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A Report
of some Cases of Dropsy
associated with
Disease
of the
'Heart, Liver and Kidneys
with
Remarks.

William Powell.



By the kind permission of Dr. Stewart
I give the following report of cases occurring
in his Ward.

A Report of some cases of Dropsy in
connection with Disease of the Heart, Kidneys,
Liver & Serous Surfaces.

The first case is one of Dropsy of the Serous
Membrane of the Pleura associated with Ascites
dependant on Cirrhosis of the Liver and
General Dropsy probably due to dilated
Auricles -

Thomas Ross Aged 30. A Sonia - unmarried.

Admitted into Ward of February 5th 1868.

History. His Parents are still alive, one
Brother died of Consumption at the age of 24.

Fifteen years ago suffered from what was
supposed to be enlargement of the Liver, which
confined him to his room for two months.

Inter years since he observed his abdomen
and legs to be swollen - and at various times
since then he has noticed a fullness of the
abdomen which he believed to be occasioned by
fluid, which however disappeared on taking

medicine.

His present illness commenced nine weeks since. He took cold from working in draughty passages and poor damp houses without windows.

He was seized with a dry nasty cough followed by such severe pain in the lower part of the right side that he was unable to leave his bed. Dr Wilson attended & applied poultices &c.

After being ill for a month he was seen by Dr. Baylin who tapped his side and drew off seven pints and a half of clear fluid -

This operation was repeated three times in five weeks, the amount of fluid drawn off being 8, 8½ and 4 pints - The last fluid being of a dark smuff colour.

On the Sunday previous to admission his Abdomen was tapped and a quantity of fluid drawn off, exact quantity unknown.

Circulatory System. - Heart's impulses very feeble, action very irregular. Apex beats in a line with the Nipple. Pulse 112, small feeble unequal, irregular.

Respiratory System. - A frequent short painful cough, little expectoration. From the exhausted

condition of the Patient a careful physical examination could not be made. Respirations 36.

Nervous System. normal -

Digestive System. Tongue moist. slightly coated - Appetite moderate - can eat a little meat. Thirst troublesome -

Water continues to ooze from the opening into the Abdomen. Bowels open. Spleen normal.

Genito Urinary System. Urine high coloured, scanty, depositing a thick layer of Lithates -

No Albumen. Sp. Gr. 1030. Acid Reaction -

Integumentary System - His face is pale & haggard, his voice weak and husky -

The Body fairly nourished - skin moist - he lies on his right side -

Ordered Steak Diet - Milk - Gin 3ij. Sherry 3iv.

To inhale 3j of the Oil of Juniper Night & Morning
An Ether Mixture and an Electuary of Bitartrate of Potash -

Feb. 9. Passed a comfortable Night -

Heart's action very irregular - Apex beat 1 1/2 inches below the Nipple. Amount of precordial dullness slight. Impulse feeble and diffused. Sounds muffled. Pulse irregular, feeble,

unequal and at times imperceptible - it is impossible to count it correctly - about 110.

Respiration 32. Cough painful - expectoration frothy right side of chest rounded, intercostal spaces obliterated - moves slightly during respiration - great dullness over lower lung fields and absence of respiratory murmur. The upper third is resonant and full respiration audible - left lung normal, but respiratory murmur loud.

Bowels open three times during the night. Stools of a light colour, scanty, and of a natural consistency. Urine 153, - no albumen.

He continues to lie on his Right side - skin cool - general oedema of the whole body especially marked on the right side, on which he lies -

Feb: 8. Another night. Bowels open three times - Stools light clay colour - natural consistency.

Pulse 100 - very full and irregular - Urine 203, - Ordered Spongia Supportiva - and Strong Infusion of Digitalis to be applied to the Abdomen and Spongia Pelvis -

Feb: 10. Patient passed a restless night. great difficulty of breathing, the cause of which is obvious,

since either from cold or the inhalations he has
Bronchitis of his left Lung.

