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SIBERIAN PLAGUE, PROPERLY TYPHUS AND FEBRIS INTERMITTENS LARVATA, OR RECURRENS, AS IT IS GENERALLY CALLED.

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[Translated from the "Wiener Medizinische Zeitung" of April 25, 1865, for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, by B. JOY JEFFRIES.]

WE are glad to find our views in regard to the so-called "Siberian Plague" confirmed by recent advices from Prof. Gruber, of Petersburg. Although we cannot reconcile many of his statements with our common terminology, and though the account is evidently not from a practitioner's pen, yet it is sufficient to afford us a sketch of the diseases now prevalent in Petersburg, which are typhus and febris intermittens perniciosa. It is to be regretted that the *post-mortem* account which we should have looked for was slighted, yet we are enabled to definitely make up our mind in reference to the epidemic.

It seems there are in reality two epidemics in Russia—*typhus*, of exactly what character we cannot determine from present information, i. e., whether it is an exanthematic, or, as would seem from all the symptoms, our common form, so well understood and studied; besides this there is *febris recurrens*, so called, which has not yet been recognized in Petersburg, but has in former years been diagnosed in different parts of the country.

The principal symptoms of so-called *febris recurrens* are chills, enlargement of the spleen and liver, pulse 100–140, general languor, and the accompaniments of all febrile affections; in addition, icterus from trouble in the liver, and painful swelling of this organ. We are correct in calling this disease *intermittens larvata*, except that the chills do not occur at regular intervals, but are replaced by a stage of continued heat. The liver and spleen exhibit the same changes as in intermittent, and as nothing, according to Gruber, is found in the intestine characteristic of typhus, and we know of no disease where the abnormal enlargement of these two organs plays

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so important a part, we are the more strengthened in our view. Dryness of the tongue is a constant symptom in typhus; who does not recal the red triangle on its end in typhus patients? In intermittens the tongue may remain moist and its tip red; all the symptoms may closely resemble typhus in *intermittens larvata*, and yet, under ordinary treatment, the whole disease may run through in six, eight to ten days, which is never the case in true typhus. We are never through with typhus under four weeks.

Prof. Gruber speaks of a bilious form. Those familiar with intermittent in Hungary will have observed exactly the appearances that Prof. Gruber speaks of, taken from the reports of observers of this epidemic in the various journals. Our journal has given such reliable testimony of this, that we wonder at the epidemic in Russia being regarded as a new form of disease. Hæmorrhage in the brain as a presumptive cause of death during the attack, effusions into the pericardium, are such common appearances in intermittent in Hungary; marked icterus, and death during the first attack occur so frequently there, that we must refer to the excellent work of Dr. Rezech (in Fuzitö, near Komorn) for all that has been considered characteristic of this new epidemic in Petersburg.

The various accounts of the disease in Petersburg have no resemblance to the plague. The plague, a contagious, febrile epidemic, is characterized by boils and arthracæ appearing on the cheeks, neck, breast, back, or limbs. The various *plagues* of olden time and the middle ages are in no way analogous to the present Russian epidemic. The *plague* Galen speaks of in old Rome under the Emperor Antoninus, the *plague* in Athens that Thucydides tells of, what is known of the "*black death*" of the 16th century and the "*pest*" of the 17th, are as different from what has now been called the "*Siberian plague*" as heaven from earth. Neither in the symptoms of the disease, its severity, extent, number of persons affected, nor its mortality, does the present epidemic deserve the name of "*plague*."

Epidemics must be thoroughly studied and understood to be treated and deprived of the alarm they cause. Cholera, typhus, scarlet fever, variola and even measles were much more dreaded, when no rational therapeutics were employed to control them, than now. We need only compare the lists of mortality of the earlier epidemics of cholera, typhus, scarlet fever and variola with those of the present day to see how rational medical treatment may deprive these epidemics of their terror. With all these elements that threaten society, the first necessity is a proper medical knowledge and a thorough understanding of them; and it is the duty of the authorities to take such action as will give physicians opportunity of seeing and diagnosing them. At the present moment we are quite at ease in reference to the "*Siberian plague*" in Petersburg, as we know that there are men in Austria who have repeatedly observed the disease and successfully treated it.

[The remainder of the article has already appeared in our pages (see Official Account of the Russian Epidemic in No. 19 of the present volume), with the exception of the following table, giving the number of patients with typhus and recurrent fever treated in the civil and military hospitals of Petersburg, since the beginning of the epidemic to March 1, 1865.—EDS.]

Name of the Hospital.	Number of patients received.		Of these died.	
	Typhus.	Recurrent Fever.	Typhus.	Recurrent Fever.
Hospital Aboukow	1315	2312	306	390
“ Marie for the poor	1521	736	169	47
“ Peter Paul	558	540	51	7
“ Maria Magdalena	453	734	92	40
“ Alexander	1699	821	350	101
“ Kalinkin	100	10	20	2
“ Ismailovsky	209	1865	47	189
1st Military Hospital	876	307	106	41
2d “ “	173	116	26	9
Marine Hospital Kalinkin	92	9	11	4
Hospital of Regiment Preobraschensky	46	66	4	2
“ “ Moskau	30	94	8	4
“ “ Grenadiers	25	15	8	
	7097	7625	1198	836
Total.	14,722		2,034	

CASE OF SUPPURATIVE PHLEBITIS, FOLLOWED BY PYÆMIA AND DEATH.

[Read before the Boston Society for Medical Observation, June 19th, 1865, and communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

By A. D. SINCLAIR, M.D.

JANUARY 26th, 1864.—Called upon to visit Mr. —, æt. 60, house carpenter, whom I found ailing from a febrile affection of an indefinite character—chief symptoms, headache, slight soreness of the throat, with cough, tenderness with some swelling of the abdomen, and some pain in the extremities. He stated that four days previously he exposed himself to cold while much heated by his work. On the same day, moreover, in lifting a heavy weight, through the carelessness of his assistant, being obliged to make extraordinary exertion, a double hernia of which he had been the subject for many years was greatly increased, rendering the truss hitherto worn completely useless in controlling the constantly-protruding masses. He repeatedly, and for several days, pressed back the bowel with his hand, giving himself no little pain, and although conscious that he might be doing himself injury, neglected proper remedial means. Up to the present time he always enjoyed excellent health, being a robust and active man all his life. Now makes little complaint.