

than the foregoing cases, because diseases are not necessarily connected with any change in structure; but in other respects of more value, because the periods have been more carefully observed. Certain diseases are communicated to the child apparently by a process like inoculation, and the child is from the first affected; such cases may be here passed over. Large classes of diseases usually appear at certain ages, such as St. Vitus's dance in youth, consumption in early mid-life, gout later, and apoplexy still later; and these are naturally inherited at the same period. But even in diseases of this class, instances have been recorded, as with St. Vitus's dance, showing that an unusually early or late tendency to the disease is inheritable.<sup>35</sup> In most cases the appearance of any inherited disease is largely determined by certain critical periods in each person's life, as well as by unfavourable conditions. There are many other diseases, which are not attached to any particular period, but which certainly tend to appear in the child at about the same age at which the parent was first attacked. An array of high authorities, ancient and modern, could be given in support of this proposition. The illustrious Hunter believed in it; and Piorry<sup>36</sup> cautions the physician to look closely to the child at the period when any grave inheritable disease attacked the parent. Dr. Prosper Lucas,<sup>37</sup> after collecting facts from every source, asserts that affections of all kinds, though not related to any particular period of life, tend to reappear in the offspring at whatever period of life they first appeared in the progenitor.

As the subject is important, it may be well to give a few instances, simply as illustrations, not as proof; for proof, recourse must be had to the authorities above quoted. Some of the following cases have been selected for the sake of showing that, when a slight departure from the rule occurs, the child is affected somewhat earlier in life than the parent. In the family of Le Compte blindness was inherited through three generations, and no less than twenty-seven children and grandchildren were all affected at about the same age; their blindness in general began to advance about the fifteenth or sixteenth year, and ended in total deprivation of sight at the age of about twenty-two.<sup>38</sup> In another case a father and his four children all became blind at twenty-one years old; in another, a grandmother grew blind at thirty-five, her daughter at nineteen, and three grandchildren at the ages of thirteen and eleven.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Dr. Prosper Lucas, 'Héréd. Nat.,' tom. ii. p. 713.

<sup>36</sup> 'L'Héréd. dans les Maladies,' 1840, p. 135. For Hunter, see Harlan's 'Med. Researches,' p. 530.

<sup>37</sup> 'L'Héréd. Nat.,' tom. ii. p. 850.

<sup>38</sup> Sedgwick, 'Brit. and For. Med.-Chirurg. Review,' April, 1861, p. 485. In some accounts the number of

children and grandchildren is given as 37; but this seems to be an error judging from the paper first published in the 'Baltimore Med. and Phys. Reg.' 1809, of which Mr. Sedgwick has been so kind as to send me a copy.

<sup>39</sup> Prosper Lucas, 'Héréd. Nat.' tom. i. p. 400.