PROVINCIAL MEDICAL & SURGICAL JOURNAL.

CASES AND OBSERVATIONS IN HOSPITAL PRACTICE.

By RICHARD CHAMBERS, M.D., Physician to the
Essex and Colchester Hospital.

(Continued from page 649.)

BRONCHITIS: PHTHISIS.

Mrs. Middleton, aged 32, applied as an out-patient, at the Essex and Colchester Hospital, March 1, 1843. She complained of cough, weakness, and emaciation, and also of hoarseness, night perspirations, and mucopurulent expectoration; there was dulness and increased vocal resonance beneath both clavicles. Pulse 120; bowels confined.

R. Pil. Rhei. Co., gr. x., in pil. ij. divid., alt. noct. sumend.

R. Liquor Potassæ, M. xv.; Potassii Iodid., gr. j.; Tinct. Hyoscyami, M. xx.; Infusi. Gent. Co., oz. j. M. Fiat haustus ter quotidie sumendus.

13th. Much the same, except that the expectoration is more copious.

Cont. haustus.

R. Ipecacuanhæ, Zinci Sulphat., utrque gr. vi. M. Fiat pulv. alt. diebus mane sumendus.

April 3rd. Thinks that the powders give relief, but she requests to have them discontinued.

Cont. haustus.

24th. Is much the same, except that the cough is more troublesome.

R. Potassæ Nitratis, gr. iv.; Tinct. Hyoscyami, dr. ss.; Aquæ Menth. Pip., oz. j. M. Fiat haustus ter quotidie sumendus.

May 1st. Cough somewhat less troublesome.

R. Naphthæ, M. x.; Potassii Iodid., gr. j.; Aquæ Menth. Pip., oz. j. M. Fiat haustus ter quotidie sumendus.

15th. Considers herself better.

Rept. haustus.

She continued this medicine till the 15th of June, after which I heard nothing more of her till May 9th, 1844, when she presented herself, complaining much as before, only that there was more dyspnoea.

R. Naphthæ, M. x.; Potassii Iodid., gr. j.; Tinct. Camphoræ Co., M. xx.; Aquæ Menthæ. Pip., oz. j. M. Fiat haust. ter quotidie sumendus.

This was continued till June 17th, when in consequence of having aggravated her symptoms by an incautious exposure to cold, I prescribed the following draught:—

R. Potassæ Nitratis, gr. iv.; Naphthæ, M. x.; Tinct. Camph. Co., M. xx.; Aquæ Menthæ Piper., oz. j. M. Fiat haust. ter quotidie sumendus.

No. 45, November 5, 1843.

This was continued till August 5th, when she felt so much better that she requested to be discharged.

On March 27th, 1845, she was again placed upon the books, complaining as before; the cough was very troublesome; there was pain between the shoulders, and night sweats; pulse 96. I prescribed the naphtha draughts as before; she attended upon the 7th and 21st of April, (out-patients are only seen once a week,) and not again till May 29th. After that she went on a visit to the upper part of the country, and she wrote to me on the 1st of last month for the prescription, as she could not exist without the draughts.

It is impossible to doubt that in the above case the strong tendency to phthisical development has been kept in abeyance by the treatment; and I am disposed to award much of the credit to the influence of the naphtha. It is true that medicine does not admit of mathematical precision, but still, tracing cause and effect as closely as we can, we must admit that the case affords strong presumptive evidence in its favour.

STRUMOUS PHTHISIS.

Sarah Ward, aged 28, a tailoress, admitted as an out-patient March 16, 1843, has been declining for the last six months, but has been much worse for the last five weeks. She is of strumous habit, of which scars in the neck afford convincing evidence; cough troublesome; pulse 102; scanty expectoration; there is dulness and feeble respiration beneath the right clavicle, and a visible falling in there also; respiration is puerile on the left side.

Applic. Empl. Lyttæ. infra claviculam dextram.

R. Potassii Iodid., gr. j.; Liq. Potassæ, M. v.; Tinct. Hyoscyami, M. xx.; Aquæ oz. j.; M. Fiat haustus ter quotidie sumendus.

This treatment was continued unaltered till the 16th of May, when she felt so well that she was discharged at her own request.

She again felt herself declining, and in much the same state, and applied for admission January 18, 1844. The same medicine was prescribed, and she continued to take it for six weeks, when she felt well enough to be discharged, and I did not see her again till last June, when she was admitted an in-patient under my colleague, Mr. Nunn, for a scrofulous disease of the knee joint, under whose judicious care she is again convalescing.

CHLOROTIC PHTHISIS.

E. D., aged 15, a dress-maker, admitted into the Essex and Colchester Hospital, March 13, 1845; has been ill for twelve months; complains of pain in the left side, cough, night sweats, and emaciation; pulse

98; tongue covered with a white fur; catamenia absent. There was considerable febrile excitement, requiring the use of salines and mild aperients up to the 27th of April, when I made the following note:—Puerile respiration beneath the left clavicle; bronchial respiration beneath the right, accompanied by dulness, and increase of vocal resonance.

