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CASE OF
LABOUR FOLLOWED BY SUPPRESSION
OF URINE.

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ON Friday, March 26th, 1886, at 7 A.M., I was called to attend Mrs. G—, a primipara, whom I had never seen before. On my arrival the child was born dead, the labour having been very rapid at the last. The child was fully formed, and appeared to be about full time. The patient was just twenty-two, and seemed very quiet and easy—in fact, rather apathetic, as she evinced no sorrow at the death of the child. She was rather pasty in appearance, but not strikingly so. Having given the usual directions as to diet &c., I left her, promising to call again the same evening.

On my second visit I found her very comfortable, and to all appearance going on well. On inquiry, however, I found that she had vomited several times since the labour, and that she had passed no urine. The patient, however, complained of no pain over the bladder, and on percussion I could not make out any urine in it. I ordered hot fomentations over that region, and told the friends to let me know if she had any great pain, and I would come immediately and draw off the urine. I ordered her soda-water and diluents of that description.

March 27th.—I found that she had still voided no urine, and that there was no pain. She had vomited two or three times since my visit. I passed a catheter, and on its entrance into the bladder only about three drops came away. I then withdrew the instrument, passed a stilette through it, and reintroduced it, but no urine exuded. I now examined the patient very carefully. There was no history of renal disease in her or her family. She had never had scarlet fever. Her mother, who was the nurse, said that she had always been healthy and very lively. She had been married only four months. Temperature 99°; pulse 88; tongue dry, with yellowish fur on it; skin hot and dry. She was now more pasty in appearance than when I saw her first. The patient's manner was markedly quiet and uncomplaining. Her heart was weak and her lungs healthy. The lochia still continued, but were slight in quantity; the appetite was bad; the bowels not open; there was no anasarca or headache; pupils active. I ordered hot fomentations to the loins, soda-water and such-like diluents to drink, and an ounce of the following mixture to be taken every four hours: tincture of digitalis, two drachms; nitrate of potash, two drachms and a half; spirit of nitrous ether, three drachms; solution of acetate of ammonia, two drachms; water to eight ounces. I also gave her a drachm of compound jalap powder.

28th.—I called in the morning, and found the patient in much the same state, except that she had a very slight amount of dyspnoea. On examination I could find no signs at the base of the lungs of œdema or congestion. Her heart was the same as the day before. She had passed about four drops of urine. There was no pain in any part of the body. Her skin was becoming more and more sallow and pasty. On my visit in the afternoon, in company with another medical man, she was in the same condition as when I left her in the morning. We passed the catheter again, and drew off about half an ounce of urine. She was kept on the same mixture, and the soda-water &c. Diet was very light. The urine contained about one-sixth albumen, and was clear and pale. We could not take the specific gravity, as the quantity was not sufficient.

29th.—The bowels had been freely open twice since my last visit, but still no urine had been passed, and there was no pain over either the vesical or the lumbar region. The skin was still very dry. The only thing that the patient complained of was weakness. Temperature 99.1°; pulse 88. The tongue still had yellow fur on it. No dyspnoea at all. She had slept very well every night since her confinement. There was no anasarca, and the heart was working fairly well. I had warned the relatives of the gravity of the case, and had, in fact, told them that I thought she would not recover. It was hard to make them see that it was so serious, as the patient was to all appearance not in any great danger, so uncomplaining was she and with so few symptoms. In the evening there was no change. I passed the catheter and

drew off about one ounce and a half of urine, which was pale and clear, and on examination afterwards found it contained a considerable quantity of blood-colouring matter, with a very few hyaline casts and a large quantity of spheroidal epithelial cells like renal epithelium; sp. gr. 1020; albumen one-eighth. The bowels had not been open since I left in the morning. I gave her another drachm of the compound jalap powder, and kept her on the diluents and diuretic mixture, with the same light diet; hot fomentations to her loins as before. The milk had appeared in the breasts now.

30th.—It was now the fifth day after her confinement, and during that time the urine drawn off and passed was about two ounces. Her bowels had acted twice. This morning I found her weaker, and she had passed a very restless night. Her breathing was not at all impaired, and the heart worked fairly well. Temperature 99°; pulse 86. Tongue covered with the same yellow fur, but not quite so much. She had vomited once since the evening before. Lochia continued. Her appetite was very bad, and her mother found it difficult to get her to take anything. I proposed a consultation with another medical man, to which the relatives agreed. Accordingly at 6 P.M. I went with Dr. S—, and found that the patient had had an action of the bowels, once freely, since my last visit, but she had voided no urine, nor could we on percussion make out any in the bladder. She talked more cheerily than usual to-night, and seemed in better spirits; otherwise there was not the slightest change in her. Pulse 86; temperature 99.1°; tongue still covered with yellow fur. The same treatment was pursued, and we left about 7 P.M. At 9 P.M. I was called again to see her by her father, who told me that he thought his daughter had fainted. I thought perhaps she was comatose, so I took some pilocarpine with me, but on my arrival I found her dead. Her mother said that since we left the house she had appeared quite cheerful, that she had passed about a wineglassful of urine, and that her bowels had acted. She asked her mother to hold her in her arms, and it was while in this position that she turned on one side and died almost instantaneously. There was no convulsion of any sort. This is all I could get from the mother.

The appearance post mortem presented nothing very extraordinary. I could not obtain a necropsy, which I should much like to have done. I should be much obliged for any suggestions as to the pathology &c. of this as a complication of parturition. Ought any very prompt measures to have been taken at the onset of the disease, although so few symptoms presented themselves?

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