

Essays on hypochondriasis, and other nervous affections / by John Reid.

Contributors

Reid, John, 1776-1822.

Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine

Publication/Creation

London : Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1823.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/jaxr4tph>

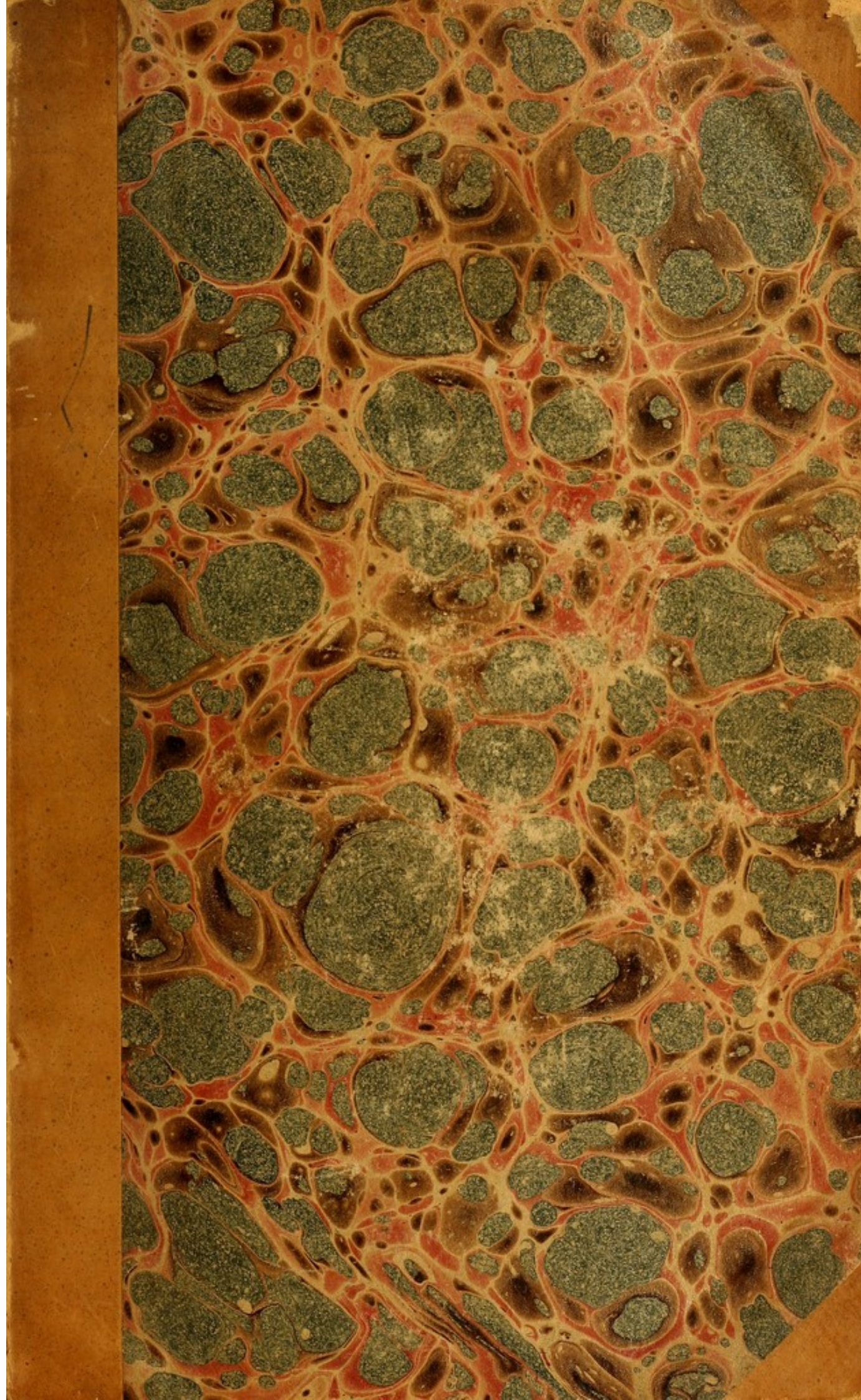
License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, through the Medical Heritage Library. The original may be consulted at the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical School. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

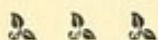


Essex Institute Library



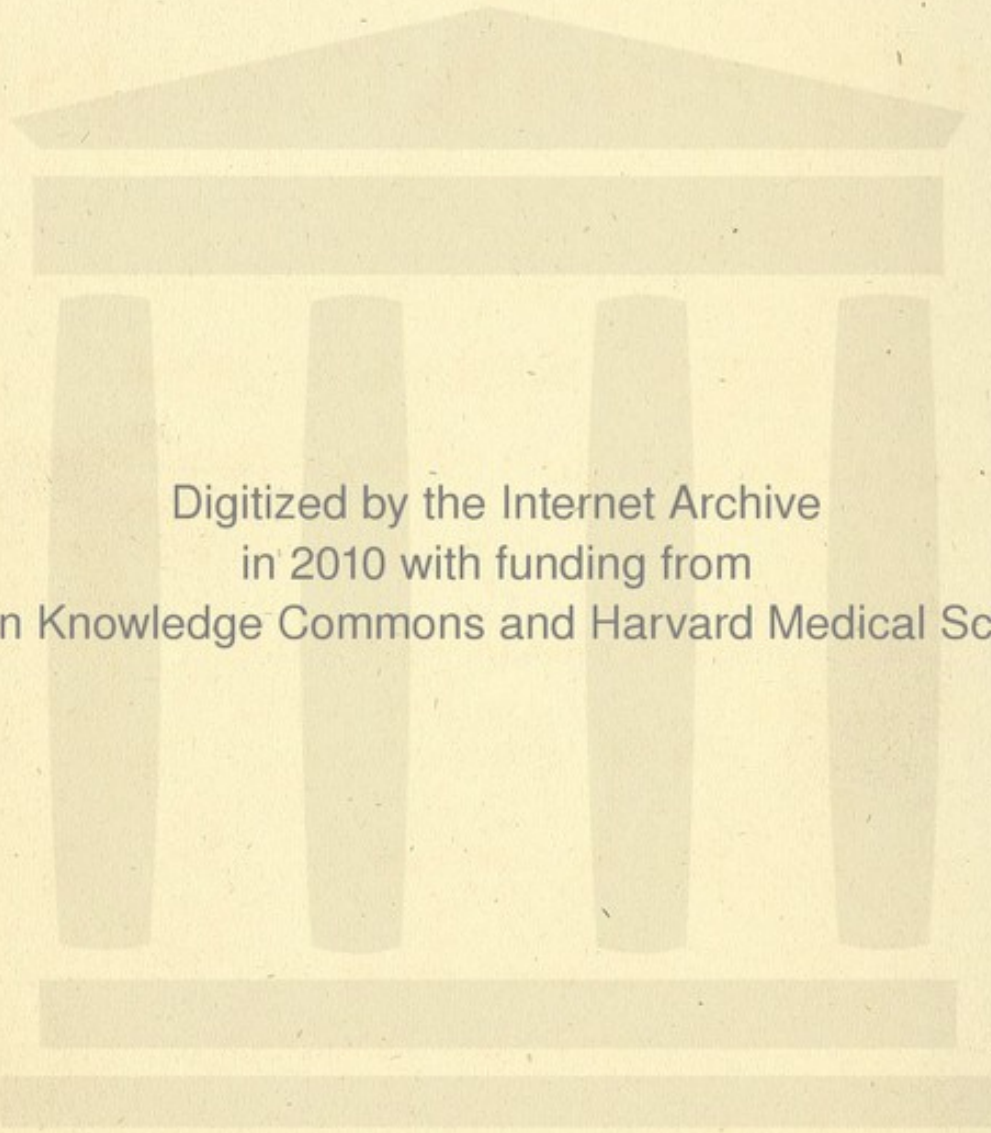
DEPOSITED BY

THE ESSEX SOUTH DISTRICT
MEDICAL SOCIETY



Received October 6, 1906

Dr. P. P. P.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Open Knowledge Commons and Harvard Medical School

ESSAYS
ON
HYPOCHONDRIASIS,
AND
OTHER NERVOUS AFFECTIONS.

BY
JOHN REID, M.D.

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, LONDON;
AND LATE PHYSICIAN TO THE FINSBURY DISPENSARY.

THE THIRD EDITION,
WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1823.

19.9.89

I have chosen those subjects of these Essays, wherein I take human life to be most concerned, which are of most common use, or most necessary knowledge, and wherein, though I may not be able to inform men more than they know, I may perhaps give them occasion to consider more than they do.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE.-

LONDON:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

THE following work having been out of print for some years past, I have been at length induced to submit to the Public a second edition of it, with considerable additions, as well as other alterations. Upon so fertile and extensive a subject, it would be easier to write a large book than a small one, as it is more difficult properly to select and compress, than merely to amass observations.

In a work intended for general perusal, it has been my care to avoid, as far as it could be done, not only all technical phrases, but also those minutiae of detail either in the narration of cases or in an

account of their treatment, more especially the pharmaceutical part of it, which would have been proper, and even necessary, in a volume meant exclusively for the professional reader. At the same time, I am not without a hope, that this collection of Essays, although divested as much as possible of a medical appearance, may contain remarks not altogether undeserving the notice of a practitioner in physic, as well as of the community at large.

J. REID.

Grenville-Street, Brunswick-Square,

May 24. 1821.

CONTENTS.

	Page
ESSAY I. The Influence of the Mind on the Body	1
II. The Power of Volition	7
III. The Fear of Death	26
IV. Pride	48
V. Remorse	62
VI. Solitude	80
VII. Excessive Study, or Application of Mind	96
VIII. Vicissitude a Cause, and characteristic Symptom of intellectual Malady	107
IX. Sleep	116
X. Want of Sleep	134
XI. Intemperance	147
The Use of Opium	174
Prosperity often a Source of Inebriety ...	180
XII. Excess of Abstinence	183
XIII. Morbid Affections of the Organs of Sense	188
XIV. Physical Malady the Occasion of Mental Disorder	202
XV. The Atmosphere of London	210
XVI. Dyspeptic and Hepatic Diseases	221
XVII. Palsy, Idiocy, Spasmodic and Convulsive Affections	244
XVIII. The Hereditary Nature of Madness	284
XIX. Old Age'.....	293
Artificial or premature Old Age	298

	Page
ESSAY XX. Lunatic Asylums	302
XXI. The Importance of counteracting the Tendency to Mental Disease	312
Lucid Intervals	317
XXII. Bleeding	321
XXIII. Pharmacy	336
XXIV. Ablution	362
XXV. Bodily Exercise	374
XXVI. Occupation	387
XXVII. Real Evils, a Remedy for those of the Imagination	416

APPENDIX.

Notes from the German of Dr. Haindorf	425
---	-----

ESSAY I.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MIND ON THE BODY.

"I seldom ever observed a heavy, dull, earthy, clod-pated clown, much troubled with nervous disorders, or at least not to any eminent degree."

CHEYNE'S *English Malady*.

HE who, in the study or the treatment of the human machinery, overlooks the intellectual part of it, cannot but entertain very incorrect notions of its nature, and fall into gross and sometimes fatal blunders in the means which he adopts for its regulation or repair. Whilst he is directing his purblind skill to remove or relieve some more obvious and superficial symptom, the worm of mental malady may be gnawing inwardly and undetected at the root of the constitution. He

may be in a situation like that of a surgeon, who at the time that he is occupied in tying up one artery, is not aware that his patient is bleeding to death at another. — Intellect is not omnipotent ; but its actual power over the organized matter to which it is attached is much greater than is usually imagined. The anatomy of the MIND, therefore, should be learnt, as well as that of the body ; the study of its constitution in general, and its peculiarities, or what may be technically called its idiosyncrasies, in any individual case, ought to be regarded as one of the most essential branches of a medical education.

The savage, the rustic, the mechanical drudge, and the infant whose faculties have not had time to unfold themselves, or which (to make use of physiological language) have not as yet been *secreted*, may, for the most part, be regarded as

machines, regulated principally by physical agents. But man, matured, civilized, and by due culture raised to his proper level in the scale of being, partakes more of a moral than of an animal character, and is in consequence to be worked upon by remedies that apply themselves to his imagination, his passions, or his judgment, still more than by those that are directed immediately to the parts and functions of his material organization. Pharmacy is but a small part of physic; medical cannot be separated from moral science without reciprocal and essential mutilation.

Such observations are more particularly apt to occur to one whose station of professional experience is established in the midst of an intellectual, commercial, and voluptuous metropolis, the inhabitants of which exist in a state of more exalted excitement and irritative perturbation,

than can be occasioned by the comparatively monotonous circumstances of rural or provincial existence. Over a still and waveless lake a boat may move along steadily and securely, with scarcely any degree of skill or caution in the pilot who conducts it ; whereas on the agitated and uncertain ocean, it requires an extraordinary degree of dexterity and science to ensure the safety of the vessel, and the proper and regular direction of its destined course. “ Thus the practice of medicine is reduced to a few simple rules in the country, and in hospitals ; but it is obliged to multiply, to vary, and to combine its resources, when applied to men of letters, to artists, and to all persons, whose lives are not devoted to mere manual labour.”*

The class of persons whose lives are

* Coup d'œil sur les Révolutions, et sur la Réforme de la Médecine. — *P. J. G. Cabanis.*

devoted to mere manual labour, especially the more indigent part of them, are, to a certain extent, distinguished by the character of their diseases, as well as that of their other evils. They differ from the higher orders, less perhaps in the actual quantity, than in the glaring and obtrusive color of their calamities.

There is no person perhaps who is apt to form so low an estimate of the value of human existence, as a medical man practising amongst the poor, especially amongst the poor of a great city. But it is not impossible that he may exaggerate the excess of their sufferings, by combining, as it is natural for him to do, their external state, with those feelings which he has acquired from very different circumstances and education. As the horrors of the grave affect only the living, so the miseries of poverty exist principally perhaps in the imagination of the affluent.

The labour of the poor man relieves him at least from the burden of fashionable ennui, and the constant pressure of physical inconveniences, from the more elegant, but surely not less intolerable distresses of a refined and romantic sensibility. Even those superior intellectual advantages of education, to which the more opulent are almost exclusively admitted, may in some cases open only new avenues to sorrow. The mind, in proportion as it is expanded, exposes a larger surface to impression.

ESSAY II.

THE POWER OF VOLITION.

“ By all the gods the Romans bow before,
I here *discard* my sickness.”

Julius Cæsar.

“ What care I for the limbs, the thews, the sinews of a man ! Give
me the spirit, Master Shallow.”

Henry the Fourth.

NERVOUS diseases, from their daily increasing prevalence, deserve, at the present time, a more than ordinary degree of attention and interest on the part of the medical practitioner. Yet nothing surely can surpass the inhumanity, as well as the folly, with which patients of this class are too frequently treated. — We often act upon the ill-founded idea that such complaints are altogether dependent upon the power of the will ; a notion which, in pa-

radical extravagance, scarcely yields to the doctrine of a modern, though already obsolete writer, on the Philosophy of Morals, who asserted that no one need die, if, with a sufficient energy, he *determined* to live.* To command, or to advise

* Of a late member of the English bar, whose strong original powers of mind had been obscured and enfeebled by the sensuality of his habits, it has been related that in the extremity of his last illness, when the shadows of death were fast coming over him, he, with a blasphemous audacity, swore, by God, that he would not die ! In this state of morbid and impious rage, he struggled out of his bed, tottered down the stairs, and fell lifeless in the passage. From the exclamation of this unfortunate man, it would seem as if he fancied that he held the reins of life in his hands, and could arrest at will the rapidity of its descending career.

It is remarkable, that a similar story is related in Spence's Anecdotes, recently published, of Salvini, "an odd sort of man, subject to gross absences, and a very great sloven. His behaviour in his last hour was as odd as any of his behaviour in all his lifetime before could have been. Just as he was departing, he cried out in a great passion, 'Je ne veux pas mourir, absolument.'"

a person labouring under nervous depression to be cheerful and alert, is no less idle and absurd, than it would be to command or advise a person, under the direct and most intense influence of the sun's rays, to shiver with cold, or one who is "wallowing naked in December's snows" to perspire from a sensation of excessive heat. The practice of laughing at, or scolding a patient of this class, is equally cruel and ineffectual. No one was ever laughed or scolded out of hypochondriasis. It is scarcely likely that we should elevate a person's spirits by insulting his understanding. The malady of the nerves is in general of too obstinate a nature to yield to a sarcasm or a sneer. It would scarcely be more preposterous to think of dissipating a dropsy of the chest, than a distemper of the mind by the force of ridicule or rebuke. The hypochondriac may feel indeed the edge of

satire as keenly as he would that of a sword ; but although its point should penetrate his bosom, it would not be likely to let out from it any portion of that noxious matter by which it is so painfully oppressed. The external expression of his disorder may be checked by the coercive influence of shame or fear ; but in doing this, a similar kind of risk is incurred to what arises from the repelling of a cutaneous eruption, which, although it conceal the outward appearance, seldom fails still more firmly to establish the internal strength, to increase the danger, and to protract the continuance of the disease. By indirect and imperceptible means the attention may, in many instances, be gently and insensibly enticed, but seldom can we with safety attempt to *force* it from any habitual topic of painful contemplation. In endeavouring to tear the mind from a subject to which it

has long and closely attached itself, we are almost sure to occasion an irreparable laceration of its structure.

Imaginary sorrow is an expression which ought perhaps to be abolished altogether, not merely as a verbal absurdity, but because the employment of it is apt to mislead the judgment, and indirectly to harden the heart of those who are unduly influenced by inaccuracies of language. The ingenious speculatist who affected to disbelieve in an external, material world, was scarcely more irrational than he who doubts the existence of an internal, invisible world, in which we may more properly be said to live and have our being. Sufferings which arise from no palpable or assignable cause, are not the less real or pitiable on that account. There may be some recondite fault in the system of sensation,

which the searching knife of the anatomist is unable to reveal.

However well founded may be these observations, it must still be acknowledged that the different degrees of power which persons of various habits and constitutions appear to possess, not only over the feelings and faculties of the mind, but likewise over what are called the involuntary muscles, and even the blood-vessels of the body, may afford ground for an enquiry, curious at least if not important, how far so desirable a power may be acquired, and to what extent, by some yet undiscovered method of education, it may be elevated and improved.

Dr. Cheyne, in one of his medical treatises, narrates a case, the accuracy of which is established by an irrefragable combination of evidence, of a man who

could die to all appearance, at any time that he chose, and, after having lain for a considerable period exactly as a corpse, was able, as it should seem, by a voluntary struggle, to restore to himself the appearance and all the various functions of animation and intellect. It is to be inferred from the latter part of the story, that the unnatural and painful exertions by which this person assumed the semblance of decease, produced at length a really fatal result. Death would be no longer mocked with impunity. The counterfeit corpse, a few hours after its last revival, relapsed into a state which was capable of no subsequent resuscitation. But the case is so interesting and remarkable, as to deserve our giving it in all the detail with which Dr. Cheyne presents it to his readers.

“ He could die or expire when he pleased, and yet by an effort, or somehow,

he could come to life again. He insisted so much upon our seeing the trial made, that we were at last forced to comply. We all *three* felt his pulse first ; it was distinct, though small and thready, and his heart had its usual beating. He composed himself on his back, and lay in a still posture for some time ; while I held his right hand, Dr. Baynard laid his hand on his heart, and Mr. Skrine held a clear looking-glass to his mouth. I found his pulse sink gradually, till at last I could not feel any by the most exact and nice touch. Dr. Baynard could not feel the least motion in his heart, nor Mr. Skrine perceive the least sort of breath on the bright mirror he held to his mouth. Then each of us, by turns, examined his arm, heart, and breath, but could not, by the nicest scrutiny, discover the least symptom of life in him. We reasoned a long time about this odd appearance as

well as we could, and finding he still continued in that condition, we began to conclude that he had indeed carried the experiment too far, and at last we were satisfied he was actually dead, and were just ready to leave him. This continued about half an hour. By nine o'clock in the morning in autumn, as we were going away, we observed some motion about the body, and upon examination found his pulse and the motion of his heart gradually returning ; he began to breathe gently and speak softly. We were all astonished to the last degree at this unexpected change, and after some further conversation with him and with ourselves, went away fully satisfied as to all the particulars of this fact, but not able to form any rational scheme how to account for it. He afterwards called for his attorney, added a codicil to his will, &c., and calmly and com-

posedly died about five or six o'clock that evening." *

Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, reports cases which were somewhat similar, but by no means equally wonderful with the preceding. "Celsus speaks of a priest that could separate himself from his senses when he list, and lie like a dead man void of life and sense. *Qui, quoties volebat, mortuo similis jacebat, auferens se a sensibus.* Cardan brags of himself, that he could do as much, and that when he list." †

Such instances serve to show that the will can perform wonders in the control and management of our corporeal frame. If such an extraordinary degree of command be possible, as has been here repre-

* Cheyne's English Malady.

† Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, vol. i. v. 134. octavo edit.

sented, it is fair to conclude that we may have in general a greater power than we are aware of over the animal and vital functions. If, by a determination of the mind, it be practicable in some cases to suspend altogether the appearance of life, it is reasonable to believe that, by the same means, we may put at least a temporary stop to the symptoms of disease. We would not be paradoxical or extravagant enough to assert, that for a person to be in health, it is sufficient that he wills it. But without transgressing the moderation of truth, we may venture to give it as our opinion, that a man often indolently bends under the burden of indisposition, which a spirited effort would, in the first instance, have shaken from his shoulders. If, upon the approach of the malady, he had resolutely set his face against it, he would probably have arrested it in its threatened attack.

In many diseases, especially in those which are called nervous, a suspension of the symptoms has not unfrequently been found to occur, in consequence of the same or indeed any other complaint attacking one who is particularly near or interesting to the patient. In cases even of contagious fever, a mother seldom feels herself sick, until the sickness of her child is over. The affectionate solicitude which is constantly kept up, even when it does not prevent the body from receiving contagion, often prevents the mind from being for some time aware of its influence. No sooner however does the recovery of her child take place, than in general it is succeeded by the indisposition of the parent, which, although it be delayed, cannot fail to be aggravated and rendered still more dangerous, by the extreme degree of

labour, watchfulness, and anxiety that immediately preceded its appearance.

I was once consulted concerning an hypochondriacal lady, who complained principally of an invincible indolence and languor. She seemed almost incapable of voluntary motion. This apparent incapacity had been sanctioned and confirmed by authority as well as indulgence. She had been told by a very complaisant physician that "exertion would be poison to her," and had too literally reposed under the shelter of that professional opinion. Many, from an anxiety to avoid this falsely-imagined poison, reject the most effectual antidote to the real miseries of life, as well as to a large proportion of its diseases. To a patient, however, whose malady is lassitude, exertion should be prescribed at first only in very small doses. Such a person would be apt to be exhausted even by an ordinary task of exer-

cise, and might thus be discouraged from further efforts at activity. In endeavouring to put the mind in motion, we ought to take care, lest we shatter so delicate a machine by the violence of the impulse.

In the class of what are called nervous affections, it unfortunately happens that the very essence of the disease often consists in a debility of the resolution, that the ailment of body arises from an impotency of spirit, a palsy of the power of resistance. A malady occasioned by the weakness of the mind is not likely to be cured by its energy. A tendency to sickness of the stomach may often be overcome by striving against it, but a squeamish disgust of life cannot in the same degree be counteracted by a similar kind of exertion. It is not uncommon to say to a drooping or desponding valetudinarian, "Only exert yourself, and you will get

the better of your complaint ;” whereas, in many instances of this kind, it might as well be said to an invalid confined to his bed by a paralysis of his limbs, only run or walk, and you will be well. People in general are apt to think that a man under the weight of constitutional or habitual melancholy may keep up his spirits, as a little Miss can hold up her head, upon merely being *bid* to do so. It is often as impossible for an hypochondriac by any voluntary effort to get the better of his complaint, as for a man of ordinary stature to gain an ascendancy when struggling under the compression of a giant. After an attack of nervous affection, Romney observed in one of his letters, “I feel like one escaped from an enchantment where some fiend presided.”

Madness may be said in general to arise from a deficiency in the faculty of self-

control. This disease shows itself, for instance, in the thoughts of the insane being all communicated in speech, without any restraint or discrimination. Whereas, in a healthy state of intellect, a man is always on the watch, that no disgraceful or ridiculous thought should straggle out of the secret inclosure of his mind. The passions which were disposed to predominate before madness, cannot fail to be rendered still more conspicuous afterwards. The veil is rent which concealed, the resistance is overcome which controlled them. What was before inlaid, now becomes embossed. Hence it happens, that a man often appears most himself when he is said to be beside himself.

Although in an actual disease of the mind, little comparatively can be effected by the enfeebled power of volition, much may be done by exertion, in guarding

against the first approaches of mental malady. By endeavouring, from benevolent motives, to smother the expression of our sorrows, we often mitigate their inward force. If we cannot imbibe the spirit, it is often a profitable, as well as a good-natured hypocrisy, to put on the appearance of cheerfulness.

By seeming gay, we grow to what we seem.

It was the remark of a person of more than common sagacity, "Only wear a mask for a fortnight, and you will not know it from your real face." By assuming the semblance of what he is not, a man will gradually cease to be what he is.

Cheerfulness, and even hilarity, when unprovoked by unwholesome incentives, undegraded by brutality, or untainted by licentiousness, instead of being interdicted as a crime, ought to be prescribed and encouraged as one of the means of urging

a perhaps too lazy circulation, and of promoting a sufficient quantity and regularity of salutary secretions. A man may be merry upon principle, and make a point occasionally of taking a laugh, as others do a walk, for the benefit of his health. The advice of the old Spanish gentleman was sufficiently absurd, who, when his son was setting off on a voyage to the Indies, took leave of him in these words: "My son, in the first place, keep thy gravity; in the next place, fear God." A celebrated Italian comedy turns altogether upon a stratagem to cure an hypochondriac by making him laugh.

It is much in our power to look on the sunny side of things, instead of keeping the eye constantly fixed on the darkened hemisphere of human life. There is no faculty of the mind which it is of more consequence should be exercised and cultivated from the earliest youth, than

that of self-control. This power is to be improved by exercise, as well as that of the memory or the muscles. A person who has been brought up in the habit of doing every thing he pleases, will at length become incapable of being pleased with any thing.

ESSAY III.

THE FEAR OF DEATH.

—
“ Oh, our life's sweetness !

That we the pain of death would hourly bear,

Rather than die at once !”

K. Lear.

“ The Egyptians in their hieroglyphics expressed a melancholy man by a hare sitting in a form, as being a most timorous as well as solitary creature.”

BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy.*

—
AN undue fear of death is one of the most ordinary symptoms of hypochondriasis, and not the least frequent perhaps amongst the causes which produce it ; unless, indeed, we consider the disease as already formed, as soon as this feeling has encroached, in any inordinate degree, upon the tranquillity of the mind.

It is a circumstance somewhat remarkable, that those persons should be in general found to dread most their departure from this state of being, to whom it has proved least productive of enjoyment. The passion for life would seem to be like that for country, which is said to be felt with the greatest vivacity by the native of barren regions.

Upon an apparently similar principle, after existence has lost every thing that could enliven or embellish it, we often become more enamoured of its actual deformity than we were with its former loveliness. When all is gone by, that could render the world reasonably dear to us, our attachment to it not only remains, but appears frequently to be strengthened rather than impaired, by the departure of whatever could justify its continuance. The love of life, one might fancy, in some cases, to be a

product formed from the decomposition of its pleasures.

These remarks are in no case so well illustrated as in that of many a nervous invalid, to whom the continuance of being is often only the longer lingering of torture. The unhappy hypochondriac is unwilling to lay down the burden which oppresses him. The rack of life upon which he is stretched he prefers to the repose of the grave. He is loath to relinquish that breath which is spent in little else than sighs and lamentations. To him existence is a chronic malady, and yet he feels an insuperable aversion from its only effectual cure. I was once present when a poor patient of a dispensary, conscious that he was labouring under the last agonies of asthma arising from water in the chest, breathed a confession, that "he was ashamed of feeling so much attached to this last *rag* of life." This

peculiar species of dotage, this fondness, as it were, for the mere function of respiration, can be explained only by that invincible obstinacy of hope which yields to no experience. We persist in looking for the sweetest part of the draught at the bottom of the cup. That felicity which the "first sprightly runnings" of life could not give, we fondly expect may be extracted from the feculence of age. Such an infatuation with regard to the future, may be considered as, in some respects, a desirable ingredient in the composition of our frame. It is a delusion which mercifully supplies what would otherwise be a dreadful want in the realities of life. On the other hand, an almost unceasing and fearful looking forward to the end of our journey, prevents our seeing many of the flowers by which the path is strewn, and induces a distaste for nearly every cordial which might otherwise have

innocently refreshed us in the course of our weary pilgrimage. The habitual horror which thus overshadows the mind darkens the little daylight of life. An indulgence in this morbid excess of apprehension not only embitters a man's existence, but may often tend to shorten its duration. He hastens the advance of death by the fear with which his frame is seized at its real or imaginary approach. His trembling hand involuntarily shakes the glass in which his hours are numbered.

Contradictory as it may appear, there are well-attested instances of persons who have been driven even to suicide by the dread of dissolution. It would seem as if they had rushed into the arms of death, in order to shelter themselves from the terrors of his countenance.

The favorable termination of serious disease is to be attributed much oftener, than is in general imagined, to a pacific

indifference on the part of the subject of it, with regard to the ultimate result. Cases have repeatedly occurred in my professional experience, in which, after having cheerfully looked for an event which the sufferer anticipated simply as a release from pain, he has appeared to feel somewhat like disappointment at a recovery which was probably to be attributed, in a great measure, to its not having been anxiously desired. I particularly recollect one instance of a restoration to health from an apparently hopeless disorder, which I ascribed, at the time, to the tranquil cheerfulness of the patient, which powerfully aided the operations of nature, and gave an efficacy altogether unexpected to the applications of art. This patient was one of the Society of Friends; a society whose peaceful tenets and habits prove as favorable to health as they are

to piety and virtue ; with whom Christianity consists principally in composure, and self-regulation constitutes the essence of religion.

In dangerous maladies, the person in whom there is the least fear of dying, has, other circumstances being the same, the fairest chance to survive. Men in critical situations are apt to be overwhelmed by their terrors ; they are drowned by their too eager struggles to emerge ; they would keep afloat, if they remained quiescent.

One circumstance which may tend to protract the life of consumptive patients is, that they in general either do not expect a fatal event, or wait for it with an exemplary and enviable resignation. This interesting, and, for the most part, amiable class of invalids excite the sympathy of others in proportion as they appear to be divested of anxiety about

themselves. Those often seem to leave us most willingly, with whom we are least willing to part.

Predictions of death, whether supposed to be supernatural, or originating from human authority, have often, in consequence of the poisonous operation of fear, been punctually fulfilled. The anecdote is well attested of the licentious Lord Littleton, that he expired at the exact stroke of the clock which, in a dream or vision, he had been forewarned would be the signal of his departure.

It is recorded of a person who had been sentenced to be bled to death, that, instead of the punishment being actually inflicted, he was made to believe merely that it was so, by causing water, when his eyes were blinded, to trickle down his arm. This mimicry however of an operation stopped as

completely the movements of the animated machine, as if an entire exhaustion had been effected of the vivifying fluid. The man lost his life, although not his blood, by this imaginary venesection.

We read of another unfortunate being who had been condemned to lose his head, that the moment after it had been laid upon the block, a reprieve arrived ; but the victim was already sacrificed. His ear was now deaf to the dilatory mercy. The living principle had been extinguished by the fear of the axe, as effectually as it would have been by its fall. “ In Lesinky’s voyage round the world, there is an account of a religious sect in the Sandwich Islands, who arrogate to themselves the power of praying people to death. Whoever incurs their displeasure receives notice that the homicide Litany is about to begin ; and such are the

effects of imagination, that the very notice is frequently sufficient, with these poor people, to produce the effect." *

Tell a timorous man that he will die, and if he has been in the habit of looking up with reverence to your opinion, it may not improbably kill him. Pronounce the sentence with sufficient decision and solemnity, and, under certain circumstances, it will execute itself.

I am no advocate for imposing wantonly or unnecessarily upon the understanding of an invalid, under the pretence of remedying his distemper. Deception is liable to discovery, and when once detected, a man forfeits his future right to credit and authority. By giving hope where it turns out that there was no ground for it, we deprive ourselves of the power, for ever after, of inspiring con-

* Edinburgh Review, No. xlviii. p. 345.

fidence in those cases where even we have ourselves no suspicion of danger. — But by terrifying the imagination, to *create* danger, where none had previously existed; by some treacherous logic to reason a man into an illness, or when a trifling ailment is present, to aggravate it into a serious malady, by representing it as already such, is amongst the basest and the blackest arts of empirical imposture. The practitioner who is capable of such meanness and atrocity, can be compared only to the highwayman who puts you in a state of alarm for your person, in order that he may secure your purse, and who, if he cannot otherwise sufficiently frighten you, has no repugnance to run the risk at least of murder, in order that he may effect his robbery.

If, during a serious illness, a patient hears of the death of some old acquaintance, especially if he be a person of nearly

the same age with himself, or affected with a somewhat similar complaint, it will, not so much from sorrow for the loss, as by exciting or aggravating his selfish apprehensions, be calculated to produce an unfavorable effect upon the character and termination of his malady. Even in ordinary health, the grief we feel for the final departure of a friend, may often arise, in part at least, from the unwelcome hint which it gives us of our own mortality.

Another circumstance which has often accelerated death, is the preparation which we make for it in the disposal of our worldly property. Many a man has died of making his will. After having fixed the signature to his last testament, that kind of prelude to the funereal ceremonies, the spirits and strength of the invalid will often be found irretrievably to sink ; no food will subsequently nourish, nor me-

dicine afford mitigation to his complaint. Such a fact constitutes a powerful argument in favour of performing this duty to survivors, whilst in a state of health and vigour, when the task will have a better chance of being judiciously executed, and, at the same time, without any risk of disturbance or injury to the body or the mind.

