

A treatise upon dropsies. Most earnestly recommended to the perusal of all persons afflicted with, or attack'd with the symptoms of, a dropsy / [William Lowther].

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T R E A T I S E

U P O N

D R O P S I E S.

Most earnestly recommended to the Perusal
of all Persons afflicted *with*, or attack'd
with the Symptoms of, a

D R O P S Y.



L O N D O N :

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T R E A T I S E
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D R O P S I E S.

THE Dropsy is a dangerous Disorder, and requires a particular and serious Description. There are three Sorts : The first, which is called *Ascites*, is a Collection of Waters contained in the Belly beneath the Peritonæum, which extends it sometimes considerably. The second is called *Tympanites*, and proceeds from Winds that swell the Abdomen. The third is called *Anasarca* or *Leucophlegmatia*, and is a watry Humour that flows from under the Skin, and betwixt the Strings of the Muscles.

In the Leucophlegmatic Dropsy, a soft Swelling gains the whole Body, and takes possession chiefly of the Legs and Feet; especially if the Person afflicted has walked a good deal, sat or stood erect for any considerable Time. If you press the Skin with your Finger it is not elastic, but leaves a Hollow and a Mark of the Impression, and it requires some Space of Time to replete itself. The Swelling often gains the Thighs and the Scrotum; but tho' the Feet are prodigiously swelled at Night, they are but little so of a Morning, rising from Bed. The Belly, if you touch it, feels big and full; tho' it is not more so than the other Parts of the Body, which is all over equally soft, wan and pale, and so languishing that it cannot support or undergo the least Exercise, tho' it's very necessary. The Breathing of the Patient is stronger and quicker than common,

common, especially after Eating; a slow continual Fever renders the Pulse fluttering, low, frequent and unequal; in fine, his Excrements are raw, and often mixed with Blood; his Urine clear and watry. This Sort of Dropsy comes for the most Part after long Fevers, thro' a Defect of the Stomach, the long Suppression or considerable Emanation of the monthly Terms, and also after Piles; thro' long Difficulties in Breathing, Asthmas, and immoderate Watchings. It attacks Children often, and differs only in its Extent from the Pituitous Cachexia, where the Swelling is not so considerable. It generally happens that the Patient is better and worse alternately the same Day; else, if he has a natural Looseness before the Disorder has made any Progress, it promises and generally restores Health.

Let us now examine the Symptoms that distinguish the Ascital Dropsy. The Swelling of the Belly is accompanied with a certain Heaviness: if you strike it lightly with your Hand, you'll hear the noise of agitated Waters, as if you had struck a leathern Bottle not quite full. The Waters are sometimes contained in the District of the Belly, and sometimes pass into the Scrotum, Thighs and Legs, especially after any Exercise of the Body. The Waters likewise penetrate often into the Breast; and in Women into the Womb and Ovaria; and more so if the Disorder has been of long standing, and encreased by Age. If you press the Belly of the Patient he will breathe harder than usual. An uncommon and continual Drought is the constant Companion of this Disorder: the Pulse is frequent, low, hard and sufficiently stretch'd: the Urine comes

comes in small Quantities, and is most commonly thick and red, especially if the Disorder proceeds from the Liver: the Body extenuates, and, as it were, melts itself, the more the Belly swells: in fine, the Corruption of the Waters in this Part excites a small Fever. This Species of Dropsy proceeds often from inveterate Obstructions in the Scirrhus of the Liver, Mesentery, Spleen and Womb; from burning Fevers, or from a Jaundice caused by a Contraction of the Bowels. Children are less subject to this Species than grown-up People. Those who void Blood at Stool, or in Reaching, by a Vein's being broke in the Bowels, are commonly attacked with it.

We now come to the third Species of Dropsies, which being form'd by the Winds detained in the Belly, is called Tympanites. Although the Belly is less swelled than what it is
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in the Ascites, it is nevertheless stretched in such a Manner, that, on striking it, it resounds like a Drum. That Noise of Water apparent in the Ascites is not heard in the Tympanites, but only a slight Murmur, attended with some Rowlings of Winds. The Patient often breaks Wind upwards, which seems to ease him. The Feet are seemingly swelled in the same Manner as in the other Dropsies, and the Rest of the Body extenuates itself as in the Ascites. This Disorder often takes its rise from a Swelling of the Stomach, and Colon, or great Bowel, and from long Fevers. *Hippocrates* has very well observed, that Wind Cholicks, and Pains towards the Navel and Loins, that do not dissipate of themselves by Length of Time, or by the Application of Remedies, degenerate, for the most Part, into a dry Dropsy.

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Let us examine the Difference likewise betwixt the Tympanites and Leucophlegmatic Dropsy. Here the whole Body swells equal and soft, and the Belly does not exceed its natural Volume, any otherwise than in Proportion to the Extension of the other Parts; but in the Tympanites and Ascites the Belly stretches: and tho' the Swelling communicates itself to the Feet, the rest of the Body extends itself sensibly. In the Anasarca the Pulse is fluttering, soft and slack; in the Ascites it is low, frequent, stretch'd and almost hard; and in the Tympanites it is long, fast and frequent, not in the least weak, nor hard, nor stretch'd.

