

The danger to be apprehended from simple tapping of the abdomen with trocar and canula is usually looked upon as very slight, so slight indeed, as hardly to require being taken into consideration. Every precaution was taken, the instrument used was purposely very small, and the fluid was gradually removed, to prevent as much as possible the sudden withdrawal of support from the vessels of the abdomen. Probably here the patient's age, his great feebleness, the previous tapplings, (one of which had been followed by inflammation,) all assisted in permitting of the development of a rapidly spreading and fatal peritonitis. The knowledge of such cases (fortunately rare—it is the first I remember to have seen) should cause us to be all the more guarded in our prognosis when performing paracentesis of the abdomen in debilitated subjects.

The latency of cirrhosis of the liver, and the rapid manner in which ascites may begin and advance, are well illustrated by Case No. 2. This patient, C. B., presented, on admission, the characteristic appearance of the subjects of advanced cirrhosis. The liver was found very small. The opinion formed was that he had fully developed fibroid contraction of that organ, yet on the most careful questioning no history pointing towards antecedent disturbance of the digestive system could be extracted, and it was only ten days prior to being first seen that enlargement of the belly was observed. From the extremely shrunken state of the liver discovered at the autopsy, there can be no doubt that the disease must have been slowly developing for many years. Is it not strange, therefore to find, as the final result of what necessarily was an extremely slow process of gradual obstruction in the smaller portal vessels, a sudden outpouring of a large quantity of serosity into the peritoneum? Why should the ascites not have appeared sooner? What disturbed the equilibrium of the circulation in so rude and sudden a manner?

I have several times seen vomiting of blood as a symptom of cirrhosis of the liver. I think, however, it is more commonly met with in the earlier stages, and it is well known that it may be the very first symptom to attract attention. In this case it