R. Ferri Iodid., gr. iss.; Tinct. Cardam. Co., dr. ss.; Aquæ Menthæ Piper., oz. j. M. Fiat haust. ter quotidie sumendus.

She continued to take these draughts till the 2nd of June, when they were discontinued in consequence of epistaxis having occurred; and the cough, dyspnoea, and night sweats, being troublesome.

R. Tinct. Digitalis, M. viij; Acid. Sulph. Dil., M. x.; Tinct. Camph. Co., M. xx.; Aquæ, oz. j. M. Fiat haustus bis quotidie sumendus.

R. Pil. Aloes cum Myrrh, gr. ij.; Pil. Ferri, gr. iij. M. Fiat pilula omni nocte sumenda.

June 30th. Improving.

Rept. omnia.

R. Liniment, Acid. Acetici., oz. ij.; affric. dr. j.; infra claviculam dextram.

July 28th. Finding the circulation less excited, I substituted the following draught:—

R. Quinæ Sulphatis, Ferri Sulph., utrq. gr. ʒ; Acid. Sulph. dil., M. x.; Tinct. Camph. Co., dr. ss.; Aquæ, oz. j. M. Sumat bis indies.

August 25th. Rept. haustus et augeatur Sulph. Ferri ad granum sing. haustibus.

September 8th. The catamenia have appeared for the first time. After this all her symptoms improved considerably, the night sweats disappeared, and she increased in flesh; there was still slight cough; there was, (if I may use the expression,) a cessation of hostilities to such an extent, that the patient's mother, contrary to my injunctions, begged to have her discharged.

When we speak of consumption, we are too apt to lose sight of the fact, that under one name, many varieties of disease are included, holding, it is true, many symptoms in common, yet possessing sufficiently distinctive characters to admit of, and entitle them to, a distinct classification. Some of the varieties are more, and some less, amenable to the treatment, and although in all cases we have more reason to exercise our fears than our hopes, it is unquestionable that there are many cases in which the disease, if not cured, is at least suspended. Under the use of well-directed dietetic and medicinal treatment, and where these measures have been seconded by a residence in a uniform mild temperature, life has been prolonged to an ordinary average.

I have given the foregoing three examples, not for the purpose of founding a classification on them, but the better to enable me to convey correct ideas of those forms of the disease in which I have found treatment of advantage.

The chlorotic variety is that in which you have chlorosis united with pulmonary symptoms.

The strumous, where you have the tangible signs of scrofula existing, with evidence of pulmonary disease.

The bronchitic, where you have the bronchitis localized in the upper portion of the lung, and accompanied by dulness.

As I have already said, all the varieties have many symptoms in common, but each possesses a leading character, that at once determines the great object to be kept in view, in selecting our remedies. If some division of this kind were more universally acknowledged, it would remove from the *consumption-curers* the semblance of excuse, for recommending such hosts of useless remedies, as each in his day, attempts to palm upon the profession and the public. In sketching the outlines of these varieties, I have briefly referred to the evidence of pulmonary disease. I have done so, under the belief that all who speak of consumptive disease, allude only to that which stands the test of the stethoscopic and rational evidence. I have met with the disease in three other forms—the acute, the chronic, (or more properly the acuto-chronic,) and the hæmoptysic, all of which have resisted the best directed efforts for their relief.

Of the acute I saw a case fatal within fourteen days. I am aware that hæmoptysis is a frequent attendant upon the disease in all its varieties; but that which I mean to designate as the hæmoptysic is that in which a copious pulmonary hæmorrhage, (recurring several times,) gives the first notice of alarm. So insidious is the pulmonary disease in many cases, that in females the hæmorrhage is regarded as vicarious, should there be any derangement of the menstrual secretion. I beg not to be misunderstood; I have seen the hæmorrhage arrested, and a deceptive calm ensue for some weeks; but it is only that calm that precedes a storm. If not fatal in all cases, the exception is a thing more to be surprised at than hoped for.

The treatment of consumption may be conducted by tonics, sedatives, and counter-irritants; but the result, if application has been timely made, will depend upon the practical tact of the attendant, and the proper administration of the remedies, so that each may be given, as it were, in season. As for instance, if much febrile excitement existed, no one would think of giving tonics till this was subdued, although the general state of the system may urgently demand them. It is a great recommendation of even a routine tonic treatment, that a deteriorated state of the blood is present in nearly all cases of consumption; in some the cause, and in others the consequence of the disease. The preparations of iron are very valuable tonics, but in consequence of their exciting property they are indifferently borne. I think I have seen the addition of digitalis and nitrate of potass eminently valuable in reconciling the system to its use. I have tried naphtha in many cases, but have only found it of advantage in the bronchitic variety. Should it, however, prove as useful in this variety in the hands of others as it has in mine, I think that my friend Dr. John Hastings will not be undeserving the thanks of the profession for having introduced it to their notice.

(To be continued.)

CASE OF MELÆNA.

By C. R. BREE, M.R.C.S.E., Stowmarket.

William S., aged 25, a gentleman's servant, of slight make, sallow complexion, and general unhealthy cachectic appearance, was attacked on Sunday, July 6th, with faintness, giddiness, a difficulty of expiration, and a sense of sinking in the epigastric region. When I