

the torn surface exhibited a granular aspect; mucous membrane of the stomach healthy. *Intestines*, not examined. *Kidneys* very soft, and the vascular part darker than natural. *Spleen*: very soft, reduced to a dark-coloured pulp.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE, WITH REMARKS.

Symptoms and diagnosis.—The history of this case and the post-mortem appearances are very imperfectly detailed, yet they leave little room for doubt that there existed acute pericarditis.

The affection was an acute one, and apparently inflammatory. There was pain in the region of the heart, increased by pressure over the intercostal spaces, but more especially by pressure directed upwards under the left false ribs. The function of the heart was greatly disturbed. The ventricular contractions were morbidly strong, excessively irregular, and frequently intermitted. The pulse, at first only 70, afterwards rose to 120 or 130, and could scarcely be counted, on account of its indistinctness and irregularity.

There was a morbid sound from the first in the region of the heart. The description of this on June 15th, compared with that on admission, is probably applicable only to a friction sound. There may have been a bellows murmur in addition, but of this there is no proof. The mere quality of the sound was not distinctive. At first it was systolic only, but afterwards accompanied both the heart's movements. At this time there was no evidence of any serous effusion into the pericardium, and there could not have been much. Hence the strong impulse, the general diffusion of the friction sound, and the presence of the healthy second sound at the base of the heart. If this view be correct, the undulatory movement described on the 15th deserves to be noticed. It could not have been due to adhesions of the pericardium, nor probably, as we have seen, to much, if to any, serous effusion. The only cause remaining is enlargement of the heart, and this agrees with the position of the movement so low down, and so far to the left side. When the heart was last examined just before the patient's death, no sounds, either healthy or morbid, were heard, and this quite accords with the absence of lymph and the presence of serum observed in the pericardium when the body was examined.

The vomiting, which was urgent at first, and frequent afterwards, was probably connected with the inflammation in the pericardium. The stomach was found to be healthy.

Complications.—1. There was some old disease of the heart. The valves of the left side are described as being leathery. There was perhaps some previously existing hypertrophy, and both might be the sequelæ of acute rheumatism, from which the patient had suffered severely. 2. Was there inflammation of the substance of the heart? The description of the anatomical appearances does not enable us to answer this question. The heart was unusually soft and dilated, and these might be effects of carditis. The excessively dispirited action of the organ might also thus receive an explanation; but the softness might be due to incipient putrefaction, and we are not informed whether this was present or not. The body was examined thirty hours after death, at the end of August, and the ready separation of the pleura from the lung is sufficient to lead to a suspicion of commencing decomposition. 3. Were the convulsions and other nervous symptoms due to inflammation of the brain and its membranes, or were they sympathetic phenomena connected with the disease in the pericardium? Many would probably at once refer these symptoms to inflammation within the head, yet the evidence in favour of this view seems to me not unequivocal. The symptoms were such as inflammation often produces, but it is equally certain that they may all arise without any structural alteration in the brain; and the post-mortem appearances are not satisfactorily detailed, and leave us quite at liberty to suppose that there might be no more than the mechanical congestion likely to result from the dyspnea which the convulsions and chest disease produced. The impression at the time was, that there was inflammation of the brain and its membranes, but I cannot now feel much confidence in this impression not otherwise corroborated.

If these epileptiform convulsions were sympathetic, they appear to point to an unusual susceptibility in the nervous system—and the excessively disturbed action of the heart itself; if not due to carditis, was probably another effect of the irritation reflected from the nervous centres.

Causes.—The causes of the cardiac inflammation cannot be stated with certainty. There is no evidence of any renal disease which is the chief cause of non-rheumatic pericarditis. There was no inflammation of the pleura, or lungs, or diaphragm,

which could, by its extension, have implicated the heart. The cause was, therefore, either rheumatism, or it is unknown. In favour of the possibility of the pericarditis being rheumatic, several circumstances may be noticed. 1. The patient had had two severe attacks of acute rheumatism at a former period, and was therefore predisposed to the disease. 2. His occupation (a coal wagoner) would expose him to cold and wet. His habits are not mentioned, but a large proportion of such persons are intemperate. 3. The co-existence of very decided bronchitis renders it probable that the patient had been exposed to cold. 4. The profuse sweats mentioned on the 25th June as having been present during several days. 5. We have seen, in the last three or four published cases, how very trifling the affection of the joints may be in rheumatic pericarditis. The very imperfect account of the present case affords no guarantee that a similarly slight articular affection may not have been present, and escaped observation. 6. It is very possible, and even probable, from the cases already referred to, that pericarditis and that state of the system which is peculiar to acute rheumatism, may be present together without any articular affection whatever. In other words, that the rheumatic diathesis, according to the opinion expressed by Dr. Todd,* may be a cause of disease of the heart.

