Five Dissertations On Fever

Fordyce George

Title: Five Dissertations On Fever

Author: Fordyce George

FIVE

DISSERTATIONS

ON

FEVER.

Medicina igitur adhuc taliter comparata est, ut fuerit magis ostenta, quam elaborata: etiam magis elaborata quam amplificata.—*Bacon, Aug. Sc. Lib. ii. Ch. i.*

Solent autem homines naturam tanquam ex prealta turri et e longe despicere, et circa generalia nimium occupari; quando si descendere placuerit et ad particularia accedere, resque ipsas attentius et diligentius inspicere, magis vera et utilis fieret comprehensio.—*Ibid.*

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SECOND AMERICAN EDITION:

FROM THE LATEST ENGLISH EDITION OF EACH RESPECTIVE DISSERTATION.

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FOR THE AMERICAN EDITION.

A FRIEND who was desired to superintend the reprinting of these Dissertations, conceived the original to be in such a state, that a perfect fac-simile would either bring censure on the author, or on those concerned in the present undertaking; for to what other quarter could the technical errors and defects contained in them be attributed?

The author also, who was for many years a public lecturer, and who was a man of peculiar character, dictated these several Dissertations to an amanuenis; publishing them successively at distant intervals, and leaving the final correction of each to the moment of revising them as they were printed. A work thus begun and conducted, is likely to have been deficient not only in polish, but in clearness and in accuracy of expression, and sometimes also in arrangement; to say nothing of brevity. So it has happened in the present instance; and therefore in an age, when perspicuity and correctness are usually sought for and attained, it seemed advisable that the author's present performance should undergo some modification. It was especially wished to render every important particular, in each sentence and in each paragraph, immediately obvious to the medical student when reading it in the course of his education, as well as to the physician when consulting it in the course of his practice. Nor is it to be overlooked, that the author himself has admitted in his fifth Dissertation, that the British public had long since objected to his manner of writing; and the English editor of that Dissertation (which was a posthumous publication) not only found it advisable in some respects to correct it pursuant to the author's wishes; but had been engaged by the author (while living) to revise three of the Dissertations which preceded it. Had that gentleman been more courageous, the liberties now taken might have been spared.—In the mean time, as the original published in England, still exists for those who may seek to refer to it, the changes now introduced are far less objectionable, than if they had been made in an original manuscript, which was thenceforth never more to see the light.

The control however thus assumed over the dead has been employed conscientiously; no alteration having here been made, which it is suspected that the author if living, would have disapproved as to the essence of it, had he seen it in the work of a stranger.—In

some degree indeed the reader can judge for himself how far the objects here proposed have been secured; since it has been designed to banish from the text its principal ambiguities and intricacies, and some small portion of its prolixity; and so to arrange the materials by the division into paragraphs, as to exhibit a clear view of the author's general plans.—As to the case of paragraphs in particular; it is conjectured that the present American edition upon an average uses only one paragraph, where the English edition employs two or three; and in some instances, the disproportion is as one to eight or ten. In two cases, above half a dozen of the English paragraphs are here thrown into a single sentence. On the other hand, one paragraph of the original is sometimes subdivided in the American edition into two or more.—In particulars like these it is repeated, that the reader can judge for himself, as to the success of the methods employed for perfecting the present edition.

The forcible punctuation employed in this edition will doubtless displease many; but if after a little familiarity with it, the sense of the author becomes thereby readily manifest in all its parts, it ought to be acceptable to professional gentlemen (whose convenience it was held so important to consult;) unless they choose to condemn the ladder after it has served them in entering the building.—The spelling has in general been rendered uniform: but the author has often been left in possession of his peculiarities in grammar and in phraseology, as having nothing to do with the scheme of making his language simple and intelligible.—It is wished that the author could have been entirely stripped of his repetitions; but this would have been a difficult reform; and therefore, though a few of these repetitions have been suppressed, yet in most instances they have merely been thrown into a parenthesis.—The parenthesis has also been frequently introduced to denote subordinate matter, or to guide the eye in discovering the sense where it was intricate or where the sentence was long.—Some alterations lastly have been made merely to suit the convenience of the printer, in the correction of his proof sheets; and it should be added, that various sheets of this edition have not received the full benefit of the plan which was intended to be pursued in it, especially in its commencement.