It often occurs to medical practitioners to observe in their patients an inexplicable conviction of the incurable nature of their disease, which, whilst it may help to make it so, is of itself a symptom of alarming, if not fatal presage. This presentiment appears like an instinct, or supernatural revelation of the future. I have not often found that a person, in fever for instance, has in fact recovered, whose mind has been strongly impressed with a persuasion that he would not, even when that persuasion has been unaccom-

panied with an anxiety or agitation of spirits which might obstruct recovery, or with that apathy or kind of fatalism which obstinately resists the application of the remedies that are necessary to his restoration. When a patient says, "There is no use in giving me medicine, I am sure that I shall die," he generally proves to be in the right. But this remark does not extend to the case of decided hypochondriacs, whose danger is for the most part in the inverse ratio of their alarm. At the present moment, I know a person of this class, whose conversation exhibits a general superiority of mind, attended however with a partial imbecility. His good sense deserts him only upon the subject of his health. His own opinion of his disease constitutes the worst part of it. His complaint appears to be seated in the stomach, and apprehension seems to be in great measure the creature of

indigestion. There is no circumstance attending his ailments that indicates danger, or is inconsistent with a fair chance of longevity, and yet for a considerable period he has been decidedly of opinion, without being able to give any reason for the inflexible belief, that he shall never recover, and has been long, in his own imagination, trembling on the very edge of the grave.

Instruments have been invented by which the most remote objects of vision may be drawn so near to the eye, as to seem almost in contact with it. Something analagous to this power exists in the mental mechanism of many an hypochondriac, by means of which he approximates to himself events at the greatest distance either in prospect or in retrospect, either before or behind him in the road of life. This power contracts the interval of time, as a telescope does that of space. The most

remote calamity which he anticipates, he feels, as if it were actually crushing him with its weight. From being in the habit of contemplating, with a morbid intensity, the close of his earthly career, he forestalls almost every day of his life, the agonies of dissolution. The spectre of human mortality is continually presenting itself before him in the full dimension of its horrors; so that it is no wonder if actual death be often occasioned by the appalling apparition. It is similar with regard to the past; although the substance of some great calamity has long gone by, its lingering shadow still continues to darken his path. Years make no impression upon the immutability of his feelings. The ideas of recollection are, in general, less lively than those which are produced by an immediate operation upon the senses. But with a certain class of hypochondriacs it is quite otherwise.

The pictures drawn upon the fancy exhibit a more distinct and vivid coloring than belongs to the realities of life.

Hypochondriasis is the more dreadful as a disease, from its being one of the tardiest ministers of death. It is a monster which delights rather in tormenting, than in devouring its prey. Under the influence of this malady, the materials of the human fabric for the most part moulder away almost as imperceptibly as under the leisurely operation of time. We do not see the actual crumbling of the structure ; although, after a certain interval, it may be observed to have lost a considerable portion of its bulk and solidity. The incrustation of melancholy, which gradually grows and thickens over the surface of the mind, seems in some measure to protect that part, and indirectly the whole of our frame, from the ravages of decay. The process of disease is often

more to be dreaded than its mortal termination. In many cases, it is not the tomb, so much as the shadowy and thorny avenue which leads to it, that is the proper subject of horror and of awe. Natural are, for the most part, more cruel than what are called violent deaths. So far as suffering is concerned, who would not rather die of a dagger, than of a dropsy, or fall at once in the field of battle, with an instantaneously mortal wound, than be doomed to bear for years the lingering agonies of cancer, or gradually to yield to the slow underminings of consumption?

Let him who crawls, enamour'd of decay,
Cling to his couch, and sicken years away,
Heave his thick breath, and shake his palsied head;
Ours the fresh turf, and not the feverish bed.

BYRON.

Mac Ivor, the proper hero of Waverley, in contemplating his approaching execution with philosophical calmness, re-

marks, "Nature has her tortures as well as art ; and how happy should we think the man who escapes from the throes of a mortal and painful disorder in the space of a short half-hour ! and this matter, spin it how they will, cannot last so long." The agonies with which dissolution is so generally accompanied, constitute one of the most melancholy mysteries in the providence of God. We ought to consider, however, as in some measure an explanation of it, that the bodily pain of the dying takes off from the edge of his mental apprehension, and that it is a mean, although a severe one, by which we are reconciled to the relinquishment of life, and our attention diverted from the horrors of that dark gulf into which we are about to plunge.

Against the inordinate fear of death, one of the most effectual preservatives is regular and active occupation. In this

way, poverty often precludes the access of evils greater than itself. The fear of death is felt most, where there is no intervening evil to obstruct the view of that ultimate calamity. He whose thoughts are absorbed in the means of living, can think little of the end of life.

The inordinate fear of death, so far as the disease is purely mental, may be in a great measure counteracted by a juster estimate of the value of life, "a state in which much is to be endured, and little, comparatively, to be enjoyed." This correct judgment, when associated with "the gay conscience" of a life that has been spent, upon the whole, honorably and usefully so far as it has advanced, will enable a man, at any stage of its progress, to look forward as well as backward, with no exulting or triumphant, but with a humble and quiet satisfaction.

The Christian is still more highly pri-

vileged. His eye, happily invigorated by faith, is able to penetrate the thick mist which hangs over the tomb, and which, from our unassisted sight, intercepts any further prospect. The light of Divine Revelation is, after all, the *only* light which can effectually disperse the gloom of a sick chamber, and irradiate even the countenance of death.

It is not the fear of death only, which is apt to overshadow the mind of the hypochondriac; he is often the slave of fear, which has no specific object. He trembles under the weight of indefinite apprehension. The terrors of the most gloomy superstition are scarcely more intolerable, than his state of vague and inexplicable timidity. He has no resolution, no enterprise. He is imprudently cautious. The foresight of possible evil shuts him out from the chance of probable advantage. In reference to a highly

estimable person of a hypochondriacal cast, it was once remarked by an ingenious young lady, that "if he had built a ship, he would not have the courage to launch it." An excess of circumspection may be worse even than rashness. A man has been often immortalized by an act of lucky indiscretion. A physician of nervous pusillanimity, rather than incur the risk of being thought to kill one of his patients, would *let* many of them die. He would not do any thing that would seem directly to destroy life; but he would often refrain from doing that which was absolutely necessary to its preservation, — as if murders from omission left no stain upon the character, and inflicted no wound upon the conscience.

ESSAY IV.

PRIDE.

“ Sick of a proud heart : you may call it melancholy if you will
favor the man ; but, by my head, 'tis pride.” *Troilus and Cressida.*

I HAD once an opportunity of being minutely acquainted with the history of a case, in which successive mortifications of an overweening pride at length brought on a state of melancholy, amounting to mental derangement. Such cases are by no means of unfrequent occurrence. None are so liable as the proud to this most humiliating of all afflictions. The patient just referred to, previous to his insanity,

had suffered under several paralytic attacks. I remember being present, when a contemptuous allusion having been made by one of the company to some of his poetical effusions, he suddenly complained of being seized by a numbness very much resembling palsy. The shafts of ridicule or satire, to which he was continually exposing himself, often wounded his vanity, but nothing could destroy it. This buoyant quality, when pressed down, has a wonderful facility in recovering itself. He was one of the multitude of instances which evince the almost necessary connection betwixt "vanity and vexation of spirit."

A young medical student, who was first a pupil, and afterwards a patient of the writer, suddenly took it into his head that he should realize a fortune by attaining academical honours. He accordingly, without making known his inten-

tion to any one, took coach for Cambridge, and entered himself at one of the colleges of that university. Upon his return, he surprized his friends with the information of what he had done. Knowing that he had no pecuniary resources to supply the necessary expense of a college life, and that his mind was as unfurnished and unprepared as his purse for entering into such a course, his friends endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose; but neither argument nor ridicule could produce any impression upon the obstinacy of his resolution. He began the attempt to study the mathematics under a private tutor in London; but after some weeks of probationary labour directed to this object, to his preceptor it became evident, although not so to himself, that he would never succeed in that line of exertion, and he was again urged, with additional emphasis, to desist

from his visionary project. Upon which he declared, that if he were not allowed to persevere in the plan he had adopted, he should inevitably lose his senses. The event shortly justified his prediction ; he fell into a state of decided derangement, of which vanity was the predominant and characteristic feature. In one of my visits to him, when in a state of necessary confinement, he told me that he was the Farnese Hercules ; that it was he, in fact, that had written Dr. Clarke's Travels in Russia ; that he had *done a job* also for Virgil, that is, had composed his Eneid ; that one of the finest paintings of Raffaello had been executed by him ; that he knew every thing. It was not quite clear to me whether he really fancied that all this was true, or that he merely wished to make his hearers believe it ; for maniacs, it may be remarked, are in general altogether unprincipled with re-

gard to veracity. Lying is a part of their disease. This unfortunate young man, after no very long time, recovered his senses, and amongst them a sense of humility, the loss of which had in this, as it has in many other cases, subverted the whole intellectual structure. He went afterwards to the Gold Coast, as a surgeon to the African Company, but died soon after his arrival on that sunny shore.*

* If this patient were still living, I should have felt some hesitation in recording the particulars of his case. A person recovered from insanity, or an hypochondriac, whose disease has never amounted to mania, for the most part feels a horror at his morbid history being laid open to the general eye. Such a person labours under a nervous consciousness of exposure in a publication of his case, even without any clue to the discovery of his name. A printed delineation of his symptoms he feels almost like a dissection of his breathing frame. Although it is more than five-and-twenty years ago, I still distinctly recollect the tone and manner of an unfortunate man suffering from a species of dropsy, which was pointed out to me, then a novice in the study of medicine, as a

Egotism, although neither technically nor vulgarly classed amongst the diseases incident to the human frame, well deserves a place in a system of nosology. Patients of this class are themselves the favorite subjects of their uttered, and of course of their unspoken, meditations. "I," is the prominent pronoun of their conversation.

Egotism, when combined with hypochondriasis, often leads a man to form too high a notion of his bodily as well as of his intellectual stature. It is no very uncommon thing for an hypochondriac to fancy himself too big to get through a door, but I recollect no in-

very curious case: "I wish," said the poor man, "it were not quite so curious." A sympathy with such a feeling ought to deter a writer upon nervous diseases from inserting in his volume a variety of living instances, the particulars of which might otherwise have contributed to the information or entertainment of his readers.

stance in which an invalid of this class has conceived that he was small enough to pass through the key-hole. In the imagination of such patients, the pictures of themselves, when not correctly drawn, for the most part are larger than life. But to this rule there are exceptions ; such, for instance, as that which Zimmerman notices of a man who imagined himself a barley-corn, and was on that account afraid of going out into the open air, lest he should be picked up by the birds.

The humbly nervous ought to be treated with the most encouraging respect, and with the most courtier-like attention. We should endeavour, by expressions of an extraordinary regard for them, to supply the want of satisfaction which they are apt to feel with themselves. On the other hand, a haughty imbecility ought to be met by a management that is cal-

culated to depress the patient in his own eyes, and to sober a spirit that may have been intoxicated by draughts of a servile or treacherous adulation. There is an appropriate remark in Terence with regard to a parasite, who was in the habit of purchasing his seat at a luxurious table, by feeding with compliments the gluttonous vanity of its master,

“ Hic homines ex stultis facit insanos.”

Praise, unjustly or too liberally administered, acts as poison upon a puny intellect. A man even of a vigorous mind is liable to receive injury from applause, although it be well deserved. Extraordinary merit is often spoiled by its natural and most appropriate reward. The smoke of the incense is apt to obscure and pollute the idol of our worship.

The obstinacy of self-conceit is to be subdued only by a permanent, as well as

a severe discipline. It is a long course of mortifying circumstances, a regularly pursued system of humiliation, that is necessary in order to bring a vain man's opinion of himself down to the level of his real merit.

It is in a great measure on account of the eminence of their station in society, exposing them more than others to the giddiness of pride, and the noxious influence of adulation, that absolute sovereigns are in general to be ranked amongst the most unfortunate of men. There is something apparently in the empire of an individual over nations, that renders him incompetent to the proper government of himself.

One reason why the proud are peculiarly liable to mental derangement is, that they are less able than others to bear up against the distresses of life. They are more severely galled by the yoke of

adversity. Misfortune they are apt to consider as an injury inflicted upon them by Providence, at which they cannot help feeling something like the same resentment as at a wrong which they had received from a fellow-creature. When assaulted by calamity, pride erects its crest in indignation against heaven. A young man of an irritable temperament, once consulted me about a complaint which had been considered as nervous, and which, according to his description of it, was sufficiently distressing. "But," added he, "the most provoking circumstance relative to my sufferings is, that I am conscious of having in no way deserved them."

Humility predisposes to resignation. He who thinks most lowly of his merits, will, in general, be induced to think most lightly of his afflictions. Descent from elevated station will be borne easily by

those who are not high-minded. The loss of opulence is no serious sorrow to one, the modesty of whose wishes can stoop to the degradation of his circumstances. Though, by eradicating pride, we could not always disarm adversity of its sting, we should, in every instance, render less painful and dangerous the wound which it inflicts.

After the remarks which have been already made, it is scarcely necessary to add any thing to shew, how ill adapted the doctrine of the ancient Stoics was, either to help the infirmities of our nature, or to alleviate its sorrows. That "pain is no evil" is a proposition of which every one, with his senses about him, must *feel* the absurdity. A maxim originating from the pride of man is ill calculated to endow him with patience. The arrogance of preposterous speculation may stifle a groan, or any more arti-

culate expression of complaint, but it will not render less excruciating the unuttered agony. It may forbid pain from betraying itself in the writhings of the limbs, or in the contortions of the countenance ; but feeling, thus forcibly compressed within the heart, will be in danger of bursting it by its elastic force and expansion. A man elevated upon the stilts of Stoicism stands higher indeed, but less securely. They lift him above the ground, but, whilst they deduct from his safety, they give no real addition to his stature. Stoicism is a cloak which merely disguises, not an armour which defends or fortifies our weakness. The vanity of its lofty pretensions may be compared to the feather that idly floats above the head, not to that solid part of the helmet which encircles and protects it. The glitter of affected magnanimity is apt to be mistaken for what is sterling and substantial,

until the repeated rubs of life have worn off the slight and superficial gilding.

For the unsatisfactory pride of Stoicism, would be well substituted that salutary benevolence which is so forcibly inculcated by the precepts of Christianity, and so conspicuously exemplified in the character of its Author. By not thinking of our individual interest, we effectually, although indirectly, promote it. He who enters most deeply into the misfortunes of others, will be best able to bear his own. A practical benevolence, by habitually urging us to disinterested exertion, tends to alienate the attention from any single train of ideas, which, if favoured by indolence and self-contemplation, might be in danger of monopolising the mind, and occasions us to lose a sense of our personal concerns and feelings, in an enlarged and liberal sympathy with the general good. Howard, had he

not been a philanthropist, would probably have been a maniac.

An admirable sermon by the late Dr. Priestley, on "the Duty of not living to ourselves," provided that the principles of it were well digested, and assimilated into the habit, would prove a better preservative against the malady of mental derangement than any that is to be found amidst the precepts of moral, or the prescriptions of medical science.

A man who aims exclusively at his own welfare will be sure to miss his object. As beauty cannot see itself except by reflection, so happiness is to be caught only by rebound. Even sensual indulgences would want nearly all their relish, if it were not for the salt of sympathy.

ESSAY V.

REMORSE.

“Those wounds heal ill which men do give themselves.”

Troilus and Cressida.

I SHALL never forget a patient, who, upon the entrance of the physician into his chamber, observed “You can be of no service to me, —doctors cannot cure a diseased conscience.” The disease was indeed in this instance too deeply rooted for medicine to eradicate. The unfortunate person a few days afterwards died by his own hand in a paroxysm of phrenzy.

Remorse is considered, perhaps too indiscriminately, as a compensation for misconduct. When it is an unproductive feeling merely, and not a regenerating principle, instead of mitigating, it can serve only to aggravate our offences. Repentance sentimentally indulged often stands in the way of practical reformation. The pressure of conscious criminality ought to be sufficient to rouse into action, but not so great as to crush altogether the powers of the mind. Contrition is most easily indulged in a state of indolence and solitude, but can be alleviated only by strenuous efforts in the service of society. The errors of our past life are not to be atoned by wasting the remainder of it in sedentary grief, or in idle lamentations. Every good deed which a man performs lightens in a certain degree the load of recollected guilt ; active duty is alone able to counteract the

injury, or to obliterate the stain of transgression.

In even aggravated cases of remorse, much may be done towards relief, if the patient have resolution enough to administer to himself; — to awaken from the lethargy of a vain regret, and make every atonement in his power for any wrong that he has committed, or any moral law which he has broken. A man may compensate to society for an injury that is perhaps irreparable to an individual, and by the extraordinary exertions of a penitentiary benevolence, be the means of producing a quantity of happiness that is equivalent to the misery which his former vices or errors may have occasioned.

The paradise of innocence, it is true, can never be regained. But innocence is a state of happiness rather than of merit. More vigour is required to resist the recurrence, after having yielded to

the first approach of temptation. The glory of victory is enhanced by the humiliation of previous discomfiture. A man must know something of vice, before he can practise the highest degree of virtue. The summits of moral excellence were never reached, without the foot having occasionally slipped during the arduous ascent.

Remorse is often felt most acutely by those who have the least reason for self-accusation. In proportion to the purity of a man's character, is in general the degree of this species of sensibility, which may sometimes indeed amount to even a fastidious, and what may be called a *nervous* delicacy; in consequence of which, the best men are not unfrequently apt to class themselves among the worst. There are no symptoms of disease which it is more difficult to cure, than the hallucinations of an hypochondriacal humility.

Hence arises a bigotted self-reproach, a want of common candour in a man towards his own character, an utter blindness to its good qualities, and a prejudiced and preposterous exaggeration of any bad one that may belong to it.

I have known more than one melancholy patient who was tortured by the imaginary consciousness of past crimes which he had not committed, and by the anticipation of future punishment which he had not deserved. I have been just looking over a long and interesting letter, written to me many years ago by a young lady who was at that time laboring under hypochondriacal apprehensions to a very distressing degree. "I cannot," she says, "altogether impute to any external cause, a complaint that seems partly constitutional, as I have been a sufferer, although in a slighter degree, almost from infancy. At a very early age, when I first felt inte-

rested in the important truths of religion, and promised myself the purest delight in regulating my life by its precepts, I was not only deprived of the happiness I had hoped for, but almost driven to despair, by the entrance of the most impious thoughts into my imagination, and which more particularly distressed me when engaged in exercises of devotion. It is true, my mind was perfectly passive in their reception, and therefore, I trust, not culpable, but that did not prevent my experiencing the agonies of remorse attendant upon sin. I am now less disturbed by this strange source of misery, but my mind is constantly under the influence of some melancholy or horrid idea that casts a gloom on every thing around me. ‘No disease of the imagination,’ Dr. Johnson remarks in his *Rasselas*, ‘is so difficult to cure, as that which is complicated with the dread of guilt.

Fancy and conscience, then, act interchangeably upon us, and the delusions of the one are not distinguished from the dictates of the other.' I have too well experienced the truth of this observation, my prevailing terror being the dread of causing evil to others. The particular kind of evil is generally determined by the last unhappy event I chance to have heard or read of, which my imagination in some way or other too readily applies to myself. As an instance, I have had the horrors of setting the house on fire so strongly impressed upon my mind, that no efforts of reason have been able to overcome its ascendancy, which has so completely overpowered me, that I have suffered inexpressible misery from merely having occasion to enter or pass through a room at evening with a lighted candle, although conscious of having taken the utmost precaution, and have even re-

turned without a light to see that all was safe ; yet has fancy, in the dead of night, painted the room in flames, with every aggravating circumstance attending conflagration, till my mind has been worked up almost to a pitch of insanity from terror. In vain has reason assured me of the absurdity of my fears, or religion bid me trust in Providence ; imagination has proved too powerful for the dictates of either. The anguish I have suffered from this kind of horror has been so great, that perhaps the sensations of a murderer have at times little exceeded mine, although I would not willingly hurt a worm."

It is not very long since I had a professional opportunity of knowing something of the morbid history of a man who had succeeded to a peerage, and an immense estate, by the death of an elder brother, with whom he had not been upon good terms for some years previous to

that event. The unfortunate heir to the title and domains so severely reproached himself for that suspension of fraternal amity, with regard to which he was altogether innocent, that he sunk into a profound melancholy, from which I have reason to believe nothing has hitherto been able to rouse him.

I knew another person who, although his life had been signalized by the most active and successful exertions in behalf of his fellow-creatures, was affected with a despondency, the burden of which was, that he had been all along a useless member of society, and that the talents which had been given him had produced nothing in his hands. Under the influence of this imagination, he expressed a kind of horror as well as shame, at the prospect of giving up a stewardship, the duties of which he had, as he thought, so unfaithfully discharged.

In addition to the disposition in a patient to calumniate himself, which is often a striking feature of hypochondriacal malady, there is another important source of error, from which even more healthy minds are not altogether exempt. We are apt to be unduly biassed in our feelings with regard to the quality of an action, or course of conduct, by circumstances which merely *happen* to follow it, without having with it any necessary or probable connection. It is by no means uncommon for a person, in reference to some, perhaps, merely fancied error of management, or neglect in attendance upon a sick friend, to say, "*Had he died, I should never have forgiven myself;*" as if the accidental decease of the one would have given a different complexion to the previous behaviour of the other, or as though the fortunate recovery of the invalid would have exonerated an indolent

or inconsiderate nurse from all sense of moral responsibility. A disastrous result not unfrequently reflects the horror of guilt upon that conduct, which would otherwise have escaped any injurious imputation, which would have been deemed innocent in its character, had it proved so in its consequences. Nothing can exceed the obvious injustice of this *ex post facto* mode of condemnation : yet after all, the *event* is often the only criterion by which the world, from its necessarily superficial knowledge, or from its careless examination, *can* pronounce a judgment upon the conduct of an individual ; and, when that judgment is unfavourable, a man's bitter reflections upon himself are rendered much more poignant, in consequence of their having been confirmed, as it were, by the verdict of his fellow-creatures. But, although the light of public opinion may sometimes be

necessary to reveal, even to the criminal himself, the true color of his offences, it not less frequently throws a false glare upon the faults, as well as upon the virtues of mankind. We are too apt to consider as misconduct what was merely mischance, and to confound calamity with crime. A man's character may be shaded by the accidents, as well as by the actions, of his life ; and perhaps, even conscience itself is seldom more deeply wounded by the stings of guilt, than it sometimes has been by the arrows of fortune.

The singular history is well known of Simon Brown the dissenting clergyman, who fancied that he had been deprived by the Almighty of his immortal soul, in consequence of having accidentally taken away the life of a highwayman, although it was done in the act of resistance to his threatened violence, and in

protection of his own person. Whilst kneeling upon the wretch whom he had succeeded in throwing upon the ground, he suddenly discovered that his prostrate enemy was deprived of life. This unexpected circumstance produced so violent an impression upon his nervous system, that he was overpowered by the idea of even involuntary homicide, and for this imaginary crime, fancied himself ever after to be condemned to one of the most dreadful punishments that could be inflicted upon a human being.

Not many months ago, I had an opportunity of knowing an instance of the melancholy effect of remorse, where the feeling, although not altogether without foundation, was unduly aggravated by an accidental association of occurrences. A young lady was one morning requested by her mother to stay at home, notwithstanding which, she was tempted to go

out. Upon her return to her domestic roof, she found that the parent whom she had so recently disobliged, had expired in her absence. The awful spectacle of her mother's corpse, connected with the filial disobedience which had almost immediately preceded, shook her reason from its seat, and she has ever since continued in a state of mental derangement.

Remorse is never perhaps felt with more painful acuteness, than on the remembrance of any seeming deficiency either of duty or affection to one whose unexpected death has precluded all future opportunities of making atonement or amends. It is no uncommon thing for us to be ungrateful to a living benefactor, but it is seldom indeed that we prove unjust to his ashes. We rarely neglect altogether to pay the tribute which is due to kindness, but too often we neglect to pay it at the proper time. The

life of a beloved object might perhaps have been saved, by a seasonable exercise of but a small portion of that sensibility, which is expended in fruitless tears upon his grave. We offer the cordial of friendship after the lips are closed. It would seem as if, in some instances, we could not come into the possession of our proper feelings, until death has prepared the way for the reversionary inheritance.

—— “for so it falls out,

That what we have, we prize not to the worth
Whilst we enjoy it, but being lacked and lost,
Why then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession could not shew us,
Whilst it was ours.”

It has often seemed to me as if the Roman Catholic notion of purgatory were, in some respects, a consolatory one. It gives, under the most melancholy circumstances, an active employment to our affections, and a useful efficiency to our regrets. It extends, with regard to certain

duties, the period of our probation. It furnishes a further opportunity of making up for what may have been wanting, in our attention to the offices of friendship. Prayers for the repose of departed souls may tend at least to promote the quiet of the living. Whilst engaged in acts of even imaginary benefit to those whom we have lost, we can scarcely fail to feel a mitigation of our sorrows.

The punishment which remorse inflicts in this world, although, in many instances aggravated by the prospect, has no necessary reference to a future state of retribution. A man's conscience is more than a household god to him; it is the private deity of his bosom. The most solemn and efficacious warnings against vice are, no doubt, furnished by the doctrines of Revelation, which present also the most powerful encouragements to the prosecution of a virtuous course. But in-

dependently of all revealed truth, there is a doctrine of the heart, a religion of feeling rather than of belief.

Upon the mind of a convalescent from moral disease, it cannot be too deeply impressed, that neither nature nor supernatural revelation makes a duty of despair. The deep shades of the past ought to serve as a back-ground to set off the comparative brightness of his present state or of his future prospects. He who has escaped from the opening jaws of destruction, ought to pursue his onward course, without looking back upon the horrors from which he has been rescued. It not unfrequently happens, that a man, by too obstinately contemplating what he has left behind, remains for ever after fixed in the retrospective attitude. His foot is arrested in the path of life ; his imagination feeds solely upon what has gone by ; fresh scenes that may present

themselves, afford to his mind neither nourishment nor gratification. In the drama of the world his part is closed, although he may be still doomed to continue on the stage. It is in this way, that melancholy and madness are often generated by the permanent pangs of memory, by the continual presence of the past.

ESSAY VI.

SOLITUDE.

“ Chiefly where solitude, sad nurse of care,
 To sickly musing gives the pensive mind,
 There madness enters ; and the dim-eyed fiend,
 Sour Melancholy, night and day provokes
 Her own eternal wound.”

Art of Health.

AN hypochondriac should be a hermit in abstinence, but not in solitude. With no less beauty than truth, has the author of *Rasselas* depicted the insanity of the astronomer, as gradually declining under the influence of society and diversion. “ The sage confessed that since he had mixed in the gay tumults of life, and divided his hours by a succession of amusements, he found the conviction of his au-

thority over the skies fade gradually from his mind, and began to trust less to an opinion which he could never prove to others, and which he now found subject to variations from causes in which reason had no part. “If (says he) I am accidentally left alone for a few hours, my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by an irresistible violence, but they are soon disentangled by the Prince’s conversation, and are instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah. I am like a man habitually afraid of spectres, who is set at ease by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harassed him in the dark.”

Burton concludes his voluminous work on Melancholy, with this summary precept: “Be not solitary, be not idle.”

The society, in the centre of which a person is placed, may be regarded as the atmosphere of his mind; and to one

whose understanding has been improved to any considerable degree of refinement or extent, this mental atmosphere is of more importance to the vigour and proper condition, even of his body, than almost any variety in the modification or proportion of those material ingredients with which his lungs are supplied by the external air. A residence even in a great and polluted city, which affords objects of interest and motives to exertion, ought to be recommended more especially to an hypochondriacal or nervous patient, in preference to the most highly oxygenated situation in the country, where there is not enough to rouse the sluggishness, or to fill the vacuity of the mind.

It is not so much from a stagnation of air, as from the want of a free circulation and ventilation, as it may be called, of thought, that some of those diseases which we are the least able to bear, are most

apt to originate. Amidst the purest breezes the mind still gasps for the refreshment of society.

Hypochondriasis is far from being a metropolitan disease. The multiplicity of external objects which, in a great capital, are continually giving a new direction to the current of thought, is of course unfavorable to the uniformity and self-absorption of melancholy. There are, in such a situation, so many rival candidates for our attention as to preclude the exclusive dominion of any single idea. Although a man be not concerned as an actor in the gay or the more serious tumults of the world, he may find as a simple spectator sufficient engagement to prevent that dejection of mind which is apt to arise from its being unemployed. Even walking the streets of London affords abundant materials for reflection and amusement.

A rage for rural charms is at the present day a matter more perhaps of fashion than of feeling. A pretended relish for the beauties of the country is found to be by no means incompatible with a real attachment to vices which are considered as appropriate to the town; although in fact the most degrading kinds of vice are at least as prevalent at a distance from, as in the centre of the capital. Intemperance both in eating and drinking is especially predominant in remote towns and provinces, where the inhabitants often devote a large portion of the day to the pleasures of the table, from having no other resource for the disposal of their time. Hence, perhaps, it may be explained how a country clergyman, more particularly where the dull monotony of his life is not diversified by literature or animated by devotion, is apt to sink into the gloom

of hypochondriasis or into the grossness of mere animal indulgences.

A state of seclusion is often thought favorable to habits of study, but it more frequently leads to an indolent wandering of the mind. There is a great difference between meditation and musing, between reflection and reverie. That species of reverie which goes under the name of castle-building, is not only a very idle, but often a very injurious occupation.

To one who has principally resided in the middle of a great city an entire and permanent removal from it is a doubtful and somewhat dangerous experiment. A person of city tastes and habits, after a short visit to the villa of a friend, was asked how he liked the green fields : he replied, "They are very well for the cows." The shades of retirement, it is to be feared, may prove too dark for him who

has been long used to the sunshine of society.

I once knew a man who, at the meridian of his reputation, withdrew from the performance of his professional duty, and the useful display of his transcendent talents in this metropolis, to enjoy, as he thought, in the obscurity of a rustic retreat, the solace of seclusion and repose. But he had not long been in this state of falsely anticipated happiness before he fell into a sottish melancholy. He who had been distinguished by his public addresses in favour of temperance, and every other virtue, became himself a victim to the most debasing excesses. Had not this person renounced the conspicuous station which he filled in society, the stimulus of public applause might have continued to supersede any more vulgar inebriety ; and for the inspiration of genius would never

probably have been substituted the contemptible and destructive excitement of alcohol.

An unnatural exile from the world, so far from implying a superiority to its pollutions, often exposes a man even more imminently to the risk of moral contamination. The voice of the appetites and passions is heard more distinctly amidst the stillness of retirement. The history of hermits, of monks, and even of nuns, serves abundantly to demonstrate, that sensuality may be indulged in solitude, and debauchery practised in the desert.

That puny and invalid virtue which cannot bear the bustle of the crowd, it is not probable will stand more firmly in a state of absolute or comparative insulation. Monasteries and nunneries may be useful hospitals for some diseased and mutilated minds ; but they ought to be

regarded only as a last and desperate resource. A man should not degenerate into a monk, whilst he is capable of performing the offices of a rational creature ; and no female ought to take the veil, until she has tried every other remedy in vain. The lamp of life burns to waste in the sepulchre of solitude. Misery ought, in a more especial manner, to shun that seclusion, which it is too apt to seek. It is necessary to a pure relish for rural retirement, that a man should carry into it a mind unincumbered with painful remembrances, and unwounded by the infliction of any great calamity. How can he be expected to enjoy the vernal freshness of the fields, and the blue transparency of the sky, whose hopes have been prematurely withered, and whose moral prospects terminate in a clouded horizon? One reason more important than his defect of sight, why the eloquent author of

Rasselas felt so decided a distaste for country scenes, was perhaps the morbid melancholy, the radical wretchedness of his constitution. A wretchedness which originates in remorse, tends still more completely to paralyze the sensibility to all the fascinations of external and inanimate nature. This may be considered as one of the punishments, which in the present world is inflicted upon moral transgression. Had our first parents been allowed, after the fall, to continue in the garden of Eden, the loss of their innocence would have robbed it of all its charms. It is remarkable, however, that melancholy, more especially when it amounts to absolute derangement, in general delights to shelter itself under the shadow of solitude. The visit even of the morning light is, in such cases, felt as an intrusion. Interruption of any kind produces distraction. The unfortunate

victim loves to feast upon his meal of misery without disturbance or control.

A too long protracted absence from society will often excite in more healthy minds an antipathy to, and even a dread of, returning to the crowd. After some weeks of confinement to his painting-room, Sir Joshua Reynolds relates of himself, that when he again emerged into the public streets, he saw men as trees walking, and fancied them attentively observing him, and intending him some mischief. I had many years ago a patient of a similar sort. He imagined the people he met were either pointing or whispering at him : amidst the population of a great town, he felt all the terrors of a man who is haunted by ghosts, or encompassed by banditti.

Although habits of seclusion should be in general avoided by the hypochondriacal, it ought also to be remembered that

there is a kind of society which may prove more injurious even than solitude to his bodily and intellectual health. We are not perhaps sufficiently aware that nervous complaints are, through the medium of sympathy, scarcely less infectious than febrile diseases. Amongst many other instances illustrative of this opinion, I particularly recollect the case of an amiable young woman, who, although she had been before remarkable for the uniform cheerfulness and gaiety of her temper, became decidedly, and often deplorably, dejected, in consequence of having, for a length of time, been domesticated with an elderly friend who was of a desponding and melancholy cast. The contiguous atmosphere of an hypochondriacal, like that of a typhous patient, may, in a certain sense, be said to be impregnated with contagion.

We are apt to catch unconsciously the

impression which we observe in the countenance of a companion. Our features are darkened by the cloud which overshadows his brow; and the beams of joy and cheerfulness which sparkle in his eye, may be seen to brighten our own with a reciprocal radiance. But what is more remarkable, this will often take place without any internal sympathy, except so far as mental feelings may be produced by their bodily signs. For it is well known that by moulding our physiognomy to the external form of a particular passion, we become in a certain degree conscious of the passion itself. This result of imitation, which is temporary only when produced by a fugitive or an occasional cause, will be likely to be rendered permanent, and in a manner constitutional, by our being exposed more constantly to the circumstances which originally gave rise to it. The mask of

hypocrisy, after having been long worn, will either adhere too firmly to be removed, or if taken off, will leave behind it the impression of its shape. In like manner, that mimic propensity we have been referring to, if it be acted upon in one particular way for any considerable period, will be apt to produce an indentation upon the mind, which can never perhaps be obliterated. Often may we see a gloom cast upon a whole company, by the apparent dejection of an individual in it. If instead of the accidental and transient presence of such a person, we are destined to be domesticated, or to have daily intercourse with him, the influence of his temper we should feel gradually to grow into the texture of our frame. The spring of our own cheerfulness, which at first was only bent, would in time be broken. The melancholy of the poet Cowper, although it might ori-

ginally be traced to a secret and a deeper cause, appeared to owe the frequency of its recurrence, and its last dreadful and incurable aggravation, in part at least, to his having watched, for many years, with so acute a sympathy, the sufferings and successively advancing infirmities of one with whom he had been long associated, and to whom he was tenderly attached.

