

Many dirty things are recommended for the cure of the jaundice, as lice, millepedes, &c. But these do more harm than good, as people trust to them and neglect more valuable medicines; besides, they are seldom taken in sufficient quantity to produce any effects. People always expect that such *things* should act as charms, and consequently seldom persist in the use of them. Vomits, purges, fomentations, and exercise, will seldom fail to cure the jaundice when it is a simple disease; and when complicated with the dropsy, a scirrhou liver, or other chronic complaints, it is hardly to be cured by any means.

Numberless British herbs are extolled for the cure of this disease. The author of the *Medicina Britannica* mentions near a hundred, all famous for curing the jaundice. The fact is, this disease often goes off of its own accord; in which case the last medicine is always said to have performed the cure. I have sometimes seen considerable benefit, in a very obstinate jaundice, from a decoction of hemp-seed. Four ounces of the seed may be boiled in two English quarts of ale, and sweetened with coarse sugar. The dose is half an English pint every morning. It may be continued for eight or nine days.

I have known Harrogate sulphur-water cure a jaundice of very long standing. It should be used for some time, and the patient must both drink and bathe.

The soluble tartar is likewise a very proper medicine in the jaundice. A dram of it may be taken every night and morning in a cup of tea or water gruel. If it does not open the belly, the dose may be increased.

Persons subject to the jaundice ought to take as much exercise as possible, and to avoid all heating and astringent aliments.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII. OF THE DROPSY.

THE dropsy is a preternatural swelling of the whole body, or some part of it, occasioned by a collection of watery humor.

It is distinguished by different names, according to the part affected, as the *anasarca*, or a collection of water under the skin; the *ascites*, or a collection of water in the belly; the *hydrops pectoris*, or a dropsy of the breast; the *hydrocephalus*, or dropsy of the brain, &c.

CAUSES.—A very common cause of the dropsy is a hereditary disposition. It may likewise proceed from drinking ardent spirits or other strong liquors. It is true, almost to a proverb, that great drinkers die of a dropsy. The want of exercise is also a very common cause of the dropsy. Hence it is justly reckoned among the diseases of the sedentary. It often proceeds from excessive evacuations, as frequent and copious bleedings, strong purges often repeated, frequent salivations, &c. The sudden stoppage of customary or necessary evacuations, as the *menses*, the hemorrhoids, fluxes of the belly, &c., may likewise cause a dropsy.

I have often known the dropsy occasioned by drinking large quantities of cold, weak, watery liquor, when the body was heated by violent exercise. A low, damp, or marshy situation is likewise a frequent cause of it; hence it is a common disease in moist, flat, fenny countries. It may also be brought on by a long use of poor watery diet, or of viscous aliment that is hard of digestion. It is often the effect of other diseases, as the jaundice, a scirrhus of the liver, a violent ague of long continuance, a diarrhoea, a dysentery, an empyema, or a consumption of the lungs. In short, whatever obstructs the circulation of the blood, or prevents its being duly prepared, may occasion a dropsy.

SYMPTOMS.—This disease generally begins with a swelling of the feet and ankles towards night, which, for some time, disappears in the morning. In the evening, the parts, if pressed with the finger, will pit. The swelling gradually ascends towards the belly, which at length grows big. When it is struck with the hand, a fluctuation may be felt, and sometimes heard. Afterwards the breathing becomes difficult, the urine is in small quantity, and the thirst great; the belly is bound, and the perspiration is greatly obstructed. To these succeed torpor, heaviness, a slow wasting fever, and a troublesome cough. This last is generally a fatal symptom, as it shows that the lungs are affected.

When the disease comes suddenly on, and the patient is young and strong, there is reason to hope for a cure, especially if medicine be given early. But if the patient be old,

has led an irregular or a sedentary life, or if there be reason to suspect that the liver, lungs, or any of the viscera are unsound, there is great ground to fear that the consequences will prove fatal.

REGIMEN.—The patient must abstain as much as possible from all drink, especially weak and watery liquors, and must quench his thirst with mustard whey, or acids, as juice of lemons, oranges, sorrel, or such like. His aliment ought to be dry, of a heating and diuretic quality, as toasted bread, the flesh of birds, or other wild animals, roasted; pungent and aromatic vegetables, as garlic, mustard, onions, cresses, horseradish, rocambole, shallot, &c. He may also eat sea-biscuit dipt in wine or a little brandy. This is not only nourishing, but tends to quench thirst. Some have been actually cured of a dropsy by a total abstinence from all liquids, and living entirely upon such things as are mentioned above. If the patient must have drink, the Spaw-water, or Rhenish wine, with diuretic medicines infused in it, are the best.