He is very feeble and weak - cant take his
meat, but takes beef tea and milk -

Passed 243, of Urine - loaded with Lithates
free from Albumen -

Ordered Cataplasm: Sinapis - to the Side

Rf. Spiritus Aetheris Chlorini ʒij

Solut: Morphic Mus: ʒi.

Emul: Cardamomi Co ʒj

Aquam ad ʒij

Capit ʒj omni tertio hora -

Feb: 10. Passed a better night. breathing easier -
respirations 30. Pulse 90. firm. irregular and
at times imperceptible - Notwithstanding
this character of Pulse the Patient is able to
get in and out of Bed with very little assistance.

Feb: 14. Pulse only on Right Side - passes restless nights.

Pulse 110 very feeble and at times imperceptible:

Respirations 32 - breathing easier and free from

Pain. Cough at times troublesome, little

expectoration and that of a slightly viscid

character. Increased perspiration on left side,

respiratory murmur loud and mixed with

bronchial tubes

Right Side - Dullness over lower two thirds the
feible respiratory murmur is heard to the base
of the Lung.

Tongue clean at the edges furred slightly in the
Centre - Is very thirsty and no appetite -

Takes Beef Tea and Milk - Brandy 3oj -

Abdomen becoming tense - The opening in it has
healed. Urine 263; - loaded with Lithates -

No Albumen -

Takes Curative preparations - which however have very
little effect in increasing the amount of Urine.

Rp Tobacco Acetatis ʒij

Spiritus Aluminis dist: ʒij

Decoctum Sciparii ad ʒiij

Caput ʒij ~~essence~~ quinquæ partâ hujâ

Feb: 18. Expectoration not so copious but viscid -

some fit having a prune juice colour - nights
restless - suffers distress from the fluid in Abdomen
increasing, and at times is a little confused.

Legs much swollen, right more than the left.

Feb: 20. Pulse 80. irregular and very feeble -

Cough troublesome, expectoration viscid in character
but not coloured - Urine 203; - loaded with Lithates

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His Bowels are open once a day, stools scanty
light clay colour, very offensive -

Feb: 25 Passed only 10 ℥, of Urine during the last
twenty four hours -

On the 18 he was ordered

Rp Spiritus Pumiperi ℥ij

Spiritus Althani ℥ij

Infus: Digitalis ad ℥ij

Capiat ℥ss sexta quaque hora -

This treatment he has continued taking till to day
the amount of Urine passed each day being on
the 19th 27 ℥, - 20th 22 ℥, - 18 ℥, 16 ℥, 20 ℥, 24 ℥, & finally
18 ℥, - Throughout it has been very difficult
to stimulate his kidneys to increased discharge of
Urine.

Breathing in left lung clear and free from rales -
complaints of sickness, probably due to the
Digitalis - No appetite -

Rp Potassii Iodidi ℥ss

Syrupi Ferri Iodidi ℥ij

Infus: Calumbae ad ℥ij

Capiat ℥ij ^{ter in} die -

March 2nd At nine this morning he complained
of shivering and great cold, he expectorated a

Can-full of matter looking very much like
grind and mixed with some watery matters.

The difficulty of Breathing continuing and his
Abdomen being very tense, he was again tapped
and 120 ounces of straw coloured fluid were
drawn off. Urine contains a little Albumen.

March 3. Breathing much relieved - Lies upon
his back - Pulse 80 feble. - Passed 363, of
Urine.

March 6. The same. Swell can be felt to
be enlarged and prodebated. Urine 103,
Pulse feble - appetite improved -

March 10. So improving. breathing much easier -
appetite better. continues to pass about
35 or 40 ℥, of Urine daily.

Right Lung - Breathing heard over the whole of it
tho' at the lower part very faint - Dull on
percussion - Urine loaded with Lithate contains
a considerable quantity of Albumen. Sp. Gr 1020.

March 13. Urine much hazzy by heat - Breathing
heard over the whole of Right Lung both anteriorly
and posteriorly tho' faint.