Now for Observations upon Dropsies in general, their Symptoms, Cause, Danger, and Cure.

Altho' the Disorder has not declared itself, yet it is to be feared it will soon, when the ordinary Evacuations of the Superfluities of Nature

ture are stopt, especially the Piles or the monthly Terms; or if these Evacuations are excessive in Quantity, or of long Continuance. It is equally to be feared if there is a Scirrhus in the Liver or Spleen; or if a Jaundice or Lientery perseveres, notwithstanding the Help of Remedies. The Corruption of Humours, or an universal Defect of the whole Body, the first Degree of which is called Cachochimiæ, and the latter Cachexia, are Fore-runners of the Dropsy. It is near at Hand, if, with any of these Dispositions, the Testicles or Yard swell; or if the Patient, from an Excess of Hunger, passes to a Disgust of Food. But as soon as the Dropsy declares itself, whatever Kind it be, the Swelling descends from the Belly to the Feet; the Breathing is difficult; the Colour of the Skin changes to a green Paleness; Disgust of Food, Thirst and Coughing

Coughing are common. Thirst is nevertheless more particular in the Ascites, and the Cough dry in the Tympanites. There are other Symptoms incident to this Disorder, such as a Defect in the Liver, and an Abundance of Humours that hinder the Healing of interior and exterior Wounds and Ulcers in any Part of the Body.

The Dropsy comes of itself from long Sickneſſes, and often from the Quartan Ague. Thoſe who have ſuffered great and violent Hæmorrhages, either upwards or downwards, and who are attacked at the ſame Time with a Fever, are much expoſed to Dropſies, which are very dangerous with theſe Symptoms. The Dropsy is leſs pernicious to thoſe who are ſubject to a Swelling of the Spleen, and which diſſipates of itſelf and ſwells alternately; this nevertheless often deceives the Patient, who, relying

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upon the preceding Success he has had, neglects to claim the Advice and Assistance of a Physician. The Dropsy that proceeds from the Humours of the Spleen, is less dangerous than that proceeding from a Defect in the Liver. If the Patient has never laboured under this Disorder before; if his Bowels are strong; if he breathes with Ease; if he does not cough; if he is not thirsty, nor has the Tongue dry, (especially after Sleep, when the Dryness of the Tongue is common) if he has no Disgust for Food, nor indisposed after Eating, he will easily be cured. The Danger is distant if the Belly is soft and extenuates; if the Physic works, and his Stools are soft and form'd; if the Urine changes its Quality according to the Difference of what he eats and drinks, or by the Use of Remedies soon after they are taken; in short, if the Patient is exempt from Pain, Heat and Weariness,

Weariness, and that he bears his Disorder with Ease : he that has all these favourable Symptoms is certainly not dangerously attack'd. Tumours in this Disorder are good Signs, but not internal ones. A Looseness or Vomiting that eases and diminishes the Pain is a favourable Symptom ; but if it weakens and enervates the Patient there is great Danger : the Danger is extreme if the Patient is of a hot and dry Constitution, and if it at the same Time it affects the Liver. If any acute Disorder has given rise to the Dropsy, or come upon the Scirrhus of the Liver or Spleen, Death in this Case is almost inevitable. A dry Cough, a Flux of Blood, or other Humour, which does not give Ease to the Patient, augments the Danger ; but more so if his Breathing is impeded, and his Looseness turn to a Dysentery. One cannot but fear in a

Dropſy the Attacks of an Epilepſy, from the Stench of the Breath, that of the Spittle, and from Sweat and inſenſible Tranſpiration: if a Fever attends it; if the Patient's Urine is thick and troubled, and but little in Quantity; when half the Body already attacked with the Diſorder, a Hæmorrhage above or below declares itſelf, it is equally dangerous. The Patient is doubtleſs in Danger when the Swelling, after going and coming, remains ſtable at laſt, and oppoſes the neceſſary Remedies applied. The Danger is imminent when a Loofeneſs attacks and depreſſes the Patient, who breathes but with Difficulty; and when conſiderable and vicious Ulcers form themſelves in the Mouth, Gums, Legs, or any other Parts of the Body; if he voids at ſtool any Blood caked; or if the Urine is differently colour'd at the Summit of the Urinal, being
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either red at Top and livid at the Bottom, or the contrary.

This short Treatise will instruct those afflicted with Dropsies of what they have to fear, when attack'd with these dangerous Disorders. I cannot sufficiently recommend to them to employ their whole Attention; they will do well to apply for Relief at the Beginning, as the Remedies applicable to these Disorders will have a speedier, surer and better Effect, than if by Neglect they wait till the Disorder has established itself and made a pernicious Progress, which must certainly hasten their Death, and which they may avoid by applying in Time. I have discovered some specific Remedies for the Cure of these Distempers, which far excel every other Medicine now in Practice. The Operation of these Remedies is so gentle,

tle, that they may be given to an Infant at the Breast, or to a Woman with Child, and to the most delicate Constitution, observing the Method and Diet which must be punctually kept up to. All Persons then, afflicted with these Disorders, are, for their own Sakes, earnestly requested to apply to me for Cure: I am so certain of the Virtue, Power and Efficacy of these Remedies, that I shall be able to agree with those who honour me with their Confidence to receive no Pay, and to forfeit my Medicines and Pains, if I do not succeed. This I think ought to convince the World, that I do not seek to impose upon them; but as the Whole depends upon Facts, Facts will prove, with Joy to my Patients and Honour to myself, what I have here advanced.

