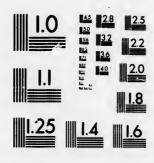


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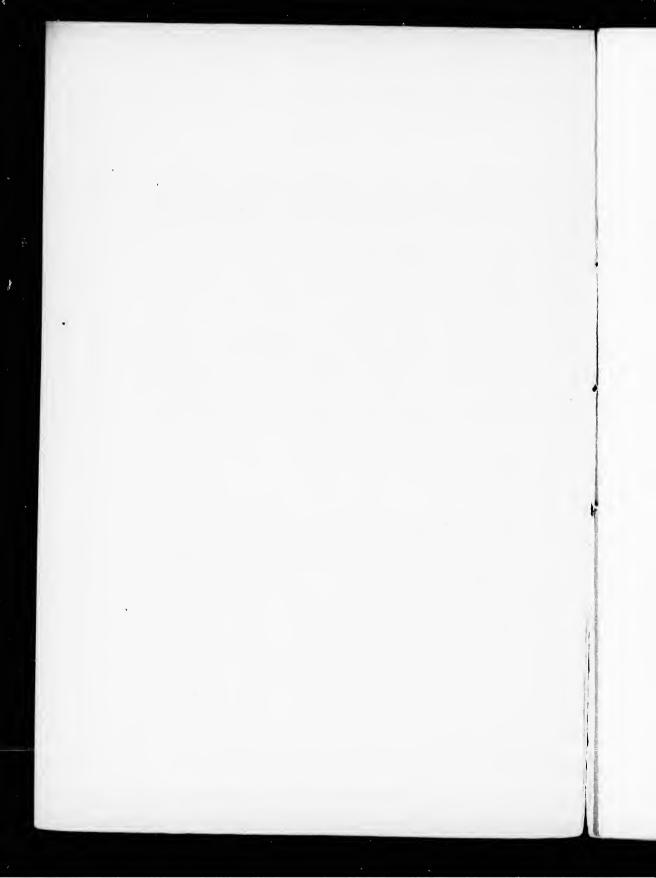
Shepherd, F.J.

A Remarkable Case of Purpuric Eruption ending in Gangrene, apparently caused by Sodium Salicylate.

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FRANCIS J. SHEPHERD, M. D., Surgeon to the Montreal General Hospital, and Lecturer on Dermatology, McGill University, Montreal.

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A REMARKABLE CASE OF PURPURIC ERUPTION ENDING IN GANGRENE, APPARENTLY CAUSED BY SODIUM SALICYLATE.*

By FRANCIS J. SHEPHERD, M. D.,

Surgeon to the Montreal General Hospital, and Lecturer on Dermatology, McGill University, Montreal,

AVING had under my eare during the past summer a very unusual case of skin ernption, supposed to be caused by the ingestion of sodium salicylate, I thought a report of it would interest the members of this association. I am indebted to my house surgeon, Dr. Byers, for the careful notes taken of this case.

William B., hotel porter, aged thirty-two, was admitted into the Montreal General Hospital, May 8, 1895, complaining of pain and swelling in the left knee-joint. Patient is a well-made man of medium stature, somewhat addicted to alcohol. Had typhoid fever six years ago, and a year later several severe attacks of renal colic, for which nephrotomy was performed. He never had syphilis, gout, or rheumatism. Two days before entrance into hospital, had received a severe blow on the knee, which was followed almost immediately by swelling, pain, and heat in the joint.

On examination the left knee exhibited all the characteristics of an acute synovitis. As there was no history of gonorrhoea or any other condition tending to a synovitis, the diagnosis of translatic synovitis was made and appropriate treatment adopted. With the exception of the knee-joint lesion the patient was perfectly healthy.

The next day after admission the patient's temperature, which had previously been normal, rose to 100° F., but there was no aggravation of the knee symptoms.

Three days after entrance the heat, swelling, and pain disappeared from the left knee, but now the right knee was becoming affected. It was slightly swellen, red, and very painful. Thinking the case was one of acute rheumatism, and waiting his transference to the medical wards, the house surgeon ordered twenty-grain doses of sodium salieylate to be taken three times a day. After three doses had been

^{*} Read before the nineteenth annual meeting of the American Dermatological Association September 18, 1895.

taken (one drachm), an eruption appeared on the body and extremities looking very much like urticaria. Distinct wheals were seen, but there was not much itchiness. Successive crops of these urticarial



Fig. 1.

spots coming out, the administration of the drug was discontinued. The spots now became petechial, and were raised above the surface

and considerably indurated (Fig. 1). The spots went through the usual chromatic changes following extravasation of blood, and coincidently the induration altogether disappeared. At a few points the hæmorrhagic extravasation was so great that the vitality of the skin was destroyed, and a deep slough resulted, which on separating left a wellmarked nleer which was very slow to heal. The emption affected all superficial parts of the body except the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. In addition to this the month, soft palate, tongue, pharynx, and larynx were all the seat of the eruption, which caused a great deal of ædematous swelling and led to alarming symptoms of impending suffocation, and for some days the patient was unable to swallow anything but liquid food, and that in only very small quantities. Myalgie and arthralgic pains accompanied the eruption The heart was normal throughout the course of the ease, and once only was a trace of albumin found in the nrine. There was never any blood or pus in the urine, nor was there any disturbance of the bowels. The whole period occupied by the disease from the onset to the disappearance of the eruption was thirty-three days.

