

Uterine and renal congestions—the former seen much oftener in feeble women—almost always made their appearance at the menstrual periods, when the woman would complain of tension and swelling of the abdomen, and of weight in the pelvis. If proper measures were not employed to reduce the congestion of the uterus, there might be a little flow of blood from it and some danger of abortion. This was commonly accompanied by marked vesical irritation. If these symptoms did not readily disappear, the speaker believed bleeding to be the best treatment, following it by chlorate of potassa and iron.

Or renal congestion he would only say that it is but recently we have learned that in some cases of cerebral congestion the primary hyperæmia is to be found in the kidneys. This was seen especially in the albuminuria of pregnancy. For a few years past he had succeeded in warding off the convulsions due to this cause by slight venesections, with a certainty such as he had never before gained by other means. He related a recent case of sudden and severe convulsions, in which he had taken thirty ounces of blood, besides inducing active purgation by elaterium. The woman had a few more convulsions, but completely recovered in a few days. On the same day with this case, he had seen, in consultation, a primipara in uræmic coma a few hours after delivery. Two or three days before, she had begun to complain of a fixed pain at the fundus uteri, which was unaccompanied by contractions, and which did not yield. The labour was rather tedious; the forceps were employed, and a dead child was delivered. The placenta came away readily, and on its uterine surface was found an organized clot as large as a man's hand. The patient died in three hours after he saw her. But little urine could he drawn from the bladder, and that was highly albuminous. It would seem as if nature had tried to relieve the renal congestion, and to relieve it by bleeding.

It was a great mistake to suppose that bloodletting should never be resorted to except in the sthenic condition. Some of the most decided benefits he had seen derived from it had been in cases of patients extremely anæmic. As an instance, he was called to a chlorotic woman in the last days of gestation; found the heart's action laboured and tumultuous, the face covered with perspiration, and every symptoms of the greatest distress. As speedily as possible he was opening a vein, when the gruff, hearty voice of old Dr. Francis greeted him with, "Well done, good and faithful servant." The abstraction of sixteen ounces of blood relieved the pulmonary œdema and the distention of the right heart, and doubtless saved the woman's life. Two days later the woman was delivered of a dead hydrocephalic child, after discharging an immense quantity of water. "She must have discharged a tub-full, sir," said Dr. Francis.