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978-1-108-06230-5 - A Treatise on Pulmonary Consumption: Comprehending an Inquiry into the Causes, Nature, Prevention and Treatment of Tuberculous and Scrofulous Diseases in General

James Clark

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A Treatise on Pulmonary Consumption

Having trained in Edinburgh as a surgeon and served aboard Royal Navy vessels, Sir James Clark (1788–1870) developed a particular interest in the spread of the tuberculosis pandemic in Europe. A licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians from 1826, and elected to the Royal Society in 1832, he became a trusted physician and friend to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. This influential work of 1835 focuses on the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis. Written for a general as well as medical readership, it was lauded by *The Lancet* and ran to several English editions along with translations into other languages. Also reissued in this series are Clark’s *Medical Notes on Climate, Diseases, Hospitals, and Medical Schools in France, Italy, and Switzerland* (1820), *The Influence of Climate in the Prevention and Cure of Chronic Diseases* (1829) and his *Memoir of John Conolly* (1869).

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*Comprehending an Inquiry into the Causes,
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A
T R E A T I S E
ON
P U L M O N A R Y C O N S U M P T I O N
COMPREHENDING
AN INQUIRY INTO
THE
CAUSES NATURE PREVENTION
AND
T R E A T M E N T
OF
T U B E R C U L O U S A N D S C R O F U L O U S D I S E A S E S
IN GENERAL

BY JAMES CLARK, M.D. F.R.S.

CONSULTING PHYSICIAN TO THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN OF THE
BELGIANS AND PHYSICIAN IN ORDINARY TO THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES
THE DUCHESS OF KENT AND THE PRINCESS VICTORIA.

LONDON
SHERWOOD GILBERT AND PIPER
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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TO
HIS MAJESTY
LEOPOLD THE FIRST
KING OF THE BELGIANS,

SIRE,

THE confidence which your Majesty was long pleased to repose in me before you were called to a yet more exalted station, and the distinguished honour which you have since conferred upon me in entrusting to my professional care those nearest and dearest to you, claim from me whatever homage—not unworthy of your Majesty—it is in my power to offer, and naturally lead me to present the following

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Treatise for your Majesty's gracious acceptance; and when I reflect that the object of my humble labours is to inculcate doctrines of infinite importance to the health of mankind and the general well-being of society, I feel an anxious desire that it may be found not undeserving of a patronage so high and so influential.

It is only by convincing the public of the comparative futility of all attempts to cure consumption, and of the signal efficacy of proper measures directed to prevent it, that physicians can ever hope to produce those beneficial results in improving public health and in preserving and prolonging human life, which it is the distinguishing privilege of their

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profession to aim at. And in looking to your Majesty in your elevated station and high character—the chosen and beloved sovereign of a great and free people—I cannot contemplate a higher fortune for my book, or one more likely to secure the object with which it was composed, than that of its obtaining the approbation and protection of your Majesty.

That your Majesty may long enjoy the happiness to reign in the hearts of a prosperous and loyal people is the fervent prayer of

Your Majesty's

Most grateful and devoted servant,

JAMES CLARK.

LONDON, JUNE 1835.

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P R E F A C E.

THE greater part of the following Treatise first appeared as an article in the Cyclopædia of Practical Medicine, under the head of TUBERCULAR PHTHISIS. In publishing it as a separate work various alterations and additions were required : these I have endeavoured to supply as fully as the short space of time which has elapsed since its first appearance permitted. That the work might have been rendered more perfect by deferring its publication I readily admit; but after mature consideration I venture to lay it before the public without further delay.

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If I am not greatly deceived, the view which I have taken of tuberculous diseases is calculated to lead to a more successful method, both of prevention and treatment, than has hitherto prevailed. With this impression on my mind I feel myself justified in submitting my views and opinions to the consideration of the profession,—well aware, that, if erroneous, the task of correcting them is not very likely to originate with their author, and that, if well founded, the efforts of an individual can avail little in procuring the general application of them.

