THE TREATMENT OF ACUTE RHEUMATISM BY SALICIN.

BY T. MacLAGAN, M.D.

(Concluded from p. 343.)


On Feb. 8th was ailing, and at night was seized with severe pain in the back and limbs, accompanied by fever and tenderness of painful parts.

Feb. 9th.—Skin hot and covered with cold perspiration; tongue dry; bowels moved; has great pain in lumber region, in knees, in calves of legs, and in elbow and wrist joints, all which parts are tender on pressure; no headache; pulse 104; temperature 102°. To have fifteen grains of salicin every two hours.

Feb. 10th.—Had a better night; pain much less; feels that the powders do him good; tongue cleaner; profuse acid perspiration; bowels moved; pulse 70; temperature 98°. To continue the salicin every three hours.

Feb. 11th.—Passed a good night; is almost free from pain; still perspiring freely; pulse 70; temperature 98°. Remained well, except for aching in knees for a few days.

CASE 5. Subacute rheumatism.—Jane S.—, aged twenty-three. For the last three weeks has had rheumatic pains, for which she has been taking nitrate of potash with some benefit.

Nov. 30th.—Five days ago she had chivering and much increase of pain. Face flushed; skin warm, not perspiring; pulse 108; temperature 100°; heart normal; tongue furrowed in centre; the joints of wrists and fingers are swollen and tender on both hands; knees painful and tender to touch, but not swollen. To have half an ounce of castor oil, and twenty grains of salicin every four hours.

Dec. 1st.—No salicin to be had from chemist; has therefore had none. Bowels acted; passed a restless night; had a good deal of pain; wrists and fingers still much swollen; pulse 92; temperature 100°.

Dec. 2nd.—Commenced the salicin yesterday evening; had rather a restless night; general state much the same; pulse 96; temperature 100°.

Dec. 3rd.—Passed a much better night; pains gone from wrists and knees, but has a little pain in left shoulder, which is tender to the touch; fingers and wrists can now be freely moved without pain; pulse 76; temperature 98°.

Progressed favourably.

CASE 6. Subacute rheumatism.—William M.—, aged thirty, has twice had rheumatic fever. Is of nervous temperament.

Dec. 31st.—Skin hot and covered with cold perspiration; pulse 108; temperature 100°; heart normal; tongue furrowed in centre; the joints of wrists and fingers are swollen and tender on both hands; knees painful and tender to touch, but not swollen. To continue the salicin every four hours.

Jan. 2nd.—Feels better; still mucous pain in left arm, but nowhere else; pulse 84; temperature 100°; takes food with relish. Continue salicin.

3rd.—Good night; no pain; pulse 76; temperature 99°.

4th.—Quiet night; free from pain; pulse 60; temp. 99°.

5th.—Ditto, ditto; pulse 56; temp. 93°.

Remained well.

CASE 7.—James R.—, aged forty-four. Has had rheumatic fever three or four times, lasting on each occasion from three to six weeks. Two days ago felt that his old enemy was returning.

Dec. 31st.—Has anxious expression; skin perspiring freely, acid reaction; tongue moist and furrowed; right wrist and fingers of both hands swollen and tender; has a soft (probably old) astatic murmur at aper; pulse 96; temperature 99°; bowels open. To have fifteen grains of salicin every three hours.

Jan. 1st.—Bad night; great pain in wrists; knees not so bad; profuse acid perspiration; pulse 96; temperature 99°.

2nd.—Better night; bowels moved; tongue rather cleaner; complains only of left wrist; pulse 92; temperature 99°.

3rd.—Good night; no pain, only stiffness in affected joints, which are still somewhat swollen; pulse 94; temp. 98°.

4th.—Pain all gone; skin natural; cardiac murmur unchanged; pulse 88; temperature 98°.

Improvement continued. Said that nothing ever did him so much good as the powders, and that he never got over an attack so quickly.

CASE 8. Chronic rheumatism.—Alexander L.—, aged fifty-five, married, was, four years ago, confined to the house for four months with rheumatism. Two years ago he was laid up in the same way for six weeks. On neither occasion were the hands affected, the pain being in the muscles and bones.

Three weeks ago his old symptoms recurred rather suddenly, and have continued. During this time, under medical advice, he has been taking various salts of potash, but without the least benefit.

Dec. 1st.—Complains of pain in back and limbs, much increased by any movement; has not got beyond the chair at the side of his bed for three weeks, and that he gets into with great difficulty; skin natural; tongue clean; bowels constipated; pulse 68, feeble; temperature 99°; heart-sounds normal. To have an aperient, and thirty grains of salicin every six hours.

3rd.—Not seen yesterday. Slept better last night than he has done for some time; feels decidedly better. His wife states that he is more cheerful than he has been for weeks; pains not so severe; pulse 68, temperature 96°.

5th.—Feels much better; can move about the house freely, having only slight pain in the lumber region and in the left leg; pulse 68; temperature 93°. To have fifteen grains of salicin every four hours.

He continued to improve for some six weeks after leaving off the salicin, when his symptoms returned as badly as before, and this time accompanied by pain and swelling of right wrist. Took the powders of his own accord, and was at work again in a week. Says that nothing ever did him so much good as the powders.

The accompanying charts will show at a glance the daily range of temperature and rate of pulse in the seven cases of acute and subacute rheumatism which have been given. The continuous white lines indicate the temperature, the dotted lines the pulse.

From an examination of these charts alone, especially of the first four, one would almost certainly conclude that they indicated the ranges of temperature and pulse of so many cases of febricula, so rapid and so decided is the diminution of fever which followed the administration of the salicin. A perusal of the details of the cases, however, indicates their true nature. So much febrile disturbance, accompanied by pain and swelling of joints and profuse acid perspiration, is seldom, if ever, seen without the coincidence of a constitutional rheumatic poison could produce. The sudden arrest of the painful symptoms, and the coincident rapid fall of pulse and temperature, followed so immediately on the administration of the salicin that it is impossible not to attribute this to its use. Cases of acute rheumatism do sometimes improve in the most unexpected manner, but I never saw a case get well so quickly as those of which I have given details above. A succession of such cases cannot but be
attribution to the peculiarity of the treatment. We have
seen that this treatment has a good foundation in reason
and analogy. The details of these cases afford, as far as
a few cases can, practical evidence of its utility.

From so small an experience of salicin as I have had, I
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