Treatment.—When first admitted, the patient was bled to a pint, and afterwards cupped to twelve ounces. The only obvious effect of the loss of blood was relief of the pain. Mercury was freely given, and the gums became affected on the sixth day. It deserves to be remarked that the friction sound continued, notwithstanding the ptyalism, for at least several weeks, and that there is no evidence whatever that the course of the disease was in this case at all modified by the mercury. Comparing the symptoms present when the patient was discharged (viz., the great irregularity of pulse, the morbid sound, and the tenderness under the left hypochondrium) with the appearances found after death, there can be little doubt that the disease had never been cured, but had passed from the acute to the chronic form, which was ultimately fatal. The total duration of the cardiac inflammation, on this supposition, would be about fourteen weeks.

ON A NEW BLACK DRAUGHT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the LANCET for January 10th, 1846, you have done me the honour, and the profession a service, to record a paper of mine on the composition of a New Black Draught, and in addition, you have deemed it needful to append, in the form of a note, an editorial remark, relative to the view professional men will take of that communication. Unable clearly to comprehend the exact intelligence of your observation, I claim a small space once more in your columns to explain to your readers the motives which induced my first contribution. So far, however, as I am capable of appreciating your note, it is certainly jocose enough, but if in earnest, your interpretation of the word "quackery" differs essentially from the common acceptance conveyed by that term, and materially from the definition given by the best English authorities. Dr. Johnson defines the word "quack" "a tricking practitioner in physic," and "quackery" "mean or bad acts in physic." What was there "mean" or "bad" in my communication, Mr. Editor? The liquor sennæ was put forth as capable of effecting a certain given object, a specific effect, not many and contrary objects and effects.

I assure you, Sir, there is not, and never has been, the slightest particle of a quackish spirit in my composition, ergo, no quackery in my acts; and if Dr. Johnson's definition of those terms be correct, I beg to submit, your remark does not apply. If, by any stretch of the imagination, I could have thought that by my contribution I was exposing myself to such unworthy imputations—if I could have believed that any professional gentleman would regard my information as a direct colouring to quackery—if I had thought that there existed the slightest pretext on which to ground such a charge, I would cheerfully have abandoned my intention of communicating that which in my innocence I deemed a good, and left the profession to discover, as best it might, the most elegant form in which to administer a pleasant and effective aperient. I certainly did not dream that the mode of preparation would be required of me, as I never required it of Mr. Colchester—much less did I think that my desire to place in the hands of the profession that which had never been ob-

* Practical Remarks on Gout, Rheumatic Fever, &c. London, 1843. P. 111.

tained before, my intentions should be placed in such a light. I was satisfied with the possession of a fact, which, the moment I had maturely realized, I published.

If I, as a general practitioner, had manufactured the article alluded to, and then puffed it forth to the world with a novel name, and a flaming and exaggerated account of its properties—capable of producing every opposite effect—sold and dispensed only by me or my agents—the secrecy of manufacture known only and kept to myself,—then, and in such case, I think your stricture would have been merited; but when my attention was first directed to the liquor sennæ comp. by Mr. Colchester, I had no other object than to obtain a knowledge of its effects as an agent in fulfilling the indications he proposed; and upon the acquirement of such information, sufficiently proved, without hesitation I put you into possession of the simple fact, that through you such fact should be communicated to the profession generally.

Some years ago you did me the honour to publish in *THE LANCET* a paper, by me, on the effects of the ethereal tincture of lobelia inflata. I there stated that I obtained the preparation I employed from Apothecaries Hall; you did not then require the formula of the tincture, of which I was, and still am ignorant; but the absence of this knowledge, either to me, to you, or others, has never lessened the efficacy of the lobelia; nor will the publication of the exact form employed in the manufacture of the liquor sennæ comp. deteriorate, in the minutest degree, from the high and deserved praise which Mr. Colchester has won for himself, in having produced that which no other pharmaceutical chemist ever yet produced anterior to him; nor will it add one additional virtue to his preparation, though it would, I have little doubt, considerably diminish the favour which liquor sennæ comp. would gain among medical men.

You, Mr. Editor, are generous enough to allow me to differ without suspecting unworthy intentions; you are not illiberal enough to quarrel with me because I express an opinion strongly and emphatically adverse to your own; and therefore permit me to remark, that I am fully satisfied that the profession at large cannot, and will not, regard my paper as one savouring of "quackery;" and you, I imagine, upon reconsideration, will do me the justice to cancel your observation, and acknowledge it was too hastily penned.

I have not been a reader of your excellent journal, now a period of fifteen years, without observing, that upon all occasions you have ever expressed yourself as most jealous of the honour of the profession; and the slightest deviation from that high dignity which should ever be preserved by professional men, has met, on every occurrence, with the severest censure and condemnation from you. That which you claim for the profession and its privileges, I claim an equivalent for the pharmaceutical chemists and their privileges. Let me solicit an equal care and protection for him, who, if he be an honourable man, has a most legitimate right to credit and emolument, accruing from a discovery, which, after much time, expense, and trouble, and labour, art, and knowledge, he has perfected, and that, too, for the good of humanity.

