

form of suprarenal substance, though in any given case it remains up to now impossible to determine its probable response to the treatment.

2. In any given case of the disease selected haphazard, the probability remains that disappointment will follow on the institution of organotherapy; but that probability is very distinctly less than that attaching to any alternative method of treatment at present known.

3. The last word upon the preparation to be used and its method of administration remains yet to be said. The problem seems to be to get a sufficient and continuous dose of the pure and active principles unchanged into the blood stream. Intravenous injection is impracticable.

The "Idiopathic" or "Essential" Dropsies of Childhood.

ARTHUR WILLIARD FAIRBANKS, M.D. "The 'Idiopathic' or 'Essential' Dropsies of Childhood." *The Amer. Journal of Med. Science*, Sept., 1903.

"The characteristic feature of this condition is the appearance of cedema, in one or more parts of the body, without albuminuria or sedimentary evidence of organic disease of the kidneys, and without clinical or post-mortem evidence of organic disease of the heart or kidneys."

It appears from the cases reported that it may be apparently primary or apparently secondary, and that it may be found in children of any age. In a study of the records, Dr. Fairbanks gathers together 168 cases—all in children under fifteen years of age.

Anæmia, marasmus and subnormal temperature with this affection are chiefly confined to the first two years of life. Of all the abnormal features that may be found associated with essential cedema, *disturbance* of the gastro-intestinal tract is by far the most common. The cause of such "dropsies" is doubtful. They have been explained as of *angio-neurotic* origin. The neurotic element may be considered, so also should the, "gouty or rheumatic." Certain cases occur after infectious diseases, as scarlet fever, measles, varicella and typhoid fever. Perhaps anæmia and exposure to cold are the chief *causes* to which these dropsies have been ascribed, while to marantic and toxic conditions they have likewise been ascribed.

The writer states his views upon the etiology in the following paragraph:—

".....In the great majority of cases this affection is produced by a reflex sympathetic disturbance, having its origin in a direct exciting cause acting through the terminal filaments in the vessel walls. This exciting cause, provided it be sufficiently severe, may in itself alone evolve such reflex even in a normal condition of the nervous system,