

DEGREE CONFERRED

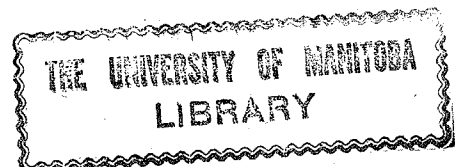
1903

S M A L L P O X , I N O C U L A T I O N

A N D V A C C I N A T I O N .

by

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SMALLPOX, INOCULATION
AND V VACCINATION.

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A HISTORICAL SKETCH, DATING FROM THE RECORDS OF
THE EARLIEST DATES TO THOSE OF
JENNER'S TIME.

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Envious and foul disease,
Could there not be
One beauty in an age
And free from thee?

In this way, at as early a date as 1600, Ben Jonson wrote of the most dread, loathsome and fatal disease of his day. At about the same time another writer calls it, "an inevitable accident of human life." Few diseases have been so destructive to human life as smallpox and thus it has ever been regarded with horror, from its fatality, its disgusting accompaniments and disfiguring effects as well as from the fact that no nation, no rank, no constitution, neither age, nor sex escaped it; all trembled in mentioning its name. Those who survived their illness came out pocked and maimed for life. Nor was this the worst, many were left as mere wrecks; consumptive, scrofulous, asthmatic, lame and in numerous cases even deaf and blind.

As with many others of our most prevalent diseases, little is known of where smallpox originated. The earliest records we have of such a disease are found among the writings of the Chinese

Cronicles. Sometime during the nine centuries of the Tschu dynasty, which lasted from the twelfth to the third century before Christ, a disease closely simulating, or identical with smallpox was referred to. Several hundred years previous to the Christian era the Brahmins of the Hindoostan had a special deity which they worshipped when smallpox plagues were prevalent. The ceremonies used on these occasions are found in their sacred book, the Artharva Veda. In neither of these early Chinese and Hindoostanee references can much be learned about the disease. They are simply the first records that have come down to the present time and are only of interest as they show the great antiquity of the disease and the probable nidus from which the worlds greatest scourge has sprung.

In Europe, at so early a date, the disease evidently was unknown. Hippocrates, the great Greek physician and the "Father of Medicine" makes no mention, in any of his eighty odd treatises, of a disease that could be taken as smallpox. The same may be said about the "Paradoxopoeus" of Rome, Claudius Galenus, who practised and wrote about six hundred years later than Hippocrates. The first evidence of the disease in the west is probably to be found in the report of a pestilential plague, that ravaged Syria about the middle of the fourth century before Christ. A Roman army returning from a tour of conquest in Asia Minor carried this plague to Europe. Many writers deny that smallpox was introduced into Europe at such an early date, but it seems indisputable that a plague was carried west at this time and the description of it, though vague, leads as many others to think that this was smallpox. Another fact that seems to show that the disease

was at least known to the early Greeks is, that, during Alexander's invasion of the Indus Valley his army is said to have suffered more from death due to thirst and ^{to certain} a disease, than it did from its battles, and this disease is not described by his historians as a strange or new malady. From the accounts given of this disease we are led to believe that it was smallpox. Hence, from these considerations, it seems more than probable that the disease was prevalent on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea long before any definite account of it was given by the early medical writers.

Leaving now the vague and indefinite evidence of the early ages let us see what can be found in the more certain and available works of modern writers. The Arabs are responsible for the spread of the disease from Asia Minor to Egypt and it is to the Arabian practitioners in Alexandria, that we must look for the first descriptions of the disease as it existed in Alexandria in the first half of the seventh century. Two centuries later Messue gave his account of it and a hundred years later (923-930), Rhazes, a doctor of the Bagdad Hospital wrote, "why hardly anyone escapes attack."

Our knowledge of the disease is obtained more from the chronicles of the monasteries and the writings of the historians than from those of the medical men, hence it is impossible to procure connected or detailed information. It seems to be quite evident that the Arabs are responsible for the spread westward around the Mediterranean shores, but, the exact course and date of this spread are questionable. What we do know is, that the disease was quite generally distributed in Southern and Central Europe previous to the time of the

her feet. Her eyes were closed by the swelling. She was
entirely covered with vesicles, even to her hands and in
Gregory wrote somewhat as follows: She was very sick,
born, who was attacked during one of these epidemics,
smallpox. In describing the sickness of the lady of Count
by him indicate that the two epidemics were of the nature of
seemed to centre in Fountains. The symptoms as described
neighbourhood of Aversa and a few years later another that
historian of Tours describes an epidemic which began in the
this, in the reign of King Childbert, Gregory, the great
as a synonymous term for smallpox. Ten years subsequent to
name for the disease and this name exists to the present day
to call "varicella". This is the first record of a specific
spotted condition of the skin during the illness, he was led
a plague of Central Europe which, from the variegated or
About the year 570 A. D. the Bishop of Aversa described
continent.
hundred years was the most prevalent and fatal disease of the
ing its way northward and in the course of a couple of
of these countries. From the coast it was not long in work-
Spain and France soon offered a medium for contagious invasion
recurring epidemics. Their commercial intercourse with
armies. The Moorish towns were more or less devastated by
evidently smallpox continually harassing the ranks of their
tour of conquest across the north of Africa, we find a disease
Europe. From historical references in accounts of the Arabs
turn now to the countries on the western extremity of
frequent mortality is entirely due.
and twelfth centuries that the rapid dissemination and con-
crusades, but, it is to these plagues of the eleventh

washed with and drank of the water with which the tomb of the blessed saint had been washed at the Lord's Passover. The fever abated, the discharge of the vesicles was painless and she recovered. Other interesting historical examples are, the death of the son of the Earl of Flanders 961, and a cure of a bishop of St. Gall in Switzerland.

The first records of the malady in England are to be found in prescriptions dated in the tenth century. The Anglo-Saxons, of this and the subsequent century, had prayers in their church services to protect them from the "lathan poccas" (loathed pocks) and one special prayer for the consecration of amulets to be worn as preventatives against the disease. Gilbert Anglicus and John of Goddesden, physicians of Edward the First's time, wrote about smallpox founding their works on the writings of the early Arabs. Both these men used the same treatment for the disease, which treatment is essentially similar to that of the present day. When the King's son was ill Goddesden prescribed his famous "red treatment." His royal patient was put in a red room with red bed furnishings and was nourished with red food and red wine. This was the founding of a practice which remains in the care of a smallpox patient of the present day, viz; avoidance of exposure to light, and stimulation. It seems peculiar that we find the disease reported at an earlier date in Ireland than its alleged appearance in Spain(675). Whether this is due to the incorrectness of the historical data, or these reports being accurate, to the close commercial connection of these western islands with the Mediterranean ports, is not known. The latter seems the more probable.

To follow closely the progress of the disease from this