W. LOWTHER.

P. S. In Consideration of the Poor, who labour under this calamitous Disorder, I will cure them *gratis*, if recommended by Persons of Distinction, or the principal Officers of a Parish, as really indigent and proper Objects of Compassion.

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The Remedies for the Curing of the
D R O P S Y,
which I humbly offer to the Public,
are five different ones, *viz.*

1. SIMPLE DIURETIC POWDERS.
2. A PURGING TINCTURE.
3. AN ELECTUARY.
4. COMPOUND DIURETIC POWDERS.
5. STRENGTHENING DROPS.

All which Medicines are to be
made use of as described in the
following

DIRECTIONS:

THE Patient must begin with
the *Simple Diuretic Powders*,
of which he must take two Doses
each Day ; one in the Morning
fasting, and the other at Six o'Clock
in the Evening, for three Days suc-
cessively.

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The fourth Day the Patient must take an Ounce of the *Purging Tincture* in the Morning fasting.

The fifth Day the Patient must take two Doses of the *Electuary*, each Dose about half an Ounce ; the first in the Morning fasting, and the other at Five in the Evening, which must be continued till the Patient is entirely cured. But as it sometimes happens that the Dose of half an Ounce of the *Electuary* is too strong for certain delicate Constitutions, which is visible if the Patient has more than three Stools a Day : in this Case the Quantity of the Doses may be diminished according to Discretion ; nay, it may be taken only in the Morning, if the Patient perceives it sufficient to procure three Stools each Day.

Those under fifteen Years old should take of this *Electuary* only two Drams in the Morning fasting,

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and two in the Afternoon, which is the proper Dose for those of that Age.

The Afflicted are particularly desired to attend to the following

O B S E R V A T I O N.

That when a great Difficulty of Breathing accompanies the *Dropfy*, it shews evidently that it's attendant is an *ASTHMA* : in this Case the Patient must not use any of the *Simple* Diuretic Powders, but must take for six Days successively two Doses of the *Compound* Diuretic Powders ; one Dose in the Morning fasting, and one at Five in the Evening.

The seventh Day the Patient, so afflicted with Difficulty of Breathing, must take an Ounce of the Purging Tincture.

The eighth Day the Patient must take two Doses of the Electuary, in
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the same Manner as before directed to Persons whose Dropsy is not attended with an Asthma, and continue it till such Time as all the Waters are dissipated.

When Patients are cured, (by a Dissipation of the Waters) the Strengthening Drops must be taken for twenty Days together, twenty-five Drops in the Morning fasting, and twenty-five Drops between Four and Six in the Evening. These Drops greatly strengthen the Stomach, fortify the Vessels, and prevent a Relapse. But the Patients must absolutely use Exercise, as hereafter described, for three Quarters of an Hour, or a full Hour, after each Time taking the Strengthening Drops, or they will not have a proper Effect, *viz.* either by walking constantly about the Room pretty fast, or if not capable of that, by riding a Horse in a Trot, by riding in a shaking

shaking Carriage, or being pulled by a Servant up and down a Room in an Easy Chair upon Castors, or by any other Means the Patient may devise for Exercise.

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to be made use of, and carefully followed by the Patient.

To abstain from Milk, and every thing composed of it, unless a little fresh Butter in Moderation, but the less the better. To abstain absolutely from eating all Sorts of Greens and Vegetables whatever. To make use of good Broths, with a little Broom boiled in them, but not drink them in large Quantities. To eat no Meat but what will digest with ease, and that but a little at a Time, and roasted preferable to boiled. The Patient, when dry, may now and then drink a Glass of Wine and Water,

Water, which, with Broom steep'd in it, is admirable. A few Drops of Spirit of Vitriol in Water is extremely good to wash the Mouth with when thirsty, but not to swallow it, for drinking should be as seldom, and as little, as possible. A Dish of Tea may be drank at Breakfast, with Bread thinly spread with Butter.

N. B. Dr. *Lowther* attends *Tuesdays, Thursdays* and *Saturdays*, from Ten to One o'Clock, to give his Advice *gratis* in all Dropfical Cafes, at BROOKE'S Warehouse facing *Water-Lane, Fleet-street, London*; at which Time he also may be consulted *gratis* in all Cafes of Fits, Nervous and Paralytic Complaints, and Disorders incident to the Fair Sex.

* * * The many singular Cures
 * performed by Dr. *Lowther* in the
 above

above Disorders, being represented to his Majesty, he has been most graciously pleased to honour him with his Royal Privilege and Protection, under the GREAT SEAL of ENGLAND.

☞ Patients incapable of waiting on the Doctor he will visit them on Notice given ; and all Letters from the Country, Post paid, punctually answered.

F I N I S.