Although I have entered more particularly into the history of tuberculous disease of the lungs, or pulmonary consumption, my observations will be found to be applicable to the whole class of tuberculous and scrofulous diseases. They all originate in the same constitutional disorder, acknowledge the same remote causes, and admit of the same rules of prevention ; and, I may add, that the same mode of treatment is essentially applicable to the whole.

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The total inefficacy of all means hitherto adopted for diminishing the frequency or reducing the mortality of this class of diseases, is of itself sufficient incitement to us to seek for some other method of remedying the evil ; and it is evident to me that this can only be done, with any reasonable prospect of success, by directing the attention to such measures as are calculated to prevent the hereditary transmission of the particular morbid state in which the formal disease originates, and to correct the predisposition to it in infancy and youth. It is, accordingly, on this part of my subject, which involves the consideration of the Origin, Causes, and Prevention of the disease, that I have more especially dwelt.

I cannot but be aware of the great difficulties which present themselves to the accomplishment of my views regarding Prevention ; and that these can, never become generally applicable until the public is fully impressed with the necessity of attending to them. This furnishes me with another urgent

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motive for the publication of the present work ; as it is only by the combined exertions of the profession that the public can be influenced in such a case. And here I hope I may be allowed to calculate the more surely on the support of my medical brethren, because, in setting forth my views and opinions, I make no pretension to originality or peculiarity of doctrine. Much that is contained in the following pages is already known to the more intelligent and experienced of the profession, and the only credit I can claim, is the having, perhaps, placed the subject in a more striking point of view, and advocated it with a degree of earnestness commensurate with its importance.

The subject, in the comprehensive view which I have taken of it, involves so many momentous considerations, and embraces so wide a range, that some points deserving notice may, no doubt, have escaped me, while others may be regarded as too lightly treated : still I trust it will be found that

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I have omitted nothing of real importance. If zeal for the accomplishment of my main object has induced me to enter into and dwell more fully upon some parts than others, the conviction of their paramount importance must be my apology. My great aim has been to point out the nature and causes of the constitutional affection in which tuberculous diseases have their origin, and on those to found rules for prevention and treatment.

By diminishing the disposition to this most destructive of all human maladies, we shall not only reduce the sum of its daily victims, but we shall raise the standard of public health, and at the same time advance the moral excellence of man, augment his mental capabilities, and increase the sphere of his usefulness; for it need not be stated, that without sound bodily health, the intellectual powers languish and decay. Our subject, therefore, is one which not only concerns personal feelings and social happiness, but

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involves the well-being of society at large, and the intellectual as well as the physical character of nations. And when we further consider that the disposition to tuberculous diseases, and the deterioration of health which this implies, are evidently, to me at least, on the increase, assuredly no higher object than that to which the present work is devoted can engage the attention of the physician; and if I succeed in awakening a more general interest in the profession towards it, and in pointing out a surer path for observation, I shall not have laboured in vain.

Respecting the alterations which have been made in my work since its original publication, I may state that the whole has been carefully revised, much the greater part rewritten, and considerable additions made to almost every chapter; more particularly to those on the Causes and Prevention. But I am fully sensible that much is still wanting to illustrate this the most important part of

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the subject, and that the labours of many men and of many years will be required to complete a work which I consider as only just begun.

I may further state that I have avoided entering into theoretical discussions ; my object being to adhere, as closely as the nature of the subject would admit, to the simple results of observation, and what appeared to be legitimate deductions from them. There being also a probability that my work, from the importance and general interest of the subject, may pass into the hands of the public, I have endeavoured to divest my language as much as possible of technical terms.

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A T R E A T I S E
ON THE
INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE
IN THE
PREVENTION AND CURE
OF
CHRONIC DISEASES OF THE CHEST,
DIGESTIVE ORGANS, ETC.

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