Sound found of Heart slightly blowing -
Fluid again accumulating in the Abdomen -

He continues at times to expectorate a quantity of the green like matter. it usually comes up in a short time after a severe attack of coughing. It was suspected it might come from the Pleural Cavity, but there were no Physical signs of its doing so. Microscopically it appeared to be composed of altered Pus Corpuscles.

March 20: Urine hazy by heat. Abdomen tympanitic in the upper half Above the fluid he lies on his right side - During the last three days his Penis and Scrotum have become swollen - Appetite good - Pulse 90 - full and irregular.

March 21. To day he expectorated several ounces of the greenish matter - The Dropsy is increasing Penis & Scrotum very large - legs very much swollen also his Face -

March 23. He died this morning at 11.20 - He had not appeared worse in any respect, except the increase of the Dropsy, and his strength had improved - At 5~~7~~ am he lost his Prof Sea and at 7 am he lost his voice, this for a short time was regained, but before both both voice and sight were lost.

Post Mortem twenty four hours after Death.

General Anasarcia - On opening the Abdomen, which was very hydropic a quantity of fluid escaped. Intestines were dilated and filled with gas. The Liver was enlarged and prolated in an early stage of cirrhosis - it weighed five pounds twelve ounces and showed microscopically a great increase of connective tissue, not only surrounding the Lobule but running into its portalis and permeating and destroying the Hepatic Cells.

The Lungs - The left Lung was adenomatous but otherwise normal - excepting a small cheesy mass.

The Right Lung was found compressed against the Spine and separated from Thoracic Wall by a quantity of matter similar to what he expectorated - A careful examination of the Lung was not made, as it was much destroyed in pressing the Heart & Pericardium -

The Heart - Pericardium was adherent to the outer Heart and contained plates of calcareous matter - The Auricles of Both Ventricles were found prominently dilated - The Valves were not examined -



11.
Kidneys were congested - surface smooth - capsule
stripping off easily -

Spleen enlarged 173,

Stomach cut at base and congested.

There are many points of Interest in this Case

In the first place the condition of the Right Lung.

On March the 10th the last ~~day~~ that notes
were taken of its condition "breathings was heard
over the whole of it, both anteriorly and posteriorly."

Was this fallacious, or had there been a further
effusion? I am inclined to the last opinion.

and that the effusion took place a day or
two before death - The Lung tho' compressed
yet was spongy in its texture -

The General Dropsy I think was due to

the condition of the Heart. It was unfortunately

that owing to the desire to preserve the calcareous
plates in the adherent Pericardium, no examination
of the Ventricles or Valves could be made -

Was the irregularity of the Heart's action a ^{partial}
consequent pulse occasioned by the ^{adherent} calcareous
Pericardium or to the Dilated Auricles -

I find that Stokes founded his diagnosis of a
Dilated Heart upon its irregularity. he says in

his splendid work on "Diseases of the Heart" page 138. Dilatation and feebleness of the Heart. "The Heart's action permanently irregular, with an extended but not a strong impulse; the sounds so rapid and unequal that their analysis is difficult, rendering it often impossible to distinguish the first from the second sound; murmur generally absent; the pulse rapid - feeble - unequal - irregular; no aortic murmur; signs of pulmonary hepatic congestion" - Most of these signs were present in this case.

What was the Cachexia of the Liver due to? He stated himself to have lived a temperate life and he had the appearance of a man that had done so. Could Cachexia be occasioned by retarded circulation thro' the Liver and the development of connective tissue taking place thro' an excess of nutrition? I think it not at all improbable -

Again the Dropsy was not at all benefited by Diuretics, many combinations were tried but none succeeded. When the pressure was taken off the Kidney by tapping the Abdomen the relief was most marked, the Urine at once

going up to between 30 and 40 ounces.

The Appearance of Albumen in the Urine is interesting, and was due to the congested condition of the Organ produced by the retarded circulation.

The great case is one of Dropsy occasioned by Dilated Right Side of the Heart and Emphysema.

Robert Hossack Aged 30. Single. Van Driver.

