

**CLINICAL LECTURES
ON PULMONARY
CONSUMPTION**

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Clinical Lectures on Pulmonary Consumption by Theophilus Thompson

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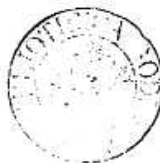
ON

PULMONARY CONSUMPTION.

BY

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151. a. 140.

PREFACE.

THESE Lectures were originally delivered at the Brompton Hospital for Consumption during the Spring of 1851, and were published with slight alterations in the second volume of "The Lancet" for that year. The favourable reception which they obtained exceeded my anticipations ; and, at the recommendation of some of my professional brethren, whose judgment I highly esteem, they are now incorporated in a volume, with such modifications as further reflection has suggested. Clinical lectures afford an advantageous medium for communicating medical information. The short but faithful sketches of individual instances of disease, thus presented, are more readily available than detailed and elaborate descriptions ; and better adapted to instruct the student respecting the proportionate value of different symptoms. Whilst avoiding tediousness, it has been my constant aim to impress the points of chief importance ; and it is doubtless practicable to be

brief without being superficial, although simplicity is more difficult than complexity.

The facts recorded were not chosen in order to support previous theories; on the contrary, the first step in the preparation of each lecture was to collect and tabulate all the facts which the wards might happen to supply for the illustration of the particular topic under consideration; and the comments were usually such as seemed to spring naturally from the examples presented.

The subject of a lecture was sometimes determined by the incidental presence in the hospital of numerous or remarkable instances, illustrative of some particular truth. This circumstance may occasionally, as for example, in reference to the gingival margin, and the influence of posture on the pulse, have given a more than ordinary preponderance of statistical evidence in one direction; but will not be found to have led to any conclusions which are not essentially in harmony with ordinary experience.

Further observation, since the Lectures were delivered, has for the most part strengthened my conviction respecting the accuracy of the opinions which they convey, with one important exception, having reference to the asserted inefficiency of vegetable oils; since it will be noticed* that I have been induced, in con-

* See Lecture VI., p. 102.

sequence of my experiments with cocoa-nut oil, to qualify that assertion.

In the present day a large proportion of talent and ingenuity is devoted to minute researches, doubtless of great interest, but which it will probably be reserved for another generation to mature and apply. It has been my aim to abstain from any elaborate discussion of such topics; and to present, as simply as possible, what has appeared to me most important in the way of direct and practical utility. If I have sometimes appeared to wander in search of collateral illustrations, it has been from a strong impression that, while the lights of modern science may correct the less perfect representations given us by former masters of our art, they should not be allowed to dazzle us into a disregard of their sound observations. The current of medical science may be made to run deeper and clearer, when the springs of literature are brought in to swell its stream.

In the style and composition of this volume, I am conscious of many defects, some resulting from its colloquial character, others not susceptible of the same excuse; but, were I to wait till my own mind is satisfied, the Lectures would probably never be published. Impressed therefore with the truth, so well expressed by the French adage, "*Le mieux est l'enemi du bien,*" I venture to reproduce them, although still disfigured with many imperfections.

It is a satisfaction to collect materials for rectifying opinion, and to offer suggestions for advancing truth ; and it may therefore be hoped that the facts here recorded will be confirmed by other observers, and retain a permanent value. Any observations which may be novel, I shall be interested in comparing with those of others engaged in the same noble profession, and anxious, according to their opportunity, to contribute their share to the advancement of knowledge, and the good of mankind.

3, Bedford Square, December, 1853.

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