It is principally on account of the barbarous and unphilosophical treatment, but in part likewise it may be owing to the communicative nature of mental indisposition, that the receptacles are too often found to be the nurseries of insanity, where any, however small an aberration from the ordinary and healthy standard of nervous excitement may, in due time, be matured and expanded into the full size and frightful monstrosity of madness.

The reference which has been made to

the contagious quality of mental depression is by no means intended to prevent, or in any degree to discourage, an occasional or even an habitual association with the afflicted, when we are able, by our society and sympathy, to comfort or relieve them, and especially if, from the obligations of gratitude or domestic connection, they have a more than ordinary claim upon our fellow-feeling and assistance. There is an *antiseptic* power in an active benevolence, which counteracts the putrescency of melancholy, and has in some instances proved an antidote even to the gangrene of despair.

ESSAY VII.

EXCESSIVE STUDY, OR APPLICATION OF MIND.

“ ——— Universal plodding poisons up
The nimble spirits in the arteries ;
As motion and long-during action tires
The sinewy vigor of the traveller.”

Love's Labour's Lost.

ALTHOUGH intemperate study be not one of those modes of excess, against which it is peculiarly necessary to guard the youth of the present generation, there is no one, I am convinced, from which more mischievous and dreadful consequences have sometimes originated. Too often talents have been sacrificed to acquisitions, and knowledge purchased at

the expence of understanding. Literary gluttons may not unfrequently be met with, who, intent only upon feeding a voracious appetite for books, accumulate gradually a mass of undigested matter which oppresses, and, in time, destroys altogether the power of intellectual assimilation. The learning of such men lies a dead weight upon the mind, which, instead of enriching its substance, or adding to its vigor, serves only to obstruct the freedom, or to impede the activity of its operations. The mental enlargement which is thus produced may be compared, not to that natural and healthy growth which is attended by a proportionate increase of strength, but rather to the distension of tympanites, or to the morbid dilatation of a dropsy. The more a mind of small capacity is crowded with ideas, the greater is the danger of their jostling one against another, and thus producing tumult and

confusion. What is called a learned man is often only a lazy man in disguise, with whom reading is a refuge from the more strenuous task of reflection. A reformation has taken place with regard to literature as well as religion. With the more rational part of mankind, wisdom is no longer thought to consist in poring over books, any more than counting beads is now regarded as devotion.

Many years ago, I was consulted with respect to an idiotic man of erudition. It was a case of idiocy arising from an overstrained intellect. The understanding had been broken down, in consequence of having been overloaded. The head of the patient, in its best estate, might have been compared to a pawnbroker's shop, which is furnished principally with other people's goods ; a repository merely for ideas, not a soil out of which an idea ever grew.

Since the occurrence of the preceding case, I was desired to give my opinion in another, which was considerably different in the circumstances attending it, although originating apparently from a somewhat similar cause. A young man of very superior talents, a member at that time of one of the colleges of Oxford, had applied most intensely to his studies with a view to the acquisition of the highest honours of the university, which however he was suddenly thrown into a despair of attaining, by some new and unexpected rules that were introduced with regard to the mode or the subject of the examinations. There was no just ground for his despondency, but the idea of possible defeat, where he had been previously confident of victory, so dwelt upon and harassed his mind, as to throw it at last into a state of temporary disorder, and the most excessive irritation.

This irritation was accompanied by a singular and sometimes ludicrous caprice. He deliberated for a long time before he could determine on the most indifferent proceeding, and he had scarcely acted upon, before he invariably repented of, his decisions. I remember calling upon him one afternoon, and finding him still in bed, from not having as yet been able to determine whether he should put on his pantaloons or small clothes, for the day. At length, he fixed upon the latter, but had not been long risen before he changed that for a different dress. Every thing he did, he regretted having done, and of what he had neglected to do, he regretted the omission. It was for no long period that the patient remained in this state of imbecility. He recovered, after a time, the entire possession of his excellent understanding, obtained all the objects of his academical ambition, and is at present

a very respectable member of a learned profession.

Although the intellectual faculties will always be in danger of debility or disorder from the too intense or too long continued exercise of them, this will be still more likely to take place, when the exercise of them has been confined to one or but a few subjects. By sufficiently diversifying the mode, we may protract almost indefinitely the period of exertion. Change of employment is often found to answer the same end as an entire cessation from it. The sense of fatigue, for instance, which we experience from the use of our limbs, may be relieved, not by rest merely, but also by again using them in a different manner. On a similar principle, if we have been reading, or thinking upon any subject until the attention be exhausted, we almost uniformly find the mind to be again roused and invigorated by directing

it to a subject of a different nature. A person in whose constitution there is reason to suspect a tendency to mental disorder, not only ought to be guarded against too long protracted or intense thinking, but it should likewise be recommended to him to avoid, as much as possible, thinking upon questions of a very intricate and perplexing nature.

There are few walks of literature in which he may not be allowed to amuse himself, provided that he shun with care the endless labyrinth of metaphysical speculation. Scarcely can it appear desirable, or even safe, to attend much to subjects, where the restlessness of doubt so seldom terminates in the repose of conviction, or at least, where the labour of the research is never likely to be rewarded by the importance of the discovery. But in the present age a propensity to metaphysical researches is not

perhaps so much to be dreaded, as an undue dedication of our time to lighter studies. A considerable portion of the novels and poetry of modern times, may be regarded as having had an unfavorable effect upon the health, as well as morals, more especially of juvenile readers. A pampered appetite for high and intense sensation has a tendency to destroy our relish for more wholesome food, for what may be called the daily bread of life. A mind that has been addicted to this kind of reading bears some analogy to a stomach, the tone of which has been destroyed by intemperance. A circulating library may for the most part be compared to a chest of liqueurs, where there is nothing to nourish or strengthen, and every thing to stimulate and inflame. A predominant taste for this species of dram, for this debauchery of the imagination, may be considered in part as the

effect, and in a still greater degree as the cause, of the actual prevalence of what at present pass under the denomination of nervous maladies.

Nothing is more conducive to happiness and health than a moderation of temper and expectation. Exquisite enjoyment is an interruption of our habitual state, a deviation from the ordinary tenor of our existence. What was originally either pleasurable or painful becomes from custom almost alike indifferent. The high road of life, however rugged, is gradually trodden into smoothness; and if it were strewn with flowers, they would soon wither under the repeated pressure of our steps.

A habit cultivated in early life of being attracted and interested by external objects, is one of the best preservatives against the danger of a morbid abstraction in our more advanced years. In this circumstance, perhaps, consists the princi-

pal advantage of such studies as botany, chemistry, mineralogy, and other branches of natural history and philosophy. A lively lady once remarked to one of the first botanists of his age, "I have no pleasure in flowers, — they don't talk:" he replied, "They talk to me."

The most miserable species of servitude is theirs, who are mendicants for miscellaneous society, to whom talking is not an amusement merely, but the business of their lives, who if they read or think, it is only to prepare for what may be considered their professional object, to lay up materials for conversational display. The wretchedness of so perverted a direction of taste and talent is glaringly evinced in the instances of such celebrated and unhappy women as Mad. du Deffand and Mad. de Stael, not to mention other cases of a similar nature which might be found on this side of the British Channel. That genius which illuminates society by

the brilliancy of its rays, often proves in solitude a consuming fire.

A poor hypochondriac went to consult an eminent practitioner at Paris, with regard to what might be the best remedy for the depression under which he laboured. The physician, as the best way to exhilarate the spirits of the invalid, told him to go to the theatre and see Carlini. The patient answered, "I am Carlini."

Hypochondriasis may be considered as one of the bitter fruits of a high state of polish and mental cultivation. Amongst barbarous nations it is said to be almost, if not altogether, unknown. If, in weighing the evils of savage against those of civilized life, we were to throw nervous diseases into the scale of the latter, it would be perhaps difficult to ascertain on which side the balance preponderated.

ESSAY VIII.

VICISSITUDE A CAUSE, AND CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOM OF INTELLECTUAL MALADY.

“ Against ill chances men are ever merry,
But heaviness foreruns the good event.”

Henry the Fourth.

VICISSITUDE constitutes one of the most remarkable features, in the character of mental derangement, as well as one of the most frequent causes of its production.

There is no radical distinction between the fury of madness and the sullen repose of melancholy. The latter expression indeed applies to the external physiognomy and demeanor, rather than to

the internal state. Under the influence of some intense emotion, a man may be made to assume at once the immobility of marble, but he does not in that case become stone *within*. He stands fixed as a statue, but not as insensible. There is often a spasmodic chillness of the surface, which serves only to aggravate that mental fever from which it originates. The supposed torpor of melancholy is like that of a child's top, which, after having been lashed into the most rapid agitation, is said from its apparent composure to be *asleep*. When any particular feeling is carried to its utmost verge, it will often usurp the external semblance of an exactly opposite condition of the mind. Who has not heard of the loud laugh of anguish, and the silent tears of enjoyment?

Morbid excitement and depression are found in the same individual fre-

quently, and often periodically, to alternate ; the opposite states of this disease, in many cases occur as punctually as the hot and cold stages of an intermittent fever. A frightful hilarity portends the certainty of subsequent depression. There is often in such cases an *equinoctial* condition of the mind, which is almost equally divided between the light of joy, and the darkness of despondency. These remarks apply by no means exclusively to the unequivocally insane ; they refer even more particularly to those minor degrees, those faint and scarcely discernible shades, those evanescent approximations towards mental disorder, the existence of which might elude the vigilance, or be concealed from the sagacity of any but an experienced and well-instructed eye. Sudden, and apparently causeless elevations, and equally abrupt and unreasonable declensions of

vivacity, mark a morbid condition of the intellectual frame. A sober cheerfulness, a quiet happiness, an evenness and tranquillity of mind, are circumstances which not only indicate the actual possession, but are necessary also to secure the continuance of intellectual health. Cowper says, in one of his letters, "I never received a *little* pleasure from any thing. That nerve of my imagination which feels the throb of any particular amusement, twangs under the energy of the pressure with so much vehemence, that it soon becomes sensible of weariness and fatigue." Whatever is exquisite is necessarily fugitive. He with whom every feeling is a passion, can never know the invaluable blessing of tranquillity.

Temperance ought to be regarded as a virtue of more comprehensive range than what relates merely to a salutary discipline in diet. Temperance implies a cer-

tain regulation of all the feelings, and a due but restricted exercise of all the faculties of the frame. There is no species of passion or exertion which may not pass the limits of a wholesome sobriety. A man may be intemperately joyful or sorrowful, intemperate in his hopes or in his fears, intemperate in his friendship or hostilities, intemperate in the restlessness of his extravagance, or in his greediness of gain.

An indulgence in any paroxysm of impetuosity is not sufficiently considered in the relation which it bears to the well-being of the body. An irascible man, for instance, is not aware how much mischief he suffers from that violent impulse of resentment which would lead him to inflict an injury or an insult upon a real or an imaginary foe. No person, perhaps, was ever angry with another, with-

out having reason afterwards to be angry with himself.

It may be remarked that, especially in this grand mart of trade, many cases of mental derangement originate from the alternations of mind attending upon the vicissitudes of commercial speculation. The Stock Exchange alone has been found to be more productive of insanity than all the other places of gambling resort combined, in either the eastern or western district of the metropolis. How many have fallen martyrs to the consols, or the victims of omnium ! I recollect the case of an unfortunate young man, who sunk under the disastrous issue of a variety of mercantile adventures. The same blow which deranged his affairs produced a disorder of his reason. His finances and his faculties fell together. The phantoms of ima-

gination indeed survived, and seemed to hover over the ashes of his understanding. The demon of speculation, which had before misled his mind, now possessed it entirely. His projecting spirit, which was always more than moderately intrepid, took, in the maniacal exaltation of his fancy, a still bolder and sublimer flight. Some of his schemes reminded me of another madman that I had heard of, who planned, after draining the Mediterranean, to plant it with apple-trees, and establish a cyder manufactory on the coast.

The late Dr. Priestley remarked, that when any thing occurred to him, of a particularly pleasant or disagreeable nature, there soon happened something of a contrary character to compensate it ; and there are few persons who, in reflecting upon their experience in this motley

world, may not have made a similar observation. The chequered scene of our present state may be compared to the black and white squares which regularly succeed each other in a draught-board. It would be desirable, if it were possible, that the good or evil, the joy or grief of the actual moment, should be so tempered by a recollection of the past, or an anticipation of the future, as to preclude an excessive indulgence of, or an entire absorption in our immediate feelings.

Although an evenness and quietness of temper may, in many cases, appear connate or constitutional, equanimity ought not on that account to be regarded as altogether out of the reach of acquisition. The feelings which have been subject to an habitual restraint will seldom be found to rise above their proper level. Disproportionate emotions may often, in

early life at least, be corrected, in the same manner as deformities and irregularities of bodily shape are by means of constant pressure forced into a more natural figure and dimension.

ESSAY IX.

SLEEP.

“ Sleep is not, as has often been supposed, a suspension of thought, but an irregular and distempered state of the faculty.” GODWIN.

IT has been a prevailing opinion of philosophers as well as of the vulgar, that perfect sleep implies the total absence of consciousness ; thought occurring only in those cases where it becomes incomplete or disturbed.

It will be allowed, that dreaming very frequently accompanies sleep ; so much so, that I should imagine there was scarcely a person who had not, in many instances of his life, remembered to have dreamt ; but it is also true, that there is scarcely a

person, who, after having awakened from this state, has not sometimes been unable to recollect what had been the subject of his thoughts, or even that he had thought at all. Hence it has been argued, that in such cases there had been a total absence of consciousness.

This want of recollection may be accounted for upon different principles. We cannot fail to have remarked, that a dream, which we were unable to recollect a short time after awakening, is not unfrequently recalled to our remembrance by some incident during the course of the day, which happens to be connected with the subject of it. Whenever, therefore, a dream is not recollected at all, it probably arises from the absence of some such associated circumstance. Our failure of memory in this case seems exactly analogous to what we observe so often to occur immediately after a state of reverie.

When we are abruptly roused from a reverie, by a companion who asks us the subject of it, we in general find ourselves at a loss to satisfy the enquirer ; having no more idea of what had just been occupying our thoughts, than if we had been during that time in a state of absolute insensibility.

There is scarcely one of the phenomena of sleep which seems so remarkable as the rapid manner in which ideas pass through the mind whilst it is in that state. Images present themselves in such quick succession, that an almost immense multitude of them appear to be crowded into the shortest period of time. Now this accelerated succession of ideas cannot fail to render the remembrance of them more than commonly difficult. For it is obvious, that the shorter the time an idea remains in the mind, the less likely is it to leave any deep or durable impression.

And accordingly we find, that men in whose minds the current of thought seems so sluggish as to threaten an absolute stagnation, are almost universally gifted by nature with memories the most faithful and tenacious.

Cases frequently occur in which persons are observed, by those who happen to be near them, to speak, or in some other way to give notice of an impression upon their minds, although, upon awakening, they are unable to recollect any consciousness.

We have reason to believe, that thought is uniformly connected with a vast variety of motions, where it is at the same time of so subtle a nature, as nearly to elude our consciousness. It seems, for instance, necessarily to precede every step that we take in the longest journey; since we find, that if the attention be at any time strongly bent upon a subject that is unconnected

with the motion of our limbs, this motion will uniformly be interrupted. The same remark may be applied to the act of swallowing our food, and, perhaps, even to the function of respiration. Now, if by the aid of reasoning we are able to detect the presence of thought, where we had least suspected its existence, why should we be unwilling to suppose that it uniformly accompanies sleep, although, in some cases, it may be so evanescent, as altogether to escape our recollection?

There are several circumstances which, if we were properly to attend to them, would account for the very sensible refreshment which the mind usually derives from sleep, although it be then as continually occupied as in our waking state.

Sleep, by entirely suspending the exertion of the voluntary muscles, promotes the repose of the body ; and from

the intimate sympathy that exists between the intellectual and the corporeal parts of our frame, will thus conduce to the refreshment of the mind.

As any occupation which is monotonous induces premature fatigue, so we find, on the other hand, that we may protract the period of our mental, as well as of our corporeal, vigor to a very unusual degree, by sufficiently diversifying the *manner* of its exertion. The state of sleep, by varying incessantly the subject of our thoughts, in part secures us against the fatigue which otherwise we should suffer from continued thinking. It is remarkable, that our ideas when we are in this state seldom remain long in the same train ; no sooner does one image offer itself to our contemplation, than it is removed by another, which in general bears no resemblance to, and seems not

to have any kind of connection with, the preceding.

Although in sleep the mind be continually occupied, in a state of vigilance only does it appear properly *active* : it receives ideas indeed in the former state, but seldom with any effort either to methodise or to detain them. Now from the experience of our waking hours, we learn, that it is efforts of this kind, and not impressions passively received ; or, in other words, that it is voluntary attention, and not mere thought, that is calculated to induce fatigue. Ideas that are quite unconnected with the will might pass through the mind, I should conceive, for an almost indefinite period without exhausting it ; unless, indeed, they happen to be associated with some violent emotions, or lead us to laborious exertions of the body, both of which tend equally,

whether we are asleep or awake, to wear away the vigour of our frame.

In the situation of a maniac, no circumstance impresses us with so lively an idea of his misery as the nearly constant vigilance to which that unfortunate being is in most instances condemned. Sleep, by which almost every other kind of unhappiness is at times interrupted or alleviated, is comparatively seldom allowed to this last of all human calamities. And yet it is remarkable, that the mind of an insane person rarely appears exhausted prematurely by this continual occupation of it ; at the same time that he is, in nearly every case, a prey to the corroding influence of a morbidly acute sensibility.

May not this singular fact be in some measure explained, by considering the state of mind in mania as approaching very nearly to that which occurs in dreaming or reverie, in both of which

the current of thought seems in general to flow independently of the voluntary power?

Our not being able to ascertain the end which may be answered by dreams which we are unable to recollect, when, the thoughts being immediately forgotten, the mind seems to have been occupied to no purpose, cannot operate as any weighty argument against the reality of the fact ; since it is impossible for us to doubt the existence of so many phenomena, the final cause of which we are, at the same time, perfectly at a loss to discover. Besides, nocturnal impressions cannot but be allowed to possess a degree of value during their continuance, although they should be entirely effaced by the light of day. The long dream of human existence ought not to be regarded as entirely destitute of at least temporary worth, although, at the con-

clusion of it, all its occurrences and variety of emotions are buried in the oblivion of the grave.

Constant conjunction is the only proof, which, in any instance, we can have of a conjunction that is necessary. Provided then that thought be in fact uniformly connected with our existence, we may suppose, that, like the animal function of respiration, or that of the circulation of the blood, it is so absolutely essential to life, that if the association were broken, death must inevitably ensue.

In every situation in which we can conceive ourselves to be placed, the body must, in some measure, be liable to impressions ; and no impression can ever be made upon the corporeal, that has not an effect, however limited, upon the intellectual part of our frame. An impression of a certain force made upon the body will have such an effect upon the

mind, even in the soundest sleep, as immediately to awaken us. Does it then seem reasonable to believe, that a force which is not sufficient to awaken, will produce no effect at all upon the mind?

It is commonly remarked, that the tendency to dreaming diminishes, in proportion as we are less exposed to causes of corporeal irritation. But these causes do always operate in a certain degree; this tendency, therefore, can never be altogether counteracted. In proportion as the stimuli of light, noise, &c. are removed, sleep is observed to be accompanied with less sensibility; but these stimuli can in no case be entirely removed, consequently this sensibility can in no case be entirely extinguished.

An objection may arise, that if the mind be in fact influenced by every impression that is made upon the body, it

must be subject to an inconceivable number of them every instant of our existence. But this, however incredible it may seem, is, I should imagine, really the fact, although it must be allowed, what indeed every man is conscious of, that we are unable to attend to more than one idea at the same time; or, in other words, that, however vast the assemblage of simultaneous impressions, they invariably *coalesce*, and assume in this way the appearance of unity. Our perceptions are in general composed of a number of minute ones, which cannot be individually distinguished. Every idea, for instance, that is presented to my mind, will, in a certain degree, be modelled by those that preceded it — by the state of my corporeal health — by my situation with regard to external objects, and by a variety of other circumstances, which influence me, without, in general, my being

at all aware of their operation. No impression is *lost*, although many are prevented from conveying a separate report to the mind, by reason of the predominance of some more violent impression. Every one of those faint notes which in a concert of music we are unable separately to perceive, has still an effect in swelling and modifying the prevailing sound. That which acts in so slight a degree upon our bodies, that we are not at all aware of its operation, would be perceived distinctly by the mind, if we were placed in a situation that was quite insulated from all other impressions. If, for instance, every sense, except that of hearing, were completely closed, and all other sound annihilated, the falling of a feather upon the earth would be heard at an inconceivably greater distance, than that at which we now perceive the report of a cannon.

It is remarkable how much the vivacity of our conceptions is increased, by merely the partial removal of external agents. So that, although the exclusion of light and noise, be in general found favorable to the approach of sleep, there are circumstances in which it is obviously otherwise. For when we happen to be subject to any internal causes of violent irritation, the mind may, in a great measure, be diverted from them by stimuli from without. A child, for instance, who, from the superstitious tales of its nurse, has unfortunately imbibed a dread of supernatural beings, will often be unable to sleep when surrounded by total darkness and silence. But, besides such cases of infantile imbecility, I have in several instances remarked, that persons endowed with an imagination more than commonly active, especially when it has

been excited by some very interesting idea, have found it less difficult to compose themselves to sleep amidst the blaze of noon, and the noises of a crowded and busy street, than at a time when midnight had removed from them almost every thing which could in any way act upon their external senses.

Thought is, in the strictest sense of the expression, *independent of the will*; it is obvious, that at no time can we choose whether we will think or not. But respiration, the circulation of the blood, and every other action of the system which is independent of the will, continues during sleep. Shall we then, contrary to analogy, presume that thought alone of all the involuntary functions, is suspended during that state?

Philosophers have often been at a loss to ascertain any sufficient reason, why

man should have been doomed to waste so large a portion of his existence in a state of insensibility ; a difficulty that immediately vanishes, after we have admitted the force of the preceding arguments.

If, on the contrary, the current of thought in sleep be not only uninterrupted, but even more rapid than when we are awake ; and it also be granted that the life of an individual ought not strictly to be measured by the revolution of the heavenly bodies, or by changes that take place in any thing external, but merely by the number of ideas that pass through his mind, we seem authorized to conclude, however strange the inference may at first sight appear to be, that sleep, so far from abridging, as it has in general been supposed to do, tends considerably to add to the quantity of human exist-

ence ! When too, we reflect that the combinations of our ideas in dreams are, for the most part, different from those which we form in our waking hours, sleep will appear useful in another light, as giving an additional variety, and a more permanent novelty, to our lives. Another circumstance which enhances the value of sleep, is, that in that state our conceptions are often more lively than they are accustomed to be during vigilance. The exclusion, in a very considerable degree, of external agents, and the suspension, in a great measure, of other faculties, seem to give greater scope to the operation of fancy.

In connection with this remark, it may not perhaps be useless to observe, that those persons have a peculiar motive for guarding against an intemperate indulgence in sleep, over whose minds the

imagination has a more than common ascendancy during their waking hours. Long continued dreams cannot fail to confirm the power of fancy, by protracting the period of its empire.

ESSAY X.

WANT OF SLEEP.

Thou hast no figures and no fantasies
Which busy care draws in the brains of men,
Therefore, thou sleep'st so sound.

Julius Cæsar.

OBSTINATE vigilance is not only one of the most uniform symptoms, but also very generally precedes, and, in a few instances, may even itself provoke an attack of mental derangement. It is rather, I am aware, to the agitating passion or the corroding anxiety, by which the want of sleep is most frequently occasioned, that we ought in many cases to ascribe the insanity which ensues. But even when

watchfulness cannot be regarded as the only agent in inducing the disease, it assists, and in no small degree aggravates the operation of the other causes. That this should be the case, it will not be difficult to shew from circumstances obviously attending the state of sleep.

The variety and rapid succession of ideas so remarkable in dreams, cannot but tend to counteract, in some measure, that habit of unvaried thought, which, when it occurs, has been too generally found the melancholy prelude to insanity.

Sleep generally suspends, and by this means preserves in vigor, the voluntary power which, in our waking state, we possess over our thoughts. It is reasonable to suppose, that the power of the will over the current of thought, like that which it exercises over the voluntary muscles, should require, in order permanently to retain its influence, to be re-

cruited by frequent and regular intervals of repose. Where such repose, therefore, has been denied for a considerable period, it seems inevitable that this power should gradually decline, and be at length altogether destroyed.

Sleep often affords a temporary relief from those tumultuous passions, or gnawing solitudes, which, if their operation were not in this way frequently interrupted, would, in no long time, induce a disorder of the mental faculties. Constant vigilance will be likely to produce insanity, by subjecting the mind habitually to that increased violence of feeling, which we must have observed to take place during the darkness, the silence, and the solitude of the night. It is astonishing, in how much more lively a manner we are apt, in these circumstances, to be impressed by ideas that present themselves, than when the attention

of the mind is dissipated, and its sensibility, in a considerable degree, absorbed by the action of light, sound, and that variety of objects, which, during the day, operate upon our external senses.

From such considerations it will be evident, that any strong feeling, or any favorite idea, will be apt to acquire an ascendancy, and, in some instances, a dominion completely despotic over the mind, when it becomes the subject, as in cases of obstinate vigilance it inevitably will be, of an habitual nocturnal meditation. "It is not generally known, that anxiety and sleeplessness, during the American war, are believed, by those persons who had the best opportunity for forming an opinion upon the subject, to have laid the foundation of the malady by which the King was afflicted during the latter years of his life." — SOUTHEY'S *Vision of Judgement*.

I have been often solicited to recom-

mend a remedy for wakefulness or broken and untranquil sleep by hypochondriac patients who had previously tried all the medicinal, or dietetic opiates, as well as other methods for producing the same effect, without obtaining the object of their wishes. In these cases I advised the use of the cold or the warm bath, and generally with decided advantage. The cold bath is by no means a novel prescription, for the malady we are speaking of; we find Horace long ago recommended it,

“ Transnanto Tiberim, somno quibus est opus alto.”

Want of sleep is often occasioned by some obstruction of the cutaneous pores. The warm and cold baths are not opposite remedies, inasmuch as they have the salutary property, in common, of purifying the surface of the body. In promoting tranquillity, both corporeal and mental, a

clean skin may be regarded as next in efficacy to a clear conscience.

Some years ago, I was called to one of the most notorious characters in London. He was an hypochondriac, the principal feature of whose complaint was an obstinate watchfulness. He had, in rotation, tried nearly all the doctors, great and small, in the metropolis; but they seemed all to have been equally inefficient. No medicine could be applied to the seat of his disease; no contrivance of art could lull his conscience to repose. With all his dexterity in fraud, for which he was perhaps unrivalled, he was unable to cheat himself. In our public courts of justice he often, by the application of technical subtleties, braved the judge upon the bench, but he trembled before the secret and more formidable tribunal that was established within his own breast. The laws of England may be evaded,

but those of nature cannot. Junius says somewhere that, upon his honor, he never knew a rascal that was a happy man. No one, I believe, ever knew a rascal that was habitually a sound sleeper.

Some writers upon nervous diseases have recommended, in order to produce sleep, heavy and substantial suppers, as if we could keep down the spirit of watchfulness by laying a load upon the stomach. This, in some instances of violent mania, may have answered the purpose, but, in ordinary cases of morbid vigilance, would in general be found to produce quite a contrary effect.

Pharmaceutical remedies are rarely in such cases of any permanent avail. Opium is dreadfully pernicious in its effects upon the feelings and constitution, more particularly of an hypochondriacal patient. It will not always produce sleep ; in mania

it very seldom does ; and, when so far effectual, the sleep it produces is generally of an unrefreshing nature. Hyoscyamus, or the henbane, is much less injurious than opium ; but, if it be not equally noxious, it is often altogether nugatory.

Bodily exercise carried to fatigue, is the most innocent, as well as the most effectual of all opiates. A man must work hard in order to earn the privilege of peaceful and continued slumbers. The repose of the night is to be purchased by the labour of the day.

The inward corrodings of remorse, the agitations of conflicting, and the irritation of frivolous passions, prove unfavorable to sleep. But grief, that is profound and unmixed with any base alloy, is found in general to be soporific in its influence. A poet who was by no means deficient in knowlege of human nature seems in

this particular to have mistaken it, when he observes of sleep,

“ She, like the world, her ready visit pays
Where fortune smiles ; the wretched she forsakes :
Swift on her downy pinions flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsullied by a tear.”

I have an intimate friend who, whenever any thing occurs to distress him extremely, soon becomes drowsy and falls asleep ; and this I believe to be no uncommon case. An Edinburgh fellow-student once informed me, that upon hearing suddenly of the unexpected death of a near relation, he threw himself on his bed, and almost instantly, amidst the glare of noon-day, sank into a profound slumber. The experience of another person I might also state, who, during the illness of his dearest friend, which he had but recently discovered to be hopeless, forced himself to read aloud in order to amuse her. By a

violent and painful exertion, he kept his eyes open and his voice in exercise, but his mind was absolutely unconscious of what he uttered, although the work before him would, under other circumstances, have been particularly calculated to awaken his attention. As others have been known to walk, so he read in sleep. Grief, when it is heavy, not only weighs down the eye-lids, but, by its pressure upon the brain, tends to produce a stupor of all the faculties.

Next to involuntary vigilance ranks the almost equal distress of anxious and agitated slumber. Those who wish to sleep composedly, ought if possible to avoid any thing which agitates or excites them immediately before going to bed. The dissipation of a London winter is in various ways unfriendly to the soundness of nocturnal repose. The brilliant crowd of images which move before the fre-

quenter of routs and dramatic exhibitions recur with even greater vivacity when the eyes are closed. The lights with which the saloon or theatre were adorned, continue to irradiate and kindle the imagination when they can no longer operate upon the external sense.

It is sufficiently known that the condition of the mind in sleep is modified by the occurrences and impressions of the previous day ; but we are not, perhaps, equally aware, that dreams cannot fail to have a certain degree of reciprocal influence upon our ideas and sensations during the waking state. The good or the bad day of the sick man depends much upon his good or his bad night ; and, although in a less degree, the same circumstance affects alike those who are considered as in a condition of health. The due digestion of our food is scarcely more necessary to health, as it relates

even to the body, and more especially as it concerns the mind, than the soundness and serenity of our slumbers. After a night of fancy-created tempest, it is not to be expected that we should at once regain our composure. The heaving of the billows continues for some time after the subsidence of the storm; the troubled vibrations survive the delusion which at first occasioned them; the nerves, for some time after the cause has ceased, retain the impression of disorder. The feelings with which we awake, determine, in a great measure, the character of the future day. Each day, indeed, may be regarded as a miniature model of the whole of human life; in which its first seldom fails to give a cast and colour to its succeeding stages. The comfortable or opposite condition of our consciousness immediately subsequent upon sleep, for the most part indicates the degree in

which we possess a sound and healthy state of constitution. With those who are in the unbroken vigor of life, the act of awakening is an act of enjoyment; every feeling is refreshed, and every faculty is in a manner regenerated; it is a new birth to a new world; but to the hypochondriacal invalid, or to the untuned and unstrung votary and victim of vicious or frivolous dissipation, the morning light is felt as an intruder. During his perturbed and restless process of convalescence from a diseased dream, he realises, to a certain extent, the well-pictured condition of the unhappy heroine of the *Æneid*.

“*Revoluta toro est, oculisque errantibus alto,
Quæsitivæ cælo lucem ingemuitque reperta.*”

ESSAY X.

INTEMPERANCE.

“ Here’s that which is too weak to be a sinner, honest water, which never left man in the mire.”

Timon of Athens.

“ **LIVING** fast,” is a metaphorical phrase which, more accurately perhaps than is in general imagined, expresses a literal fact. Whatever hurries the action of the corporeal functions must tend to abridge the period of their probable duration. As the wheel of a carriage performs a certain number of rotations before it arrives at its destined goal, so to the arteries of the human frame we may conceive that there is allotted only a certain number of pulsations before their vital energy is en-

tirely exhausted. Extraordinary longevity has seldom, I believe, been known to occur, except in persons of a remarkably tranquil and slow-paced circulation.

But if intemperance curtailed merely the number of our days, we should have comparatively little reason to find fault with its effects. The idea of "a short life, and a merry one," is plausible enough, if it could be realized. But unfortunately, what shortens existence is calculated also to make it melancholy. There is no process by which we can *distil* life, so as to separate from it all foul or heterogeneous matter, and leave nothing behind but drops of pure defecated happiness. If the contrary were the case, we should scarcely be disposed to blame the vital extravagance of the voluptuary who, provided that his sun shine brilliant and unclouded as long as it continue above his

head, cares not although it should set at an earlier hour.

It is seldom that debauchery breaks at once the thread of vitality. There occurs, for the most part, a wearisome and painful interval between the first loss of a capacity for enjoying life, and the period of its ultimate and entire extinction. This circumstance, it is to be presumed, is out of the consideration of those persons who, with a prodigality more extravagant than that of Cleopatra, dissolve the pearl of health in the goblet of intemperance. The slope towards the grave these victims of indiscretion find no easy descent. The scene is darkened long before the curtain falls. Having exhausted prematurely all that is pure and delicious in the cup of life, they are obliged to swallow afterwards the bitter dregs. Death is the last, but not the worst result of intemperance.

Punishment, in some instances, treads almost instantly upon the heels of transgression ; at others, with a more tardy, although an equally certain step, it follows the commission of moral irregularity. During the course of a long protracted career of excess, the malignant power of alcohol, slow and insidious in its operation, is gnawing incessantly at the root, and, often without spoiling the bloom, or seeming to impair the vigor of the frame, is clandestinely hastening the period of its inevitable destruction. There is no imprudence with regard to health that does not *tell* : and those are not unfrequently found to suffer in the event most essentially, who do not appear to suffer immediately from every individual act of indiscretion. The work of decay is, in such instances, constantly going on, although it never loudly indicate its ad-

vance by any forcible impression upon the senses.