Exercise is of the greatest importance in a dropsy. If the patient be able to walk, dance, or run about, he ought to continue these exercises as long as he can. If he be not able to walk or run, he must ride on horseback or in a carriage, and the more violent the motion so much the better, provided he can bear it. His bed ought to be hard, and the air of his apartments warm and dry. If he lives in a damp country, he ought to be removed into a dry one, and, if possible, into a warmer climate. In a word, every method must be taken to promote the perspiration and to brace the solids. For this purpose it will likewise be proper to rub the patient's body, two or three times a day, with a hard cloth or the flesh-brush, and he ought constantly to wear flannel next his skin.

MEDICINE.—If the patient be young, his constitution good, and the disease has come on suddenly, it may generally be removed by strong vomits, brisk purges, and such medicines as promote a discharge of sweat and urine. For an adult half a dram of ipecacuanha in powder, and half an ounce of oxymel of squills, will be a proper vomit. This may be repeated three or four times if necessary, three or four days intervening betwixt each dose. The patient must not drink much after the vomit, otherwise he destroys its effect; a cup or two of camomile tea will be sufficient to work it off.

Betwixt each vomit, on one of the intermediate days, the patient may take the following purge: jalap in powder half a

dram, cream of tartar two drams, calomel six grains. These may be made into a bolus with a little syrup of pale roses, and taken early in the morning. The less the patient drinks after it the better. If he be much griped he may take now and then a cup of chicken broth.

The patient may likewise take every night at bedtime the following bolus. To four or five grains of camphor add one grain of opium, and as much syrup of orange-peel as is sufficient to make them into a bolus. This will generally promote a gentle sweat, which should be encouraged by drinking now and then a small cup of wine whey, while a tea-spoonful of the following diuretic infusion may likewise be taken every four or five hours through the day.\*

As this disease is very apt to return, after the water has been drained off, to prevent its collecting again, the patient must continue to take exercise, to use a dry diet, and such medicines as strengthen and brace the solids, as wine with steel or bark infused in it. Warm and aromatic bitters infused in wine or brandy are likewise proper, as the Virginian snake-root, *canella alba*, orange-peel, &c. The patient must avoid all great evacuations, and ought, if he can, to make choice of a dry and warm situation.

The above course will often cure an incidental dropsy, if the constitution be good; but when the disease proceeds from a bad habit, or an unsound state of the viscera, strong purges and vomits are not to be ventured upon. In this case the safer course is to palliate the symptoms by the use of such medicines as promote the secretions, and to support the patient's strength by warm and nourishing cordials.

The secretion of urine may be greatly promoted by nitre. Brookes says he knew a young woman who was cured of a dropsy, by taking a dram of nitre every morning in a draught of ale, after she had been given over as incurable. The powder of squills is likewise a good diuretic; six or eight grains of it, with a scruple of nitre, may be given twice a day in a glass of strong cinnamon water. Ball says a large spoonful of unbruised mustard-seed taken every night and morning, and drinking half an English pint of the decoction of the tops

\* Take juniper-berries, mustard-seed, and horseradish, of each half an ounce, ashes of broom half a pound; infuse them in a quart of Rhenish wine or strong ale for a few days, and afterwards strain off the liquor. Such as cannot take this infusion may use the decoction of seneca root, which is both diuretic and sudorific.

of green broom after it, has performed a cure, after other powerful medicines had proved ineffectual.

I have seen extraordinary effects from cream of tartar in this disease. It promotes the discharges by stool and urine, and will often perform a cure when duly persisted in. The patient may begin by taking an ounce every second or third day, and may increase the quantity to two or even to three ounces, if the stomach will bear it. This quantity is not, however, to be taken at once, but divided into three or four doses.

To promote perspiration, the patient may use the decoction of seneca root, as directed above; or he may take two spoonfuls of Mindererus's spirit in a cup of wine whey three or four times a day. The diuretic infusion of the London hospitals is likewise a very proper medicine in this disease.\* When other means fail, recourse must be had to tapping and scarifications. These often give ease, though they seldom produce a radical cure.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### OF THE GOUT.

THERE is no disease which shows the imperfection of medicine, or sets the advantages of temperance and exercise in a stronger light, than this. Few who pay a proper regard to these are troubled with the gout. This points out the true source from whence that malady originally sprung, viz. *excess* and *idleness*. It likewise shows us that the only safe and efficacious method of cure, or rather of prevention, must depend, not upon medicine, but on *temperance* and *activity*.

Though idleness and intemperance are the principal causes of the gout, yet many other things may contribute to bring on the disorder in those who are not, and to induce a paroxysm

\* Take of zedoary root two drams; dried squills, rhubarb, and juniper-berries bruised, of each a dram; cinnamon in powder three drams; salt of wormwood a dram and a half; infuse in an English pint and a half of old hock wine, and when fit for use filter the liquor. A wine-glass of it may be taken three or four times a day.