

DULLES (C.W.)

REPORT ON HYDROPHOBIA.

BY

CHARLES W. DULLES, M.D.,
OF PHILADELPHIA.

FROM

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BY CHARLES W. DULLES, M.D.,
OF PHILADELPHIA.

IN June, 1888, I made my last report to this Society, in pursuance of the resolution adopted at Williamsport, in 1886, asking me to continue my studies on hydrophobia and to report to the Society from time to time. During the six years which have just elapsed I have continued to collate cases of so-called hydrophobia and to study them, with a view to the report which I now make.

The period of time covered by my present report is six years, from June 1, 1888, to nearly June 1, 1894. I have collated for these six years seventy-eight cases which had any claim to be regarded as instances of hydrophobia. A considerable number of these are, in my opinion, utterly incredible and wholly spurious. Admitting them all as true hydrophobia, we have for the United States an average of thirteen cases per annum, or about one case to four and a half million of inhabitants per annum. This is

¹ Read before the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, May 16, 1894.

The table of 78 cases accompanying this report will be published in the Transactions of the Pennsylvania State Medical Society and the Transactions of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia for 1894.



about the same proportion as I found in my last report.

The geographical distribution of the cases was as follows: 62 (about 80 per cent.) in the section of country from Maine to Georgia—14 of these being in the New England States; 43 (55 per cent. of the whole number) in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; and 5 altogether in Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia. Only 16 cases (20 per cent.) occurred in the country west of the Allegheny Mountains.

This distribution I attribute to the influence of the newspapers published in New York and Philadelphia, which have at times, especially those in New York, given too much space to descriptions of the horrors of so-called hydrophobia, and to the exploitation of the Pasteur Institute established in New York. Twenty-four cases occurred in New York City and places in Long Island and New Jersey which may be considered as environs of New York—like Jersey City, Newark, Elizabeth, etc.

In studying the cases that have come under my notice in the last six years I have been impressed by their bearing upon the views expressed in some books and papers on the subject as to the age at which hydrophobia occurs, and the relation of the length of the period of incubation to the age of the patient and the situation of the bite.

In regard to age, I find that this varied from what was called "a baby" to what was called "old."

Of the 78 victims, 18 were under ten years old; 16 were between ten and sixteen years old; 8 were between seventeen and thirty-one years old; 34

were between thirty-five and fifty-seven years old ; 1 was said to be " old," and the age of one has not been ascertained.

TABLE OF AGES.

Little children.	From 10-16 years.	From 17-31 years.	From 35-57 years.	Old.	Not stated.
Baby, 1	11 y'rs, 5	19 y'rs, 2	35 y'rs, 2	1	1
3 years, 2	12 " 4	22 " 3	Adult, 23		
4 " 3	13 " 3	27 " 1	40 y'rs, 1		
5 " 3	14 " 1	28 " 1	43 " 1		
6 " 4	15 " 2	31 " 1	45 " 1		
7 " 2	16 " 1		48 " 2		
8 " 2			50 " 2		
9 " 1			53 " 1		
			57 " 1		
Total, 18	Total, 16	Total, 8	Total, 34	1	1

Of these victims of so-called hydrophobia, the only ones too young to have distinct notions in regard to this disease were the " baby" (No. 59), about whom I have no evidence that the case was one of hydrophobia except a newspaper headline ; a child of three years (No. 27) that was bitten by a dog that was living and well six months later, when the child died ; another child of three years (No. 44), about which I have only a brief newspaper item, saying the disease was pronounced hydrophobia ; a child four years old (No. 10) that died in convulsions six weeks after having been bitten by a dog of which nothing was known, and attended by a physician whose name I cannot find in any medical directory ; a child four years old (No. 35) that died in Philadelphia after having been bitten

by a pet dog with which he was playing and about which there is not a particle of evidence that it was rabid (a case that the coroner refused to admit as hydrophobia); and another child four years old (No. 68), bitten by a dog on whose sore foot he had trodden, and the owner of which scouted the idea that it was rabid. All the rest were of an age at which most persons have very distinct notions about and fear of hydrophobia.

In regard to the relation of the period of incubation to the age of the patient and the situation of the bite, the statistics of the United States for the last six years are, I think, very instructive. They indicate precisely what is found upon studying the thousands of cases reported in books and medical journals which I have investigated, namely: That the facts do not in the least support the theory that bites near the center of the nervous system are more dangerous or more likely to be followed by a brief period of incubation than those inflicted on more remote parts. In our statistics we find a child four years old bitten on the face, with an incubation-period of nearly five months, and a man thirty-five years old bitten on the hand, with an incubation-period of only four weeks. We have also a four-year old child bitten on the finger, with an incubation-period of three weeks, and an adult bitten on the leg, with an incubation-period exactly the same. Taking all the cases together, we find that after bites on the face the incubation-period was less than the time-honored quota of six weeks in only a third of the cases, while the same is true of a full fourth of the cases of bites on the hand and wrist. These