A feeble constitution is, in general, more flexible than a vigorous one. From yielding more readily, it is not so soon broken by the assaults of indiscretion. A disorder is, for the most part, violent in proportion to the stamina of the subject which it attacks. Strong men have energetic diseases. The puny valetudinarian seems to suffer less injury from indisposition, in consequence of having been more used to it. His lingering, and scarcely more than semivital existence, is often protracted beyond that of the more active, vivacious, and robust.

But it ought to be in the knowledge of the debauchee, that each attack of casual or return of periodical distemper, deducts something from the strength and structure of his frame. Some leaves fall from the tree of life every time that its trunk

is shaken. It may thus be disrobed of its beauty, and made to betray the dreary nakedness of a far advanced autumn, long before, in the regular course of nature, that season could even have commenced.

The distinction, although incalculably important, is not sufficiently recognized betwixt stimulation and nutrition ; between repairing the expenditure of the fuel by a supply of substantial matter, and urging unseasonably, or to an inordinate degree, the violence of the heat and the brilliancy of the flame.

The strongest liquors are the most weakening. In proportion to the power which the draught itself possesses, is that which it ultimately deducts from the person into whose stomach it is habitually received. In a state of ordinary health, and in many cases of disease, a generous diet may be safely and even advantageously recommended. But in diet, the

generous ought to be distinguished from the stimulating, which latter is almost exclusively, but, on account of its evil operation upon the frame, very improperly, called *good* living. The indigent wretch, whose scanty fare is barely sufficient to supply the materials of existence, and the no less wretched debauchee, whose luxurious indulgence daily accelerates the period of its destruction, may both be said, with equal propriety, to *live hard*. Hilarity is not health, more especially when it has been roused by artificial means. The fire of intemperance often illuminates, at the very time that it is consuming its victim. It is not until after the blaze of an electric coruscation, that its depredations are exposed.

Stimuli sometimes produce a kind of artificial genius, as well as vivacity. They lift a man's intellectual faculties, as well as his feelings of enjoyment, above their

ordinary level ; and if, by the same means, they could be kept for any length of time in that state of exaltation, it might constitute something like a specious apology for having had recourse to them. But, unfortunately, the excitement of the system can in no instance be urged above its accustomed and natural pitch, without this being succeeded by a correspondent degree of depression. Like the fabulous stone of Sisyphus, it invariably begins to fall as soon as it has reached the summit, and the rapidity of its subsequent descent is almost invariably in proportion to the degree of its previous elevation. Genius, in this manner forcibly raised, may be compared to those fire-works which, after having made a brilliant figure in the sky for a very short time, fall to the ground, and expose a miserable fragment, as the only relic of their preceding splendor.

It is no very uncommon thing, I believe, in this dissipated metropolis, for a woman of gaiety and fashion, previous to the reception of a party, to light up by artificial means her mind, as well as her rooms, that both may be shown off to the best advantage. But the mental lustre which is thus kindled goes out even sooner than that of the lamps, and the mistress of the entertainment often finds herself deserted by her spirits, long before her company is dispersed. In like manner, a man who is meditating a composition for the public, is often tempted to rouse the torpor, or to spur the inactivity of his faculties, by some temporary incentive. Gay, if I mistake not, in one of his letters, observes, that “he must be a bold man who ventures to write without the help of wine.” But in general it may be remarked, that the cordials which an author may on this account be

induced to take, are more likely to make himself than his readers satisfied with his productions. The good things which a person under the influence of fictitious exhilaration may be stimulated to say, are often, in their effects, the very worst things that could possibly have escaped him. From a want of sufficient steadiness or discretion, sparks sometimes fall from the torch of genius, by which it is converted into a firebrand of mischief.

We are apt to complain of the heaviness and wearisomeness of volumes, where the pains taken by the writer have not been sufficiently concealed. But the apparent result of excessive care is much to be preferred to the headless effusion of a mind, over which it is too obvious that the judgment has in a great measure suspended its control. It is far better that

a work should smell of the *lamp* than of the *cask*.

Intemperance is a resource especially to be dreaded by men of more than common acuteness of feeling and vivacity of imagination. Such persons are in general least able to submit to the ennui of vacancy, or patiently to bend under the leaden weight of incurable sorrow. On which account, they too frequently endeavour to fill up a want of interest, or to disperse the cloud which darkens their horizon, by transient remedies that permanently ruin, by momentary reliefs which tend only to destroy more effectually the last wreck of their comfort and constitution. Under certain circumstances the motive is almost irresistible, to seek a repose from suffering in the opiate of intoxication, in that kind of sleep of the sensibility, out of which the awakening cannot fail to be attended with an

accumulated horror. In the flood of intemperance, the afflicted inebriate does not drown, he only *dips* his sorrow, which will in general be found to rise again, with renovated vigor, from the transient immersion. Wine, during the treacherous truce to misery which it affords, dilapidates the structure, and undermines the very foundations of happiness.

The habit of indulgence in wine is not more pernicious than it is obstinate and tenacious in its hold, when once it has fastened itself upon the constitution. It is not to be conquered by half measures : no compromise with it is allowable ; the victory over it, in order to be permanent, must be perfect ; as long as there lurks a relic of it in the frame, there is danger of a relapse of this moral malady, from which there seldom is, as from physical disorders, a gradual convalescence. The man who has been the

slave of intemperance must renounce her altogether, or she will insensibly re-assume her despotic power. With such a mistress, if he seriously mean to discard her, he must indulge himself in no dalliance or delay. He must not allow his lips a taste of her former fascination.

Webb, the celebrated walker, who was remarkable for vigor both of body and mind, drank nothing but water. He was one day recommending his regimen to a friend who loved wine, and urged him with great earnestness to quit a course of luxury, by which his health and his intellects would be equally destroyed. The gentleman appeared to be convinced, and told him, “that he would conform to his counsel, though he thought he could not change his course of life at once, but would leave off strong liquors by degrees.” — “By degrees!” exclaims the other with indignation, “if you should

unhappily fall into the fire, would you caution your servants to pull you out only by degrees?"

To reprobate the use of strong liquors altogether, may be considered as a kind of *prudery* in temperance; as carrying this virtue to an unnecessary and even preposterous extent. But prudery, it should be recollected, consists not so much in the excess of a virtue as in the affectation of it. The real prudes in regimen are those who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel;" who would have great scruple perhaps in drinking a glass of wine, but who would not hesitate every day of their lives to swallow, in a pharmaceutical shape, draughts composed principally of the worst and most concentrated spirits. Tinctures are medicinal drams. The habitual use of them can be regarded only as a more specious and decorous mode of intemperance. In this

may be said to consist the privileged debauchery of many a nervous valetudinarian. A female of decorum and delicacy may thus most effectually ruin her health without in the slightest degree impairing her reputation. She may allay the qualms of the stomach, without the danger of occasioning any more disagreeable qualms of conscience.

It is possible for us to be intemperate in our eulogy of abstinence, and to violate moderation in our invectives against excess. But at the same time it is our duty to reflect, that what is evil in its essence, no reduction of quantity can convert into good. Vice retains its character throughout every gradation of its scale. In none of its descending degrees can it produce any thing better than more diluted and mitigated mischief.

The crime of intemperance must, after all, be allowed to be, in a certain sense, a

relative thing. Pope said, that more than one glass of wine was to him a debauch. There are multitudes who, without the intellectual vigor, labour under the corporeal imbecility of the celebrated poet, and who ought therefore to be equally nice in their notions of excess. The mischief, and, of course, the guilt of intemperance, vary considerably according to the sex, as well as other circumstances of the individual. To the constitution of man, for instance, unnecessary incentive is injurious, to that of woman incalculably more so ; and to that of a woman in a state of pregnancy, it involves the danger of two-fold destruction. Females in that situation are loaded with a double responsibility. By the abuse of inebriating liquors, they incur the risk of child murder, in addition to that of suicide. Or, if the infant of an intemperate mother so far escape as to be ushered alive into the

world, little physical vigor or intellectual health can be expected from a human being, whose constitution has been made to know the influence of alcohol, before even it was exposed to that of air.

Alcohol ought not to be had recourse to even in more advanced life, except upon some extraordinary occasion, when a deficiency of immediate vigor obliges us to draw upon the future for supply. A prudent man, however, will be careful how he at any time mortgages his constitution, but in early youth a want of this caution is particularly to be dreaded. There is a kind of compound interest to be acquired in vital as well as in pecuniary property. In our first years, deviations comparatively slight and transient from the straight line of sobriety and nature, inflict perhaps a more essential injury upon the imperfectly formed and insufficiently cemented fabric, than it would be

likely afterwards to receive from the attacks of more permanent and outrageous excess.

The actual habits of an hypochondriac may be temperate, but it will generally be found, upon enquiry, that they were not always so. He is now probably reaping that harvest of mischief, the seeds of which were sown in the season of his youth. It is often in the power of moral reform to stop the progress of injury, but it can seldom obliterate that which has been already inflicted. No revolution of habits can regenerate the decayed principle of life. We shall never be what we might have been, had we not once transgressed. Bankrupts in constitution cannot, like commercial insolvents, be restored to their former condition. For a considerable time, we may not seem to ourselves to be poorer for our early extravagance, but the debt in which it has involved us must

be paid at last. It often unfortunately happens in such cases, that care becomes excessive at a period when it can no longer be of much advantage. After having wantonly poured, as it were, upon the ground the first sprightly runnings, a man becomes absurdly parsimonious of the dregs of vitality. He throws away the kernel, and hoards with an insane avarice the dry and empty shell.

Men who, from an equivocal felicity of constitution are prevented, for a long time, from killing themselves by their excesses, are often the indirect means of destroying many of their fellow-creatures. Such persons are referred to as living arguments, much stronger than any inanimate logic to the contrary, of the innoxious nature of intemperance. In their countenances we may sometimes read the indications of almost invulnerable health ; it would be well, if also were

inscribed there, in characters equally legible, the catalogue of convivial companions who have fallen victims to their treacherous example.

The unfortunate Burns at one time complained that those with whom he associated were not satisfied with his conversation, luxurious as it must have been, unless he gave them also a slice of his constitution. He must be condemned as unwisely lavish, who cuts up his vital principle for the entertainment of his friends: on the other hand, a person may be thought by some too grudgingly parsimonious of his fund of health, who would not lay out a little of it upon extraordinary occasions, in solemnizing, according to the usual form, the rites of hospitality, in heightening the warmth of sympathy, or in promoting the vivacity of convivial intercourse. But that man's heart, it must be acknowledged, is of little

value, which will not beat full and strong upon an empty stomach. An after-dinner kind of friendship, the expression of which acquires new ardor at every fresh filling of the glass, must be expected to evaporate with the fumes of the liquor which inspired it. The tide of liberal sentiment retires, in such cases, as soon as the animal spirits begin to ebb. The heat produced by alcohol ought not to be mistaken for the glow of virtue. He whose pitch of generosity or goodness is regulated by the state of his circulation, is entitled to little confidence or respect, in any of the important connections or social intercourses of life. The steadiness of a sober and substantial benevolence is to be compared, only by way of contrast, to the precarious vicissitudes of that person's temper, with whom kindness is not a healthy habit, but a feverish paroxysm ; and who, although constitutionally, or in

the ordinary course of his life, sensual or selfish, may be occasionally wrought up by factitious means, to the elevation of a jovial and fugitive philanthropy.

In connection with the subject of intemperance, it may be proper to remark, that there are cases in which extraordinary stimuli may be useful in deducting from the operation of causes still more injurious or more rapidly fatal in their effects. When bodily pain, for instance, has risen to a certain point, wine, brandy, or laudanum, although they should always with caution, may sometimes with propriety be applied, as by affording temporary relief they spare, for a time at least, the wear and tear that is produced by too acute and violent sensations. Such a seasonable use of them may be estimated, upon the whole, as a saving to the constitution. It is likewise a doctrine of some importance, and which ought to be acted upon by the me-

dical practitioner, that whenever a patient expresses a violent appetite, which, from his never having been known to experience it before, appears to have been created by his disease, it ought in general to be regarded as indicating what is subservient to its cure. As, in the lower animals, which are constitutionally deficient in reason, instinct supplies its place, so, during the period that the mental power in man is in some measure impaired by bodily disorder, nature often provides him also with a temporary instinct, which is still more sure in its dictates than the reasoning faculty.

To some hypochondriacs we ought not to proscribe the moderate use of wine, as by so doing, we may be in danger of excluding them altogether from the enjoyment of that social intercourse, which is the only medicine of a life that may, under certain circumstances, be regarded as

a long disease. Those who have lived in the habit of taking two or three glasses of wine after dinner, and who have seldom exceeded that quantity, it would be an act of almost gratuitous cruelty to deprive of so scanty an indulgence.

There are persons who carry the doctrine of abstinence to an absurd and even ridiculous extent. Such are they who tell us to abstain not from wine only, but even from water, unless it be purified by an artificial process. The spring which issues from the bowels of the earth needs not the chemist's art to render it salubrious. The laboratory of nature requires for such a purpose no aid from the laboratory of man.

We ought not to dismiss the subject of the present essay without remarking, that the best way of attempting to conquer in another the vice of intemperance, especially when it has been induced, as is very

frequently the case, by some permanent or weighty cause of sorrow, is to picture to the mind of the patient the agreeable change in his situation, which would be likely to arise from an alteration in his mode of life, rather than to present to him those deeper shades of misery which must successively ensue from the continuance of his ignominious servitude, and habits of fatal, although joyless indulgence. The latter, though the more common mode of endeavouring to effect the reformation of an unfortunate inebriate, is in general calculated only to confirm and aggravate the evil, by sinking his spirits still lower, and, in some instances, perhaps converting the languor of dejection into the mental palsy of despair. Nothing acts as so powerful a sedative upon virtuous efforts as the consciousness of the loss of reputation ; and no circumstance is so directly calculated to rob a

man of his good name, as a habit of intemperance. It is a very difficult task, in such cases, to get the stain of wine out of the character; but it is not quite so impossible as to change the spots in the leopard's skin. We ought never to think that the day of grace is past, or that, however desperate our circumstances, we are out of the pale of possible salvation. It is a condition scarcely distinguishable from despair, which can alone account for the obstinacy with which many an intemperate person deliberately pursues his disastrous course. Bent almost to the earth under the burthen of his regrets, he is unable to look up so as to contemplate the brighter prospect which may at length open upon his path. In his mind, the heavy foot of calamity has trampled out every spark of hope. He feels as if he could scarcely be in a more wretched, or is ever likely to be in a better condi-

tion. The exaggerated dimensions of his present misery so completely fill his eye, as to prevent him from seeing any thing beyond it. He is habitually in a state of agitation, or despondency, similar to that in which suicide is committed. His is only a more dilatory and dastardly mode of self-destruction. He may be compared to a person who in attempting to cut his throat, from a want of sufficient courage or decision, lacerates it for some time, before he accomplishes his purpose. The intemperate man instead of forgetting himself, as he is said to do, is in general the most selfish of mortals ; but sympathy, when not altogether eradicated by this destructive habit, will often give a chance of rescue from its dominion. I have known a man who, a long continued course of excess not having rendered him callous to conjugal tenderness, was thus enabled at once to break the

spell. The wretchedness to which he might otherwise have submitted as his inevitable doom, he could no longer bear to see reflected on the countenance of his dearest friend. The apparently inseparable community of their fate produced an alteration in his conduct, which would not in all probability have been effected by the prospect of his individual and insulated ruin.

THE USE OF OPIUM.

INEBRIETY is not properly confined to the use of fermented liquors. The tipplers of laudanum are sots, although of another sort. There is something peculiarly plausible and seducing in this mode of fascinating the sensations. Opium does not in general, as wine is apt to do, raise a tumult of the feelings, or involve

the intellect in clouds ; but acts more like oil poured upon a tumultuous sea, which tends to allay the agitation of the billows, and induces an agreeable stillness and tranquillity. Instead of lowering man to a level with the beasts, it often invests him, for a time, with the consciousness, and at least fancied attributes of a superior being ; but he is soon stripped of his shadowy and evanescent prerogative, and is made to suffer all the horrors and humiliation of a fallen angel. The confessions of many a miserable hypochondriac, who has been in the habit of having recourse to opium for relief, would justify this representation from the charge of extravagance. I recollect the forcible expression of a person who, in speaking of the miserable effect which the use of opium had produced upon his feelings, remarked that it excited in him “an appetite for death.”

Grievous as is the depression which takes place, as the second effect of fermented liquors, that which succeeds to the excitement produced by laudanum is still more intolerable. It is of course a task less difficult to refrain from the former than the latter, when the latter has been for many years regularly applied to for temporary comfort or support, in a desertion or prostration of the spirits. The late Dr. Heberden was of opinion that it is more easy to relinquish opium than wine, and therefore, in cases which may seem to require either the one or the other, he recommends the former in preference to the latter. My own comparatively contracted experience would incline me, in the same circumstances, to give different advice.

I received some years ago an anonymous letter, which I afterwards learnt was written by a veteran hypochondriac,

who had practised medicine in London for more than half a century. The concluding passages in it convey an impressive lesson with regard to the evil arising from an habitual use of opium. "I am sensible that in this tedious and extraordinary letter there are twenty faults, but if you will excuse me for writing it, you will doubly excuse the composition, when I solemnly and truly declare, that I was not during the writing of it a moment free from the most excruciating torments both of body and mind. I have seen and heard of many laboring under dreadful afflictions, but I never can believe that any ever endured for so long a time such excruciating agony. Every night I expect will be the last. May no man suffer what I have suffered! The laudanum has kept me alive for more than two years, but it has lost its charm. I never would recommend any man to introduce it so

long as to make it habitual, for it would most likely make him, as it has made me, wretched beyond compare."

I have known only one case in which an inveterate opium-taker has had resolution enough to dispel the charm which had long bound him to its use. This patient was in the custom of employing it in that concentrated form of the drug, which has received the appellation of *the black drop*. The dreadful sensations which he experienced for a considerable period, after having refrained from his wonted cordial, he was unable to express any more than the gratitude which he felt towards his physician, for having strenuously and repeatedly and at length successfully urged him to an abstinence from so delusive and bewitching a poison.

The use of opium, which is often begun with a view to relieve bodily pain, is

apt to be afterwards recurred to whenever it is necessary to compose irritability, to animate languor, or to elevate depression.

When opium is employed as a remedy in cases of merely physical disease, it may not be liable to the same objection. When used however for a length of time without any considerable interval, its bad effects upon the constitution will be found to accumulate, whilst its alleviating influence over troublesome and painful symptoms becomes almost every day less observable.

It would be well if a drug which is so liable to become a part of the daily regimen of an hypochondriacal invalid, and which often renders him incurably such, were never used in any form or quantity, except under the especial sanction of professional authority ; and it may at least be doubted, whether even the sanction of professional authority be not in general

too carelessly and too lightly lent to the employment of a medicine, the application of whose extraordinary powers ought to be reserved for occasions of proportionate emergency.

PROSPERITY OFTEN A SOURCE OF INEBRIETY.

THE meaning of the word stimulus is in general confined to fermented liquors, or to drugs such as that which we have noticed in the preceding section. But it may, in a more comprehensive and philosophical sense, be made to include not only what acts immediately upon the stomach, but likewise a vast variety of moral causes which operate more directly upon the passions or imagination. A man may be intoxicated by good news as well as by brandy. In this way prosperity not

unfrequently proves as unwholesome as intemperance. Many have thus fallen the victims of what has been considered their good fortune. A sudden accession of opulence or honor will often obscure the faculties as much as the fumes of drunkenness. A sudden gush of happiness has been known to occasion immediate death, and in other instances has given rise to what is incalculably worse, paroxysms which have terminated in incurable insanity. In the celebrated South Sea speculation, it was remarked, that few lost their reason in consequence of the loss of their property, but that many were stimulated to madness by the too abrupt accumulation of enormous wealth. In other lotteries, as well as in the general lottery of life, dreadful effects have perhaps more frequently arisen from the prizes than the blanks. It has often happened that an adventurer, in addition

to the original price of his ticket, has paid for his chance-gotten wealth by a forfeiture of his reason. The same turn of the wheel which has raised him into affluence has sunk him also into idiocy, or by no advantageous change, has transformed the mendicant into the maniac.

Adversity, that "tamer of the human breast," acts, on the other hand, as a salutary sedative upon the irritability of our frame, and may thus not only secure the subjugation of our passions and protect the sanity of our intellect, but also in some instances may tend to protract life, almost in proportion as it deducts from the vivacity of its enjoyment.

ESSAY XII.

EXCESS OF ABSTINENCE.

“ But more immedicable ills

Attend the lean extreme.”

Armstrong.

“ Let me have men about me that are fat.”

Julius Cæsar.

THE author was once acquainted with a person who, not from actual poverty, but from an hypochondriacal fear of its approach, denied himself not merely the enjoyments, but the wholesome comforts and almost the meagre necessities of existence. He insulated himself from convivial and all social intercourse, that he might avoid the expenses attending them ; and refused what was almost

essential to immediate sustenance, lest he might ultimately want the means of procuring it. He died in fact of an extreme debility and emaciation of mind and body, from neither of them having been regularly provided with a sufficient quantity of its appropriate aliment. Temperance is moderation. In the proper sense, therefore, of the word, we may be intemperately abstemious as well as intemperately luxurious and self-indulgent. That degree of privation which is unnatural or unreasonable, proves no less destructive than superfluous and superabundant gratification. It is possible, indeed, by simple and almost innoxious means, to relieve ourselves from the burden of excess; but it is not possible long to bear with impunity, or even without a fatal result, the inconveniences of a scanty and deficient supply. I recollect a case in dispensary practice,

which was almost the first presented to my notice, where the patient obviously died in consequence of too long an interruption in the supply of nourishment. The moment of her death was unperceived and silent, like a watch which stops without giving either sound or notice, merely because it has not been wound up afresh before the periodical exhaustion of its power of movement. The vital flame requires a perpetual renovation of fuel. The waste which is incessantly going on of internal strength, must be as incessantly compensated by reinforcement from without. There is no interior and independent spring of action and support. Sound does not exist in the Eolian harp, but is produced merely by the breeze that passes over it; life in like manner is not an essential part or ingredient of the human body, but is every moment generated by the external

powers that are continually operating upon its sensible and delicate organization. Take away the action of air in the former instance, and that of all external stimuli in the latter, the harp will instantly become silent; and the body cease to exhibit any symptom or expression of vitality.

“To enjoy is to obey.” A gratuitous abstinence is a species of practical impiety. He who sullenly rejects, and he who wantonly abuses the proffered favors of Providence, are alike guilty of ingratitude. That piety should consist in privation, and virtue in self-inflicted and unnecessary torture, is a doctrine which has been professed indeed by monks and hermits, but which is altogether unworthy of rational and enlightened man. Many are the instances upon record, where a superstitious abstinence has proved mischievous, and even fatal in its

effects. Fanatics have become delirious from voluntary famine. A misguided conscience has conquered the cravings of hunger, and has resisted the demands of a still more imperious instinct. Men have fancied, that in proportion as they rebelled against the laws, their conduct has been well-pleasing to the Author of nature. Voluntary violations of our duty are not more injurious, than erroneous conceptions with regard to its dictates and its limits.

ESSAY XIII.

MORBID AFFECTIONS OF THE ORGANS OF SENSE.

“ Why, then your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes’ anguish.”

Lear.

MORBID affections of any individual organ of sense for the most part originate from, although in some instances they produce, a more general affection of the nervous system.

Lord Orrery in his account of the life and writings of Swift observes, that this extraordinary man attributed to a surfeit that giddiness in the head which sometimes for a longer, and sometimes for a shorter continuance pursued him, until

it seemed to complete its conquest, by rendering him the exact image of one of his own Struldbruggs; a miserable spectacle, devoid of every appearance of human nature except the outward form. The noble author's own opinion with regard to the origin of Swift's mental disease is both more ingenious and more plausible. It may not be improper to quote his words.

“ The absolute naturals are owing to a wrong formation of the brain, as to accident in their birth, or the dregs of fever, or other violent distempers. The last was the case of the Dean of St. Patrick's, according to the account sent me by his relations, Mr. Whiteway and Mr. Swift, neither of whom, I think, make the least mention of a *deafness* that from time to time attacked the Dean and made him completely miserable. You will find him complaining of this misfortune in

several parts of his writings, especially in the letters to Dr. Sheridan. Probably some internal pressure upon his brain might first have affected the auditory nerves, and this by degrees have increased so as entirely to stop up that fountain of ideas which had before spread itself in the most diffusive and surprizing manner."

Whatever may be the physiological mode of accounting for it, there is scarcely any symptom more frequently attendant upon maniacal or hypochondriacal disorders than a defect, excess, or some kind of derangement in the faculty of hearing. The celebrated Dr. Johnson complains at one time, that he could not hear the town-clock distinctly, and at another states that he distinctly heard his mother, who had been dead many years, calling out "Sam." Cowper, in one of his letters to a friend, speaks

thus of his infirmity : “ I have a perpetual din in my head, and though I am not deaf, hear nothing right, neither my own voice nor that of others. I am under a tub, from which tub accept my best love.” There are few hypochondriacs that do not know, as well as Cowper, what it is to be under a tub ; or who cannot perfectly understand and sympathise with this invalid in most other passages where he refers to his morbid feelings.

I once attended a nervous patient, who was afflicted with a noise in her head, which she compared to that of the guns firing at the Tower, in the neighbourhood of which she then resided.*

* One circumstance that makes me recollect this case is, that the lady referred to had a very fine head of hair, and upon my advising that her head should be shaved in order that a large blister might be applied to it, she objected to this sacrifice, and observed, that “ she would rather trust to Providence.”

Mental impressions, we know, act upon the nervous system in general, but especially upon that part of it which is more immediately subservient to the function of vision. The appearance of the eye is for the most part a faithful index of the state of the mind. It has been remarked by those who have had peculiar opportunities of observing, that it is beyond even the cunning of maniacal hypocrisy to disguise the appropriate expression of the eye. The eye seems to be acted upon almost equally by all the passions, whether of a pleasurable or painful nature. It cannot then appear impossible, that highly excited or long protracted emotion should in some instances, more especially where there has previously existed any ocular debility or defect, act so powerfully as to impair the structure, and altogether to destroy the capacity of that organ.

I had occasion to peruse, many years ago, a letter from a poor French emigrant, in which he gave a pitiable account of his situation ; and, amongst other things, complained of so great a degree of ophthalmic weakness, that “ he was unable to shed even one tear for all that he had left behind him.” This no doubt arose in part from the many tears which he had already shed. The heart is not so soon exhausted as the eye.

During my attendance upon the Finsbury Dispensary, a remarkable instance of dimness of sight occurred, that had for some time before been gradually approaching towards absolute blindness, which, indeed, had actually taken place in one of the eyes. The patient first perceived the dimness the day after she had been frightened by witnessing a violent paroxysm of epilepsy, with which her husband had been attacked the preceding

night. Since that time, she had herself become, although not in the least so before, extremely liable to fits, and was apt to fall down insensible upon occasions of the slightest degree of agitation or surprise. Her complaint seemed to consist, not in an injured state of the eye, but in a debility of the nervous system in general, that *appeared* more particularly in that delicate and exquisitely irritable part of it which is destined for the purposes of vision. The capacity of seeing with the eye that was not altogether blind, was intermittent, "going and coming," to use her own comparison, "like the sun, when a cloud passes over it." The patient had likewise been subject to a deafness, that might be traced to the same circumstance as gave rise to her defect of sight. Both symptoms had in all probability a common origin in nervous weakness or derangement.

One of the most decided tests of medical sagacity consists in the power of almost instantaneously distinguishing between the origin of a malady and the outward phenomena which it produces. A disease is not always external when it appears to be so. If the hand of a clock go wrong it is seldom owing to any fault in the hand itself, but is to be attributed to some irregularity or defect in the internal machinery, of whose movements the hand serves merely as the superficial index. By correcting a symptom, it is possible that we may only give deeper root to the essential malady. It is either from ignorance of, or a disregard to, this circumstance, that empirics so often gain an undeserved reputation.

Diseases of the eye, when they arise from mental influence, or from any disorder of the general health, which in a large proportion of cases, upon a strict

examination, they will be found to do, are not of course to be cured by exterior and local applications, but principally, if not exclusively, by those means which are calculated to restore the strength, or to reform the character of the constitution. Trifling with and teasing the eye with drops of lotion*, or particles of unguent, is only betraying the patient into a flattering and faithless anticipation of recovery, without any chance of eradicating, or even touching, the root of a disease, which is more properly the object of medical than of surgical treatment. †

* “Philosophy I fear does not warrant much faith in a lotion.” — JOHNSON’S Letters.

† Such distinctions, although they ought by no means to be neglected, may sometimes be carried to an absurd and even ludicrous extent. When at Calais during the truce of Amiens, as I was walking on the sea-shore, a particle of sand lodged itself under my eyelid. Happening at the moment to be near a shop that wore a pharmaceutical aspect, I entered and re-

In the washes for the eye, opium is I believe in general if not the only efficient, at least the most important ingredient. It is said that a late celebrated oculist, after more than forty years' trial of this substance as an application, which he conceived beneficial to the eye, found out at length that it had an injurious rather than a salutary operation upon that organ. It is a matter of equal surprise and regret that a fact so important should, for so long a period, have escaped the discernment of any watchful and intelligent observer ; or that it should not have before occurred to a man at all in the habit of reasoning or reflection, that

requested the person whom I saw there to remove the troublesome intruder, by means of the feather of a quill that was lying upon his desk. The performance however of this simple act he scrupulously declined. " Pardon, Monsieur, nous sommes chymistes, pas chirurgiens ; il n'est pas à nous à *opérer*."

opium frequently administered for a course of time, either to the stomach or the eye, must tend instead of strengthening to impair its structure, and more permanently to disorder, instead of re-establishing, its functions.

In my practice at the institution already mentioned, a considerable number of the cases, not only of ophthalmia, but of acute and chronic headache, and other distressing nervous affections, seemed to have been occasioned by the too strenuous and continued exertion of the optic nerve, in the minute operations of watch-making, an occupation which used to employ no small proportion of the mechanics in the neighbourhood of the Finsbury Dispensary. Inflammation or debility of the eye cannot but be produced by the excessive or unseasonable exercise of it, and the diseased state of that organ is likely to be communicated by sympathy

to the brain in particular, and in many instances even to the whole nervous system. Hence, from an injury often apparently unimportant, inflicted upon the delicate instrument of vision, hysteria, epilepsy, hypochondriasis, and even absolute and obstinate melancholy, have not unfrequently originated.

One case of melancholy I well recollect, which was remarkable from the patient not having been afflicted by it until after the deprivation of his sight. Reflection upon that loss could not fail, for a time, to have been itself a source of uneasy feelings ; but the continuance and gradual aggravation of his depression may be better accounted for, by his not being longer able in consequence of this loss to pursue his usual active employment, by its withdrawing from him the natural and exhilarating stimulus of light, and by its precluding altogether the possibility

of that amusement and diversion of mind which is so constantly derived from the contemplation of external objects ; to which may be added, that by confining the sensibility within a smaller compass, it condensed and increased its force. Notwithstanding all this, we find that the blind when in society, and engaged in conversation, are in general more cheerful than other men. But from their apparent and even actual state of spirits, when exhilarated by social intercourse, we are by no means to infer that their ordinary condition of feeling is of the same character. Society is the proper sphere of their enjoyment. In proportion as the total obstruction of light shuts out the principal inlet to solitary amusement, they must feel delight in that which arises from a communication with their fellow-creatures. Conversation acts upon them as a cordial ; but when

that stimulus is withdrawn, their depression is likely to be aggravated by the temporary elevation which it had induced. This, however, does not appear to be uniformly the case. I knew a man of a superior understanding who, according to vulgar prejudice and phraseology, had the *misfortune* to be blind. The conversation once happened to turn, in his presence, upon a person who was subject, without any apparent cause, to a lowness of spirits, which, though many things had been tried, nothing had been able to remove. Upon the blind man being asked what *he* thought would be most likely to cure the malady of this mental invalid, he emphatically replied, "Put out his eyes."

ESSAY XIV.

PHYSICAL MALADY THE OCCASION OF MENTAL DISORDER.

“ The body and mind are like a jerkin and a jerkin's lining,
rumple the one and you rumple the other.”

STERNE.

AMONGST a great number which have fallen under my observation, I recollect a remarkable case, in which a derangement of the body unequivocally produced a disorder of the understanding. This case occurred at one of those critical periods of life, at which the female sex are particularly liable to an anomalous variety of diseases, especially to those to

which there is any hereditary or constitutional predisposition. The poor woman fancied that she saw her bed encompassed with a legion of devils, impatient to hurry her to eternal torments. She derided medicine, and obstinately and haughtily resisted its application. In a very short time, however, an alteration having taken place in her physical condition, she repented of her folly, and smiled at the mention of her former terrors. To so humiliating a degree do the floating particles of matter which surround, and still more those which enter into the interior composition of our frame, exhibit their influence in exciting, repressing, or disordering the phenomena of human intelligence ! “ Toi qui dans ta folie prends arrogamment le titre du *roi de la nature* ; toi qui mesures et la terre et les cieux ; toi pour qui ta vanité s’imagine que le tout a été fait, parceque tu es intelligent,

il ne faut qu'un léger accident, qu'un atome déplacé, pour te dégrader, pour te ravir cette intelligence, dont tu paroiss si fier !”

In those cases in which mental derangement has originated from a physical state that exists only for a short period, or from the sudden impression of an unlooked-for calamity, an expectation of cure may, for the most part, be not unreasonably entertained ; but when, on the other hand, by a life of debauchery, or the corroding operation of any chronic passion, the structure of the mind has been disorganized, there is in general little hope from either medical or moral regimen of an entire and permanent restoration.

What enfeebles the body will indirectly weaken the faculties of the mind ; and there is a nearer connection than is generally imagined between mental weakness and derangement. There cannot be a

more erroneous opinion than that persons only of a more than common vigor of intellect are capable of madness. *Violence is not strength.* In typhous fever, for instance, of which, in its advanced stage, delirium is the most prominent and alarming symptom, excessive debility constitutes the characteristic, if not even the essence of the disease. This delirium seldom comes on until the strength of the patient has arrived at almost its lowest point of reduction ; better evidence can scarcely be required, that the former is produced by the latter : and from analogy, it may not unfairly be inferred, that in other cases where phrenzy takes place, it may arise from a similar cause. This analogy might be corroborated by other maladies : hysterics, for instance, which, although it is most apt to occur in relaxed constitutions, and although its violent attacks

are generally occasioned by circumstances immediately preceding them that weaken or exhaust, often exhibit symptoms of morbid energy, much greater than the patient would have been capable of displaying in the state of her most perfect health and vigor.

