

The hands were cold and covered with clammy perspiration. The pulse was almost imperceptible in the right side, weak in the extreme when felt and at the same time extremely rapid. It was ascertained to beat 135 in the minute, and was irregular. It could not be felt on the left side for some time. The legs were enormously swelled, and pitted deeply on pressure. Over the dorsum of the foot and at the instep deep lived stains appeared on the skin.

The great dyspnœa prevented a very accurate examination of the chest being made, but the following facts were made out. The left side of the chest was more prominent than the right, and this prominence was greatest in the cardiac region. The heart appeared to beat lower down than usual, and its impulse was noticed over a more extended surface. Palpation detected valvular thrill and peculiar heaving impulse. A loud systolic bruit, was very plainly heard, and was loudest near the apex. It was noticed as remarkable at the time that such a disproportionate impulse existed with a weak and irregular pulse.

The physical signs pointed to disease of the mitral valve with regurgitation, and consequent dilated hypertrophy of the left ventricle.

The kidneys had not been acting very freely, but the urine was free from albumen. The bowels had been acted on by medicine. The tongue was slightly coated, but of a deeper colour than natural, and inclining to purple.

There was not much pain complained of. It was chiefly muscular, and referred to the back and shoulders. The dyspnœa appeared to engross her thoughts, and take up all her attention. In fact, her friends were hourly looking forward to her death, as the breathing had become more laboured towards evening.

At my suggestion twenty drops of the tincture of digitalis with the same quantity of the tincture of muriate of iron were given every hour. I sat up with her to superintend the treatment during the night. Beef tea and brandy were given every half hour in small quantities as some dysphagia existed.

After four doses of the digitalis had been given, there appeared to be intermissions in the very feeble pulse. The breathing became less rapid, and an attempt at a sigh was now and then made. But she complained of the hands becoming extremely cold, and looked even more exhausted than before. Recognising the effect of the digitalis, it was suspended for two hours, during which brandy was very freely given, and the tincture of the muriate of iron was administered as before. The digitalis was then resumed, and given steadily till morning with the food and stimulant.