

connection with cardiac complications in diphtheria, says: "The most common is dilatation, which leads to irregularity and attacks of syncope. When acute, the dilatation is accompanied by vomiting and severe epigastric pain." Goodall and Holt are the only authors I can find who mention the group of symptoms as such. Goodall describes the pain and vomiting as accompanying rather than preceding as well as accompanying the heart failure.

Holt says: "When prodromal symptoms are present, and particularly when it is accompanied by vomiting, abdominal pain and disturbed respiration, it is probably the result of a toxic neuritis affecting either the pneumogastric or cardiac nerves, and is to be regarded as a form of post-diphtheritic paralysis."

Osler says nothing of pain. "In some instances vomiting has preceded the serious heart attack," being his only reference to the condition I speak of.

Frederick Taylor and Burney Yoe do not mention either vomiting or pain in this connection.

Goodhart mentions vomiting but not pain.

Fagge and Flint incidentally mention vomiting but make no reference to abdominal pain. Allbutt says nothing of premonitions in speaking of "heart failure," but under the heading "Vomiting" he says: "Another serious symptom, and one often associated with cardiac failure, is a tendency to vomit. The cause of it is not always the same. But whatever it be, repeated vomiting is a dangerous symptom; most of such patients die in a state of heart failure and algidity within a few hours or a few days." No reference is made to pain at all.

So far as pathology is concerned, I have nothing to say other than that it would appear that the condition is due to some involvement of the vagus, the distribution of that nerve being such that each symptom might be explained on the theory of changes affecting its fibres. Occurring as it does about the time that neuritis appears elsewhere, the assumption might fairly be made that a toxic inflammation of the vagus is the condition present.

Before closing, let me again emphasize the points I wish to make, viz.: The occurrence of abdominal pain in a case of diphtheria should be regarded with apprehension, and if associated with vomiting be looked upon as the forerunner of death.