These fugitive and abrupt exhibitions of morbid energy are very far from indicating genuine strength, which shows itself only in a capacity for regular and continued action. The human machinery is of so complicated a structure, and its motions, although various, are all so connected and dependent upon each other, that a derangement in one part may produce a temporary augmented action in the whole machine, in the same manner as the wheels of a watch, if the balance be removed, will run down with increased and inordinate force.

Mental diseases are well illustrated by

those of the body. The paroxysms of mania are convulsions of the mind*, those of melancholia its paralysis. So far from its being true that madness, in any of its modifications, necessarily arises from an excess of intellectual vigor: although it is not in every case, in many cases it is, a symptom of radical imbecility, or of premature decay.

By being so much in the habit of observing the influence of physical causes upon the mental powers and feelings, the practitioners of medicine are particularly apt to lean towards the doctrine of materialism. Speculations with regard to the nature of the vital or intelligent principle in man are involved in so much obscurity, as to allow greater scope for the display of a fertile imagination, than

* Mania in general bears a striking analogy to chorea; constant, irregular, and involuntary motions of the body characterise the one, motions precisely correspondent of the mind constitute the other.

for the sober exercise of the reasoning faculty. The clouds in which this subject is enveloped, the rays of genius may illuminate, but cannot disperse. The unwarrantable boldness and decision with which many are apt to speak upon a question, which, from an incurable deficiency of data, admits of no satisfactory conclusion, argues a more than ordinary imbecility, rather than any superiority of understanding. Genuine intrepidity of every species is naturally allied to modesty. There is a chaste and sober scepticism. When we profess that there is no moral evidence so immaculately clear, as to preclude all obscuration of doubt, we acknowledge merely the present imperfection and immaturity of our nature. A peremptory positiveness of opinion, as well as a rashness of action, is natural to the ardour and inexperience of youth ; but diffidence gradually

grows upon declining life. Unlimited dogmatism, in almost every case, affords suspicion of very limited information. In the degree in which our actual knowledge advances, we increase likewise our acquaintance with its comparative deficiency. As the circle of intellectual light expands, it widens proportionably the circumference of apparent darkness.

ESSAY XV.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF LONDON.

"It is not air, but floats a nauseous mass
Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things." ARMSTRONG.

It is not so much the heat itself, as the various and accumulated pollution with which, in the warmer months, the atmosphere of the metropolis is impregnated, that tends to disorder and debilitate the constitution of its inhabitants. Happy are they, who, unconfined by professional or any other chains, find themselves, at this season of the year, at liberty to enjoy the salutary fragrance of vegeta-

tion, or to seek refreshment and relief in the still more enlivening breezes and invigorating exhalations of the sea. London, which at other times serves as a kind of nucleus for an accumulated population, seems in the latter part of summer to exert a *centrifugal* force, by which are driven to a distance from it a large proportion of those inhabitants, who are not fastened to the spot upon which they reside, by the rivet of necessity, or some powerful local obligation. Men, whose personal freedom is not restricted within geographical limits, may gladly escape in the autumnal state of the atmosphere, from the perils real or imaginary of this crowded and artificially heated capital,

Pericula mille sævæ urbis.

An already immense and incessantly expanding city, on every side of which

new streets are continually surprizing the view, as rapid almost in their formation as the sudden shootings of crystallization, it is fair to imagine, cannot be particularly favorable to the health of that mass of human existence which it contains. In London, when a man receives into his lungs a draught of air, he cannot be sure that it has not been in some other person's lungs before. This second-hand atmosphere can scarcely fail to be as injurious to health as the idea of it is offensive to the imagination. But it is a matter of at least doubtful speculation, how far those maladies which are attributed exclusively to the air of this great town, may not arise from the more noxious influence of its prevailing habits. It is not so much perhaps from the change of atmosphere, as from that of hours and employment, that a person experiences restoration and relief in retiring from

London, after the exhaustion of a winter campaign. A conformity with the etiquette of polished life is inconsistent with the preservation of vulgar health. Complaisance of this kind is as destructive as contagion. Those who are supposed to fall a sacrifice to foul air, are frequently, in fact, martyrs to the idolatry of fashion. As the body varies little in its heat in all the vicissitudes of external temperature to which it may be exposed, so there is an internal power of resistance in the mind, which, when roused into action, is, in most instances, sufficient to counteract the hostile agency of external causes. I have been acquainted with more than one instance of a female patient, who, at the time that she felt or fancied herself too feeble or enervated to walk across a room, could, without any sense of inconvenience or fatigue, *dance* the greater part of the night, with an agreeable

partner. So remarkably does the stimulus of an enlivening and favorite amusement awaken the dormant energies of the animal fibre.

Now when the mind is quickened, out of doubt
The organs, though defunct and dead before,
Break up their drowsy grave, and newly move
With casted slough, and fresh celerity.

Upon a similar principle, they are, for the most part, only the vacant and the idle, the "lilies of the field that neither toil nor spin," who suffer in any considerable degree from the closeness of the air, or the alterations of the weather. One whose attention is constantly occupied, and whose powers are actively engaged, will be found to be, in a great measure, indifferent to the elevations and depressions of the barometer.

The "gloomy month of November" has been regarded as peculiarly disposing to melancholy, and the favorite season of

suicide. A man, when he feels dejected from any cause, is apt, like the sympathising friend of Yorick, to "blame the weather for the disorder of his nerves." But the dark hues of the mind are not in general reflected from the sky, and the preternaturally exalted excitement of mania soars in general above atmospheric influence.

There are cases indeed, in which the diseased apprehensions of a mental invalid are relieved or aggravated by the changes of the weather, where, when the sun shines, even his mind seems to be irradiated by its influence, and scarcely a cloud can obscure the face of nature, without at the same time casting a melancholy shade over his speculations.

The custom which prevails amongst the more fashionable or valetudinarian inhabitants of London, of retiring from

it during the autumnal months, conduces equally to health and to enjoyment. In order to feel, in the highest degree, the refreshing influences of the country, it is necessary that we should spend the greater part of our time in the midst of a great town. To the epicure in climate, pure air is a luxury, but like other luxuries, it ceases to be such, when it becomes an article of daily diet, of our familiar food. The air of the country stimulates and enlivens, but like other cordials, it appears in general to act only for a short time, and to produce, in some instances, a similar exhaustion. That this, however, is not universally true, is evinced by the permanently salutary effect in many cases of the marine atmosphere. The breezes of the ocean often seem to bear healing under their wings ; and are particularly adapted for restoring those convalescents, who have little other relic of disease

than the weakness or emaciation which it generally leaves behind. For this reduced and debilitated condition the air of the coast operates like a specific. It proves, when combined with gentle exercise, the best perhaps of all known corroborants, and sometimes produces effects the most astonishing in filling up the exhausted form, and in giving new nerve and muscle to a frame that has been attenuated and almost dissolved by long continued malady, medicine, and confinement.

But common as it is, nothing surely can be more cruel and absurd than to send, in contempt as it were of our unsparing and changeful climate, persons far advanced in the alarming symptoms of hectic, from their own warm and comfortable habitations, to undergo the last struggles of nature in cheerless and unaccommodated lodgings on the coast, or

at some other gaily frequented watering-place. For consumption, home is the best hospital, and the most effectual remedy is repose. A melancholy delusion is exhibited in the etiquette of sending a cast-off patient, after his faith, his fortune, and his frame have been well nigh exhausted, to the medicinal fountains in the vicinity of Bristol, where the undermined and crumbling fabric of his constitution may quietly moulder away, out of the sight of those professional advisers, who anticipated and were conscious of being no longer able to avert or retard the period of its inevitable destruction. Clifton may be regarded merely as a fashionable asylum for the dying, an anti-chamber to the grave; where miserable emigrants from home, pilgrims to a land of flattering but faithless promise, nearly lifeless and semi-transparent spectres may be seen waiting

upon the brink of this, for their passport to another shore.

Before quitting the subject of this Essay, it may be proper to notice the evil and danger which arise from churchyards situated in the midst of a great and populous city. Those consecrated spots, which were destined merely to be the peaceful repositories of the dead, are thus too frequently converted into fertile sources of mischief and misery to the living. Such must be more especially the case in cemeteries which are excessively and even indecently crowded, in which stratum above stratum of cadaverous matter lie in the closest contact, and where one body is not unfrequently mutilated or removed to give place to another. A soil like this, composed principally of human relics, constitutes an accumulated mass of malignant and almost irresistible contagion. Independ-

ently of such considerations, there is scarcely any man, in spite of all his reasonings, but must feel a repugnance to molest the quiet, and to violate the sanctity of the grave.

ESSAY XVI.

DYSPEPTIC AND HEPATIC DISEASES.

“ We’re not ourselves ’

When nature being opprest, commands the mind
To suffer with the body.”

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN disease originates from an improper indulgence in the more solid luxuries of the table, it ought perhaps in general to be regarded as a condition of debility, occasioned in a great measure by a fatigue of the corporeal powers. The epicure is not aware what hard work his stomach is obliged to undergo, in vainly struggling to incorporate the chaotic mass with which he has distended

and oppressed it. It is possible to be tired with the labor of digestion, as well as with any other labor. The fibres connected with this process are wearied by the execution or by the ineffectual endeavour to execute too heavy a task, in the same manner as the limbs are apt to be wearied by an extraordinary degree of pedestrian exertion. Gluttony is one of the most frequent conductors to the grave. When even the table may be said to groan under the load of luxury, it is no wonder that the stomach also should feel the burden. The poorer orders of the community, fortunately for themselves, cannot afford to ruin their constitutions by the inordinate gratification of their appetites. It is one of the unenviable privileges of the comparatively wealthy, to be able to gormandize to their own destruction. Those who are not indigent, although they may es-

cape many other trials, have often to undergo the severest trials of resolution.

What are called dyspeptic and bilious diseases, may for the most part be attributed to some error in diet, or excess in epicurean indulgence. They are to be found principally amongst persons who, in their habits of living, sin against the stomach, an organ which always sufficiently revenges itself upon those who impair or trifle with its texture. Hippocrates, one of our most venerable fathers in medicine, tells us that he who eats and drinks little will have no disease. Dr. Cheyne, who had suffered dreadfully from the effects of an opposite course, laid it down that, in the regulation of our diet, we ought to aim at "the lightest and the least." Those persons can scarcely expect to escape the horrors of indigestion, whose meals emulate in frequency and continuance the pasture o

an animal at grass. He who is sparing in the quantity, need not be very scrupulous with regard to the quality of his aliment. By making it a habit to rise from table with a certain degree of appetite, a man may save himself a great deal of trouble in the selection of his food. Nothing is more common than for an invalid to enquire of his physician, what dishes are proper for him and what are not so. His doctor might almost as reasonably be required to tell him what was most agreeable to his palate, as what best agreed with his stomach. Upon such points a patient can alone judge for himself, the proverbial difference in tastes being scarcely greater than the real difference in the individual faculties and peculiarities of digestion.

The appetite is increased much beyond what is natural, by the excitement of miscellaneous and highly seasoned dishes,

of which we can eat more although we can digest less than of plainer and less varied diet. The list of our viands would be sufficiently numerous, although we were to strike all poisons out of our bill of fare. If we confine ourselves in our most substantial repast to one dish, and that not a dish which is calculated to provoke rather than to satisfy the appetite, we may spare ourselves all anxiety with regard to the wholesome and unwholesome; a mean and servile solicitude which debases the mind of a man, and can do little good to his body. To live rigidly by rule, is not to live in any valuable or dignified sense of the word. I never could respect the character, or envy the longevity of Cornaro.

People who are naturally feeble, or have been debilitated by disease, are apt to fancy that they can scarcely take suf-

ficient nourishment ; but it ought to be remembered, that taking food is not always the same thing as taking nourishment. By receiving too much into the stomach, we obstruct the process of assimilation. The general frame may be thus starved by an excessive, as well as by a defective quantity of the ingesta.

The observance of fasts is a wholesome form of superstition. The omission of them in the Protestant calendar was, perhaps, as it relates to health, an unfortunate result of the Reformation. Though no longer regarded by us as religious institutions, it would be desirable that some of them at least should be still kept with a kind of sacred punctuality, as salutary intervals of abstinence, which give to the stomach a periodical holiday, and afford an occasional respite from the daily drudgery of digestion.

The evil of repletion is, however, often aggravated by previous inanition. The injury to the digestive organs, and, of course, to the general health, is incalculably great from the prevailing fashion of late and large dinners, from a daily alternation of emptiness and oppression.

I recollect a case of unsightly and unwieldy corpulence, which appeared gradually to have accumulated in consequence of gross feeding, connected with a life of sluggish inactivity. From an ignoble indulgence in habits of repletion and repose, this patient seemed ultimately to sink under the weight of abdominal oppression.

———— *Ille horridus alter*

Desidia, latamque trahens inglorius alvum.

It is a common opinion that animal food is less easily digested than vegetable, and that persons who have weak stomachs ought therefore to abstain in a great de-

gree, if not entirely, from the former species of diet. This I consider as a notion altogether as unfounded as that of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who thought the flesh meat that he took was unfavorable to the fertility of his fancy. “ But I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit.” It appears to me that in animal food there is a greater quantity of nutritive matter in the same compass, and that it is with more facility than any other kind of food, converted into the substance of our frame. Persons afflicted with dyspepsia or with gout, diseases which are intimately connected, have often been induced by their sufferings to refrain alike from meat and from wine, as if these articles of diet produced, though in a different degree, a similar effect upon the constitution. But I have repeatedly observed, that, although an abstinence from the latter has, by invigorating the

frame, diminished the susceptibility to disease, the privation of the former has been attended with a contrary effect. The difference between a beef-steak and a bottle of wine to a man, bears some analogy to the difference to a horse, between a feed of corn and the application of the spur. The one gives solid support, the other merely excites to action, which is followed by proportionate exhaustion and fatigue.

In the more self-indulgent classes of society, which although not in general so denominated, ought in a rational and moral view to be regarded as the lower orders, it may be remarked that coughs originate not so frequently from a diseased condition of the lungs as from a depraved state of the principal and more immediate organ of digestion. Hence arise those chronic coughs which are almost universal amongst the obstinately intem-

perate in eating as well as in drinking. Such coughs become particularly troublesome early in the morning, when the tone of the stomach has not been as yet duly excited by the natural and artificial stimulants of the day. The violent paroxysms of coughing often produce a tendency to vomiting. In such cases emetics give relief, which are on that account by these spendthrifts of constitution so frequently resorted to, as in some instances to become a part of their habitual regimen. An emetic relieves a person for a time from the filth and burthen of a debauch ; but this medicinal mode of purification is scarcely less injurious than intemperance itself. I knew a man whose conduct in every other respect was highly exemplary, who was in the habit of clearing his stomach in this manner on returning from a dinner-party. The violent action of an emetic under these circum-

stances, was the immediate occasion of his death.

A less injurious mode of relief from the effects of indigestion, is the use of warm diluents. There may however be an intemperance in weak as well as in strong liquors, especially when the former are taken at a high temperature. The celebrated Burke was as much in the habit of refreshing himself by draughts of hot water, as the no less celebrated Pitt by potations of wine ; and many a prude in regimen, who prides herself in the fancied consciousness of her dietetic discretion, gradually wears away the tone and vigor of her frame, by an inordinate indulgence in gruels, broths, and teas. Such gossip-cordials relax as certainly, although not in so great a degree, as the poisonous products of fermentation. By the constant application of hot liquids, we may imagine the coats of the stomach

to be *soddened*, in the same manner as the fingers of a washerwoman appear to be by a habit of tepid immersion.

In spite of these observations, I am still inclined to think, that there are many cases in which a taste for tea ought to be encouraged rather than condemned. This taste has a tendency to preclude the more prevalent, and, after all, more mischievous propensity for vinous stimulation. Many persons distinguished for their longevity have been known to indulge habitually in the use of tea ; which we may account for, not from its being in itself a wholesome beverage, but from a fondness for it generally implying a distaste for potations of a much more decidedly pernicious nature. Tea will produce in some very irritable frames an artificial state resembling intoxication ; but it is a cloudless inebriety. Tea removes the film from an eye that has been obscured by a gross

and stupifying intemperance, and tends to improve a susceptibility to the true relish of social and intellectual enjoyment.

I have known several instances of dyspepsia, which might be in part accounted for from the state of the teeth, which were so decayed as to be unequal to the due performance of their appropriate office. When it is considered how much health and life itself depend upon the proper assimilation of our food, that such an assimilation must be preceded by an adequate digestion, and that this last process cannot well be effected without a previous and sufficient mastication, the functions of the teeth will seem to approach in importance to that of the essential viscera. The wanton or unnecessary extraction of a tooth ought to be avoided, not on account merely of the momentary pain of the operation, or of

the appearance of decay and dilapidation it may give to the face, but because it involves the loss of one of the instruments most intimately connected with the preservation of vigor, and even with the continuance of vitality. A circumstance which has almost constantly been observed to occur among the phenomena of an extraordinary and healthy old age, is the unimpaired integrity of the teeth. Their decay which for the most part accompanies, cannot fail likewise to contribute to and accelerate that progressive reduction of substance and of strength that so generally characterizes the more advanced stages of our existence.

Hepatic disease, although belonging more properly to a warmer climate, forms a large proportion in the class even of English maladies. It is a very common thing amongst the dyspeptic to fancy

themselves bilious. The idea of an excess of bile often arises merely from those uneasy feelings in the abdomen, that are apt to accompany indigestion; from a foul taste and a furred tongue upon awaking in the morning, and from that sallowness of the skin which is usual in various cases of habitual or constitutional weakness. But none of these circumstances, either separately or in combination, afford unequivocal evidence of an overflow of bile. The uneasy feelings and the foul taste may be attributed to the general ill condition of the organs of digestion. As for the yellow hue of the complexion, it may be accounted for by the unhealthy state of the cutaneous glands, without the bile having any share in it.

It were to be wished that the commencement of mischief in an organ so important as the liver, should invariably

announce itself by some obtrusive and unequivocal symptom ; but this essential viscus has often been found after death to be indurated, or otherwise injured, without any marked indication of disease during the life of the patient, except dyspepsia, or simple indigestion. Fortunately, however, in the greater number of cases, less doubtful signs of this disorder shew themselves before it is too late to avert its most lamentable consequences. A sense of heaviness in the upper part of the abdomen, an obtuse pain below the ribs on the right side, a troublesome acidity or flatulence in the first passages, with an uneasiness when lying on the left side, are grounds of reasonable apprehension. When a *bon vivant*, who has indulged in those habits of life, which in this country at least are observed to be by far the most frequent exciting causes of liver complaints, begins to be con-

scious of these symptoms, no time ought to be lost in reforming his regimen, as well as in having recourse to the modes of recovery which are to be derived from the medical art. On a close interrogation of invalids with disorganized livers, we shall often discover that they can recollect the exact time since which they always found themselves lying on the right side, on awaking in the morning. It is probable that inward sensations during sleep, unconsciously inclined the patient to take this posture. We should, however, be aware that an equal ease in lying on either side is no demonstration of the liver being in a sound condition. Amongst the signs of hepatic disorganization, may be classed a pain under the right shoulder-blade, and what is particularly worthy of notice, a regular morning cough, followed by the ejection of a little froth from the mouth. The liver may

sometimes be felt hard or enlarged ; but there is no one, it is to be hoped, who would defer his apprehensions until they were forced upon him, by this palpable completion of evidence.

After all, a large proportion of what are in general called cases of disordered liver, may be more properly considered as cases of broken-up habits or worn-out stamina. The constitution is, perhaps, not so often affected in the first instance by a disease of the liver, as the liver is by the previous disease or decay of the constitution. On this account it is not altogether by the remedies which seem to have a more particular operation upon this organ that its irregularities are to be corrected, or its obstructions to be removed, but in a great measure by those other medicines and methods of treatment that are calculated to restore lost

tone to the general fibre, or to prop for a period the tottering pillars of the frame.

There are no doubt articles in the *Materia Medica*, which do not rank with tonics or corroborants, that often have a decidedly and eminently favorable operation in hepatic disorders. Of these the most distinguished is calomel. But calomel, powerful and beneficial as it unquestionably is when seasonably and discreetly administered, has sometimes, perhaps, been extolled with an intemperate zeal, and appears to have been employed in certain cases with too little reserve and discrimination. There is reason to believe that many a patient, supposed to be hepatic, but in fact only dyspeptic, has fallen a martyr to a mercurial course; a course which has often been persisted in with a perseverance undaunted by the glaring depredation which it produced. Mercury would be

more cautiously administered, if sufficient attention were paid, not only to its immediate and more apparent, but also to its ultimate and comparatively clandestine operation upon the human frame.

In the treatment of any malady our object ought to be not merely to remove it, but to do so at as little expense as possible to the stamina of the patient. In too rudely eradicating a disease, there is danger lest we tear up a part of the constitution along with it. One of the most important circumstances that distinguish the honorable and reasoning practitioner from the empiric is, that the former, in his endeavour to rectify a temporary derangement, pays at the same time due regard to the permanent interests and resources of the constitution.

The inebriate, who, from having hardened or mutilated his hepatic organs,

or one who, from having mangled his health by a different mode of indiscretion, has recourse to the remedial influence of mercury, ought to be aware that a poison may lurk under the medicine which apparently promotes his cure; that, although it prove ultimately successful in expelling the enemy, it often, during the conflict, lays waste the ground upon which it exercises its victorious power.

The countenance, and not only the physical, but even the mental constitution, will often retain through life the impression of a mercurial course. It frequently leaves a man in a diseased state, which becomes worse rather than better as age advances, where the susceptibility to uncomfortable feeling is excessive, and connected at the same time with an almost paralytic insensibility to enjoyment. The instrument is

so entirely out of tune, that no hand, however delicate or dexterous, can draw from it an harmonious note.

Between the diseases which form the particular subject of this Essay and hypochondriasis, the connection is intimate and almost inseparable. The assimilation of the food has an important effect upon the regulation of the mind. A sourness of the temper may often be traced to acidities in the stomach. He who does not digest well, is not likely either to act or to feel aright. A morbid secretion of the liver will give a tinge to a man's character as well as to his complexion. He whose disposition to goodness can resist the influence of dyspepsia, and whose career of philanthropy is not liable to be checked by an obstruction in the hepatic organs, may boast of a much deeper and firmer virtue than falls to the ordinary lot of human nature. A

disorder in the physical part of our frame produces not so frequently a total obscuration, as a twilight of the intellect, an intermediate and equivocal state between entire sanity and decided derangement: the state in which a large proportion of hypochondriacal men, and hysterical women, may be considered as nosologically placed,

ESSAY XVII.

PALSY, IDIOCY, SPASMODIC AND CONVULSIVE
AFFECTIONS.

“ That’s he that *was* Othello !”

SHAKESPEARE.

IN the formidable family of diseases, there is no individual more to be dreaded than palsy, unless, indeed, it extend its influence to the faculties of intellect, as well as to that of muscular exertion. Idiocy is a mournful object of contemplation ; but the second childhood of the mind is less to be pitied than that of the body, when, in the latter case, the powers of memory and reflection remain comparatively unimpaired.

I remember a young man who, in consequence of having caught cold during a medicinal course to which he had frequently before been under the necessity of submitting, was attacked with a palsy of the left side, which soon became universal, except in the muscles about the neck and face. He presented the spectacle of a living head moving upon a motionless and apparently deceased trunk. Death soon, however, completed his task, and liberated the sufferer from the horrors of consciousness.

More than one instance of paralysis which I have met with has seemed to consist in a gradual mouldering away of the constitution. The warm bath, which often proves one of the most efficacious cordials for decayed energies, was in these cases only of fugitive advantage.

The application of blisters, which in a state of torpor, or morbid sleep of the

faculties, is so well calculated to rouse them into activity, is seldom of much avail, and often is positively injurious in cases of radical exhaustion or slowly induced decay.

Intemperance is among the most frequent causes of paralysis, but it is not always an intemperance in the use of intoxicating liquors, but sometimes in business requiring anxious and unseasonable exertions. One instance of paralysis I have known, in which the subject of the attack had through life been remarkably abstemious in his regimen, but had stretched and strained his faculties by a praise-worthy effort to secure to himself and his family the reasonable comforts of life, and a respectable independence. Labour is the lot of man, and perhaps his most genuine and lasting luxury. But although no ordinary error, it is possible to be industrious over-much;

we may sometimes over-work the machine, although more frequently we allow its springs to rust for want of sufficient use. The patient above referred to observed, that "it was very strange a man should be so ill and not know it." The doctors whom he saw, and the medicines that he took, were to him almost the only indications of his laboring under disease. But this is by no means uncommon in paralytic affections, more especially when they extend their influence to the intellectual powers. The muscles of a man's face may be distorted by this malady without his being aware of it, unless he is made so by the testimony of a friend, or the accidental reflection of a mirror. Unfortunately, or perhaps happily, there is in such cases no mirror for the mind ; and as for a friend, we are seldom willing to acknowledge a man as such, who endeavours to convince us of our mental decline. The

Bishop of Grenada in *Gil Blas* is a well drawn copy of a multitude of originals, which are continually occurring in actual life. Pride consoles us for the failure of reason ; and in proportion as we forfeit our title to the respect of others, we are often apt to acquire an additional reverence for ourselves. A once celebrated beauty sees but too distinctly the reflection of her faded charms ; but a man, the flower of whose genius is withered, for the most part remains ignorant of the melancholy alteration. The dim eye of dotage cannot discern its own decay. Hence arises the reluctance which men often show to resign stations in society, to the duties of which they have long ceased to be equal. Next to the glory arising from a course of illustrious and profitable activity, is the dignity and the grace of a seasonable and voluntary retirement.

To the man of genius more especially, paralysis teaches an edifying lesson of humiliation. It is that unjustly envied class of men, which is most conspicuously open to its attacks. A dazzling display of intellect menaces its premature extinction. Of a life signalized by mental exercise and splendor, palsy too frequently marks the melancholy conclusion. Marlborough, in his last years a victim to this dreadful malady, observed to one admiring his portrait, "Yes, that *was* a great man;" such a remnant at least of understanding was still preserved as enabled him to recollect the brilliancy of his former career.

Swift lived to accomplish his own prediction. His fate corresponded to his melancholy presentiment with regard to it. He became at length like the tree which many years before he had seen withered at the top. His mind died

before his body. There was a stagnation of rational thought long before his blood had ceased to flow. The embers only remained of so many coruscations. How different are the feelings which are excited by beholding the ruins of a superannuated mind, from those with which we contemplate a dilapidated specimen of ancient architecture, more especially if the latter has been associated in our recollection with examples of former heroism or devotion ! The remaining fragments of a decayed abbey or a time-worn castle, strike us as venerable or sublime ; but who ever heard of a venerable idiocy, or a sublime paralysis ?

In an inveterate case of idiocy, or of paralysis affecting more particularly the intellect, which once came under my observation, I was particular in my enquiries with regard to the habits of living, professional employment, and former character

of the patient. I found that he was originally a man of more than ordinary acuteness and capacity for business; that he had been always abstemious in his diet, and had spent the greatest part of his life in an official situation, which required no unseasonable or unwholesome degree of labour, or any extraordinary anxiety or perturbation of mind. The mental imbecility seemed in this instance not to originate from any of its usual or natural sources. Upon further scrutiny, however, it came out that the patient had, for a considerable period, been in the habit of taking "patent drops," which produced a gradually progressive weakness, and ultimately an entire destruction of the intellectual and active powers.

About the same time, I met with a remarkable case which strikingly exemplified the connection and affinity that may exist between what are called "bilious

affections" and those which belong more apparently and decidedly to the nervous system. The patient referred to had, in consequence of a severe domestic privation, been seduced into habits of intemperance, which, for two years, seemed to have no effect but upon the liver, producing, at nearly regular intervals of ten days, vomitings of bile, accompanied occasionally by a diarrhœa, which, when combined with the former, of course assimilated the disease to the character of cholera. For the considerable period above mentioned, his only apparent complaint was what, in popular and fashionable language, is called the "bile." — After the lapse, however, of somewhat more than two years from the commencement of his intemperate habits, without having received any precautionary or prefatory intimation, he was surprized by a seizure which paralyzed one half of

his body, dividing it longitudinally into two equal sections, the one dead to all the purposes of sensation or voluntary motion, the other retaining the functions and privileges of vitality, although in some measure, of course, clogged and impeded by the impotent and deceased half to which it was united. When I saw him last, he had remained three years in this truly melancholy state. At least, during that time he had experienced no important or permanent amelioration, nor any evident tendency towards the recovery of his corporeal powers. His mind also seemed to have shared in the paralysis. This was more particularly obvious in the lapses of his recollection. His memory had been maimed by the same blow which had disabled one side of his body. His recollection with regard to things, did not seem to be much impaired, but it was surprisingly

so with regard to the denominations of persons or places. He has often forgotten the name of an intimate friend, at the very time that, with the most unaffected cordiality, he was shaking hands with him. Upon enquiry, it appeared that the pernicious habit of the patient was still persisted in ; a circumstance which alone was sufficient to account for the uninterrupted continuance of his disorder.

In this case nothing could be more evident, than that the bilious symptoms with which he was first affected, and the nervous complaints which succeeded, both originated from one source : and this may give a hint to those who are much troubled with the *bile*, as it is called, especially when it has been occasioned by the same means as in the instance just stated, that unless they seasonably

reform their regimen, they may be at no great distance from a paralytic seizure.

I recollect another case of palsy which was rather remarkable, both from some of the symptoms which attended it, and from the manner in which the patient was restored. This person was perfectly sensible of every circumstance of the attack. He felt as if the ground were sinking from under his feet, and all the objects before him appeared to be inverted. He suddenly became incapable of moving any limb or part of his body, while at the same time his recollection and other faculties of mind were not, in a sensible degree, impaired. Instead of bleeding or any other violent method of depletion being had recourse to, stimulants, both externally and internally, were administered. The patient was thus gradually aroused, and a resus-

citation took place of those powers, which might perhaps have been irrecoverably extinguished by an ill-timed expenditure of the vital fluid.

A curious and interesting case fell some time ago under my professional observation of a new species of paralysis, a palsy of the heart, a sudden congelation of the affections. Although before by no means deficient in natural feeling, the patient could now, as she said, see without emotion every one of her family lying dead at her feet. She continued to be influenced by an anxiety to do what was right; almost the only sense indeed that seemed to be left her, was an abstract sense of duty. She had entertained an ardent and tender passion, but many difficulties had been thrown in the way of its indulgence. These however had been at length overcome. But when the object approached within her reach, it ceased to

be an object of desire. Her love had struggled so long against the current of opposition, that it expired, as if exhausted by its efforts, upon landing on the wished-for shore. This is not the only instance that I have known, in which a long continued excess of suffering has produced a morbid apathy. It is an unalterable decree of nature that extreme wretchedness must in no long time terminate in death, derangement, or torpidity. Sensation cannot be wounded for any considerable period, without its being altogether destroyed. It is a law which kindly limits the possible degree, in the extension of human calamity.

Palsy, although often apparently sudden in its attacks is, for the most part, a disease of gradual and sometimes of clandestine growth. The circumstances at least which indicate the embryo existence of this malady in the constitution, are

seldom understood or sufficiently attended to. In the premature diminution of the capacity for either bodily or mental exertion there may, in many cases, be a well-founded fear of ultimate paralysis, unless the tendency to it be in due time counteracted by the administration of appropriate remedies, or the relinquishment of pernicious habits. A decline of energy is often to be regarded as a commencement of palsy. But besides the general failure of the most important powers of life, there are many more particular circumstances which indicate the approach, if not the actual inroad of this formidable disease: such as transitory torpor of some limb or muscle, dark spots floating or fixed before the eye, an occasional dimness of discernment, an indistinctness or confusion of memory. Fearful feelings are frequently experienced, such as deep-seated pains in the

back part of the head that give an idea of pressure, or of the firm and violent grasp of an iron hand ; these symptoms are often attended by a singing in the ears, an awkward difficulty of motion or articulation, a diminished acuteness, although in some rare cases it is increased, in several or all of the senses. What is particularly remarkable, and by no means unfrequent before a fatal seizure, a numbness of one side will be felt occasionally for a little time, and then pass away. Dr. Beddoes speaks of a person, who once feeling in this manner whilst a tailor was employed about his person, remarked that "he should probably never want the suit of clothes, as he distinctly felt death taking measure of him for his shroud." This man afterwards died suddenly of palsy.

An acquaintance not merely with the actual symptoms of a disorder, but with

the previous history also of the patient, is highly interesting and instructive. The latter knowledge is often as necessary to the prevention, as the former is to the cure of a disease. It is of importance to know and to interpret rightly, those signs which portend the approach of any formidable malady, in order that our fear may be aroused in time, and that we may seasonably oppose to the morbid tendency all the means of precaution and counteraction in our power. In some of the complaints which fall under the denomination of nervous, this is more particularly required.

Many of the symptoms which indicate a tendency to epilepsy are the same as those by which palsy is preceded. But there are some which more particularly threaten the occurrence of the former disease. Upon minute enquiry of an epileptic patient, it will often appear

that several years before the complete formation of an epileptic paroxysm, he had been liable to a drowsiness, which was not removed by actual sleep ; to a frequently occurring sense of intoxication, without having taken any inebriating draught or drug ; to an almost habitual unsteadiness upon the feet, and sometimes an absolute staggering ; to an incessant restlessness and propensity to loco-motion and a continual disposition to change his posture or his place. This mobility extends likewise to the mind of the patient, so that a permanent direction of it towards one object is an effort beyond his power. The attention is always fluttering on the wing. Not long before an actual paroxysm of epilepsy, a variety of uncomfortable feelings occur, such as flashes of light before the eyes, head-ache, violent rushings, as it would seem, of the blood

towards the head, dizziness, dimness and confusion of vision, and a frequent sense of faintness approaching to syncope. The patient often complains also, whilst the malady is pending, of being subject to transient desertions of the intellectual faculty, which seems to leave him for a few minutes and then to return in a manner that he cannot account for.

It is but seldom that we meet with a person whose previous life affords all those admonitory hints of the kind of danger which may threaten his constitution : although it is perhaps for want of a scrutiny sufficiently strict, that we do not ascertain, in almost every instance of true epilepsy, the previous occurrence of most at least of these circumstances of awful presage. Happy are they who, in such cases, have discernment enough to decypher and resolution practically to apply the characters of menace, before it

be too late to avert the evil which they forebode.