Resides at Musselburgh. Admitted Feb: 18th 1868.

Complains of great difficulty of breathing and shortness of Breath.

Patient has had good health till the last few years, during that time he has been liable to be attacked with great difficulty of breathing. Three years since he kept his bed for six weeks with an attack of this Nature. Never observed his feet to be swollen before last week. Never had Rheumatism, his Brothers and Sisters are healthy.

Circulatory System. Absence of Heart's impulse

no perceptible apex beat, no dullness over precordial region - Just under the xiphiform cartilage there is pulsation and slight dullness ^{over} for a space two inches square - Murmurs sounds over precordial region indistinct, a loud systolic and diastolic sound heard over xiphiform cartilage - Pulse 120, small and occasionally intermittent - No venous pulsation.

Respiratory System. Respiration laboured and painful, easiest in the sitting posture. 32.

Anterior part of chest prominent, on right side lower is pushed up - Inspiration loud in upper part - expiration wheezing - in lower half of each lung there is loud crepitation -

Posteriorly - Right side rather duller than the left and in one spot the breathing is of a tubular character - left side prominent, breathing mixed with loud crepitation and bronchial rales - Expectoration viscid of a slight rusty colour - cough very troublesome - Chest is rounded, barrel shaped -

Nervous System - Normal.

Digestive System. Tongue smooth, moist and clean - Appetite bad - great thirst - sickness

and vomiting. Abdomen swollen and containing fluid. Scrotum enlarged. Bowels open once a day.

Quinto. Urinary System. Urine slightly albuminous.

Integumentary System. General anasarca face is swollen and of a dusky blue.

Rp Spiritus Mellis Nit: ℥ss
 Spiritus Sassafras ℥ij
 Infus: Digitalis ad ℥oj.

Cupiat cochlearum amplum scata quinquaginta.

20. Passed a restless night - Bowels open three times. Pulse 100 irregular - unequal and intermittent - difficulty of breathing increased, dropsical symptoms increased, scrotum and penis swollen, great anxiety and distress.

Repetatur Mistura

Infus: Scoparii in loco Inf: Digitalis.

21. Restless night, dropsy increasing - respiration less audible in fact lung. breathing very distressed, orthopnea - Pulse 120 - irregular unequal - Urine 14 ℥, albuminous - Bowels have not been open - legs, scrotum and penis much swollen -

Recipe Pulv: Jalape Co ʒij
Fist Pulvis. Capiat nocte.

22. Powder did not act freely. symptoms continue the same.

Repetatur Mistura et Pulvis -

24. His breathing is not relieved - continues in the same state. Crepitation heard over both lungs profusely. Pulse 100 feeble and irregular. He was dry cupped over both lungs. This afforded temporary relief. slight punctures with a needle were made into the swollen legs and the fluid allowed to exude into a flannel. The Jalap powder produced a few watery evacuations.

25. Appears somewhat easier - face livid, crepitation audible over both lungs profusely.

Rf. Calomelanos gr ij
Pulv: Jalapae Co ʒij

~~Rf.~~ Kora summi succindus -

26. Powder acted better freely. passed 403, of Urine, pale clear and free from Albumen. Sp: Gr. 1015. appears easier and I last saw him seemed inclined to sleep. He died at 5. pm. He was assisted out of Bed by

when he fainted and died shortly after.

Post Mortem Twenty hours after death.

General Anasarca - Pericardium contained a considerable amount of fluid. There were milk spots on surface of the Heart, right side markedly dilated and slightly hypertrophied, left side natural. Inferior vena cava measured 6 1/2 inches, pulmonary artery 3 1/2 and Aorta 3 inches. Lungs were both greatly ematous and edematous, bronchi in some parts dilated.

Abdomen contained fluid, intestinal canal greatly congested, particularly the duodenum and ascending colon.

Liver somewhat fatty and congested.

Spleen natural, kidneys congested.

There are few remarks required to be made concerning this case. The symptoms & signs of the Dilated Right Side agreed pretty much with those described by Walcke. (Diseases of the Heart and Great Vessels, page 327 - 3rd Ed.)