The author's *meaning* in essentials, has never been intentionally varied from, in the slightest particular. A hint has now and then been offered in the notes (only one or two of which it must be observed belong to the author;) but it was solely for explanatory purposes in favor of the student, or with a view to suggest some trifles which were too minute for the notice of other critics.

For the rest, it is reserved as a natural right to the original patrons of the American edition of these Dissertations, to speak in a preface of their merits, their errors, and their omissions, without the slightest interference.

September, 1815.

P. S. No preface has been received, as was once expected.

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TO THE SECOND AMERICAN EDITION.

The same principles which were adopted in preparing the First American Edition of this work for the press, have been still more extensively employed in preparing the Second of these Editions; and it is hoped with an increased good effect, as regards the exhibition of the Author's *Plans and Opinions*, which may now be said to carry with them their own Analysis.

The reader on the other hand, will seldom find himself troubled with remarks on the *substance* of the work itself;—even when the author attempts to apply his treatment of "Fever" in England, to the "yellow fever" of the U. States!—The author indeed should have borne in mind on this occasion, that he had himself censured Boerhaave for *prescribing for diseases which he had never seen.*

That the American student and practitioner may nevertheless have every aid in treating *Intermittent and Remittent* Fevers, (which constitute the principal object of attention *in the larger portion of the U. S.;*) two important European works on these subjects, which have appeared in this country under the patronage of Dr. Rush, are now to be pressed upon their notice.—The *first* is a treatise by *M. Senac;* the principal physician to Louis XV, and the author of a celebrated book on the Heart. This treatise has for its title, "The 'Hidden Nature and the Treatment of Intermittent and Remittent 'Fevers;" and was translated at the request of Dr. Rush by Dr. Charles Caldwell; having been published at Philadelphia in 1805. The Second European work referred to, is, *Dr. Cleghorn's* "Obser-'vations on the 'Epidemic Diseases of Minorca from 1744 to 1749;" which were republished by Dr. Rush himself, with *notes*, in 1809.—Both are short, but highly important productions.—Of the *first*, Dr. Rush remarks in an advertisement which is prefixed to it, that he had long known it to be a judicious and useful work; and had derived much assistance from it in his practice; and that it was peculiarly calculated to assist the students in medicine in the U. S. in forming just opinions of the nature and treatment of the *Summer* and *Autumnal* Diseases of their country.—Of the *second* publication, (that of Cleghorn) Dr. Rush observed, that it had passed through many editions; that it contained a greater mass of practical knowledge in a small compass, than any book perhaps of the same kind in medicine; that its merit consisted chiefly in the number and importance of its facts; (for facts afforded the surest passport of a medical book to present and future generations;) that the author of it viewed diseases in connection with climate, season, *aliments, drinks, and national manners;* and that as he took notes of all cases, as they occurred to him, he was enabled to compose and to publish the work in question, before he had entered the thirty-fourth year of his age.—Dr. Cleghorn, we add, was during five years a confidential house-pupil of the elder Monro, and attended the lectures of Mr. John Hunter in London; he was also a fellow student of

Drs. Fothergill and Russel; and one of the founders of the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh: He rose also to high honors in Dublin, and was in much esteem at Paris. He says of himself, 'I have 'given the history of these fevers collected from an almost infinite 'number of cases, carefully minuted in the chambers of the sick; 'without trusting to memory, or regarding what others had said on 'the subject before me, or advancing any thing but from reiterated 'examination. The observations relating to the *Cure* (which are by 'much the most material,) have been confirmed again and again by 'the experience of all who have practised physic with attention, 'among either the English or Spanish inhabitants of Minorca.'