When the early intimations of the progress either of approaching epilepsy or paralysis are not adverted to, and the tendency of the disease towards further encroachment is not, by a correction of diet and general regulation of the passions and habits, carefully and vigorously resisted, the destiny of the unhappy patient is likely, in no long time, to be irretrievably fixed by one decisive blow, which, if it spare for a season the principle of life, will blast at once and obscure for ever all the energies and capacities of intellect. The paralytic survivor of his reason presents an object truly pitiable and humiliating; an unburied and respiring corpse, a soul-less image, a mockery of man! All is fled that was valuable in the interior; it is only the *shell* that remains. The

empty casket serves merely as a melancholy memento of the jewel which it once contained.

During the year 1809, I met with two cases of disease arising from personal imprudence of a similar nature, but producing effects, in some respects different, upon the constitution. One of them was an instance of fatuity, or extreme imbecility which had been gradually induced by a succession of epileptic paroxysms, each of which took something away, until the mind was stripped altogether of its powers and endowments. At length, it presented a tablet from which was effaced nearly every impression of thought, or character of intellectual existence. The other case was that of a young man who, from an indiscreet exposure during a medicinal course, was suddenly seized with delirium, which on account of an heredi-

tary bias in that direction, seemed likely to degenerate into a chronic and perhaps cureless aberration, instead of abolition of the mental powers. The mind, in the latter instance, shattered by disease, may be compared to the small fragments of a broken mirror, which retain the faculty of reflection, but in which, although the number of images is increased, there is no one entire and perfect representation.

I have known an instance of epilepsy, in which the disease seemed to have been at first occasioned by blows upon the head which a boy had received from his schoolmaster, and also from the hand of an unnatural parent. He had, for some time previous to my seeing him, been in the habit as a baker's servant of carrying to great distances heavy loads of bread, the pressure of which upon his head was calculated to aggravate the

disposition to his original disorder. When he had, in consequence of professional advice, been induced to relinquish this peculiarly unsuitable occupation, the fits occurred more rarely, and assumed a less alarming appearance.

A paroxysm of epilepsy, it may be observed, is more frightful than perilous. It is more eminently menacing to reason than to life, although the frame in its corporeal as well as mental part cannot fail to be injured in a certain degree, by the wear and tear of every violent and morbid convulsion.

It is remarkable how much epilepsy is the result of association and habit. Break the association, stop the clock which should announce the period of the accustomed paroxysm, and you will often prevent, not the next fit only, but any future attack of the disease.

It is not always easy to mark the distinction between different kinds of fits ; hysteria, epilepsy, palsy, and apoplexy exhibit often strong features of consanguinity, and in practice are seldom, indeed, seen so distinct from each other, as in the definitions of nosology.

Fits, and even habits of nervous affection, are often induced by some sudden and impetuous movement of the mind. It particularly behoves, therefore, those who are inclined to maladies of this class, to study the science of self-government ; and others who are connected with them, ought to be anxiously afraid of giving rise to any unnecessary cause of fretfulness or irritation. In one of the modern comedies, a pampered and gouty nabob, upon some opposition to his wishes, cries out in a rage, " The doctors order that I should not be contradicted." Ludicrous as this exclamation may appear in the

play, there are instances in which such professional advice may be seriously and judiciously administered. I well recollect a lady who, in a state of nervous languor and irritability, very much the result of self-indulgence and the indiscreet kindness of her friends, gave general orders that nothing unpleasant should ever be told her. Her weakness in this respect resembled the childish cowardice of those who, in a thunder-storm, close their window-shutters or their eyelids, that they may not see the lightning which plays about their habitation, as if when not dazzled by the flash, they were proof against the peril of the electric power.

Some years ago, I heard of an impressive instance of the fatality of impetuous passion. A farmer was intemperately indignant against a tenant, for some alteration which he had made in one of his houses, and in the crisis of his anger fell

instantly dead at the feet of the innocent offender. The violence of his emotion exhausted the powers of vitality without the intervention of disease. The moment before the sudden rising of his rage he was in the most perfect health, and had been so for a long time previous to it. Although at already an advanced age, his mode of living, and moderation in every thing but temper, had promised still a considerable protraction of comfortable life. Armstrong had such a case as his here related in his view, in the following description :

“ But he, whom anger stings, drops, if he dies,
At once, and rushes apoplectic down.” *

It may be doubted, however, whether this fatal attack may be correctly considered as apoplectic, although that epithet is in general, but certainly with too

* Art of Preserving Health.

little discrimination, applied to almost every case of sudden death, which has not been obviously occasioned by external violence.

The physical injury arising from inordinate passion, separate from any mischievous act to which it may lead, has not been sufficiently the subject of medical attention. It operates upon the vital functions in a state of health, so as to produce disturbance and disease; and in a state of actual disease it has an alarming tendency to aggravate every symptom of disorder, and to increase the risk of a fatal termination. Anger, when it is not immediately dangerous, is at least unwholesome. It is painful without any compensation of pleasure. A man must be altogether unwise who would sacrifice his health to his enmity, and really injure himself

because he conceives that he has been injured by another.

Bath is a favorite place of refuge for the paralytic, whether made so by debauchery or any other cause of premature decay. But the fashionable springs of that crowded mart of health are not impregnated with the power of restoring lost energies, or of bringing back the tide of ebbing animation. The late Dr. Heberden, a physician eminent for the largeness of his experience and the correctness of his observation, remarks, that "these waters are neither in any way detrimental, nor of the least use in palsy."

My experience with regard to the trial of the electric fluid in paralytic seizures, arising from radical debility or decay, has in no instance proved favourable to its use. Although it may have the effect of awakening dormant sensation for

a moment, it is not likely that the sudden operation of so fugitive an agent should produce any important or permanent impression upon a chronic and constitutional disorder. Electricity is of well-ascertained advantage in some diseases, where the cure is often to be effected only by a violent agitation or movement of the general system. But with regard to those morbid affections, or, to speak more correctly, those predispositions to morbid affection, which are either implanted before our birth, or have, by the influence of exterior situation or inveterate habits, been gradually introduced into our frame, in addition to a vigilant and unceasing care to avoid any circumstances which may rouse the sleeping propensity to disease, little else is to be prescribed than the adoption of that regimen and method of life, and occasionally the use of those pharmaceut-

ical remedies which are calculated to preserve or restore the general health, and by a slow and almost imperceptible influence to give additional vigor to the stamina of the constitution.

In the treatment of disease it must appear desirable to effect the cure when it is practicable, by means which act generally and impartially upon the body, rather than by those which operate, although not solely, yet more immediately and with peculiar force upon the delicate nerves and fibres of the stomach. The health and, of course, comfort of man depend, in a principal degree, upon the due vigor of his powers of digestion, which by the inordinate or unnecessary use of drugs, has in too many instances been gradually impaired and at length irrecoverably destroyed. This is apt to be the case more especially with those fashionable hypochondriacs, who are con-

tinually having recourse to the doses of pharmacy, in order to relieve the *ennui* of indolence, or to support the languor of an effeminate or enervated constitution. Such an existence as theirs may out of courtesy be called life, but it possesses none of life's privileges or its blessings.

Dr. Beddoes in his *Hygeia* notices an imperfect catalogue of epileptic remedies, with the titles of the works in which their effects are described, which occupies an hundred and fifty pages. There is often an important difference between a medicine and a remedy, although they are too generally considered as synonymous.

Before concluding the present Essay, it may be worth while to notice several additional cases of nervous or spasmodic disorder which are somewhat remarkable, and capable, perhaps, of useful application.

A case of chorea once fell under my care, in a girl of nine years of age. Her limbs, during the time that she was awake, were in constant motion ; so far from being able to stand still, she was scarcely able to stand at all. Every muscle of her face was strangely distorted, and her countenance wore an expression of singular horror. She frequently threw herself upon the floor and beat her head violently against it, the effects of which were visible in the scars and contusions that remained. She would in some of her paroxysms thrust needles into the flesh of her arms, without appearing to receive pain from the wounds thus inflicted. She was in the habit of grasping with an uncommon degree of eagerness and tenacity any object which might happen to be within her reach. All these symptoms when regarded in combination seemed to indicate a superabun-

dance of sensorial power, which continually required to expend itself in muscular motion and voluntary exertion. It is many years since I heard of this patient; but it is not improbable that the reduction of excitability which gradually takes place as life advances, might at length have restored her to that state of health which no remedies were likely, at the time I knew her, completely and permanently to effect.

Dr. Parry observes, that "the mere sight of certain colors and liquids, slight noises, and various other trifling irritations, are highly distressing, and even productive of convulsions. These circumstances are very common concomitants of high degrees of what is called nervous affection. A lady whom I knew, could not bear to look at any thing of a scarlet color; another could bear the sight of no light color whatever; in con-

sequence of which the papers and wainscot of her rooms were all tinged with a deep blue or green, and the light was modified by green blinds. If also at any time I visited her in white stockings, I was always at my entrance presented with a black silk apron, with which I was requested to cover these offensive garments. I have seen a third patient of this description, repeatedly thrown into violent convulsions by the noise produced by the falling of a pill box, or even a black pin on the floor.” *

The source of convulsive affections for the most part consists in a morbid excess of irritability. Every nerve, in many of these cases, seems to have the exquisite sensibility of the optic. I have repeatedly been called upon to prescribe for one lady who belonged to this class of patients.

* See “Cases of Tetanus and Rabies Contagiosa,” by Dr. Parry of Bath.

She was subject to attacks of convulsion, accompanied with the most excruciating pain at the top of the head ; these symptoms were once suddenly induced by the servant letting fall the tea-board at the door of her chamber. She felt as if the brittle load had fallen upon her head ; her brain appeared to sympathize with the fracture of the porcelain. This person had recently undergone the pains of childbirth without experiencing any injury, or a more than usual shock to her feelings. Such invalids are often operated upon most powerfully by the most feeble causes ; serious sufferings they can bear with fortitude and composure ; it is only trifles that overcome them.

It may also be remarked of this class of persons, that although upon some extraordinary occasion their courage may be forced up to a very high pitch, they appear to be subsequently exhausted in proportion to the efforts which they

have made. They feel more after an escape than during the encounter ; when an evil is past, than whilst it is pending. What may, by a little license, be called the retrospective apprehension, is sometimes more lively than what was felt in the actual prospect of danger. The firmness of the mind is seldom in such instances shattered immediately after the shock which it has received. The shell seems to sleep upon the ground for some time before the destructive explosion.

Between sensibility and irritability there is an important distinction. The former is to be measured by the permanence and force of sensation ; the latter, by the suddenness and facility with which sensation is excited. When it is excited to any great degree by trifling or imaginary causes, it implies the existence of disorder, although in other respects the faculties of the system remain healthy and unim-

paired. “On comparing the situation of an hypochondriacal female liable to distressing agitations from the most trifling causes, as the dropping of a hair-pin upon the floor, with that of the engineer who stands unmoved amidst the thunder of a battery ; of the seaman who maintains his footing upon the deck or ropes of his vessel reeling under the shock of the elements ; or of the Indian who exhibits the signs and probably feels the throb of intense delight, whilst the flames are preying upon his flesh ; how astonishing do we find the range in human susceptibility to the effect of the powers by which we are surrounded !” — *Dr. Beddoes' Hygeia*.

Such differences in individuals often take their rise from hereditary stamina, but not unfrequently they appear to be in a great measure produced, and are always magnified or diminished by habits and external influences. A porter has a

stronger back than another man, because he is more than other men accustomed to make use of it. The mental laborer for a similar reason will be likely to acquire, if he were not originally endowed with a more than ordinary degree of mental power; and in like manner, an irritable person who nurses his nerves by a hot-house kind of treatment, will be apt to aggravate the unfortunate peculiarity of his constitution, and to convert a more than common delicacy into absolute disease.

A very singular and anomalous case of nervous affection I shall narrate in the words in which it was described by me many years ago, when I was Physician to the Finsbury Dispensary.

“A case equally remarkable and melancholy, has remained for a very long period under the care of the dispensary. It is that of a young woman, who, for

many years past, has been confined to her bed in a state of nearly universal spasm. She lies rigid and motionless, with her eyes more than half closed, and every other organ of sense almost completely shut against external impression. The physician who attended her, by speaking in her ear as loud as it was possible for him to do, succeeded only so far as to produce a motion of the lips, that betrayed an ineffectual endeavour for utterance. It seems to be a case in which there is an absence of actual sensation, although, by some violently exciting cause, the sensibility may, at times, be imperfectly awakened. Lying in such a state, with scarce any symptom of vitality, but a feeble respiration, she can be regarded as little more than a breathing corpse. It is possible that in this case consciousness may still exist, although it be unable to appear, in con-

sequence of the voluntary muscles usually employed to express it refusing in the present instance to discharge their accustomed office. It is to be hoped, however, that this is not actually the fact. Nothing is more terrific to the imagination than the idea of being buried alive, and what mode of being buried alive can be conceived more truly horrible, than for the soul to be entombed in the body ?” *

* See Monthly Magazine, Medical Report, for June, 1800.

ESSAY XVIII.

THE HEREDITARY NATURE OF MADNESS.

“ For he himself is subject to his birth.”

Hamlet.

“ To be well born,” is a circumstance of real importance, but not in the sense in which that expression is usually employed. The most substantial privileges of birth are not those which are confined to the descendants of noble ancestors.

The heir of a sound constitution has no right to regret the absence of any other patrimony. A man who has derived from the immediate authors of his being vigorous, and untainted stamina of

mind as well as of body, enters upon the world with a sufficient foundation and ample materials for happiness. Very different is it with the progeny of those who are constitutionally diseased in any way, but more especially with the progeny of persons who are radically morbid in intellect. No wealth, which it is in the power of such parents to bequeath, can compensate the probability of evil which they entail, upon the creatures and the victims of their selfish indulgence or their criminal indiscretion.

Nothing can be more obvious, than that one who is aware of a decided bias in his own person towards mental derangement, ought to shun the chance of extending and of perpetuating, without any assignable limit, the ravages of so dreadful a calamity. No rites however holy can, under such circum-

stances, consecrate the conjugal union. In a case like this, marriage itself is a transgression of morality. A man who is so situated, by incurring the risk of becoming a parent, involves himself in a crime, which may not improbably project its lengthened shadow, a shadow, too, which widens in proportion as it advances, over the intellect and the happiness of an indefinite succession of beings. The ruffian who fires at the intended object of his plunder, takes away the life of him only at whom his aim is levelled. The bullet which penetrates the heart of the unfortunate victim does in general no farther mischief. But he who inflicts upon a single individual the worse than deadly wound of insanity, knows not the numbers to which its venom may be communicated ; he poisons a public stream out of which multitudes may drink ; he

is the enemy, not of one man, but of mankind.

In cases of disease which are more strictly corporeal, the risk as well as evil of engendering them is smaller, not only because they are less serious in their character and consequences than mental maladies, but also, because they are more within the scope of management and possible counteraction.

Scrofula, for instance, although by the vulgar it has been emphatically denominated "the Evil," is less deserving of so fearful a title than that complaint which, not altogether without reason, has received the appellation of the "English Malady." It should likewise be considered that scrofula might perhaps, in a majority of instances, be corrected in early life, by a suitable *education* of the muscular fibre, upon the chronic relaxation of which affections of this nature

may be supposed, in a great measure, to depend. Gout likewise may be considered as an hereditary complaint. But by temperance, exercise, and other means which are completely within our power, we may avert an impending attack, and even counteract in some measure, if not altogether extirpate, an original tendency to this disease. But an hereditary propensity to *inflammation* and consequent *distortion* of the mental faculties will not yield, with equal readiness and certainty, to any skill in medicine, or discretion in diet. We may shun or protect ourselves against those vicissitudes of external temperature which develope the secret tendency to pulmonary complaints. But we cannot, with similar facility or success, attempt to elude the noxious influence of those vicissitudes of life, which are apt to awaken the dormant energies of madness. There are crushes of ca-

lamity which at once overwhelm, with an irresistible force, the sturdiest and most firmly established intellect. Such, however, are comparatively of rare occurrence. But who can uniformly escape those abrupt *interruptions*, or sudden *turnings* of fortune, by which a reason that is loosely seated, may be suddenly displaced, or those lighter blows of affliction which are sufficient to overpower the feebleness of a tottering understanding?

When, as it sometimes happens, an hereditary disposition to this disease appears to sleep through one generation, it will often be found to awaken in the next, with even aggravated horrors. Should the child of a maniac escape his father's malady, the chance is small that the grandchild will be equally fortunate. The continued stream of insanity, although it occasionally conceal

itself for a time, soon again emerges to our view. Madness, like the electric fluid, runs through the whole length of the chain, although we may not observe it at every link.

After all, I would be understood to inculcate, that, strictly speaking, it is the *tendency* only to insanity that is inherited, or, in other words, a greater facility than ordinary, to be acted upon by those external circumstances, that are calculated to produce the disease.

It might not perhaps transgress the exactness of truth to assert, that the external circumstances and accidents of a man's life, and, what is more important, his physical and moral habits, are calculated to have a greater efficacy than any seeds of disorder that may lie concealed in his original organization. That, therefore, one, who, under a fear of radical predisposition, should, from early youth,

adopt a counteracting regimen, as it relates both to the body and the mind, would often be in less danger of being affected by intellectual malady, than another who, confiding in a constitutional immunity from this form of disease, should continually and carelessly expose himself to its predisposing and exciting causes.

An hereditary tendency to insanity, it must be acknowledged, often holds a close alliance with the best qualities of the head and of the heart. Those rudiments of the intellectual frame which are most apt, by neglect or error of education, to be fostered into madness, will, if properly subdued and tempered by a judicious and early discipline, be calculated, in an eminent degree, to ennoble and animate the character. Insanity often arises from a too violent impulse towards what is sublime and beautiful in morals and in mind. It not

unfrequently consists in the excess of what is good, in passing the limits of the highest excellence. Properties which it is pleasing to contemplate, it is not always desirable to possess. Those exquisite charms that are felt by lovers, and are celebrated by poets, and the splendor of that genius which dazzles and delights, both touch alike on the confine of disease. Beauty is allied to phthisis, wit is contiguous to insanity.

ESSAY XIX.

OLD AGE.

“ As soon may the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots.”

JEREMIAH.

CORNARO, in his celebrated little treatise on health and long life, introduces one of his paragraphs thus absurdly : “ Since nothing is more advantageous to man upon earth, than to live long —”

It is matter of surprise, that by a person of an unimpaired reason, longevity should ever be regarded as an object of ambition or desire. The wick of life emits, in proportion as it lengthens, a dimmer and more languid flame. Man, in com-

pleting the orbit of his terrestrial existence, returns to that point of imbecility from which he originally set out. But, between his first and second childhood, there is a difference no less important, than between the morning and the evening twilight. The equivocal obscurity of the former, it is not unreasonable to hope, may be succeeded by a clear and even a brilliant day. But of the latter, the faint and imperfect shadows must be expected to grow gradually deeper and longer, until they are lost in the complete darkness of night.

During the periods of youth and maturity, a man has a regular revenue of health and vigor, which he is at liberty to consume without infringing upon the capital of his constitution. But, in old age, he is reduced to the necessity of living upon his principal; in consequence, every day his stock of vitality

grows sensibly less ; his power of resistance against the agents of further decay diminishes in proportion to the degree of decay which has already taken place. The pressure of years often seems to produce a curvature even of the understanding, which, when it has been bent from this cause, cannot, any more than the body, restore itself to the upright attitude.

An old man is no longer susceptible of new ideas. His mind lives altogether upon the past. Hence in a great measure arises the extreme difficulty, amounting in many instances to an impossibility of removing mental disease, when it occurs at a very advanced period of life. In the instance of an aged melancholic, we might almost as well attempt to change the complexion of his grey hairs, as to brighten the dark hues of his imagination. Grief hangs loosely about early youth,

but in more advanced life, it often adheres so closely as to become almost a part of the moral organization. In the one case, sorrow resembles the dress of civilized life, which is laid aside without much difficulty ; in the other, it may be compared to the scars with which savage nations are used to adorn themselves, and which are so deeply engraven in the substance of the body, as to defy any attempt at obliteration. A radical cure has scarcely ever been effected in the instance of a hoary-headed maniac. His mind, when shattered, is like broken porcelain, the fragments of which may be so carefully put together as to give it the appearance of being entire, but which is in danger of falling to pieces again upon the slightest touch, or upon even a more than ordinary vibration of the surrounding atmosphere. The disorder of the faculties, in such a

case, is not likely to terminate except in their complete extinction. The agitation of mind can be expected to subside only in the calm of death, or in the inoffensive quiet of idiocy or idea-less superannuation.

We are apt to be unconscious of the clandestine and fraudulent encroachments of time. We often fancy ourselves ill, merely because we are no longer young. I have been consulted by more than one person who complained of a disease in his eyes, from finding to his astonishment and dismay, that he was unable to read small print by candle-light so easily as he could ten or fifteen years before, not at all thinking that this was a complaint for which the use of spectacles was the only remedy. Only a few days ago, a lady in her ninety-third year, was puzzling herself about a dimness that had gradually come over her

sight, and asked me, whether I could not give her some lotion that would remove it. If our spirits are not so lively, nor our limbs so active, nor our digestion so perfect and expeditious as in the earlier periods of life, it does not occur to us that we may labor under no other malady than that inevitable decay of nature, which shows itself alike in the fall of the leaf, and in the gradual fading of the human faculties.

When we consider the complexity of the human frame, and the number of points at which it is exposed to fatal injury, an old man becomes the object of our wonder, no less than of our veneration.

ARTIFICIAL OR PREMATURE OLD AGE.

THERE are few men that can be strictly said to die a natural death, and there are fewer still that allow themselves to live to a natural old age. An unseasonable senility grows out of the hot-bed of juvenile licentiousness. Spendthrifts of constitution by an inconsiderate waste of their hereditary fund of vitality, bring upon themselves an early incompetency and want of healthy relish for the pleasures as well as for the business of the world. It is thus then man decays before he has had time to ripen. The foundation is undermined, before the superstructure is nearly finished. The helplessness of childhood is by means of excesses, brought almost into contact with the imbecility of age, so as to leave scarcely any interval for that

period of manly maturity, that combination of intellectual with physical vigor, which principally constitutes the value, and alone exhibits the dignity of human nature. In such an existence there is no noon. The sun of life, instead of completing the convexity of its course, soon after the first show of its light, relapses beneath the verge of the horizon.

Veterans in vice often appear to become virtuous, in consequence of having lost the capacity for licentious indulgence. On the other hand, it not unfrequently happens, that "when the bodily organs have lost their freshness, the imagination its radiant hues, and the nerves their once exquisite faculty of thrilling with delight through all their filaments," the dull debauchee, the vapid voluptuary, still persists, from the inveteracy of custom, in a course which

he has long ceased to pursue from the impetuosity of instinct. Habits are more invincible than passions. Nothing can be more truly wretched, as well as contemptible, than a state in which impotency is still instigated by the torment of desire, and where, although the fire of masculine emotion be extinct, even the ashes of the constitution continue to glow with unhallowed and ineffectual heat.

ESSAY XX.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

“ I am not mad ! I have been imprisoned for mad — scourged for mad — banished for mad — but mad I am not.”

Guy Mannering.

THE mind of a man may be bruised or broken as well as any limb of his body, and the injury, when it occurs, is not so easy of reparation. A morbidly tumid fancy, cannot, like many other swellings, be made speedily to subside ; an intellect out of joint will not allow of being set with the same facility as a dislocated bone ; nor can the deep and often hidden ulcerations which arise from mental dis-

temper or disorganization, be healed with the same readiness or certainty as those more palpable sores which take place on the surface of the body. On this account it is, that so close and vigilant an observation is required in watching the incessantly varying movements, and in inspecting the too exquisitely delicate texture of a disordered and highly wrought imagination.

One thing at least is certain, that in the management of such maladies, tenderness is better than torture, kindness more effectual than constraint. Blows, and the strait-waistcoat, are often, it is to be feared, too hastily employed. It takes less trouble to fether by means of cords, than by the assiduities of sympathy or affection. Nothing has a more favourable and controuling influence over one who is disposed to or actually affected with melancholy or mania, than

an exhibition of friendship or philanthropy ; excepting indeed in such cases, and in that state of the disease, in which the mind has been hardened and almost brutalized, by having already been the subject of coarse and humiliating treatment. Where a constitutional inclination towards insanity exists, there is in general to be observed a more than ordinary susceptibility to resentment, at any act that offers itself in the shape of an injury or an insult.

Hence, it will not appear surprising, that so soon as an unfortunate victim has been enclosed within the awful barriers of either the public, or the minor and more clandestine Bethlems, the destiny of his reason should, in a large proportion of cases, be irretrievably fixed. The idea that he is supposed to be insane, is almost of itself sufficient to make him so, and when such a mode

of management is used with men as ought not to be, although it too generally is, applied even to brutes, can we wonder if it should often, in a person of more than ordinary irritability, produce, or at any rate accelerate, the last and incurable form of that disease, to which at first perhaps there was only a delusive resemblance or merely an incipient approximation?

Tasso, the celebrated poet, was once instigated by the violence of an amorous impulse to embrace a beautiful woman in the presence of her brother, who happening to be a man of rank and power, punished this poetic license by locking up the offender in a receptacle for lunatics. It is said that by this confinement he was made mad, who was before only too impetuous or indiscreet.

That a wretched being, who has been for some time confined in a receptacle

for lunatics, is actually insane, can no more prove that he was so when he first entered it, than a person's being affected with fever in the black-hole of Calcutta, is an evidence of his having previously labored under febrile infection.

Bakewell, the late celebrated agriculturist, was accustomed to conquer the insubordination or any vicious irregularity of his horses, not by the ordinary routine of whipping and spurring, but by the milder and more effectual method of kindness and caresses ; and it is worthy of being remembered and practically applied, that although the human has higher faculties than other animals, they have still many sympathies in common ; that there are certain laws and feelings which regulate and govern alike every class and order of animated existence.

In order to obtain a salutary influence over the wanderings of a maniac, we must

first secure his confidence. This cannot be done, without behaving towards him with a delicacy due to his unfortunate state, which for the most part ought to be regarded not as an abolition, but as a suspension merely of the rational faculties. Lord Chesterfield speaks, in one of his humorous essays, of a lady whose reputation was not lost, but was only *mislaid*. In like manner, instead of saying of a man that he has lost his senses, we should in many instances more correctly perhaps say that they were mislaid. Derangement is not to be confounded with destruction ; we must not mistake a cloud for night, or fancy, because the sun of reason is obscured, that it will never again enliven or illuminate with its beams. There is ground to apprehend that fugitive folly is too often converted into a fixed and settled frenzy ; a transient guest into an irremovable tenant

of the mind ; an occasional and accidental aberration of intellect into a confirmed and inveterate habit of dereliction ; by a premature and too precipitate adoption of measures and methods of management, which sometimes, indeed, are necessary, but which are so only in cases of extreme and ultimate desperation.

A heavy responsibility presses upon those who preside or officiate in the asylums of lunacy. Little is it known how much injustice is committed, and how much useless and wantonly inflicted misery is endured in those infirmaries for disordered, or rather cemeteries for deceased intellect. Instead of trampling upon, we ought to cherish, and by the most delicate and anxious care, strive to nurse into a clearer and a brighter flame the still glimmering embers of a nearly extinguished mind.

It is by no means the object of these

remarks to depreciate the value of institutions which, under a judicious and merciful superintendence, might be made essentially conducive to the protection of lunatics themselves, as well as to that of others, who would else be continually exposed to their violence and caprice. But it is to be feared, that many have been condemned to a state of insulation from all rational and sympathising intercourse, before the necessity has occurred for so severe a lot. Diseased members have been amputated from the trunk of society, before they have become so incurable or unsound as absolutely to require separation. Many of the dépôts for the captivity of intellectual invalids may be regarded only as nurseries for and manufactories of madness ; magazines or reservoirs of lunacy, from which is issued, from time to

time, a sufficient supply for perpetuating and extending this formidable disease, — a disease which is not to be remedied by stripes or strait-waistcoats, by imprisonment or impoverishment, but by an unwearied tenderness, and by an unceasing and anxious superintendence.

There are no circumstances in my professional life on which I look back with a more sincere self-gratulation, than on those cases where I have rescued persons, who had some incipient or transient symptoms of insanity, from the threatened terrors of a madhouse. By a proper attention to their physical health, and a considerate observance and soothing of their mental agitations, they became in several instances speedily convalescent, and were soon restored to their former place in domestic and general society.

The subject of lunacy and of lunatic asylums is one of peculiar interest to

the British practitioner. By its visible and rapid extension, insanity renders itself every day more deserving of the title of the English malady. Madness strides like a colossus over this island.

“ *Hamlet.* — Ay, marry, why was he sent into England ?

“ *Clown.* — Why, because he was mad. He shall recover his wits there ; or if he do not, it is no great matter there.

“ *Hamlet.* — Why ?

“ *Clown.* — ’Twill not be seen in him ; there the men are as mad as he.”

ESSAY XXI.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNTERACTING THE TENDENCY TO MENTAL DISEASE.

“ De toutes choses les naissances sont foibles et tendres. Pourtant faut-il avoir les yeux ouverts aux commencements, car comme alors en sa petitesse on ne découvre pas le danger, — quand il est accru, on n'en découvre plus de remède.”

MONTAIGNE.

No subject has excited so little, or deserved so much the attention of scientific men, as that of mental derangement. For scrofula and cancer, for an obstructed liver, or an inflamed lung, new specifics or recipes are almost daily tried or suggested; but for an inflamed or obdurate mind, for those aberrations of the sensibility which so irritate as to disorganize

the reason, for a mutilation or scirrhus of the intellectual faculty, we hear of no effectual or scarcely even of a pretended prescription. The human understanding has not been sufficiently exercised in the study of itself, in an investigation of the means which are necessary for correcting its own errors or irregularities, and for postponing the period of its inevitable decay. In mental diseases, as well as in those of the lungs, much may be done in their nascent state, to crush their growth and to annihilate the embryo malady. But the commencement of morbid irritation is seldom sufficiently watched and corrected. Almost every nervous affection may be considered as an approach to insanity. The coming on of melancholy, like that of the evening darkness, is scarcely perceptible in its encroachments. The gradual establishment of intellectual hallucination is traced with admirable

fidelity in the following delineation of Dr. Johnson :—

“ Some particular train of ideas fixes upon the mind, all other intellectual gratifications are rejected ; the mind in weariness or leisure recurs constantly to the favorite conception, and feasts on the luscious falsehood, whenever it is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees, the reign of fancy is confirmed. She grows first imperious and in time despotic. These fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.” *

We continually meet in society with indistinct sketches, which are only more highly colored and more completely filled up in the hospital models of lunacy.

There are floating atoms or minute embryos of insanity, which cannot be dis-

* Rasselas.

cerned by the naked or uneducated eye. One of the most important requisites in the character of a physician, is the capacity of detecting the earliest rudiments and the scarcely-formed filaments of disease ; so that by timely care and well adapted means, he may prevent them from growing and collecting into a more palpable and substantial form.

I well recollect an interesting case of a person whose mind had received the highest culture, and who was endowed with an exquisite sensibility. The disease was, in his instance, of gradual, almost of imperceptible growth ; the shadow of melancholy slowly advanced, until it had produced a total eclipse of the understanding.

The importance cannot be too deeply impressed of counteracting a *tendency* to this disease. When it is fully formed and established by habit, our efforts will

seldom prove of any avail. We might in that case as well almost attempt, by the spell of a professional recipe, to break asunder the chain which binds the body of a maniac to the floor, as the strong concatenation of thought which is still more closely riveted around his mind. In a derangement of the intellectual faculties, the first moment of its appearance is often the only one at which it may be combated with any certainty of success. The smallest speck on the edge of the horizon ought to be regarded with awe, as portending, if not speedily dispersed, an universal and impenetrable gloom.

It is not in the adult and fully established form of insanity that we can best learn its origin, or become thoroughly acquainted with its character. A mad-house is, on this account, an insufficient school for acquiring an intimate and cor-

rect knowledge of madness. No man by studying merely a *hortus siccus* would think of making himself a botanist. In order to lay any claim to that title, he must contemplate plants, not as they are pinned down in a portfolio, but at the period when they first emerge from the soil, and at every successive stage of their history and growth.

LUCID INTERVALS.

IT is astonishing with what management and sagacity a maniac, when he is impelled by a sufficient motive, can keep the secret of his madness. I was once very nearly imposed upon by a patient of this description, who, by means of extraordinary art and exertion, had effected his escape over the barriers of confinement, and, in order to elude pursuit, solicited

professional evidence in favor of his sanity. A particular train of thought, which for a time lay silent and secret within the recesses of his mind, all at once, by an accidental touch, kindled into an unexpected and terrible explosion.

Lucid intervals are a subject deserving of the very particular study of the legal, as well as the medical profession. There are, in fact, few cases of mania or melancholy, where the light of reason does not now and then shine between the clouds. In fevers of the mind, as well as those of the body, there occur frequent intermissions. But the mere interruption of a disorder is not to be mistaken for its cure, or its ultimate conclusion. Little stress ought to be laid upon those occasional and uncertain disentanglements of intellect in which the patient is, for a time only, extricated from the labyrinth of

his morbid hallucinations. Madmen may shew, at starts, more sense than ordinary men. There is perhaps as much genius confined, as at large; and he who should seek for coruscations of talent, might be as likely to meet with them in a receptacle for lunatics, as in almost any other theatre of intellectual exhibition. But the flashes of wit betray too often the ruins of wisdom, and the mind which is conspicuous for the brilliancy, will frequently be found deficient in the steadiness of its lustre.

The process of convalescence from mental disorder, when it has actually begun, is seldom rapid and regular in its advance. The dawn of reason only gradually and with apparent difficulty gains upon the surrounding darkness. This, however, is not always the case. There are instances in which the curtain

of melancholy delusion is suddenly withdrawn; where the eye of the mind seems to be couched all at once by a miracle of Almighty power: "Let there be light, and there was light."

ESSAY XXII.

BLEEDING.

“ To break into the bloody house of life.”

King John.

THAT sacred reverence for the blood, the vital fluid of the human frame, which has been inculcated by the dictates of ancient and holy writ, and sanctioned by the fatal results of modern medical experience, is by no means sufficiently observed in the ordinary treatment of diseases.

