ACUTE RHEUMATISM COMPLICATED WITH INFLAMMATION OF THE HEART.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—Should the subjoined case possess sufficient interest to recommend itself to a place in your valuable columns, I shall feel happy in having placed it at your disposal.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES ANDERTON.

Leigh, near Manchester,

July 10, 1843.

Aug. 24, 1842. Mr. G. R., aged twenty-three, of a full and plethoric habit of body, of a sanguine temperament, whose father has for many years been the subject of rheumatism; by occupation a joiner. Was seized on the present occasion, after a day of laborious exertion, which caused him to perspire profusely, with general rigors, succeeded by heat, thirst, and other symptoms of pyrexia. Tongue covered with a thick, white, and tenacious coating; urine scanty and high colored; pulse full, strong, and 76; soreness of the throat; bowels rather constipated. He was bled to sixteen ounces; pill composed of three grains of calomel, with a saline purgative mixture, were given.

25. Found him relieved in his febrile symptoms, but complaining of acute pains in the shoulder and knee of the right side; bowels unmoved; pulse softer and slower, 70. Ordered an anodyne fomentation to the affected joints and a purgative powder.

26. Bowels had been but scantily moved; pulse increased in strength and fullness; tongue cleaning round the edges; pains had slightly extended to the left arm and ankle; the joints on the opposite side full, tense, and exquisitely painful. To continue fomentation, and add wine of colchicum, half an ounce, and tincture of hyosciamus, two drachms, to mixture, with pills of calomel and opium.

30. Found him this morning suffering severely from great difficulty in breathing, with pain in the left side, inability to lie down, and an intermitting pulse; the sounds of the heart upon auscultation were loud and tumultuous, similar to the sound caused by the meeting of two opposite currents of air; there was likewise to be distinguished at intervals the "new leather sound;" the little sleep he obtained was in the erect position, but which was interrupted by frightful dreams, such as falling down precipices, or, as he expressed himself, "as falling down a coal-pit;" his aspect had the appearance of one suddenly seized with fearful surprise; face pale and elongated, with eyes exsanguined and staring, of a glassy brightness; urine high colored; the pains in the joints somewhat relieved since the pain in the side appeared. Directed to have mustard cataplasms applied to the affected joints; venesection to sixteen ounces, and sixteen leeches to be applied to the side; ordered an active purgative of infusion of senna and sulphate of magnesia, with pills of calomel and opium, to be given every three hours, and a drachm of tincture of digitalis to be added to the mixture.

Vespere: Had experienced considerable relief from the above remedies, but still continued to have pain

in the side and inability to lie down; pulse intermitting, but with longer intervals of regular action; sounds of the heart not so noisy; the crackling and rubbing kind of sensation more distinct; bowels had been copiously relieved. Directed a blister to be applied over the front part of the chest, and to continue the medicine.

31. Found him better as regarded his articular pains, but still suffering from the pain in the side and inability to resume the recumbent posture; bowels open, but complaining of intense suffering at the neck of the bladder, with difficult micturition, probably arising from the endermic action of the blister. I rather hailed this as a favorable circumstance, flattering myself that it might, by derivative influence, be found to operate favorably on the cardiac affection. I ordered him, for the relief of his vesical symptoms, to be immediately placed in a warm bath, and gave him a few pills of camphor and extract of hyosciamus, with linseed tea to take at intervals.

Vespere: Found him better in all respects; had been enabled for the first time to lie down, but only on the back; the pulse still intermitted about once every twelve or fourteen pulsations; the hurricane (I may so express myself) of the heart's action had in a great measure subsided; the crackling or friction sound, although still present, was less distinct; he yet complained of pain in the side, but in a more subdued degree, his breathing continuing still interrupted; his mouth had become slightly sore; he urinated more freely, but still scantily; his aspect bore a more subdued character; bowels open. I now ordered him to have the potassio-tartrate of antimony ointment freely rubbed in a space of four inches square over the region of the heart, and prescribed the following mixture:—

Hydriodate of potass, one drachm;
Tincture of digitalis, one drachm;
Wine of colchicum, three drachms;
Camphor mixture, seven ounces and a half. Two
tablespoonfuls three times a-day.

The strong mercurial ointment to be rubbed in.

Sept. 2. Progressing very favorably; was now enabled to lie down on the right side, but not on the left; breathing more free; pain in the side diminished since he commenced the last mixture; indeed, so remarkable was the change, that he requested I would not attempt to make any alteration in the mixture; mouth sore; urinates freely; bowels open; pulse 70, soft, and regular; tongue clean and moist; beef tea and a more generous diet allowed. Repeat the remedies.

16. Has had no untoward symptom since the last report; pain in side gone; can lie on either side, and is able to walk about his room. Discontinue medicines, and give decoction of cinchona with good diet.

18. Was sent for hastily, he having been seized again with the pain in the side and palpitation; he attributes it to a change in his medicines. Directed the hydriodate of potass mixture to be repeated, and a purgative given.

20. Much better since he commenced taking the hydriodate of potass.

22. Continues improving in every respect.

Jan. 18, 1843. Is now quite recovered.