It is to be lamented, that Dr. Rush, (whose claim to be called a very eminent man is to be held as established,) has thus republished, with his notes, only Cleghorn, Sydenham, Pringle, and Hillary (of Barbadoes).—There are still various European Medical authors of the same periods, whose works merit a revival; and comments upon them by able American practitioners would add to the usefulness of them in both hemispheres. Where the habit of authorship is established, many examples prove, that undertakings of this kind may be pursued by men of the most extensive engagements, with little sacrifice of time. Nor is the occupation of an Editor to be considered as derogating from rank, whether as regards station or talent; especially where public utility is interested.—For example, we may refer to the attention which Senac bestowed upon Heister, Van Swieten on Boerhaave, Richerand on Boyer, Bichat on Desault, and Beclard and others on Bichat; or in another line, we may cite the notice paid by Voltaire and others to Newton, by Buffon to Dr. Stephen Hales, by Spallanzani to Bonnet, and by Dr. Hunter of York (Eng.) to Mr. Evelyn. Even in the case of poetry, we find Warburton as the editor of Pope, Mason of Gray, and the celebrated Mr. Fox as the intended, and Sir Walter Scott as the actual, editor of Dryden.

But returning to the work before us, we repeat the regret expressed in the advertisement to its first American edition; namely, that it was not revised and illustrated by those who were competent to the task, *and who were expected to have undertaken it.* But let us nevertheless add, that these *Five Dissertations on Fever*, naked and unprotected as they have been, have still attracted notice and respect; that the defects in them have been forgiven; and that no physiologist or physician, HOWEVER ABLE, is ever likely to read them with proper attention, without being led into new and important reflections.—We may say farther; namely, that since the days of good philosophy (of which Dr. Cullen saw at least the dawn) we have had an assemblage of writers in the English language on the subject of *Fever*; such as Darwin, Clutterbuck, Beddoes, Rush, Wilson Philip, Robert Jackson, Armstrong, Mason Good, and others; and yet none probably will deny a distinguished place among them to our author on account of his *Dissertations*; coming as they do from an experienced, original, contemplative, and successful *Practitioner.*

July, 1823.

THE

FIRST DISSERTATION

ON

FEVER;

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF

SIMPLE FEVER;

OR OF

FEVER

CONSISTING OF

ONE PAROXYSM ONLY.

FROM THE EDITION PRINTED IN LONDON, IN 1800.

ERRATA, &c.

Defects in this edition have multiplied from the want of a revision of the proof-sheets; as also from the original of the work having been mislaid, in consequence of the decease of the printer of the First American Edition. The first portion of the present edition has likewise been noticed less strictly by the Editor, than the sequel of it. Nevertheless none but important errata are noticed; the rest being left to the kindness of the reader.

page.	line.	
57.	12.	dele, at present.
201.	11.	dele, although.
222	3.	dele, appear.
224.		For the note found here substitute the following:
		* See a note at the end of the *first part* of the present Dissertation. p. 231.
225.	11.	read 1757. (This error is in the original.)
255.	5.	from the bottom; for, them; read, been.
295.		Add to the first note at the end, as follows:
		—Also Black's Lectures edited by Robison, Vol. 3.
297.		Let the top line make the bottom line.
312.	28.	read *Retching*.
		N. B. It has been somewhat difficult to develope the author's scheme of division in the Fifth Dissertation. But the following mistakes not belonging to the author require correction: viz.
380.	6.	Let the paragraph begin with this mark of division; viz: 3d.
397.	8.	For (F.) read, (E.)
425.		In the copies where the following lines are wanting, (as is the case in part of the impression of the work,) they must be inserted at the top of this page.

—But when it does not, it often increases the difficulty of respiration, or the affection of the head; so that the patient dies. It is nevertheless worth running the risk; since the disease, if left to itself, is much more frequently fatal.—This kind of irregularity in continued fever, is fortunately not very frequent; and many practitioners may not have noticed it.