Pneumonia, or a pleurisy, is one of the few complaints in which an early and often a repeated application of the lancet, is in general of the most urgent and in-

dispensable necessity. If blood-letting be had recourse to at a proper period, and to a sufficient extent, which must vary according to the symptoms of the disease and the constitutional habit of the patient, it will seldom fail, without much other aid, to remove a complaint that otherwise might, and not unfrequently does, in a very short time, terminate in death. But it is a matter of serious and essential importance to discriminate between genuine pleurisy and those pains, difficulty of breathing and other associated symptoms which arise, not from inflammation or too high excitement, but merely from nervous weakness and depression. In the latter case, venæsection is often as injurious to health, as in the former it is necessary to the preservation of life. To draw blood from a nervous patient is, in many instances, like loosening the chords of a musical instru-

ment, whose tones are already defective from want of sufficient tension.

In obedience to an absurd routine, the curable patients of Bethlehem were formerly bled without discrimination, about the commencement of June and the latter end of July. In mania, bleeding lowers the physical force, without in general correcting the mental error. It weakens the external expression, without impairing the internal strength of the disease. It converts the fury of madness into the passive sullenness of melancholy. M. Pinel, who had great experience upon this subject, observes, that the use of the lancet in mania frequently produces idiocy.

Pain in any part is too generally considered as an evidence of inflammation; whereas it more frequently arises from the difficulty with which a debilitated or obstructed organ performs its accustomed and salutary office.

In modern times inflammatory fever, or a habit indicating an excess of general excitement, very rarely indeed occurs. I have never met with an instance of proper fever which appeared to me to justify the opening of a vein. It would reconcile many of the apparent oppositions, and incongruities which occur in the works of those who have written upon the diseases of the human frame at different stages of its history, to consider that man, the subject upon which they write, has, during the intervening periods, undergone considerable changes in his physical as well as in his moral constitution. Sydenham was eminently judicious and successful in his time. But the physician who, in this comparatively enervated and puny age, was, in the exercise of his profession, to imitate, without modification or reserve, the bold and energetic style of practice adopted by that great

master of his art, would not be unlikely, by the empirical rashness of his conduct, to injure, if not destroy, in almost every instance in which he ventured to prescribe.

Local inflammation, so far from operating invariably as an argument for, may constitute, in some instances, even an objection against the application of the lancet. Local inflammation is often only a partial accumulation of that excitement which ought to be equally distributed through the whole frame. The frame in general is of course likely in such cases to be proportionably impoverished, and will of consequence be rendered less able to bear any artificial or extraordinary evacuation.

Those hæmorrhages which are so common to the nervous, more especially of the other sex, rarely indicate the propriety of artificial blood-letting, although

in such cases it is often employed. Hæmorrhage may be occasioned either by too copious a production of the vital fluid, by some partial accumulation of it, or by the laxity or tenuity of the vessels which contain it. In the present condition of the human frame, enfeebled as it is by every species of luxury and effeminacy, this as well as most other modes of physical derangement originate in a majority of cases from a deficiency of vigor. Hæmorrhages seldom, comparatively, arises from a more than ordinary mass or impetus of blood; but in general from a want of that contractile power in the artery, which is necessary to resist its tendency to immoderate effusion.

True pleurisy, as I have already stated, in most cases imperiously demands immediate venæsection; but with true pleurisy are apt to be confounded those pulmonary or asthmatic affections, which

for the most part commence their attacks in advanced life, and which are not attended with any active inflammation, but arise merely from the worn-out condition of superannuated lungs. The difficulty of breathing, pain, and oppressed circulation, will seldom, in such instances, justify the subtraction of blood. We cannot be too fearful and tender in deducting from an old man any portion, however small, of that fluid, the remaining quantity of which is barely sufficient to support the vigor, or even the vitality of his enfeebled and declining frame. I have lately had an opportunity of witnessing more than one case, in which copious and repeated bleeding relieved an asthmatic old man from most other symptoms of disease, but at the same time left a degree of weakness from which he was not able to recover, and which was in no long time fatal in its result. I think it may

be laid down as a practical rule, that few men beyond sixty years of age, and no man above seventy, will suffer without danger any considerable subtraction of blood. Bleeding may, in some instances, produce a temporary alleviation of pain, only by inducing that debility of the general powers of the system, which of course deducts in a proportionate degree from the particular power of sensation.

To the phthisical patient there can be little doubt that bleeding proves generally injurious, by the weakness which it aggravates or occasions. In cases of hopeless consumption, it hastens the march of an inevitably fatal malady, it hurries those steps which are unalterably pointed towards destruction. By no dexterous management of the reins can we turn this disorder out of its course, but we may restrain in some degree the rapidity of

its progress, and cause it to move at a more leisurely and easy pace to the grave.

The fatal result of real or apparent apoplexy may sometimes arise from the manner in which it is treated. At the sight of a person in any kind of fit, the surgeon almost instinctively pulls out his lancet. Sometimes, even after the paroxysm has subsided, bleeding is had recourse to from a vague and empirical notion of its indiscriminate utility in this class of diseases.* Less slaughter, I am convinced, has been effected by the sword, than by the lancet, — that minute instrument of mighty mischief!

From the period of life at which apoplectic and paralytic seizures are most

* See an excellent practical paper on this subject in the last (the 8th) volume of the Medical Transactions of the College of Physicians of London, by Dr. Latham.

apt to take place from the enfeebling habits or diseases which in a large proportion of cases have preceded and prepared the way for their occurrence, and from the variety of circumstances indicating a worn and debilitated frame, which almost invariably accompany such attacks, it would seem natural to infer, that although the habitual use of stimuli may in many instances have helped to bring on this deplorable state of the constitution, a recovery from it, when it is practicable, can be effected only by their temporary application ; and that, on the contrary, to have recourse, in so extreme a case of actual weakness, attended by a partial suspension of the functions of life, to the most direct and powerful means of producing still further weakness and exhaustion, is, in effect, forcibly to overwhelm the sinking, and to trample upon the already prostrate.

My opinions upon this subject cannot be better sanctioned than by the authority of the late venerable Dr. Heberden, whose own words relative to a point so important it may not be improper to make use of. “ Etenim juniores et robusti non tam obnoxii sunt his morbis (apoplexy and palsy) quam pueri infirmi, et effæti senes, in quibus vires nutriendæ sunt et excitandæ, potius quam minuendæ; dum multa sanguinis profusio, quemadmodum in submersis fieri dicitur, omnes naturæ conatus reprimat et tenues vitæ reliquias penitus extinguit. Quod si consulamus experientiam, hæc, quantum possum judicare, testatur copiosas sanguinis missiones sæpe nocuisse, easque in non paucis ægrotis, tutius fuisse prætermissas.”*

* The commentaries of Dr. Heberden, from which the above quotation has been made, comprise the scanty but invaluable results of a long life of exten-

In the preceding observations it is far from my intention to inculcate, that bleeding is not in many instances of apoplexy or palsy absolutely necessary to the life of the patient ; but that, on the other hand, there are also many instances in which it may with more propriety be omitted, and that such diseases would not be so generally fatal, if the lancet were more cautiously employed.

It should be remarked, however, that weakness is not always an insuperable argument against the propriety of bleed-

sive and diligent, as well as of correct and sagacious observation. That experienced and highly accomplished practitioner, in this his literary legacy to the public, has communicated a large portion of what is at present known in the practical part of medicine. A science which, after the lapse of so many ages, may still be regarded as at a great distance from its maturity.

“ When will thy long minority expire ?”

YOUNG.

ing. The arteries, whose contractile power has from any cause been considerably impaired, are sometimes not able, without difficulty and febrile uneasiness, to propel even their usual quantity of blood. Under such circumstances they ought, perhaps, to be in some measure relieved from their burden by timely and moderate evacuation. The existence of a morbid plethora is not to be ascertained merely by the absolute mass of fluid, or even by its proportion to the diameter of the vessels which it occupies, but likewise by a circumstance which is not, perhaps, sufficiently attended to ; the less or greater degree of power which, in any particular instance, the heart and arteries may possess, of urging with unintermitting constancy the tide of circulation.

By most practitioners it is imagined, that what is called local bleeding is pre-

ferable, in many cases, to that which is called general. In apoplexy, for instance, the pressure upon the brain is supposed to be relieved more effectually, as well as more expeditiously, by an operation on a vessel in the neck, than on one in either of the arms; in pleurisy, pthisis, or catarrh, by cupping and leeches in the breast or side affected, than any where else. When more attentively considered, however, the matter will appear, perhaps, in a somewhat different light. There is no such thing, in fact, as *local* bleeding, if by that term be meant an evacuation from one part of the vascular system without its affecting in the same proportion every other. When a fluid is in a constant state of circulation through a round of vessels, it can be of little consequence from what part of that circle any quantity of it is deducted. From whatever part the water be taken out of a canal through

which flows a free and uninterrupted stream, it must equally affect the level of its surface and the impetuosity of its course.

ESSAY XXIII.

PHARMACY.

“ Il n’y a de bon pour le corps que ce qu’on digère. Quelle médecine vous fera digérer ? L’exercice. Quelle réparera vos forces ? Le sommeil. Quelle diminuera des maux incurables ? La patience. Que peut changer une mauvaise constitution ? Rien.”

VOLTAIRE.

PHARMACY may be abused, but it is not therefore to be despised. Nature has provided physic to relieve the aliments, as it has food for the nourishment and support of man. The suitable and seasonable use of the one is almost as necessary in order to rectify occasional deviations from health, as that of the other is for its ordinary maintenance and preservation.

There are however several seeming abuses of pharmacy, which I shall here venture to advert to, although, I hope, with due reverence towards established usage.

In cases of convalescence from acute disease, to prolong a medicinal course, for the sake merely of still further strengthening, after the natural desire has returned for wholesome and substantial food, is a practice that appears to me contrary to common sense, although it be not altogether so to ordinary routine. Under such circumstances, "to throw in the bark," is to those who are asking for bread, giving a stone. There is no such thing as a permanently strengthening medicine. It is only what nourishes, that gives any durable vigor or support. Medicine, as it is usually administered, interferes with appetite before a meal, and with digestion after it. Drugs, although not in general intoxicating, are at

best unnatural stimuli, and of course are seldom to be resorted to, except in that state of the constitution in which it cannot be duly excited by the ordinary incentives to vital and healthy action.

Life, according to Brown, is a "forced state;" but we should employ no more force than is necessary, in the phrase of Dr. Cullen, "to counteract the tendency to death." It is contrary to culinary economy to use the bellows, except where the fire is near being extinguished, and then only with a gradual and cautiously adjusted application of its power.

If an exception should be made in favor of the chronic use of any medicine, it ought, perhaps, to be allowed in the case of steel, one of the most powerful instruments to be found in the magazine of nature for restoring health, and giving sometimes, as it were by magic, new life, vigor, and even beauty, to the human

frame. To a lady who enquired of Sydenham, how long she should continue to take this remedy, he replied, "Thirty years; and if you are not well then, begin it again." Steel was known as a remedy to practitioners of the most distant antiquity. Melampus, a Greek, one of the earliest who attempted to treat diseases, is related to have cured Iphicles, a companion of Jason in the Argonautic expedition, of a most deplorable species of debility, by giving him the rust of iron in wine.

In the prescriptions of physicians, as well as in the preparations of cookery, a simplicity ought to be observed, which is, perhaps, not sufficiently attended to. A number of different dishes, which, separately taken, might be wholesome and nutritious, must altogether form a compound that cannot fail to have an unfavorable and disturbing effect upon the

organs of digestion. In like manner, a glass of port wine or a glass of Madeira, a draught of ale, or one of porter, might, in a state of debility or fatigue, for a time at least, invigorate and refresh ; while if we take a draught, the same in quantity, but composed of all these different liquors, we shall find that, instead of enlivening and refreshing, it will nauseate and oppress. And yet something similar to this daily takes place in the formulæ of medical practitioners. A variety of drugs are often combined in the same recipe, each of which might be good, but the whole of which cannot. A mixture of corroborants or tonics is not necessarily a tonic or corroborative mixture. A prescription ought seldom, perhaps, to contain more than one active and efficient ingredient ; we should thus give that ingredient fair play, and by a competent repetition of trials, might be able to ascertain, with

tolerable correctness, its kind and degree of influence upon the constitution: whereas, out of a confused and heterogeneous mass, it is impossible for us to discriminate the individual operation of any one of the articles which compose it.

It may here be proper to observe, that although there should seldom be a variety in the same prescription, it is expedient, more especially in chronic cases, that the prescription should be occasionally varied in order to secure, for any length of time, the production of the same effect. By changing the kind, we render it less necessary to increase the quantity of a restorative agent. When, as after a certain period it will generally happen, any single remedy has lost in some degree its salutary action, the application of another, although not intrinsically superior in power, will often be necessary to preserve a continuity of progress towards a state of

perfect restoration. A considerable dexterity in frequently altering, or in modifying anew the administration of remedies, is in a particular manner called for during the protracted continuance of most nervous diseases.

In appreciating the value of a pharmaceutical course, we ought not to overlook its use in affording a certain degree of interest and occupation to the mind of a valetudinarian. In the absence of every other diversion, even the swallowing of physic may be a source of amusement. The times for taking the different draughts or doses, are so many epochs in the chronology of an hypochondriac, which by dividing, help to conquer the tedium of his day.

Such is the power of imagination, that the result of a medicine depends much upon the respect which a patient feels for his physician. Faith will give a

virtue to the most inefficient remedy ; on the other hand, a distrust in the ability of a professional adviser, will often defeat the tendency of his most judicious and seasonable prescription. It is often necessary that the mental disposition of the invalid should co-operate with the drugs in order to give them their fullest efficacy. There is a repose in an implicit confidence that is eminently favorable to the restoration of health, as whatever tends to agitate the mind must interfere with the process of convalescence. Practitioners, who by any means have become celebrated or popular, are often, on that very account, more successful than others in the treatment of diseases. A similar remark may be made with regard to medicines themselves. A new medicine will frequently obtain a fortuitous fame, during the continuance of which there is no doubt that it ac-

tually produces some of those salutary effects which are ascribed to it. But the fault of these new remedies is, that they will not *keep*. For so soon as the caprice of the day has gone by, and fashion has withdrawn its protecting influence, the once celebrated recipe is divested of its beneficial properties, if it become not positively deleterious ; by which it would appear, that its reputation had not been the result of its salutary efficacy, but that its salutary efficacy had been, in a great measure at least, the result of its reputation.

However sceptical a physician may be with regard to the inherent or permanent qualities of a specific in vogue, it is his duty, perhaps, to take advantage of the tide of opinion, as long as it flows in its favor. He may honestly make use of his patient's credulity, in order to relieve him from the pressure of his disease, and

render the partial weakness of his mind instrumental to the general restoration of his corporeal strength. A wholesome prejudice should be respected. It is of little consequence whether a man be healed through the medium of his fancy or his stomach.

The changing of a medical attendant may be useful, as well as the changing of a medicine. A new one gives new hopes, and refreshes that confidence which has been fatigued and exhausted by repeated disappointment. From another plan, or another prescriber, the patient fondly looks for that success which he has not experienced from the persons or things which he has already tried. A physician or a drug may operate beneficially for a certain time, but a too long continued use is apt to destroy the utility of either.

A kindness of manner on the part of the practitioner that bespeaks an interest

in his patient's health, may not unfrequently prove conducive to its restoration. A person will get well, or which in many cases amounts nearly to the same thing, will endeavour to fancy himself well, in order as it would appear to oblige his physician. On the other hand, a brutality, rudeness, or arrogance of demeanor, seems in some instances to induce a spiteful obstinacy in the disease.

Upon the same principle of the influence of the mind upon the body we may remark, that as soon as it can be done without danger, every thing ought to be removed from about a convalescent that is associated with the idea of sickness. As long as he continues immured amidst the gloom of those apartments to which he has been for weeks or months necessarily confined, until he has discarded the dishabille as well as the diet of indisposition, and has begun again to breathe

the ordinary air, and to resume in every respect his wonted course of life, he will not be likely to feel himself perfectly restored to the former condition of his spirits or his health.

One of the most important results of modern improvement in medicine is, that it has revealed to us the hidden virtue of poisons, or at least of what used to be regarded as such. For there is not perhaps in nature such a thing strictly and abstractedly as a poison. It is to an insufficient acquaintance with its qualities, or with the proper manner of applying it, that we are to attribute to any substance its deadly operation. With regard to forms of medicine as well as of government, it may be observed that

“Whate’er is best administer’d, is best.”

In arsenic, which the comparative ignorance of man was wont to consider as a

mortal drug, his more advanced experience has detected the most salutary properties. The same remark might be made in reference to other articles which are now engrafted with propriety into the established pharmacopœia. So that from an analogy somewhat more extended, it may not be unphilosophical to infer, that there is no agent, however deleterious it may appear or prove to be in the present imperfection of our science, which by a more complete and accurate knowledge of its properties, may not be transformed into an important auxiliary to the powers and materials of the medicinal art. There is nothing which abuse may not convert into a poison, or a right use into a valuable remedy.

“ There is a soul of goodness in things evil.”

An observation occurs in the work of a sensible medical writer, which although

it may appear merely a bon mot is in fact a serious truth. That "there is a great deal of difference between a good physician and a bad one, but in many cases very little between a good physician and none at all." A French minister once enquired of an eminent merchant at Paris, in what way he could be of service to the interests of commerce. "Laissez nous faire," was the reply. Medical men are apt to consider themselves, and are generally regarded by others, as unfaithful to their duty unless they are *doing* something, either performing some painful operation or administering some powerful remedy; whereas in no small proportion of cases the best thing that he can do is, to let the patient alone. "There is an inherent bias observable in the animal economy to restore health. As the surface of a lake, which clearly reflects the sky and hills and verdant scenes around

its borders, when it is disturbed by the falling of a stone, immediately endeavours to recover its scattered images and restore them to the same beauteous order in which they were wont to appear ; in like manner when the natural course of the animal economy is interrupted and disturbed by disease, the powers of the constitution are continually endeavouring to restore its organs to the perfect use of their functions, and to recover its usual vigor and serenity.”* A restoration to health no doubt often takes place independently, or sometimes even in spite of medical treatment. A long continued course of medicine will appear to cure a disease, merely because during a long continued course of medicine the disease will have had leisure to cure itself. Those who place so perfect a confidence in what are called alterative doses of physic, are not

* Moore's Medical Sketches.

aware that in most cases of their apparent efficacy, the only real *alterative* is time.

Although it is often expedient that the patient should have a high opinion of the virtue of physic, in order that it may have the desired operation in cases of unavoidable disease, much evil may be attributed to a superstitious and exaggerated estimate of its powers. Men are frequently less careful in the preservation of their health, from an idea that the wounds inflicted upon their constitution may at any time be healed by the resources of the medical art. But no drug has yet been discovered that can act as an effectual antidote to the poison of intemperance. Bark has but a feeble effect upon a stomach that has been long accustomed to brandy, and a frame, the stamina of which have been destroyed by an inordinate indulgence of the sensual appetites, will in no instance be regenerated, or

even derive considerable relief, from a recourse to any of the pharmaceutical preparations.

An amusing instance of the unreasonable expectations entertained from the efficacy of drugs, occurred not long ago in a person who came to me to ask for some corroborative medicine that might enable him to go through a chancery-suit which was impending over him. He was not then ill, but he expected to be so. He wished for bark, or some more efficient tonic which might give him strength to bear up against the intrigues of villany, and to prop his mind under the pressure of unmerited reproach. This patient, if he might be called such, reminded me of a knight of some literary notoriety, who relates of himself that whenever he was in love, to which passion in his youth he was much addicted, he used to swallow great quantities of the cinchona, in order

to cut short this species of fever, or to counteract its debilitating influence upon his frame.

In instances of decided mental derangement, the medicinal part of the treatment is, according to the best authorities, of very little avail. Even bleeding, blisters, setons, and aperients, are not in such cases to be considered as remedies, except where their necessity or utility is indicated by the state of the corporeal habit. There is no medicine properly anti-maniacal, no physical febrifuge for the exacerbations of the mind, no evacuant which can exonerate the intellectual part of our frame from the load that oppresses or obstructs the freedom of its operations. We are by no means sure by letting blood to abate an inflammatory state of the imagination, much less can those irritating applications to the surface which barely puncture the skin be expected to pene-

trate the deep recesses of the understanding. Delirium, properly so called, is often relieved by medicine ; but delirium without fever, which according to Dr. Cullen constitutes insanity, requires, notwithstanding a certain similarity in the symptoms, an essential difference in the method of cure. It may here be observed, that it is no uncommon thing for those to regulate the treatment of a malady by its name, who do not know or do not reflect that a difference in the age, the sex, the previous habits or original stamina of the patient, cannot fail in every instance to create an important diversity in the character of the disorder. Scarcely a single disease can be pointed out in the whole system of nosology, which is not capable, in different circumstances, of being cured by means directly opposite to each other.

In no department of our profession

does the practice of it appear so cruelly absurd as in the mismanagement of infants. I once ventured to observe, that “of the cases of mortality in the earlier months of our existence, no small proportion consists of those who have sunk under the oppression of pharmaceutical filth. More infantile subjects in this metropolis are perhaps diurnally destroyed by the mortar and pestle, than in the ancient Bethlehem fell victims in one day to the Herodian massacre.” I plead guilty to the charge of rashness and hyperbole, which were brought against this remark when first published, but I wish that the years of experience and reflection which have since intervened had convinced me that the remark was altogether destitute of foundation. When we contemplate a church-yard, the earth of which is composed in great measure of the bodies of infants, it is natural for

us to fancy, but surely it is not reasonable for us to believe, that those beings were born for no other purpose than to die, or that it is within the design of nature that the pangs of production on the part of the mother should, on that of her offspring, be almost immediately succeeded by the struggle of dissolution. Fault must exist somewhere; it cannot be in the providence of God, it must therefore attach to the improvidence and indiscretion of man. Consequences as fatal originate from ignorance as from crime. Infanticide, when perpetrated under the impulse of maternal desperation, or in the agony of anticipated disgrace, is a subject of astonishment and horror; but if a helpless victim be *drugged* to death, or poisoned by the forced ingurgitation of nauseous and essentially noxious potions, we lament the result merely, without thinking about the means which inevitably led to its oc-

currence. Conscience feels little concern in cases of medicinal murder. The too ordinary habit of jesting upon these subjects in convivial or familiar conversation has an unhappy tendency to harden the heart, and inclines us to regard with an inhuman and indecorous levity those dark and horrible catastrophes which too frequently arise from professional ignorance or mistake.

Paley, that eminent moral philosopher, was never in so lively a manner impressed with the benevolence of the Deity, as when he saw little children at play. Children when healthy are almost universally happy. To this general rule, however, I have known some exceptions. One is particularly impressed upon my memory. The child I refer to, who was between five and six years old, would often look out of spirits, and be heard to sigh. When asked what was the matter, he replied, "I am

low." He was born in sorrow, and had been in the habit of seeing his maternal parent in deep affliction. He only echoed a phrase of melancholy familiar to his ear, and heaved an hereditary sigh.

As a contrast to this case of infantile hypochondriasis, I am more agreeably reminded of a fine boy of the same age as the former, who, whilst he was frolicking about the room in a state of plethoric vitality, cried out, "What a funny thing it is to be alive!"

The complaints of an hypochondriac may often be traced to the misfortunes or mismanagement of the first stage of his being. A spoiled child generally becomes an hypochondriacal adult. The mature man suffers in this manner from the indulged follies of the infant. The miniature and perhaps invisible evil in the constitution is gradually developed and

expanded by the growth of advancing life. One of the most important requisites in the medical character is the capacity of detecting a morbid tendency, before it has had time to ripen into actual and established malady.

We may often hear it said of a person, that "he is a stupid man, to be sure, but he is a very good practitioner;" as if to understand the movements, and to be able to correct the errors of so delicate and complicated a machine as the human frame, required scarcely a common allowance of intellectual acumen. To a person who reflects however upon the subject it must appear, that a more than ordinary quickness and clearness of mental sight is essential to the character of a properly qualified physician. Often, in acute and perilous disorders, not more than a few hours are allotted to the professional attendant for the effectual exercise of his

skill ; which, if, from a timid hesitation with regard to the treatment, or a too late detection of the actual essence of a disease, he unfortunately permits to escape unimproved, no future effort of recollection or sagacity can avail to counteract the mischievous and sometimes fatal consequence of his error or neglect. A late advocate at the Scotch bar, habitually brilliant from the scintillations of his wit, once, by an ebullition of it peculiarly happy, excited a convulsion of laughter that spread universally around him, with the exception of one learned gentleman on the bench, whose gravity appeared to be undisturbed by the bon mot ; until after many minutes of solemn consideration, and when the orator was occupied with quite a different topic of his harangue, he suddenly exclaimed, to the no small surprise and amusement of the court, “ Oh, I see it now ! ” The tardy

perception of the venerable judge, betrayed on an occasion like the above, was highly pleasant and entertaining; but how different from pleasant and entertaining would the discovery of a similar slowness of discernment be in a medical practitioner, who, after the mortal termination of a disease, the nature of which he had not previously understood, should be heard to exclaim, "Oh, I see it now!"

ESSAY XXIV.

ABLUTION.

“ Ev’n from the body’s purity, the mind
 Receives a secret, sympathetic aid.” THOMSON.

PERSONAL cleanliness ought to be added to the list of the cardinal virtues, not only as being equally conducive with any of them to the welfare of the body, but as it is connected with, and for the most part implies, a certain degree of delicacy and purity of mind. For the generality of cutaneous diseases, there is not, perhaps, a better recipe in the pharmacopœia than is to be found in one of

the periodical papers of the "World."
 "Take of pure clean water *quantum sufficit*, put it into a clean earthen or china basin, then take a clean linen cloth, dip it in that water, and apply it to the part affected, night and morning, or oftener, as occasion may require."

At the same time that I would wish to inculcate the importance of frequent ablution, I cannot too deeply impress my opinion of the danger that may arise from a careless and indiscriminate use of the cold bath; a fashionable remedy which is much more frequently injurious than those who have recourse to it seem to be aware of. By taking off heat from the system, when from its enfeebled state, or other circumstances, it has not the power of generating heat in a sufficient quantity, it is particularly likely to be injurious to those weakly persons and delicate young females, to

whom it is too much the fashion to prescribe it as a tonic or corroborant. To the latter, indeed, it may often be in other ways attended with inconvenient and even dangerous effects. In both sexes, pulmonary consumption frequently may be traced to the injudicious administration of this powerful and equivocal agent. There are certain obstructions or irregularities which the shock of the cold bath may be calculated to rectify or remove, but that a *course of shocks* should be in general likely to invigorate a feeble, or give what is called tone to a relaxed constitution, is too glaringly inconsistent with the suggestions of ordinary sense, to harmonize with the genuine principles of medical philosophy.

A patient is, for the most part, to be raised to a state of strength, from the depression of chronic debility, only by those influences which act gradually and

almost imperceptibly, like that of the air which he is constantly, though unconsciously breathing, or that process of assimilation which is every moment going on in the body, without his being aware of it.

How large a proportion of the deaths which we see inserted in the public papers have occurred at sea-bathing places, where, it is observed, the patient had gone for the benefit of his health ! The more than ordinary expedition with which the destroyer executes his destined task in those fashionable resorts of mingled gaiety and sickness, is strikingly exhibited to our view in their crowded records of mortality. This would tend, one should imagine, to counteract in some measure that disposition to hope so easily imbibed, and so tenaciously cherished by the multitude of credulous invalids, who, on the approach of each

returning autumn, hasten with eagerness to the coast, fondly expecting to find, amidst the waves and the breezes of the ocean, that relief which elsewhere had been sought for in vain. Bathing in the sea is, however, less liable to danger or inconvenience than the ordinary cold bath, principally, if not entirely, because the marine temperature being higher, the transition from one element to another is less violent in the former case than in the latter. As to the saline particles of this, or any of the chemical constituents upon which is supposed to depend in a great measure the virtue of other baths of medicinal celebrity, they can scarcely have any important effect upon the body during the usual period of its immersion. Regarding, as it seems reasonable to do, the act of bathing as in the generality of cases beneficial only so far as it performs the office of ablution, it

will appear that the utility of every species of water is nearly equal, in reference to its external application. The waters of that city which originally derived its name from them, can have no real superiority in their external use, over waters which are equally heated in any other place. A warm bath in Middlesex is as good as a warm bath in Somersetshire. What are called medicinal springs may indeed from the influence of faith produce wonderful results, in the same manner as miracles have been wrought in periods of superstition, at fountains which have been hallowed by some patron saint. Their natural efficacy was improved by their supernatural reputation. They were really salutary, because they were supposed to be sacred. It was the imputed holiness of the well, which gave it in a great measure its healing quality.

Ablution which, in the Mosaic law,

constituted one of its most important ceremonies, in the Christian, was originally inculcated as an essential and introductory rite, and which has been always enjoined as necessary for the preservation of health, has of late been happily extended to the successful management of disease. It has been well ascertained that fevers may, in a number of cases, be *washed away* almost without pharmaceutical assistance.

In noticing the application of washing to the treatment of diseases, we cannot but refer, with gratitude and respect, to the scientific and benevolent exertions of the late Dr. Currie, whose splendid and solid talents, with equal success were employed in restoring the health of the living, and in embalming the memory of the dead. No selfish insincerity can be suspected in an expression of reverence for the character of one whose ear it will never reach.

The voice of praise, however loud, cannot interrupt the silence, or penetrate the secrecy of the tomb.

The washing of those parts of the body which are usually covered, is perhaps more necessary to health and comfort than of those that are exposed to the external air, a circumstance which, by favoring the process of evaporation, tends to prevent the accumulation upon the surface of that secreted matter, which when allowed to remain there, is apt to produce, in addition to a state of uncomfortable languor, febrile and a variety of cutaneous diseases.

Many persons in this part of the world, one might imagine from their practice, entertained a medical theory similar to that of a tribe inhabiting the Great Desert in Africa, noticed in a recent volume of travels. "No people have more aversion to washing than the

Tuarick generally have. Even in performing their necessary purifications, which require that a man should wash in a particular way before his prayers, they avoid water and make use of sand. Many attempts were made by us to discover the reason why they kept themselves in such a dirty state ; but to all our enquiries we obtained nearly the same answer, ‘ God never intended that man should injure his health if he could avoid it ;’ water having been given to man to drink and cook with, it does not agree with the skin of a Tuarick, who always falls sick after much washing.”* It were most earnestly to be wished that an approximation to habits of this kind should doom the offender to a residence in the Great Desert, as the proper associate of his fellow-savages.

* Lyon’s Narrative of Travels in Northern Africa.

The warm bath has a remarkable influence in composing the mind when in that state of violent irritation, which often leads to the use of laudanum, or some equally deleterious opiate. This remedy has been for many years considered at the Retreat at York as of greater efficacy in certain cases of insanity than all the other medical means which have been employed. There is no agent which equally with the tepid bath is calculated to promote the general tranquillity of the constitution. It will often induce sleep when the more direct and accustomed opiates fail, and with all its beneficial tendency, it is followed by none of those evil effects that are apt to arise from the drugs more generally employed to allay uneasiness, to restore composure, and to conquer the obstinacy of an involuntary and unnatural vigilance. The notion that the warm bath is relaxing

may in a great measure be derived from the effect which it is observed to produce upon inanimate matter ; as if the nerves and muscles of the human frame were like the strings of a musical instrument. The warm bath is, in many cases, a congenial and salutary cordial ; it animates torpor and elevates depression ; on which account, when intemperately employed, or in cases where there is already a too vigorous excitement, there is a chance of its proving deleterious. In furious mania, for instance, it has been known to produce mischievous effects.

To the mansions of the wealthy, a bath ought to be considered as an indispensable appendage ; and if institutions for the corporeal purification of the lower classes of society were generally established, such a measure could not fail to produce an incalculable diminution of disease, and would thus supersede, to

a certain degree, the more expensive necessity of hospitals, and that of all the other medical asylums for popular refuge and relief.

ESSAY XXV.

BODILY EXERCISE.

“ To cure the mind’s wrong bias, Spleen,
Some recommend the bowling-green ;
Some hilly walks ; all exercise ;
Fling but a stone, the giant dies.”

GREEN.

“ **W**HATEVER hope the dreams of speculation may suggest, of observing the proportion between nutriment and labour, and keeping the body in a healthy state by supplies exactly suited to its waste, we know that, in effect, the vital powers, unexcited by motion, grow gradually languid ; that as their vigour fails, obstructions are generated, and from obstructions proceed most of those pains

which wear us away slowly by periodical tortures, and which, although they sometimes suffer life to be long, condemn it to be useless, chain us down to the couch of misery, and mock us with the hopes of death.” *

The late Dr. Beddoes remarked, that it is one of the evils of such a climate as ours, that it supplies so strong an inducement to a chamber-life.

A man, it should be considered, may sit and lie, as well as eat and drink to excess. There is a debauchery of inaction as well as of repletion or stimulation. No other abstinence, however salutary, can compensate the mischief that attends upon an abstinence from exercise.

There is not any means better adapted than bodily exercise for the cure, as well

* Dr. Johnson.

as prevention, more particularly of what are called nervous diseases. One of the best moderators of too acute feeling, is labor carried to fatigue. A man suffering under a fit of the vapors, will often find that he is able to walk it off. He can be exonerated from the load upon his mind by the violent or continued agitation of his body. I knew a delicate and nervous lady who, to counteract the influence of domestic vexation, often used to walk ten miles and back again ; and I have heard of an eminently successful manager of the insane, who cured his patients by putting them to hard labour. By making them literally work like horses, he brought them to think and feel again like rational beings.

Of the important effects arising from bodily labour, assisted perhaps by mental excitement, we have a remarkable instance recorded in the “ *Monita et Pre-*

cepta," of Dr. Mead. "A young student at college became so deeply hypochondriac, as to proclaim himself dead, and ordered the college-bells to be tolled on the occasion of his death. In this he was indulged, but the man employed to execute the task, appeared to the student to perform it so imperfectly, that he arose from his bed in a fury of passion to toll the bell for his own departure. When he had finished, he retired to his bed in a state of profuse perspiration, and was from that moment alive and well." It would seem, in such a case, as if the skin having been relaxed by exertion, hypochondriasis evaporated through its pores.

