

SYPHILITIC NEPHRITIS—FATAL.

Dr. N. D. GUNN reported the following case :—

J. L., aged 25, traveller, consulted me on July 17th 1896, for swelling of the face and fullness of the abdomen, which he had noticed four days before, for the first time.

His family history was good, and his personal history revealed nothing bearing on the case, save that he had contracted syphilis six months previously, and had been under treatment ever since, taking large doses of bichloride of mercury with good results so far as secondaries were concerned, as the rash and sore throat were of the mildest type.

On examination I found general anasarca, temperature $99\frac{2}{3}^{\circ}$ pulse 92, slight accentuation of the second sound of the heart. The liver seemed slightly enlarged, but was difficult to palpate owing to tension in the abdomen. The urine was acid, in consistence like thin linseed tea, of S. G. 1022, and solid on boiling.

The patient was put to bed on a milk diet with the administration of citrate of potash and digitalis. The urine in 24 hours was in amount 10 ounces of S. G. 1020, and albumin over the line marked 12 on Esbach's albuminometer ; it contained no blood but plenty of epithelial casts.

4th day. Urine 20 oz., no change in albumin.

6th day. The oedema was greatly increased. Temperature $102\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, pain and tenderness in both groins, slight diarrhoea, urine 10 oz. Hot baths every six hours with hot abdominal compresses in the intervals were ordered.

7th day. Urine increased to 24 oz., temperature 100° , some delirium and twitching of the eyelids present.

8th day. Temperature normal, pulse 88, no pain, great distension of the abdomen, slight tenderness over the liver, bowels active, urine 27 oz., S. G. 1010, no change in the amount of albumin.

It is not necessary to give daily details after this, but only the marked changes in the case.

On the 12th day mercury was given, and the digitalis stopped ; by the 20th day urine was 40 oz., albumin down to line 4 (Esbach).

30th day. Urine 80 oz. Albumin again increased even above line 12, S. G. 1006.

32nd day. Urine 18 oz. No chemical or microscopic changes.

The mercury was suspended, and digitalis and strychnine supplied instead, hot packs and hot air baths were continued as before. From this to the death of the patient on the 12th of October there was a gradual decline. Great ascites developed, with liver tenderness pointing to organic disease of liver ; the urine varied between 25 and 50 oz., S. G. never above 1008. Casts were numerous.

The damage to the kidneys was evidently irreparable. No uræmic symptoms developed until 3 days before death, when a semi-coma, which gradually deepened, came on ; there were no convulsions. Death resulted from heart failure.

The interesting points about this case are :

1st. Could this nephritis have been induced by the large doses of bichloride of mercury which this man was taking at the time it developed ?