

improvement in this respect than do the other portions of the body. Let us here note the difference between the dropsy from heart disease and that from disease of the kidneys. In cardiac dropsy we may have the legs and belly swollen and the lungs congested, but, as a rule, the dropsy will diminish as we go from the periphery towards the centre, and we will have none in the hands and arms; neither would the face be puffy in cardiac dropsy unless kidney disease co-existed with it. The reason for this is that in cardiac dropsy the cause is purely mechanical, a mechanical interference with the venous circulation, in consequence of which the watery constituents of the blood are forced out into the cellular tissue. This dropsy will therefore naturally occur most where there is the most impediment to the circulation; the further we get away from the heart, the greater will be the obstruction, since the diseased heart will not be able to force the blood along with its accustomed power. So, also, the force of gravity will favor dropsy in the lower limbs. Now, in renal dropsy, there is, of course a mechanical influence at work, but this is the least important factor; the blood is loaded with effete matter, on account of which the capillaries seem unwilling to let it pass through their walls, the suction action of the tissues, which is so essential to terminal circulation, is less, there is a torpid state of molecular tissue interchange, so that while the dropsy of cardiac disease is a propulsive dropsy, the water is forced out because the blood does not properly circulate, it is in renal disease more of a functional dropsy, so to speak, the water escapes because the blood stagnates, because, owing to lessened molecular interchange, there is less invitation, less inducement, less suction to aid the blood in its course through the capillaries. This explains why, in renal dropsy, we have the effusion everywhere, in all parts of the body, why it is so universal. There is still another reason; we must remember that Bright's disease is, in reality, not a local disease, but a general or constitutional disorder that has its seat of greatest manifestation in the kidney. Acute nephritis is, of course, a local disease, but when it has existed for some time, when it has become chronic, or when we have it coming on in that slow, insidious manner, so characteristic of Bright's disease, then the whole system is really involved.