or it may arise spontaneously, without any evident or sufficient cause. Some years ago very opposite opinions were entertained as to the real cause and nature of the dropsical effusion consequent on scarlatina, some very eminent men contending for its inflammatory character, others regarding it in the opposite light, and attributing it to debility. That both opinions were tenable to a certain extent, experience has long ago convinced me, and that treatment must be modified according to the character of the case is no less certain. So far, however, as I have been personally called upon to treat the disease, the latter cause has been decidedly most prevalent, as in no case have I ever deemed active depletion necessary, nor have I ever had reason to regret the omission of such—when requisite—very valuable means. In all the cases which have occurred in my practice, purgatives, diuretics, tonics, the warm bath, friction, and rigid attention to diet, with careful protection against cold and damp, have proved fully adequate to a complete and permanent cure. In conclusion I would observe, that the less the primary diseases are interfered with by medical treatment the better.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, May 23, 1846.

(To be continued.)

CASE OF COMPOUND FRACTURE AT THE ELBOW-JOINT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

If you think the following case is worth insertion, inasmuch as the relation of many such cases might expose the consequences of casualties occurring during the treatment of them, you will have the goodness to give it a place in your Journal.

I am, Sir,

Yours very respectfully,

W. ALLISON.

Nov. 14th, 1845. A man, aged 65, of a rheumatic habit, who had lately recovered from broken ribs, had a compound fracture at the elbow-joint, from the wheels of an empty waggon having passed over the arm upon a hard road. A hole in the skin, over the front and upper part of the external condyle of the left humerus, admitted the finger very readily, by which pieces of bone were felt in the joint, detached from the humerus, though not from the supinator and extensor muscles of the forearm. There had been free venous hæmorrhage.

Considering the man's age favourable,—that he was neither so young as to make violent inflammatory action probable, nor so old as to be deficient in necessary vigour, I observed to him, "that his arm might be saved, but that as some of his fingers would be permanently contracted, and as he was a man of property, (not dependent upon labour,) it would be better, under all circumstances, to remove the limb after he had been a night in his own bed; more especially as his natural strength of constitution had been reduced by the accident from which he had but just then recovered." To which he replied, "If it be possible to save the limb, I should prefer it; I don't mind how useless it remains."

The opening in the skin was enlarged two inches, to admit of the separation, by a bistoury, of tendons arising from the pieces of broken bone. The removal of the bits of bone produced a recurrence of the hæmorrhage. Three sutures were used. A piece of lint soaked with blood was placed over the wound, and over that, lint soaked in the compound tincture of benzoin, to seal it up air tight. A roller was applied over the whole.

The man, having his arm placed in a sling, was taken home in a chaise, from a small cottage by the road, a distance of five miles. It may be here remarked, that the circumstances of his being in a very small cottage with a family of children, and being faint from loss of blood, rendered *immediate* amputation undesirable. On the following day the roller had become soaked with blood. Cold wetted linen was then applied over the whole arm, during some days. Having no fire-place in his cold bed-room, (nor in the house, except one in a small kitchen,) he "took cold" with getting up to his night chair, whilst using the wetted linen, and became rheumatic; still his elbow-joint and his constitution remained quiet until he took a second cold, about the 11th of December.

December 6th, (the twenty-first day from the accident.) The whole of the lint, &c., were taken off the arm. Two sutures were loose from ulceration, and the third was removed. The wound had entirely healed.

11th, (the coldest part of the winter.) The man became feverish, with very acute rheumatic pains, from fresh cold; the joint became inflamed, and supuration ensued.

The skin gave way on the 17th, and from the 22nd the wound began to fill up by granulations. After that time the limb, during six or eight weeks, gradually recovered its natural size, and May 5th, (upwards of six months after the accident, and nearly five from the suppuration in the joint,) the wound had healed, at which time the man was in a very good state of health, but the joint is ankylosed to but a trifling extent, the forearm cannot be borne out of a sling, and the fingers are almost useless. Next winter the limb may be frequently the seat of rheumatism.

Remarks.—If the arm had been amputated on the day after the accident, the man would have incurred considerably less expense, and would not have been so helpless in dressing as he now is; but he would always have thought that the arm might have been saved, and that it would have been very useful to him. It is probable, that if he had had a fire in his bedroom, the process of reparation would have been completed without suppuration in the joint. He is quite satisfied with his recovery, and content with the present state of the limb.

PROVINCIAL

Medical & Surgical Journal.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 1846.

So large a number of the members of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association are to be found among the supporters of the Sydenham Society, that the proceedings of the latter body cannot but be a subject of considerable interest to the Association.