

VARIOLOID AT WAPAKONETA.

BY JAS. T. WHITTAKER, M. D., CINCINNATI.

October 4 I was called by Dr. G. B. Nichols, of Wapakoneta, O., on behalf of some of the citizens of that place, to determine the character of an eruptive disease which was at that time epidemic in that town. There had been some difference of opinion as to the character of the disease, but the fear was entertained, and the opinion expressed by some of the physicians, that the disease was smallpox, and the business interests of the city were being seriously affected. On my arrival I found that Dr. Probst, one of the members of the state board of health, had also been invited to inspect the cases. I had, however, no intercourse with Dr. Probst, as it was thought best that each of us should make his own examination and express his own opinion. There seemed to be an idea that the health officer of the state would feel himself in duty bound to consider the cases at least contagious, and that under the circumstances it might be expected of me to be somewhat more lenient. What the people wanted, however, was the truth at any cost, as far as we could give it. The statement was made that there were or had been thirty or forty cases in the city or its immediate vicinity, and probably two hundred in the county or adjoining counties.

There was considerable excitement in the place, and little knots of people were gathered together opposite each house as we entered. Every house visited was placarded as being infected with contagious disease, and one house was distinctly marked smallpox.

We were received kindly in all the houses save one. I was much impressed with this fact. In the one house there was some hesitation in bringing forward the case, and quite fierce denunciation of the physician who had declared the disease to be smallpox, the elderly lady in attendance insisting upon it that the disease was measles, although she could recall the fact that the patient had had measles in childhood. She always knew smallpox by the "smell."

I was then conveyed about in a carriage with Dr. Nichols and a local officer of the city, and made an examination of the following cases:

A. M., young man, aged twenty. Has never been vaccinated. Taken sick September 21, in the midst of health, with severe headache and intense pain in the back, followed on the next day by a chill with fever. The temperature taken September 23 registered 102.5° . September 25 an eruption showed itself on the face and hands and spread gradually over the body in the course of a few days. The eruption is marked at the present time, October 4, nine days after the first appearance on the face. It is scattered over the body in the form of pustules, varying in size from a large

pea to a small Lima bean, some of which are umbilicated, and some of which are thoroughly distended. At the present time there is no fever and the general condition is good.

C. S., young man, aged nineteen. Was vaccinated in infancy, but the arm was sore for only two days. There is no mark on the arm. September 22, in the midst of health, was taken sick with a chill, the temperature registering 103.5° to 104° in the course of twenty-four hours. There were with the chill pain in the head and nausea. September 26 three spots appeared on the forehead, which enlarged to become vesicles and subsequently pustules. These spots spread gradually over the body, to become so numerous as to run together on the feet. At the present time eight days after the appearance of the eruption, the pustules appear much dried up on the face, though there are a few large pustules on the hands, some of which are distinctly umbilicated. This pustular eruption is still confluent on the toes and ankles.

E. M., girl, aged thirteen. Has never been vaccinated. Has had washing done at a house at which there was a disease marked by an eruption. Was taken sick September 25 with a chill, fever and nausea, but no vomiting; felt very tired and dizzy. September 28 first eruption appeared on the forehead and one spot on the wrist; the temperature taken for the first time on the fourth day registered 104.5° . Suffered a good deal from sore throat. The eruption at the present time, six days after its first appearance, is vesicular and pustular, and shows itself over the whole body, presenting the appearance of a well-marked discrete variola.

M. K., a boy, aged six. Never vaccinated. Taken sick September 24 with chill and vomiting. Was very sick at this time, vomiting on the second day. Suffered, however, no pain in the head or back. September 27 an eruption appeared on the face, to spread on the next day over the body. The spots were always isolated and have now nearly disappeared. This case is remarkable as the only one in a large family, the oldest member of which, a boy aged seventeen, being the only member vaccinated in infancy. None of the rest was ever vaccinated, and no others have as yet shown any signs of the disease.

R. M., boy, aged twelve. Never vaccinated. Taken sick in perfect health September 17. Lost his appetite, felt badly all over, but complained especially of weariness. The fever is said to have been high, registering on the 19th 104° . The patient now felt pain in the head, was dizzy, the face was flushed, the eyes red. September 21 an eruption appeared as pimples, to become later vesicular and pustular, on the face, and extended thence over the

whole body, but was especially marked on the fingers. It is now fading, leaving crusts.

M. B., young woman, aged nineteen. Never vaccinated. Had chickenpox at the age of six and measles at the age of seven. Was taken sick June 20 with fever. The day was Monday. On the following Thursday an eruption appeared "like measles," first on the hands, to spread thence over the whole body. The eruption "stayed out" about two weeks. The face was so swollen that the patient could not see. Patient declares that she counted forty "spots" on the middle finger of one hand. At the present time, after the lapse of three months and about two weeks, the face shows universal pitting as if from a previous attack of severe variola. The cicatrices are still pinkish, not white.

In the family of Mr. E. K. four boys and two girls have been affected since the first case showed itself in the middle of last August. We had been referred to this house as the probable source of all the rest, but the father of the children declared that the boys had got it from another family, B., two squares distant, who had it on the last of June. Upon inquiry it appeared that this family, B., contracted the disease from a family, H., living two squares still farther away, and they in turn from a family, S., two squares distant from them in the month of May. The boys of this family had been away fishing, and had apparently brought the disease back with them. The testimony was now becoming hearsay evidence only, which we did not think it necessary further to pursue.

Having visited these various houses, and having been assured by the physicians that the other cases were of exactly similar character, I felt that I had collected evidence enough to pronounce a positive opinion to the effect that the epidemic was a very light and mild variola, constituting what is commonly known as varioloid.

In justification of this diagnosis the following points presented themselves:

1. Not a single one of these cases had been vaccinated. In one the attempt had been made, but as the arm was "sore" for only two days this attempt could in no way be regarded as a vaccination.

2. The disease affected all ages. The youngest case which I saw was six, the oldest twenty. I was assured, however, that infants had been attacked, and one had actually died of the disease, the only fatal case so far, as well as adults in more advanced life.

3. The cases were all alike. Upon this point there could be no question, and there had been no differences of opinion. The individuals in perfect health were seized with chill, fever, malaise, headache, and sometimes,