

**THE PEDIGREE OF DISEASE: BEING SIX
LECTURES ON TEMPERAMENT,
IDIOSYNCRASY AND
DIATHESIS, DELIVERED IN THE THEATRE
OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
IN THE SESSION OF 1881**

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The Pedigree of Disease: Being Six Lectures on Temperament, Idiosyncrasy and Diathesis, Delivered in the Theatre of the Royal College of Surgeons in the Session of 1881 by Jonathan Hutchinson

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JONATHAN HUTCHINSON

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SIX LECTURES

ON

TEMPERAMENT, IDIOSYCRASY AND
DIATHESIS,

DELIVERED IN THE THEATRE OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE
OF SURGEONS IN THE SESSION OF 1881.

BY

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1884

To the Memory
OF
CHARLES DARWIN
THESE LECTURES
ARE
REVERENTLY INSCRIBED.

PREFATORY NOTE.

WITH a few emendations I have reprinted these Lectures just as they were delivered in June, 1881, and as they appeared at the time in one of the medical journals. I am well aware of their many imperfections, but am hopeful that they may be found to point to work in the right direction. It was, indeed, the commendation which this method of dealing with some of the problems of disease received from Sir James Paget, in his Bradshaw Lecture of last year, which induced me to determine on their present publication.

THE PEDIGREE OF DISEASE.

LECTURE I.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—I fear I do not much mistake in the belief that the subjects which I have ventured to take for my present course of lectures are by no means high in professional favour. Our forefathers, who knew far less about the details of pathology than we do, attached far more importance to such matters as temperament and diathesis. They were accustomed to prescribe for a man's temperament; we think only of his disease, and turn aside with weariness from classifications of diathesis in which the physicians of an older day delighted. Although to a large extent this change of sentiment has been the result of advance in knowledge, yet I think it might easily be shown that it has gone too far, and that we now neglect unwisely the study of those differences between man and man of which, for the most part, physiology takes no cognisance, but which may yet prove of much importance in modifying the processes of disease. It is to this study that I now invite your attention. I have been attracted to it in part by its own intrinsic interest, and in part by the circumstance that it has seemed to be, in some sense, supplementary to the lectures which on former occasions I have had the honour

to deliver from this chair. In my first course (three years ago) I investigated the present state of knowledge as to the influence of the nervous system in the production of disease. In the second we examined those remarkable and widely-spread forms of diathesis known respectively as Gout, Rheumatism, and Leprosy. When on these subjects I tried to show that rheumatism is a modification of the catarrhal diathesis, mainly nervous in its origin, in which the stress of the reflex disturbance falls upon the tissues of the joints. I traced a close parallel between gout and leprosy, alleging that both are food-diatheses, being distinctly and definitely caused by certain peculiar articles of diet. Respecting both we had to remark upon the facts, that having been thus acquired by food, they became capable of transmission from parent to child, and that gout, at any rate, was prone to receive important modifications in such inheritance. In my third course, delivered last summer, I was led by a not unnatural sequence to take as my topic the laws of pathological inheritance in general, and to deal with them in relation to such maladies as syphilis, gout, leprosy, catarrh, and certain specialised defects, such as deaf-mutism, colour-blindness, and hæmophilia. In each one of these courses I have been obliged very frequently to use the term "diathesis," and to justify its use against what I have all along recognised as a widespread and to some extent well-grounded distrust of the vagueness of the knowledge, or, shall I say, of the mere ignorance which its employment not unfrequently denotes. It has thus occurred to me that I could not take for the present course a subject more suitable than the one which I have announced. It will enable me to recapitulate, with amplification, some of the topics to which on former occasions I adverted to briefly, to approach them from a different point of view, and, I trust, to place some of them in a clearer