Such is the general account of the case, as to the distribution of

the emption and its appearance.

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As was noted, almost every part of the surface of the body except the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet was affected at some time or other during the course of the disease. The eyelids were so swollen that the patient could not see out of his eyes, and the prepuce was much enlarged, discolored, and ædematous. The tongue, month, and pharynx were similarly affected, large extravasations occurred in the soft tissues of the palate and pharynx, and many sloughy spots were seen as the result of the severe hemorrhage. This gave rise to difficulty and severe pain in swallowing. The larynx, owing to the condition of the mouth, could not be examined with the laryngoscope, but the voice was much altered and severe dyspnæa occurred at times, showing that the conditions existing in the mouth were also present in the larynx.

The eruption first appeared on the right leg, thigh, left leg, and left elbow. Then the trunk became affected, and the backs of the arms, the face, and month. The shoulders next were the sites of the eruption, and here it was more severe than anywhere else (Fig. 2). About the neck, shoulders, and upper arms the extravasation following the nrtiearial wheals was so great that large slonghs were formed. The eruption was much more extensive on the posterior than the anterior surface of the body. The scapular region and nape of the neck, backs of arms, back, buttocks, backs of thighs, and calves of legs were

especially affected; indeed, in every part where there was much pressure the rash was thickly distributed. On the anterior surface the only parts affected were the face, upper part of thorax, shoulders, thighs,



Fig. 2.

and dorsum of right foot, and in no place was the eruption very abundant. Over the shoulders and arms the eruption was most violent, the extravasations leading to neerosis of the skin. Several crops of eruption came out from time to time, but none was so severe as the first.

When the spots first came out they had exactly the appearance of urticaria, the wheals varying in size from a ten- to a fifty-cent piece and elevated above the surface of the skin. At times they were slightly itehy, and the patient complained of stinging sensations. Soon

after their appearance the spots became markedly infiltrated, and the surrounding tissue was slightly redematons. In some regions, the arms especially, the swelling was acute and associated with tenderness and pain, probably due to the tension. Within twelve hours the infiltrated spots showed blood extravasation. They had at first a pinkish color, with here and there a central spot of a darker shade. In some instances the whole spots became dark from extravasated blood. In another forty-eight hours the infiltration had disappeared, and the color changes in the spots had commenced. These were very striking, the body being covered with brown, red, and coffee-colored spots. In many places, where several wheals had run together, a large, irregular, sharply defined spot was seen. The extravasated blood in the greater proportion of the eruption was rapidly absorbed, and the spots gradually disappeared, going through the various color stages of a braise; but in certhin places, instead of the extravasation being of moderate extent, it continued to increase and finally destroyed the part, forming deep slonghs, which slowly separated from the tissues below. This local gangrene, which occurred in the month and pharynx as well as on the surface, was most marked about the right and left shoulders and upper arms. In these latter spots the process was very rapid. First, large, irregular, and raised patches were seen, much indurated and very painful. These patches were in size from a fifty-cent piece to the palm of the hand, the larger patches being due to the fusion of several smaller ones. The central portion was of a dark purplish color, fading gradnally to bright erimson, pink, and pale pink. The tenderness and pain as well as the inflammatory areola were marked. Later, the eentral portions of the spots became quite black, and blebs appeared on the surface, and soon a line of demarcation formed, and the dead began to separate from the living. During the separation of the sloughs the patient had a rise of from two to three degrees of temperature and felt ill and miserable. As the sloughs separated, his condition improved, and he was discharged from the hospital about the middle of June, with healthy granulating ulcers, which were dressed from time to time, and did not completely heal until September last. The patient has had no pain in joints and limbs since leaving hospital. salicylate of sodium is the cause of skin lesions is well known. After the administration of this drug the appearance of crythema or urticaria has been frequently noted; in some eases intense itching has been the chief symptom, and eases of ædema of the eyelids following its use have also been reported. Freudenberg (Berlin. klin. Woch.) reports a case in which a petechial eruption occurred after the taking of five grammes (seventy-five grains) of sodium salicylate. These peteehiæ were intensely itehy, and some were the size of a fifty-cent piece. They occurred on the hack at first, but afterward spread to the breast, shoulders, upper arms, hips, and thighs. After eight days the spots became paler, and the epidermis desquamated in large scales. Of course, some might contend that my case was not one of drug emption, but one of those rare forms of peliosis rheumatica known as crythema purpuricum. Hutchison calls it purpura thrombotica. In some of these cases the hæmorrhage is severe enough to destroy the skin and cause a slough. It is said that the rash of this affection occurs chiefly in the legs, and is more often seen in women.

The pains in the limbs, the swellings in the joints, and the duration of the ease would perhaps render this diagnosis probable, but still the fact remains that until the drng was administered no sign of any skin affection was seen, and the purpura was preceded by a well-marked urticarial rash. Again, the hæmorrhagic condition existed in the nuncous membranes or under the skin. Still, there is no doubt much to be said in favor of the diagnosis of peliosis rheumatica, and since the case occurred I have been daily more inclined to come to the conclusion that the emption was not due to the sodium salicylate alone.

