CASE
OF
RUPTURE OF THE RIGHT VENTRICLE OF
THE HEART.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL
JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—As I have learned that one of your correspondents has contributed a case of rupture of the heart to the pages of your useful periodical, I beg to send you the following, which may, perhaps, be worthy of insertion :—

Sept. 25, 1840. I was summoned in haste, at eleven, p.m., to the housekeeper of an eminent goldsmith in Bond-street; but she died before I arrived. The next day I examined the body, and found the following morbid appearances :—

Head.—Dura mater vascular, and excessively adherent to skull; more fluid than usual in the ventricles; the base of the brain softened.

Chest.—The pericardium quite distended with blood; this, on minute examination, was found to have issued from a perforation of the right ventricle of the heart, close to the apex, and near the septum; the perforation was scarcely the size of a crow-quill; at first sight it looked like a little spot of ecchymosis; it readily admitted a probe into the cavity of the ventricle. The muscular substance around it was neither discolored nor softened, and there was no disease of the great vessels.

During the afternoon and evening preceding her death she complained of great faintness; she had also been sick, and said she felt a load at her chest, as if there were something there which wanted to come up. She retired to bed about ten minutes before eleven, and a servant, who entered the room a few minutes afterwards, found her quite dead, and leaning over the edge of the bed, as if in the act of vomiting.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN CHALLICE.

2, Southwick-crescent, Hyde-park,
Nov. 4, 1843.

CASE OF POISONING
BY THE
BICHLORIDE OF MERCURY.
RECOVERY OF THE PATIENT.

COMMUNICATED BY

E. MORRIS, Esq., Surgeon, Spalding.

On Sunday afternoon, the 15th of October, I received a hasty summons to visit Mrs. A., aged twenty-three years, the wife of a veterinary surgeon, to whom she had been married about three weeks, and was informed that she had taken a quantity of corrosive sublimate.

Upon my arrival at her residence I was told by the husband that he was mixing medicine, and had four powders upon the table containing half a drachm of the bichloride of mercury in each; she took one of them up, and emptied the contents of it into her mouth, and swallowed some of it, and the remainder she spat out again; she then drank some water immediately.

This occurred about a quarter after four, p.m. I

saw her for the first time five-and-twenty minutes afterwards; she informed me that she was very unhappy in her mind, and that she had taken it with the intention of destroying herself, and did not at all regret having done so; she was sitting in a chair, with a basin upon her knee, into which the saliva was continually running. The countenance was flushed, and she was much excited; she complained of a burning sensation in her mouth, œsophagus, and stomach; the mucous membrane of the mouth and fauces, particularly about the lips, was quite white, and rough to the feel; she had great thirst, and felt rather sick; the pulse was full, and only 40 in the minute; the hands and feet were cold.

I gave her the whites of four eggs mixed with a little water, which she immediately swallowed. About ten minutes after she had taken it, she vomited repeatedly and freely, and completely emptied the stomach. After the sickness had abated I gave her the whites of several more eggs, which she kept down; I then ordered bottles of hot water to the feet, and left her at six o'clock, ordering her a mixture containing castor oil suspended in mucilage, and directing that two tablespoonfuls should be taken every half-hour, until the bowels were relieved.

At eight o'clock, p.m., I again saw her; she said that the burning heat in the mouth, throat, and stomach, were much worse; she now complained of a darting pain through the chest, and also of an acute pain in the right iliac fossa about the caput coli; the lips were very much swollen, and the saliva flowed abundantly from the mouth; the breath was very foetid; the pulse very small, and 29 in the minute, and intermitted about every ten beats, during the time it would take for two pulsations; there had not been any more sickness; the extremities were very cold. As she sat in her chair, her head nodded as if she was about to go to sleep, and every now and then her arms were suddenly jerked up; she said her legs felt benumbed; she had a heavy feeling in the head; the pupils were dilated, and she was very drowsy, and never spoke unless spoken to; the breathing was very slow, and frequently interrupted with deep sighing; she had passed but little urine, and when she did so said it scalded her very much.

About ten o'clock I again visited her; she appeared much the same; the bowels had not been moved; I desired them to continue giving the mixture until a satisfactory evacuation was produced.

Monday, Oct. 16, at Eight, a.m. The husband called upon me, and said that she was much better in every respect.

At eleven, a.m., I saw her; the bowels had been well relieved in the night, and the motions contained a small quantity of blood; the pulse was 89; the pain in the side was quite gone; her throat and stomach, she said, were very sore. Upon examining the mouth, the mucous membrane lining the lips and underneath the tongue were found corroded, and in a state of ulceration; she had still much pain when she made water. I ordered a gargle, containing the solution of chloride of lime, and a mucilaginous mixture, to be taken every four hours.

Nine, p.m. She is much better, with the exception of her mouth, which pains her very much.

Oct. 17. Pulse 86; complains of pain in the head