Pemphigus Contagiosus Containing Leishman Bodies.

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During the summers of 1903-4, while stationed at Multan, several cases of pemphigus contagiosus came under my notice in the British soldiers reporting sick at the Station Hospital. Most of the cases were in the early stage of the disease. This pemphigus contagiosus is a non-febrile disease of a highly contagious nature, as shown by the easy manner in which it spreads to different parts of the body by scratching after touching the original sore. It is characterised by the formation of vesicles varying in size from that of a pin’s head in the early stage, to that of an inch in diameter in the later stage of the disease. It is not attended by inflammation, but may ulcerate, after some time, if left untreated.

The antecedent of the vesicle is unknown in some cases, but in others there is a history of an abrasion of the skin, which, in about a week’s time, showed a minute abrupt vesicle at the seat of lesion. This vesicle sometimes developed quickly, but as a rule was slow in its circular growth, sometimes taking weeks to become an inch in diameter. At first it is tense, shining and transparent, but soon loses these appearances, becoming dull and flaccid, after which it is usually burst by the friction of the clothes or by the patient scratching it. From this point it gradually widens in a circular fashion, undermining the epidermis (which may long remain overlapping the sore beneath), until it enlarges to half an inch or one inch in diameter. The sore, on exposure, presents a pinkish, slightly glazed-looking patch, in the earlier stages, but becomes of a dirty ashy-grey colour later on, and is covered by a varying thickness of disintegrated tissue, which is easily removed by gentle scraping, leaving a bleeding surface.

On examining these scrapings on prepared slides and stained by Leishman’s method for malaria, I discovered Leishman bodies in great numbers in some cases, and to a less degree in others. These bodies are oval, sharply defined in outline, having one end rounded and the other pointed, and measure from 2 to 4 microns in length. Inside the body is a nucleus which stains lilac and occupies from a quarter to sometimes half its size, is peripheral in position, and may be circular or variable in shape; a smaller chromatin spot, invariably...
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circular, is placed near the nucleus; adjoining the nucleus is a part of the body which does not stain, and beyond this the stained periphery. As the above bodies appear to be identical with the *Helcosoma tropicum* of Wright, which causes the oriental boil, it is reasonable to conclude that the "Multan sore" has an origin in the vesicular disease of pemphigus contagiosus. The cases were treated by first removing the blisters, scraping the sores, and applying antiseptics, as corrosive sublimate (1:1,000).

In conclusion, I may state that Colonel Semple, R.A.M.C., of the Pasteur Institute, India, very kindly examined one of my slides and pronounced it to contain Leishman bodies, thereby confirming my discovery.