At first the Epigastric pulsations occasioned a little difficulty in the diagnosis but the absence of the Heart's sounds and pulsations in the Cardiac region led to the supposition

that there was some displacement of that Organ. There was no venous pulsation or hemoptysis beyond the slightly rusty coloured Sputa. The tubular breathing heard in one fixed position on the right side was doubtless occasioned by the dilated bronchi. The Pulse possessed the urgent irregular character characteristic of dilated heart, and very different from the tumbling character of pulse caused by mitral regurgitation. The lividity of face was ^{marked} very. The best case is one of General Dropsy following Scarlet Fever.

John Russell Oct. 20. 1846 - a Gardener -
 Lives at Alford - Admitted Feb: 21st 1868.
 Had good health till four weeks since when he had Scarlet Fever - Had sore throat and rash but only kept his bed for a day and a half and remained in the house for five days, after that he resumed his work - He observed very little desquamation - He worked for eight days when he was taken ill again, sore throats and joint cold, he still continued to go about tho' unable to eat or work, at this time he noticed that his feet were beginning

to walk - he now looks to his bed, tho' sitting
up part of the day - He walked into the Hospital.

Circulatory System. Percordial dullness increased -
first sound prolonged and of a blowing character -

Second - regular, small and firm -

Respiratory System. Breathing normal anteriorly -
posteriorly slight dullness on percussion especially
at the base of each lung - respiratory murmur feeble -

Respiration 24 easy -

Digestive System. Tongue red in the center,

fidis coated with a brown fur - great thirst

little appetite, bowels open once daily -

Genito-urinary System. Urine slightly smoky
in colour - Sp: Gr 1012. acid, highly albuminous -

The microscope shows hyaline casts covered
with granular epithelium, blood globules, and
loose granular epithelial cells -

Integumentary System - Face pale and swollen,
skin clear, very slight anasarca -

Recipe Spiritus Aetheris Nit: ʒij

Spiritus Pumpini ʒij

Infus: Digitalis ad ʒvj

Capiat ʒij sexta quaque hora -

at nine pm of the evening of the 23 he was taken with a convulsive fit which lasted about four minutes, he was violently convulsed and remained insensible for fifteen minutes, at this time difficulty of breathing came on and continued - at 3 a.m. he had another fit -

24. When seen to day he was seated up in bed gasping for breath. respirations 60 in a minute, expectoration heard over both lungs.

Pulse 125. face much swollen and white. Had 40 ℥ of Urine during the night, of a dark colour like port, almost solid by heat. He was cupped to six ounces over the loins and dry cupped over the Lungs posteriorly.

Ordered Sig: Ammoniac Acet: ℥ij
Vini Spermantis ℥ij
Mist: Camphorae ad ℥ij -

Copied 3, 4th hour -

9. pm - Patient continues in same condition. Skin acts freely but distress of breathing is quite as great. He sits up in bed gasping, he is quite sensible, tho' a little confused when spoken to. He was dry cupped ~~over~~ over Lungs. He died at 10 pm -

Post Mortem sixty hours after Death.

Commencing discoloration of Abdomen great hypostasis. Pericardium contained an increased amount of fluid. Heart enlarged, valves of left side slightly thickened - Right side of Heart contained recent red clots among which there were older fibrinous coagulations - Similar coagulations existed in the left side.

Lungs were very oedematous.

Liver natural.

Kidneys lobulated, highly congested, cortical substance marked with cloudy swelling.

Remarks. There is one feature in this case that at once forces itself upon our consideration viz, the sudden aggravation of the symptoms - Were they occasioned by Cold or the Stimulating Burette. The Patient had left his warm bed to go outside to the Water Closet attached to the Ward and it is quite probable that he then suffered a chill which increased his symptoms - At the same time as there may be some doubt as to the precise cause, I would prefer to treat these cases by acting upon the Skin and Bowels rather than upon the Kidneys.