Thinking and feeling as I do, and anxious as I am that every man should wear the wreath his own skill and handiwork has wove, I cannot require the information you seek of Mr. Colchester; nevertheless, I have placed the number of your journal in his hands, and must leave him to act as may appear best.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

Curtain-road, Shoreditch, Jan. 1st, 1846.

ALFRED BOWER.

ON A NEW BLACK DRAUGHT.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—I beg to observe, in answer to your note at the conclusion of Mr. Bower's letter, in *THE LANCET* of the 10th January, respecting my compound senna liquor, that the only active medicinal agent in its composition is senna in a concentrated form, deprived of its mucilage and other impurities, combined with a very pure extract of liquorice root, and a little sassafras, with a small proportion of spirit. I consider this explanation of the preparation sufficiently satisfactory for the medical profession to make use of it with perfect confidence.

Considering the time, trouble, and expense bestowed by me upon the compound senna liquor, in order to bring it to its present state of purity, uniformity, and elegance, I feel it no injustice to the profession to withhold entering further into the minutiae of its manipulation, upon which its uniformity of action and pleasantness of taste so much depend; and, indeed, were I to make public every particular with regard to its preparation, I feel certain that the members of the profession

would not thereby be benefited, being themselves unable, for want of time or the necessary apparatus, to make the article; they might be induced to purchase the compound senna liquor of other makers, some of whom, as the preparation is troublesome, complicated, and tedious, would probably do with this as has been done with some other valuable preparations, soon reduce the strength, alter the method, shorten the time absolutely necessary for its manufacture, &c., until the compound senna liquor would lose the reputation it has obtained, and perhaps be rejected by the profession as useless, inert, and altogether unworthy their patronage and confidence.

Hoping you will be so kind as to insert this in an early number of your valuable publication,

I remain, Sir, yours respectfully,

WILLIAM MARKHAM COLCHESTER.

Old-street-road, Jan. 1846.

THE SECRET LAWLESS COMMITTEE.

To the Committee of the National Association of General Practitioners in Medicine and Surgery.*

GENTLEMEN,—It having been announced, on authority, that her Majesty's Secretary of State has determined on abandoning his medical Bill, a crisis has arrived in the affairs of the medical profession, which renders it incumbent on you, in the faithful discharge of the duties confided to you, to declare publicly and explicitly what you have done to produce this result. You are bound to show to the profession that your efforts have been honest and disinterested; that your intentions are honourable; in a word, that you may have been deceived, but have not deceived them.

Your enemies—and they are neither few nor insignificant—already assail your character as a public body; while your friends, although still trusting that the result arrived at is not your fault, though it may be your misfortune, are constrained to acknowledge that the cause confided to your hands has been most unfortunate since you undertook its protection. With a liberality as unwarranted as unexpected, compromise and concession have followed each other in quick succession, until, at length, having nothing left to concede, you yourselves declared that "concession had reached its utmost limits." True; it could go no farther.

Your mysterious secrecy was especially unfortunate, as, although the position of many of your members placed them almost above suspicion, there are also many with whom it is otherwise, whose corporate interests tend to the present unhappy aspect of medical reform, and are best promoted by the defeat we have just sustained. Their presence on your Committee required that your proceedings should have been less private, and causes the integrity of your conduct to be suspected.

Not twelve months since, the cause of medical reform was confided to your hands—it was then all but triumphant; the exertions of medical reformers had succeeded, after years of toil, in exciting the attention of the public as well as of the profession, and in awakening her Majesty's Secretary of State to a due sense of our grievances, and to the expression of his intention of remedying them; the press of every political shade supported us; victory was all but in our hands. We confided in you, and cheerfully left the laurel we had hardly earned to be gathered by you. Alas! a few short months have sadly changed the scene. Under your auspices, the grievances of the profession have been disregarded—their rights frittered away—injury tamely submitted to has been followed by insult; and, to fill the cup of our degradation, her Majesty's Secretary of State has declared us unworthy of his notice.

In that happy state of ignorance as to their political affairs, in which it has pleased you to maintain the members of the medical profession, I know not what we should expect—conjecture alone remains. Allow me, then, to adopt the language of interrogation, as best suited to my condition, and inquire as follows:—

Are we still to possess twenty heads, but not one home?

Are the members of the profession to be still deprived of all corporate rights and privileges?

Are the few to continue to monopolize the honours of the profession, to the exclusion of the thousands, and reap the advantages purchased with their money and procured by their exertions?

Are the members of the College of Surgeons to be still degraded by the stamp of inferiority, whilst their juniors in age,

* We had not space for the whole of this letter. The Committee, as it is at present constituted, can do nothing but mischief. There ought to be a GENERAL MEETING of the members of the Association.—ED. L.