

could not walk any distance or exert himself without distress he concluded it was time to apply for medical treatment.

When first seen one could easily recognize a very fair case of ascites; the pressure of the pent-up liquid in his stomach after a meal caused a certain amount of pain and uneasiness and the resistance offered to the diaphragm in its downward movement hindered his breathing. His skin felt quite dry, and he said he had not perspired freely for a long time.

For the first ten days he was ordered to take the vapor baths and was given a diuretic mixture. The dropsical effusion gradually went away, and with it disappeared all his other complaints and he left cured. He was given the following, and advised to take, at home, an occasional vapor bath :

R. Magnesia Sulph. . . . .	5 viij.
Acid, Sulphuric . . . . .	3 j.
Aquæ pur. . . . .	5 xvj.

M. Sig. A tablespoonful in a tumbler of water before breakfast every morning.

When last heard from (two months after treatment) he expressed himself as perfectly well and with no sign of dropsy.

The vapor bath in this case did not act as promptly as in the first, and it will always be more likely to remove the fluid accumulations of anasarca than of ascites, probably because in the first disease the eliminating glands are situated close by (almost in contact with) the effused fluid, and the depleted vessels take up the water only to pour it out at once on the surface of the body, while in ascites this is done indirectly, and if any obstruction be offered to the flow, through the veins of water-charged blood from the peritoneum to the skin (and in ascites there nearly always is) one can readily perceive how tedious the process may become if not assisted by diuretics or mild watery cathartics. Yet, for reasons to be afterwards considered, this mode may be found preferable, as a rule, to some other plans of treatment.

In treating dropsy the greatest reliance seems to be placed on some one of the following remedies:—diuretics, hydrogogue cathartics, bleeding, in ascites paracentesis abdominis and in anasarca acupuncture.

Sudorifics, like the Juniper bath described before, may always compare favorably with them, and in many cases be preferable, because (1) of the whole amount of water taken into the body, at least 26 per cent. is eliminated by the skin; hence it is easy to see

what a large quantity of fluid may be got rid of through its agency, if it be incited to vigorous action.

(2) In anasarca the watery deposits are immediately under the skin, and consequently near the capillary network that surrounds the extremities of each sweat gland. These cutaneous capillaries, once depleted by the flow of perspiration, eagerly drink up the nearest water—which is that of the dropsy. This argument would not hold good in the case of ascites, and would even seem to indicate diuretics, but here a third proposition ought to be considered :

(3) The kidneys are vital organs, necessary to life, and it is of the greatest importance that their functions should not be impaired, nor their structure injured. When, however, powerful diuretics are constantly given, and they have to bear all the burden of elimination, they must suffer. Not so with the skin; its functions may be stimulated and it may even be overworked without injury to the vital powers.

(4) In the use of diuretics, for anasarca especially, it should be remembered that even when the dropsy is plainly dependant upon disease of the heart, renal complications almost always exist, and to stimulate the kidneys by the continual use of powerful remedies would surely increase the kidney disease, which is to be avoided.

(5) The action of hydrogogue cathartics, though usually effectual, is harsh in the extreme and quickly exhaustive, while the gradual depletion of the blood vessels in sweating is attended by nothing unpleasant, by nothing, at least, that cannot be guarded against.

(6) Bleeding acts by emptying the blood vessels and thus facilitating the re-absorption of the effused liquid, but in this case the nutritive properties of the vital fluid are removed with the water, thus weakening the already debilitated patient and robbing him of what he can least afford to lose. The action of the skin is to remove only the watery parts of the blood, leaving behind the necessary fibrin and red particles.

(7) In abdominal dropsy nothing is so directly effectual as tapping, as also in anasarca acupuncture is not unfrequently used in much the same way. The vapor bath will be found to be quicker and safer (gangrene has followed these holes when made in dropsical limbs) than the needle in anasarca, and as far as the patient's feelings are concerned will compete quite successfully with the trocar in ascites.

(8) The employment of these baths not only