

Cholelithiasis : fourteen thousand calculi removed at operation.

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CHOLELITHIASIS—FOURTEEN THOUSAND CALCULI
REMOVED AT OPERATION.

WITH a view of adding to the literature of gall-stone surgery, the following case is reported, believing that the very unusual number of stones found fully justifies its presentation.

The patient was an unmarried woman, aged 52 years, who was referred to me through the kindness of Dr. George F. Simpson. Her family and personal history were negative.

Eighteen years ago she first experienced epigastric pain and vomiting. Pain came suddenly and disappeared suddenly. No further trouble for months. Then renewed attack with moderate pain and nausea but no vomiting. About a year thereafter a third attack occurred similar to the preceding. Then followed a period of quiescence lasting four or five years. After this attacks recurred about every six months. About eight years ago patient began having attacks every month, and noticed that there was a tendency for them to increase in severity, hold on longer, and return more frequently. At times they would continue throughout the night. Recently the attacks increased decidedly in frequency and severity. Nearly always vomited. No jaundice at any time. Marked chronic constipation. Pain at the ensiform cartilage, or to the right, and when it radiated it would be about the right rib toward the inferior scapular angle. During the last four years she lost 50 pounds in weight. . .

Operation: In the presence of Dr. Jacob Weber, Dr. Paul H. Greenleaf, of Lexington, Illinois, and with the assistance of Dr. George F. Simpson, the operation was performed at St. Mary and Elizabeth Hospital. An attempt to aspirate the bile by means of a trocar was made without success. Upon withdrawing the trocar, it was found to be clogged with a number of small stones. The appearance of the gall-bladder being perfectly symmetrical, it was not suspected that its distention was absolutely and literally due entirely to the stones. It was incised and the stones removed. The wall of the gall-bladder was twice the usual

thickness, but otherwise the organ was serviceable in its appearance. Some bile made its appearance at the close of the operation. The patient was discharged cured. More than a year and a half has elapsed and there has been no return of the symptoms. The volume of stones was so enormous that I detailed a responsible person to make an accurate count.

During the operation, it was estimated that at least 200 stones of small size were lost in the gauze surrounding the gall-bladder and in the act of transferring the stones to the receiver. These were not included in the count. The total number of stones removed that were counted reached the sum of 13,832, and if we include those stones that were lost we would feel safe in saying that the gall-bladder contained over 14,000 stones.

A careful search of the cystic and common duct did not reveal the presence of any stones.

The stones varied in size from that of a white mustard seed to that of a grain of corn. Roughly speaking, about 75 per cent. of the stones were the size of the mustard seed. The other 25 per cent. varied. No stones were broken and all the small ones were distinct and perfectly formed.

Desiring to collect other cases in which an unusual number of stones were found, letters of inquiry were addressed to several operators. The following answers are the result of this inquiry:

"In answer to your letter I have much pleasure in telling you the greatest number of gall-stones I have removed from one patient is 2300. They were bilirubin calculi from a female patient, age 27, and were taken from the gall-bladder, cystic, common and hepatic ducts. The next largest number was 1058, was a man, aged 51, the next 720, the next 607, and another 568. In many cases I have removed numbers to correspond to these latter ones.

(Signed) A. W. Mayo Robson."

"I have removed in one case over 7000 stones from the gall-bladder, and over 3,000 in another case from the common duct; in the latter case also there were several hundreds left uncounted. In both cases, of course, all the stones were quite small.

(Signed) B. G. A. Boynihan."

"We have had a number of cases in which there were a very large number of stones removed. The largest number we have counted was between five and six thousand.

(Signed) W. J. Mayo."

"The case in which I found the most gall-stones was that of a young man about 30 years of age who had 6780 stones from the size of half-a-grain of rice to twice the diameter of a pea.

(Signed) A. J. Ochner."

"Answering your letter I beg to say, recently I operated upon a case of cholelithiasis, doing cholecystectomy, in which there were 2252 calculi.

(Signed) John B. Deaver."

Some cases in which a large number of stones were removed post mortem are recorded by B. G. A. Moynihan, "Gall-Stones and Their Surgical Treatment," page 34, as follows:

"Frerichs, in a woman sixty-one years of age, found 1950 stones, Dunlop (*Lancet*, 1878), in a woman of ninety-four, found 2011, Morgagni 3000, Hoffman 3646, Lagenbuch 4000, Naunyn 500, and Otto 7802."

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