

Diseases

As in any hospital, there were a variety of diseases encountered by the doctors. Many of them, such as rheumatism, bronchitis, diarrhea or gonorrhoea are well enough known to be self-explanatory. A brief description of most of the diseases listed is included. The most prevalent disease was fever, either intermittent (one that comes and goes within a 24-hour period) or continuous (which was possibly malaria). There was at least one case of "*Malingeria*" and also several cases of lunacy. A list of the illnesses follows (good hunting!):

Abscessus- A localized collection of pus in any body part that results from an invasion of a pyogenic bacterium.

Anasarca- generalized massive edema (swelling); also called dropsy, it is a retention of water in tissues and cavities which can be caused by heart disease or cirrhosis of the liver.

Anemia- A reduction in red blood cells; weakness and fatigue; a symptom of other diseases.

Anthrax- Inhaling spores of bacillus; eating contaminated meat.

Ascites- An accumulation of serous fluid (edema) in the peritoneal cavity.

Catarrh- inflammation of any mucous membrane, (of the throat or nose), usually from a cold or allergy.

Colitis- Inflammation of the colon.

Constipatis- a decrease in a person's normal frequency of defecation; treatment consisted of consuming fresh vegetables, fruits and grains.

Cystitis- Bladder inflammation, urinary tract infection.

Debilitas- weakness, loss of weight or appetite, possibly cancer or tuberculosis; general exhaustion.

Dysentery- inflammation of the colon with frequent passage of bloody mucous; usually from food or water contamination.

Dyspepsia- indigestion and heartburn (also heart attack symptoms); upper abdominal discomfort.

Epistaxis- A nosebleed.

Enteritis- Inflammation of the intestines.

Enuresis- involuntary discharge of urine ("bed-wetting").

Erysipelas- Streptococci infection, today treated with penicillin; if not treated, nephritis, abscesses and septicemia results (with a 40% death rate). It is marked by a bright red rash on

the face or legs, fever, chills, sweats, vomiting, swelling and tenderness. Sometimes called the "Eel thing" due to the redness and swelling that occurs. Today it could be treated by penicillin.

Febris Continuum- A continuous fever sustained (over a 24-hour period) scarlet fever, typhus, pneumonia. (Note: Febris Intermittens, or intermittent fever, is one that carries throughout a 24 hour period.

Gastritis- Inflammation of the lining of the stomach; it could be caused by the use of alcohol and tobacco products.

Hematemesis- Vomiting of blood (usually due to gastric ulcers), gastritis.

Hepatitis- Inflammation of the liver.

Icterus- jaundice, a bilious discharge which first appears in yellowness of the eyes and skin

Laryngitis- Over or improper use of the voice; exposure to cold or wet; inhalation of irritating dust or vapors.

Lumbago- A dull, aching pain in the lumbar (back) region.

Neuralgia- described as discomfort, such as a headache; a severe pain along the course of a nerve.

Orchitis- Inflammation of a testis due to trauma or mumps; symptoms include: swelling, severe pain, chills, fever, vomiting, hiccough, delirium.

Otalgia- Pain in the ear.

Otitis- Inflammation of the ear.

Otorrhoea- Inflammation of the ears, with putrid discharge.

Paronychia- An acute or chronic infection of the marginal structures about the nail, redness, swelling, suppuration.

Phthisis- A wasting illness.

Pleuritis- (pleurisy) inflammation of the membrane around the lung; any pain in the chest with each breath.

Remittent Fever- A pattern of fever that varies over a 24 hour period, but does not return to normal.

Rheumatism- Acute and chronic conditions marked by inflammatory muscle soreness and stiffness, pain in joints.

Rubeola- German measles.

Scabies- a skin disease which has scaly eruptions; sometimes called sanguineous crust.

Typhoid Fever- an acute infectious disease characterized by high fever and intestinal inflammation, spread by food or water contaminated with the bacillus *Salmonella typhosa*.

Typhus- prevalent among sailors and passengers at sea and in military installations. It is transmitted to humans by fleas and lice; sometimes mistakenly called Typhoid fever and is characterized by high fever, headache and dizziness.

Varicocele- Enlargement of the veins of the spermatic cord, commonly occurring above the left testicle.

Variola- Smallpox. There was a separate hospital for smallpox cases (quite possibly the Mount Tirzah site, south of Wilmington).

Vulnus Sclopeticum- any manner of gun-shot wound (usually abbreviated as Vulnus Sclopt or sclopet).

Copyright R. J. Cooke 2005