The number of cases of hydrophobia that occur in this country is happily small. It would doubtless be smaller still but for the exploitation of the Pasteur Institute, conducted by Gibier, in New York, and of its feeble imitator, conducted by Lagorio, in Chicago. These institutions, and the newspapers that in times past have published sensational accounts of cases of so-called hydrophobia, have in a mild way reproduced some of the conditions which make France the hotbed of hydrophobia, as well as of hystero-epilepsy. But the psychological make-up of Americans is less favorable to the development of the germs of hydrophobia or those of hystero-epilepsy than that of the French, and consequently there is less of both here than there is in France. There the history of the last six years differs but little from that which I described to you in my last report. As then, so now, the number of deaths in France is greater than it was before Pasteur, just ten years ago (in May, 1884), boasted to a newspaper reporter: "Whoever gets bitten by a mad dog has only to submit to my three little inoculations, and he need not have the slightest fear of hydrophobia." The year before he made that boast there were four deaths from hydrophobia in Paris (the Department of the Seine); the year after, when he had practised his preventive method for six months, the deaths from hydrophobia leaped at once from four to twenty-two. In 1886 the number fell to three again in Paris; but I have a list of twenty-three persons that died after treatment by Pasteur himself in that year. In 1887 the deaths in Paris rose to nine, in 1888 to nine-

teen. These oscillations indicate that Pasteur's method is no more preventive of hydrophobia than is the method which he declared in 1884 would eradicate rabies in dogs. On the contrary, Pasteur's method has undoubtedly increased the number of deaths from hydrophobia. I have indicated what has taken place in France, and can assure you that there has been no diminution in the number of deaths from hydrophobia in any part of the world since Pasteur's infallible cures were inaugurated; and at the same time there has been added to these a large number of deaths due to inoculation of the virus of what ought to be called "Pasteur's disease." Just how many these have been no man can say. The statistics are confusing. Those from friendly sources contain remarkable discrepancies. Pasteur's own statistics, published in the *Annales de l'Institut Pasteur* for March of this year, admit seventy-two deaths in seven and one-half years after treatment in Paris. My own show a much larger number, while I find that Dujardin-Beaumetz, a most enthusiastic supporter of Pasteur, reported to the Académie de Médecine on June 21, 1892, ninety-eight cases in only six years, which is just twenty-six cases more than Pasteur himself reported for eight years. One way in which such curious figures appear may be seen when we examine Pasteur's detailed report for 1893, in which we find that ten actual deaths are set down as four, because two of the ten unfortunates succumbed in less than fifteen days, three developed their fatal disease while receiving the inoculations, and one did not stay to have the treatment completed. The same manipu-

lation may be found in the reports for other years.

In view of these facts, and of others which I cannot detain you with, it is astonishing to see how medical writers quote approvingly the claim that the Pasteur method has reduced the mortality from hydrophobia from 15 or 16 per cent. of those bitten by rabid animals to a fraction of 1 per cent., especially as this claim of Pasteur and his disciples, besides being in the face of the fact that more people die now from this disease and Pasteur's disease than used to die from hydrophobia, rests upon the stupendous fallacy that Pasteur has saved from death by hydrophobia during the last eight years nearly 15,000 persons, who are in the report spoken of as "cured," of whom about nine-tenths were Frenchmen, say about 1500 a year. Of this number he is supposed to have "cured" about 1400 Frenchmen in the year 1893—more persons than have died from hydrophobia in the United States in a century.

But for the frequent use of the word "cure" by Pasteur and his disciples, it would be better to assume that his claim to have saved life covers only 15 or 16 per cent. of the figures given here.

One of the perils of the science of medicine at the present time is the credulity which some writers show for statements published from experimental laboratories and the contempt which they manifest for sources of knowledge that conflict with laboratory-theories. One might suppose that prolonged study of what has been written in regard to a subject from a clinical, an experimental, and a philo-

sophical standpoint would warrant a conscientious and fairly intelligent investigator in believing that he knew something about it ; but my experience shows that this will not protect one against the scorn of some who spend more time in producing artificial diseases in test-tubes and guinea-pigs than they do in curing natural diseases in human beings.

On this occasion you may be spared the labor of trying to follow figures to establish what I say. You know that I have said such things as this often before, and that they have been published and spread abroad where their credibility might be impeached if they were incorrect, and their fallacy exposed if they were fallacious.¹ But nothing of this kind has happened. Thus far no man has cared to proceed to a deliberate and detailed review of the arguments by which I have at various times endeavored to present to others the views in regard to hydrophobia which I hold, and which are held by a large number of intelligent men.

With this I conclude what I have to say on this occasion. I speak earnestly, because I feel deeply, and I believe what I have said to be of great importance to humanity. With less earnestness I should long ago have given up a course which has had abundant pains and few rewards.

¹ Disorders Mistaken for Hydrophobia, Trans. Med. Soc. of State of Pennsylvania, 1884. Treatment of Hydrophobia, Historically and Practically Considered, Journ. of the Amer. Med. Assoc., Aug. 6, 1884. Comments on Pasteur's Method of Treating Hydrophobia, Medical Record, New York, Feb. 13, 1886. Case of So-called Hydrophobia, with Remarks, etc., Lancet, London, May 1, 1886.

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