100 YEARS AGO

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As we approach the Millennium I thought it would be interesting to see what our forebears were writing about 100 years ago. The Journal of Laryngology, Rhinology and Otology was then published by Rebman Publishing Company, Limited, 11 Adam Street, Strand, London, W.C.—Editor

ON AFFECTIONS OF THE EAR OCCURRING IN GOUTY PERSONS, OR THOSE OF GOUTY FAMILY TENDENCY.

By Dr. GEORGE GELLÉ, Jun. (Paris).

In his paper Dr. Gellé shows how the different affections of the ear are varied when they occur in people suffering from gout or having hereditary gouty tendencies.

Primo. – Gouty persons, or members of gouty families, have an unfortunate predisposition to affections of the ear. Like chronic rheumatism gout does not spare this organ, and this is not surprising if one recalls the extreme frequency of catarrh of the respiratory passages, quinsy, tonsillitis, etc., in the unfortunate inheritors of gout. The ear is often affected from the earliest infancy (eczema, external otitis, otorrhoea), and in these the otorrhoeas following the fevers of infancy are often very severe and intractable. Active hygienic treatment is necessary as soon as the affection of the ear shows itself, in addition to the local treatment which is, of course, of primary importance. Dr. Gellé insists on attention, at the same time, to the general treatment, which has a preponderating effect on the subsequent evolution of the processes going on in the ear.

Secundo. – Gouty otitis is most often fluxional, and is characterized by signs of obstruction of the tubes and a redness of the superior segment of the membrana tympani extending on to the wall of the attic. This fluxation has a tendency to localize itself in the cavity occupied by the ossicles, and in the chain of bones, which is often rendered immobile by it (producing vertigo). In addition to the acute attacks it is not uncommon to find calcareous deposits infiltrating the tympanic membrane and thickening the handle of the malleus, at the tip of which there is a spatulate swelling. Among the prodromata there is frequently observed an oedematous pharyngitis, characterized by the special aspect which we have designated "false pillars." If the otitis is unilateral, the pharyngitis is situated on the side of the lesion, but in cases of double otitis it is bilateral.

Tertio. – Very often (if we may judge by the cases which the writer has published) the catarrhal otitis presages an imminent attack of articular gout, after which everything returns into good order. The noises in the head and the attacks of vertigo which occur in gouty subjects, and in sclerosis of the middle ear, frequently cease on the occurrence of an attack of gout in the joints or a crisis of hepatic colic.

Quarto. – In the author's opinion, the gouty vertigo described by classical writers is more often a vertigo from unrecognized disease of the ear – because, in the cases in which he has had an opportunity of examining the ear, he has found signs of old sclerosis sufficiently advanced and marked to account for the production of the vertigo.

Author's Abstract.

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