Improvements in the mechanism of modern carriages, by which they are made to convey a person from place to place, almost without giving him a sense of motion, may be one of the circum-

stances that have contributed to the increased prevalence of those maladies, which originate, in a great degree, from an indulgence in lassitude and languor. A man may lose his life not only by a sudden and violent overturn, but by a vehicle which carries him too smoothly along. The notion of taking exercise upon springs of fashionable construction, is scarcely less absurd than that of taking an airing with closed windows. An objection was once made by the physicians, of I do not recollect what reign, to a projected improvement of the pavement of London, as being likely to injure the health of those of its inhabitants who used carriages. Driving a spirited and somewhat unruly horse in a gig, although attended with a certain degree of peril to life or limb, I have more than once prescribed in cases of hypochondriasis, as not only requiring bodily exertion, but as

being calculated actively to engage the attention. Almost any remedy that is likely to be successful, is to be recommended in so dreadful and desperate a malady.

Walking is no doubt best adapted to a state of unblemished health or unimpaired vigour ; but for the feeble and hypochondriacal, or those who are affected by any visceral obstruction or disease, riding on horseback is for the most part preferable to any other kind of exercise. Horse-exercise is particularly calculated to remove the obstructions and to brace the relaxed energies of the frame. Sydenham had such confidence in it, that he considered it as an absolute specific for phthisis ; and in one of his medical treatises observes, that if any man were possessed of a remedy that would do equal service to the human constitution with riding on horseback twice a day, he would

be in possession of the philosopher's stone. I have myself frequently seen instances of broken-up spirits, and apparently ruined constitutions, in which an altogether unexpected restoration to strength and cheerfulness has been effected by horse-exercise, when almost every other method of recovery had been tried without any sensible advantage. To many of my nervous, as well as bilious patients, I have recommended it as almost my sole prescription, to *live on horseback*.

No persons, perhaps, more strikingly illustrate the importance of bodily exercise, than that class of *bons vivans* who combine with a luxurious mode of living amusements which consist in strenuous and almost indefatigable exertions. The sportsman works as hard for pastime as the ordinary day-labourer is obliged to do for bread. The toils of both are equally

arduous, and differ only in the one being a matter of choice, and the other of necessity. The unwholesome pleasures of the table are in a manner compensated by the salutary enjoyments of the chase. An evening of noisy and jovial intemperance not unusually crowns a day of equally jovial and noisy activity; and a man will often be found for a long time to escape the dangers of the field, and the still more imminent dangers of the festival. The follower of the hounds is on the road to health, although he may not be in search of it, and if it were not for the excesses which are too frequently connected with his manner of life, it might prove singularly conducive to vigour and longevity. As it is, however, the fox-hunter seldom dies of a broken neck, to which he seems continually liable, but very generally of a broken constitution, to which his habits

more inevitably, although less obviously, expose him. He stands out longer, indeed, than the sedentary or indolent debauchee, but yields at length to the destructive power of licentious indulgence, with all the sufferings, although without any of the glory or the merits, of a martyr. Coxe, I think, states in his History of the Bourbons of Spain, that hunting first became there a royal amusement, or at least was more assiduously cultivated as such in consequence of its having been professionally advised as an antidote to the hypochondriasis, to which that august family were constitutionally liable.

There is not a single power of the body or the mind which inaction does not enfeeble or destroy. The lameness of gouty feet, for instance, is often owing to their not having been sufficiently used. It is but a fair retribution that we should

be deprived of a faculty, which we have not enough valued or employed. Between the two principal causes of gout, there is a natural alliance. Men are apt to indulge to excess in the luxuries of the table from a deficiency of other occupation, and there is a tendency, on the other hand, in gluttonous indulgence, to induce sluggishness and a disposition to intemperate repose. It is upon exercise, associated with regularity and moderation of living, and not upon any of the artifices or felicities of pharmaceutical composition, that the arthritic is to depend principally for a defence against the inroads of his painful and fearful malady. Drugs can assuage for a time the torture, but are insufficient to eradicate its cause. A paroxysm may be abridged by this means, but a tendency to its recurrence, upon the application of any exciting cir-

cumstances, cannot be thus effectually and permanently counteracted.

Tollere nodosam nescit medicina podagram.

Posture is nearly connected with the subject of bodily exercise. The usual attitude of a person occupied in reading or writing tends to obstruct the passage of the blood through the pulmonary and abdominal vessels. Those therefore who are habitually engaged in this manner ought, as much as possible, to stand to their employment. Standing, as it implies muscular exertion, may be regarded as a species of exercise. A valuable treatise might be written on what may be called the diseases of the desk.

Some years ago, I was consulted by a lady with regard to the health of several of her daughters, the complaints of each of whom might be ascribed principally, if not solely, to the confinement, sedentary

habits, and other circumstances, which made a part of the austere and inauspicious discipline of a fashionable boarding-school. The representations which they gave could not be doubted, although scarcely credible, of the unwholesome regulations which were enforced in some of these manufactories of infirmity and disease. Instead of mills for grinding old women young, we have, in many of these seminaries, mills for grinding young women old. The natural functions are in such institutions too often sacrificed to the attainment of artificial accomplishments. They treat the human frame as if it were a child's watch ; much pains are taken about the polish and gilding of the surface, but scarcely any in preserving the integrity and regular action of the internal machinery ; and if it look well on the outside, it is a matter of little consequence how it *goes*. Far is the writer from

meaning to involve in one unsparing censure all the existing institutions which are dedicated to the early formation of the female character. There are happy, and, in number, daily increasing exceptions, where a proportionate and prominent part of the plan of education is made to consist, as it ought, in the cultivation of that physical well-being, which is the basis of even moral and intellectual merit, and therefore of every thing that is truly estimable and permanently desirable in existence. There is no species of speculative knowledge that can compensate a practical ignorance of health.

ESSAY XXVI.

OCCUPATION.

“ Le meilleur moyen de calmer les troubles de l'esprit n'est pas de combattre l'objet qui les cause, mais de lui en présenter d'autres, qui le détournent et l'éloignent insensiblement de celui-là.”

Memoires de Mad. la Baronne de Staël.

BUSINESS, attended with extreme care and uneasiness, is, perhaps, less undesirable than the having no subject at all of uneasiness or care. The worst kind of air is not more certainly fatal than a vacuum. Inaction is not rest, recumbency is not repose. Although we squander our exertions upon an insignificant or undeserving object, the pains we take to attain it are attended with advantage as well as pleasure. The means are necessarily

useful, however worthless may be the end. That the passion for gaming should prevail, as it so frequently does, in minds of a superior order, is to be attributed to a principle different from avarice. Men of that character love the dice, in general, not so much from the prospect of the wealth which they may chance to sweep from the table, as from that very agitation of mind, and that strain of attention, which seem so unenviable to a tranquil and disengaged spectator. Gaming is a miserable refuge from the still greater miseries of indolence and vacuity. So dependent is the mind of man upon novelty and expectation, or, in another word, upon engagement, that he adds artificial chances to those which are inseparably attached to his nature and condition. As if the inevitable vicissitudes of human life did not sufficiently endanger his peace, he exposes himself un-

necessarily and wantonly to be trodden under the foot of fortune, or to be crushed by the revolution of her wheel.

Expectation is the vital principle of happiness. It is that which constantly stimulates us to exertion, and fills up the vacant spaces of life. We are in general more interested by a precarious good in prospect, than by the most valuable realities in our possession. The blossoms of hope seem better than the ripened fruits of fortune. We complain of the vicissitudes and uncertainty attending upon our present state, and yet it is in this very uncertainty and vicissitude that its interest, and of course its value, principally consists. Anticipated change constitutes the predominant charm of life. What we imagine that we may be, reconciles us to an endurance of what we are. Although dissatisfied with the good which has already arrived, we still fondly expect that the

stream of time is bearing for us some richer freight upon its bosom. Were a map to be presented to us, in which we could discern the windings of our future way, as distinctly as we can look back upon our past route, our desire to proceed in the journey of life would be no greater than it is to retrace the steps which we have already trodden. If we could lift the curtain which divides the future from the present, we should find it to be like one of those beautifully colored transparencies which are contrived so as to intercept the view of uninteresting or disagreeable objects.

There is an important practical difference, which is not, perhaps, sufficiently attended to, betwixt effort and mere occupation of mind — between agitation and action — between strong emotions and strenuous exertions. To the former, the hypochondriacal are often peculiarly

liable, but they seem in general to be disinclined to, and in some instances to be almost incapable of, the latter. There is often a pressure upon the spirits which takes away, or essentially impairs, the power of voluntary movement. Many a melancholic invalid is conscious of what the poet Cowper remarks relative to himself. "I have that within me, which hinders me wretchedly in every thing that I ought to do; but is prone to trifle, and let every good thing run to waste."

The possession of that pecuniary abundance which supplies a man with the conveniences and accommodations of life, is often an unfavorable circumstance in his lot. A specious and external welfare is not unfrequently the indirect cause of that inward condition, which is in fact the more to be deplored, as it presents no ostensible claim upon

our sympathy and compassion. No one feels so strongly as the affluent and listless hypochondriac the vast difference between prosperity and happiness, between possession and enjoyment. Opulence is the natural source of indolence, and indolence, of disease ; necessity, inasmuch as it impels to labour, is the mother of hilarity, as it proverbially is of invention. Toil was made for man ; and, although he may often inherit what is necessary to his existence, he is, in every instance, obliged to *earn* what is essential to its enjoyment. If we wish for habitual cheerfulness, we must work for it ; there is no “royal road” to good spirits. Every man possesses the raw material of happiness, but it must be wrought up for use by his own industry. For the most part we find that none are more uneasy in themselves, than those who are placed in what are called easy circumstances.

Few persons have resolution enough to supply the place of necessity.

The lounge's life is in fact a life of the most irksome labour. Upon him who has no other burden to carry, every hour presses as a load. Instead of flying by him with an evanescent celerity, time tediously hovers above his head: the sun, as in the days of Joshua, seems to stand still.

Leisure is frequently the cause, although not often the subject, of our complaints. I was once consulted by a hypochondriacal patient who had been the greatest part of his life a journeyman tailor, but who by an unexpected accident became unhappily rich, and consequently no longer dependent for his bread upon drudgery and confinement. He accordingly descended from his board: but Charles the Fifth, after having voluntarily descended from his throne, could

not have regretted more severely the injudicious renunciation of his empire. This man, after having thrown himself out of employment, fell ill of the tedium of indolence. He discovered that the having nothing to do was more uncongenial to his constitution, even than the constrained attitude and the close and heated atmosphere in which he had been accustomed to carry on his daily operations. In one respect, however, the repentant mechanic was less unfortunate than the imperial penitent ; as it remained in his power to reinstate himself in his former situation, which after having resumed, no motive could a second time induce him to relinquish.

It is more difficult than is generally imagined, “ to realize an independence.” For this purpose, a mind richly endowed is at least as necessary as a well replenished purse. To set a man

up in a business, requires, for the most part, a certain capital. To set him up comfortably in a state of idleness, besides a pecuniary competency, requires also a capital of a different sort. To render retirement tolerable, we must carry into it a stock of ideas, in addition to our other funds. We cannot fill up the vacancy of leisure, except from the fulness of our internal resources. Daily bustle is to some persons as necessary as their daily bread.

The drudge of mercantile or mechanical employment patiently waits for the period, when he expects to be repaid for the hardships of his present servitude, by a final liberation from his fetters. But when the wished-for period arrives, he generally finds, in the emancipation which it brings, a punishment for the desertion of his active duty, rather than a recompence for having so long dis-

charged it. What at a distance appeared the most enviable privilege, proves, upon trial, to be almost the severest penalty that could have been inflicted upon his unlicensed expectations.

A man, the best part of whose life has been spent in endeavours after wealth, however successful he may be in the attainment of his object, will scarcely ever become independent of the pursuit. The slave of mercenary toil is transformed into the more miserable victim of mental malady. Hypochondriasis fixes its unsparing tooth upon the leavings of avarice. The former, indeed, often assumes the shape of the latter, more especially when it attacks the veteran votaries of Mammon. The retired tradesman continuing to part with his money, although he has ceased to acquire it, finds that the balance of his books is not so much in his favour as formerly. He begins to

fancy that the fountain must soon be exhausted, from which flows a perpetual stream of expenditure. He is haunted by the spectre of poverty. It is not improbable that he may thus starve himself from a horror of famine, or be driven to live in a mad-house by the fear of dying in a jail.

Although there is little happiness in possessing, there is great in the progress of acquiring wealth. So it is with regard to rank. Pleasure consists not in high station, but in gradually raising ourselves to it ; not in having started first in the race of ambition, but in having passed competitors in the course.

Poverty is often a preservative against the inroads of despair. The extremely poor are for the most part too miserable to be melancholy. They are occupied too much with painful sensations to have leisure for the luxury of sentimental distress. The unwholesome indulgence of

their feelings is precluded by the almost uninterrupted continuance of their exertions. They expend life in supporting it. Their attention is by necessity riveted to the immediate hour. They can seldom therefore suffer or enjoy from either retrospect or anticipation. The fear of death, for instance, is principally felt where no intervening evil obstructs the view of that ultimate calamity.

Scarcely any evil is more intolerable than that sense of vacuity which the mind often suffers, that has no object commensurate to its powers, or whose faculties of action or of feeling are not called out by some imperious necessity. Whatever thorns may lie in the path of ambition, the agitations of public are perhaps preferable to the languors of private life. Upon a similar principle, national commotions have proved favorable to the health of individuals. It has been

remarked, that nervous diseases have disappeared during the conflicts of civil war. The reign of hypochondriasis has been suspended by a political rebellion. By a happy contrivance of nature, the existence of one species of distress has a tendency to prevent the occurrence or to check the prevalence of another. It seems to be ordained that a certain measure of calamity should invariably mix itself as a component part in the mass of terrestrial experience. With regard to different persons, as well as to the public at different periods, it may be remarked, that the principle of evil, although infinitely diversified in the external and obvious shape which it assumes, is universal, and, much more than is generally imagined, impartial in the exercise of its power. It is the kind rather than the degree of happiness or misery, which constitutes the real difference between the apparently

various conditions either of individuals or of generations of men.

We are told by M. Pinel that there is a lunatic hospital in Spain, where the poorer classes are made to work, and are generally cured, whilst the grandee, who is not compelled to labour, is generally incurable. So necessary is employment, that no innocent form which it can assume ought to be rejected or despised. I once recommended to an hypochondriac to engage in the composition of a novel, which seemed to answer, during the time that he was occupied with the task, the purpose for which it was prescribed. By interesting himself in the distresses of fictitious beings, he diverted his attention from sufferings which were no less the offspring of his imagination. Novel reading was the greatest source of relief to the mind of Cowper, at the period of its deepest disorder and despair. A work of

fancy would awaken his feelings when they were dormant to the realities of life. A good novel is perhaps the most arduous, and certainly not the least useful product of human genius.

Dr. Johnson observed, that "a woman was happier than a man because she could hem a pocket-handkerchief." A needle and thread are a small artillery which can often repel the force of the mightiest passion. This apparently trifling occupation of the fingers draws off, as it were, the superfluous and oppressive sensibility of the mind. Some men are too proud to be pleased with what interests or amuses the generality of mankind. Their dignity would be impaired in their own eyes by a participation in ordinary pastimes. But when the mind is left vacant of graver concerns, it is of the highest moment, that it should be capable of engaging itself in trifles. Philosophi-

cally considered indeed, almost all the subjects of human occupation are trifling, when compared with the incalculable importance of occupation itself. An intellect of the most perfect organization possesses that compass of contractility, which enables it to take up the most minute, as well as to grasp the largest object within its reach, and for the time to be equally filled with either.

Sir Isaac Newton, with no less justice, perhaps, than modesty, ascribed the superiority which he appeared to possess over other students of philosophy, merely to his greater patience or more continued controul over his attention: such a controul over the attention is not more essential to the acquirements, than it is to the healthy condition of the mind. The healthy condition of the mind may, indeed, for the most part, be considered as bearing an exact proportion to the de-

gree in which this desirable faculty is possessed.

Dr. Paley remarks in the preface to his valuable volumes on Moral and Political Philosophy, that "whatever is the fate or reception of this work, it owes its author nothing. In sickness and in health I have found it that which can alone alleviate the one or give enjoyment to the other,—occupation and engagement." From a similar feeling, some of our finest writers have regretted the completion of their most elaborate works. When Gibbon had finished his history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, which will ever remain a monument of his genius, his taste, and his intellectual energy, he laments rather than rejoices at the conclusion of his task. This employment, combined perhaps with the prospect of fame from the result of it, constituted the happiest moments of his life.

The gigantic author of the English Dictionary complained of his morbid indolence. Johnson fancied that he had been idle, after he had achieved the greatest literary work that had ever perhaps been executed by an individual. But when that edifice of talent was completed, he almost wept over its accomplishment.

The advantage of indispensable occupation is never more unequivocally evinced than in cases of heavy calamity. The apparent aggravation of an evil, will not unfrequently be found to constitute, in fact, the source of its most effectual relief. The situation of a widowed female, left in needy circumstances with a large family, is often less truly deplorable than that of an opulent and childless dowager, who, in the absence of other objects of interest and attention, has leisure and every accommodation for pampering her sorrow and of nursing dejection until

it ripens into derangement. Children in the former case are, indeed, heavy weights hanging upon the minds of the mother ; but, like the weights pulling upon the machinery of a clock, they are necessary to keep it in motion. Such *incumbrances*, as they are often called, may be compared to a *drag* upon the wheel of a carriage, which prevents it from being precipitated to its destruction.

Although the indolent hypochondriac may not be awakened to effort by any direct and undisguised attempt to rouse him from his inertness, it is possible that by some skilful manœuvre, or by some benevolent and judicious fraud, he may be cheated into exertion. Let the most arrant sluggard be confined to his bed by the order of his physician, or the necessity of his disease, and he will probably be restless and *fidgetty* in the extreme.

Tell him that he ought to lie still, and he will feel an irresistible propensity to rise. Give the most favorite delicacy as a medicine, and it will no longer be palatable. A task is not necessarily a labor or exercise of any kind ; it is something which is enforced or prescribed.

Salutary as occupation in general is, it is far from being so when it consists almost exclusively in an attention to a man's self, and more particularly to his corporeal sensations and infirmities. The hypochondriac often destroys his health, by taking too much care of it. The maker of a watch will tell you, that there is no way more certain of injuring it, than the constantly meddling with its machinery. In like manner, it is impossible to be perpetually tampering with the constitution, without either disordering its movements or impairing the elasticity of its spring. A valetudinarian is

apt to treat himself, as a doating mother manages her child, whom she ruins by over-nursing; whom she fondles and dandles into delicacy and disease. So solicitous is she to protect him against the inroads of distemper, that she closes against him nearly every avenue of health as well as enjoyment. He is scarcely allowed to take the air, lest he should take a cold along with it, and is often restricted in the free use of his limbs, from the apprehension of accidental fracture or possible fatigue.

The hypochondriac is a pedant, who is absorbed in one subject, and who is apt to obtrude it upon the attention of others who feel no interest about it. He acts, or rather talks, as if every one he met with had a deep concern in the condition of his bowels. Unlike other egotists, who are fond of displaying their brilliant or agreeable qualities, he seems, on the con-

trary, to be perversely ostentatious of his infirmities and defects, and has an unnatural pleasure in exposing to every casual acquaintance all the imbecilities of his physical and intellectual character. He is never happy but whilst expatiating on his misery, and is extremely offended with any one who endeavors to persuade him into a more comfortable state of feeling. The history of his symptoms might not improperly be disclosed to his professional adviser, but in this respect he is too apt to regard every friend as a physician, and a friend as no longer deserving of the name, who betrays the least degree of weariness or ennui whilst listening, or endeavoring to listen, to his vain and unprofitable repetitions. His conversation moves in a circle, of which himself is the perpetual centre.

A man who is well, in the most perfect and comprehensive sense of the

word, feels himself a constituent part, a living member of the social body ; an artery which, however small, beats in unison with the general pulsation. We ought to regard one without benevolence, as we should a person destitute of sight, or any other inlet of pleasurable sensation. The malevolent man, however mischievous, is doomed to suffer more than it is in his power to inflict. There are, on the other hand, heroes of philanthropy, who cannot stoop to everyday occasions ; who by a single achievement of generous energy, would rescue your life from destruction, but by overlooking the smaller delicacies of humanity, would render it miserable in detail. As the longest duration of human existence is an aggregate of seconds, so is its happiness composed, in a great measure, of little felicities, produced by minute kindnesses and momentary attentions.

Lord Chesterfield somewhere observes, that a gentleman, after having once dressed himself with proper care, will think no more about his dress during the remainder of the day. In like manner, after having adjusted his habits of regimen, according to the most approved model, a wise man will banish the subject from his mind. He will, as uniformly as he can, adhere to the rules of living which he has laid down for himself, but will have them as little as possible in his thoughts.

There are *petit-mâtres* with regard to health as well as dress. Both are almost constantly employed in examining themselves ; the one from an anxiety to know whether every thing about him, the other whether every thing within him is exactly as it should be. Each of these characters is, to a certain degree, an object of pity. But the coxcomb has in one respect the

advantage over the hypochondriac, inasmuch as the latter is, in general, less satisfied with the state of his inside, than the former is with that of his exterior.

To be always considering "what we should eat and what we should drink, and wherewithal we should be clothed," in order to avoid the approach of disease, is the most likely means of provoking its attack. A man who is continually feeling his pulse is never likely to have a good one. If he swallow his food from the same motive as he does his physic, it will neither be enjoyed nor digested so well as if he ate in obedience to the dictate of an unsophisticated and uncalculating appetite. The hypochondriac who is in the habit of weighing his meals will generally find that they lie heavy on his stomach. If he take a walk or a ride with no other view than to pick up health, he will seldom meet with it on

the road. If he enter into company, not from any social sympathy or relish for interchange of thought, but merely because company is prescribed for his disease, he will only be more deeply depressed by that cheerfulness in which he cannot compel himself to participate, and will gladly relapse into his darling solitude, where he may indulge his melancholy without risk of interruption or disturbance. "The countenance of a friend doeth good like a medicine," but not if we look upon it merely with a view to its medicinal operation.

The constitutional or inveterate hypochondriac is apt to view every thing only in the relation which it may bear to his malady. In the rich and diversified storehouse of nature he sees merely a vast laboratory of poisons and antidotes. He is almost daily employed either in the search after, or in the trial of remedies

for a disease which is often to be cured only by striving to forget it.

But even if such a plan of life were really calculated to lengthen the catalogue of our days, it would still be equally wretched and degrading to the dignity of our nature. Who would condescend to be absorbed in such selfish and paltry anxieties, in order that he may be allowed to crawl a few months or years longer on the surface of the earth, instead of being laid quietly beneath it? Nothing, surely, can be more idle and absurd than to waste the whole of our being in endeavours to preserve it; to neglect the purposes, in order to protract the period, of our existence,

— Propter vitam, vivendi perdere causas.

JUVENAL.

Of all occupations, that which has the good of others for its object is the most salutary to the person employed. It ought

to be the favorite care of education to sow the seeds of kindness in the spring-time of life. There can be no doubt that it is in the power of a parent to enrich the heart of his child as well as his understanding, and that by a proper system and example, philanthropy might be taught as well as philosophy. Every other kind of toil soon becomes wearisome, but it is the peculiar property of true benevolence to be never exhausted by its exertions. It is like those odoriferous substances, which after the longest period are not sensibly impaired by the effluvia which they have been constantly exhaling.

That benevolence is of the highest order, whose prospects extend beyond the grave. The hope of a future life is the only one that can certainly last to the end of this. How much more enviable is the disinterested and enthusiastic mis-

sionary, than the cold and selfish hypochondriac ; he who is engaged in promoting, as he imagines, the spiritual and eternal interests of his fellow-creatures, than he who is absorbed in the care of his own temporary and merely bodily welfare ! How much happier is the man whose faith can remove mountains, than one whose fears are apt to magnify into a mountain the slightest unevenness in his path !

ESSAY XXVII.

REAL EVILS, A REMEDY FOR THOSE OF THE
IMAGINATION.

“ Great griefs, I see, medicine the less.”

Cymbeline.

THE author has often been applied to by hypochondriacs, who fancied themselves phthisical. Hypochondriasis and phthisis are seldom united. Danger of this latter disease is for the most part in the inverse ratio of apprehension. He who thinks himself consumptive will very rarely be found to be so. Prevalent as phthisis unfortunately is, the fancy is much more frequently disor-

dered than the organs of respiration. In the absence of any other malady, the physician is often called upon to cure an *alarm*.

I was once consulted by a hypochondriacal young man, who conceived, without the smallest foundation, that he was afflicted with a diseased liver. He had previously applied to several of his friends, who smiled at his complaint as the fiction merely of a capricious imagination. Seeing, though his disease was exclusively mental, that, at the same time, it was too deeply rooted to be removed by argument or ridicule, I listened to the statement of his feelings with the most respectful attention, apparently coincided with him in his notion of the malady, and professed to treat it, as if it were in fact a disorder of a particular viscus. The patient had taken, only for a short time, what had been pre-

scribed ostensibly for his liver, before he found that the pain in his right side, and other symptoms, which he attributed to a deranged condition of that organ, were considerably alleviated, and in little more than a month, every trace of his hepatic affection was completely obliterated. It is long since he has been restored to a state of healthy activity and unobscured cheerfulness.

A diseased fancy will not unfrequently produce nearly all the symptoms, or at least all the sensations of bodily disease; but any very serious malady of the latter kind is calculated, on the other hand, to dissipate the clouds which hover over the imagination. Hypochondriasis may often thank calamity for its cure.

Some years ago I knew a lady who had for a long time been a miserable victim to the vapours, but who was completely cured of this complaint by the super-

vening of another, which was more immediately alarming, and which precluded indeed the possibility of much longer life. No sooner was her new disease ascertained to be an aneurism of the aorta, and the necessary result of that complaint was explained to her, than all her nervous feelings vanished, and she even bore the announcement of her inevitable fate with a calmness which is seldom exhibited under such trying circumstances. The near prospect of death, instead of overpowering, seemed to brace anew the relaxed energies of her frame ; and what is well worthy of remark, so far from being, during her subsequent days, selfishly absorbed by her real, as she had been before by her imaginary ailments, she interested herself almost continually and exclusively about the happiness of others ; and, in proportion as she be-

came more amiable, found herself less wretched.

I was once acquainted with a person who, at the age of five-and-forty, declared that he had never known a misfortune in his life. With such a being it is scarcely possible to feel a sense of friendship or even of fellow-creatureship. That man's moral education must be very imperfect, who has taken no lessons in the school of adversity. The mind must be wounded before it will give out the balm of human kindness.

In the crucible of serious sorrow, the affections are, in general, purified and refined. But trials of a lighter sort have often an undesirable rather than a happy influence upon the character. A high degree of heat *melts*, a lower merely soils and tarnishes the metal which is exposed to its influence. Truly tragical

misfortune begets a kind of heroic composure. Distress, when it is profound, becomes the parent of equanimity. It renders our feelings proof against the petty hostilities of fortune. What were before cares are, under such circumstances, often converted into comforts. Even pain of body operates as mental relief. Adversity, when it assumes its more awful form, lifts us above the level of the earth, so that we are no longer incommoded by the roughnesses or inequalities of its surface. From this state of elevated sorrow, a man looks down upon the common-place troubles of life with the same sort of contempt or indifference as upon the toys and trifles of his childhood. The mind itself is enlarged by the magnitude of its misery.

Such may be conceived, for instance, to be the mental situation of a man of even ordinary feeling, under the recent

and irretrievable loss of one whose soul had been in a manner amalgamated with his own ; between whom and himself there had long been not a sympathy merely, but a unity almost of consciousness. To the ordinary weight of the atmosphere we become, on account of its unceasing pressure altogether insensible ; but the sudden removal of this imperceptible weight would occasion agonizing convulsions. In like manner, when the unwearied assiduities of domestic tenderness, of which from long familiarity with them we are apt to grow almost unconscious, are by the most solemn of human events for ever withdrawn, our eyes are often, for the first time, opened to our late happiness by the conviction of its irrevocable departure.

We are apt to be stunned by the blow of any very great misfortune. Its immediate effect is a dimness of perception

and a confusion of ideas. A calamity may be of such a magnitude, that, like any vast object of nature or of art, we must be removed to a certain distance from it before we can take into our view its entire dimensions. Time may obliterate fanciful and superficial sorrows, but it adds to those which are justified and nourished by reflection. In such a case, the current of melancholy thought deepens the channel in which it flows. Human felicity is of so frail and delicate a texture that it is susceptible, from the slightest accident, of tarnish or decay. We cannot be made invulnerably happy by any combination of events, however fortunate; but, on the other hand, a single event of a calamitous nature will often be found enough to darken the remainder of our days. The sunshine of life is continually liable to be interrupted by clouds,

but there are clouds which no sunshine can disperse.

The employment of a physician disposes him to think worse of the aggregate of human suffering, but on that account somewhat better of his peculiar share of it. The more narrowly we look into the interior of families, and the closet-history of individuals, the greater approximation shall we find to a general equality in the lot of life.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

A TRANSLATION of the first edition of the foregoing work into the German language having been published at Essen, by Dr. Haindorf*, with various notes and additions, it appeared to me desirable to put the English reader in possession of a few of the most interesting original passages; which, without unnecessarily swelling the size of the volume, might in some degree contribute to his entertainment.

* John Reids, M. D., Mitglied des Königl. Collegiums der Aerzte zu London, &c. *Versuche über Hypochondrische und andere Nervenleiden. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt, mit Anmerkungen und Zusätzen, von D. A. Haindorf, vormaligem Staatsarzt bei dem Provinzial-Lazareth zu Münster, Lehrer der Heilkunde und practischem Arzt daselbst.*

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS
OF
THE TRANSLATOR.

ESSAY II. — VOLITION. — (Page 25.)

THE following auto-biography of one of my patients, as bearing a relation to the healing power of the Will, and as the confession of an invalid, appeared not unworthy of being communicated.

“ I had always a great deal of self-love, and considered myself as being, on account of my fine feeling, superior to other persons. With much inclination for the mystic and the extraordinary, I was guided by my sensibility, and never by my reason in forming my judgment; and my only passion was to compose poems. I never was courageous, and accused those who were so of not being able to discern danger. From my earliest youth my happiest sports were disturbed by an anxious dread of death. This dread became a deep melancholy from the circumstance of my seeing, in my fourteenth year, the bleeding corpse of a person killed by a fall; and this gloomy state of mind was not dissipated in less than two or three months. Some time after I had a disorder in my chest, and frequently spit blood, and my peace of mind was now completely destroyed. Childish fears and self-pity occupied me incessantly,—all the joys of life had

vanished for me. Neither amusements nor laborious employment could drive away from my mind the image of corruption, the melancholy idea of the fragility of earthly things, and the contemplation of death. I became emaciated, and appeared to be in a consumption. Thus I reached my twenty-second year. At that time I met with Haal's Work, entitled 'Method of Curing Sickness by the Force of the Will.' I was deeply impressed with the following words of his: 'Let your ailments alone, as if they did not affect you in the least;' and I was persuaded that his method must be successful. My anxiety respecting the future gradually disappeared, and my melancholy completely left me after my illness had lasted three years and a half. Fresh spirits then pervaded mind and body, and I felt as if I had received a new existence.

"This happy state lasted six months, when I awoke one morning very uneasy, thinking my old complaint was returned, and my thinking so really occasioned it to attack me once more. From that period I deemed my state of mind incurable; for I considered, never can an illness be conquered which has lasted so long, and whose temporary cure depended merely on deception. No Kantian will ever be able to delude me again so happily. It is true, I now perceived that my uneasiness proceeded solely from my fancy, and that I grieved about what is in reality no evil at all; yet this consideration affords me no relief, since the contemplation of death subdues my reason with gigantic force. I endeavored to direct my ideas to-

wards other objects, but in vain. I feel a fear of *fear*, uneasiness about *uneasiness*, and have not the least hope of relief; in short, language is too poor to express the tortures which I suffer.

“ My mental malady is perhaps the only example of cause and effect being one and the same, for as I figure to myself that my unhappiness cannot cease, it is natural that this very idea should produce the greatest unhappiness. I know that I have nothing to fear, and yet I fear. This often appears so paradoxical to me, that I fancy I feel two wrestling natures within me, one of which points to the north pole, the other to the south.”

My patient concluded his letter by observing, “ My disorder can be cured only by feelings of more force than my *fixed idea*, and should such feelings ever be mine, I shall recover, and this is my hope and my comfort.” He was at length indeed cured of his *fixed idea*, but died of a consumption that lasted three years, during which, his mental malady gradually disappeared as the fatal disorder became more and more formed, a melancholy counterpoise to hypochondriasis, and what he had instinctively prophesied would happen. These metamorphoses of disorders, at first apparently mental, into bodily sufferings terminating in death, particularly occasioned by consumption, are far from being uncommon.

ESSAY III. — FEAR OF DEATH. — (Page 47.)

ALTHOUGH most persons who are enlightened by a higher wisdom, and fortified by religion, are enabled

to raise themselves above the fear of death, yet, it is not the less true, that for many this fear is difficult to conquer; and this serves to explain why physicians and philosophers have occupied themselves in finding various methods of counteracting this natural impulse. The phenomenon having been observed that, even at a very advanced period of life, the hair and teeth grow again; and that in lower degrees of animal life, every part is produced anew, a hope arose that what was possible in particular parts, and in a lower order of beings, might also be realised altogether in superior creatures. Many secret societies have endeavored to discover such an universal remedy, and the natural instinct of man for life has led many, even against sound reason, to make attempts to lengthen it.

Humbled as we must feel by the conviction of the nothingness of our earthly knowledge, we shall do well to submit quietly to our destiny, although it may not be in our power to prove the absolute necessity for its present course. In this state of uncertainty, therefore, between the theoretical possibility of avoiding death, and the practical necessity of at length yielding to it; to render this catastrophe as supportable as possible, to deprive death of its terrors, and lessen its apparent bitterness, is equally conformable to the highest wisdom, and conducive to the happiness of life. A wise man will calmly contemplate his end, as a release from all earthly cares; and the hopes of a happier futurity, which never quit him,

will elevate him beyond the terrors of death. He has considered this mortal life as a lesson, and acknowledged the equality of human destiny and its constant alternation; this world has therefore lost its charm for him, and in looking upon his death as the passage to another world, how can it terrify him who acknowledges it to be necessary in the order of things? "I would willingly," says P. Richter, "give my life, were it possible to transfer it, to any dying person who wished it. Meanwhile, let not any one suppose I mean to say that because there is for me an eclipse of the sun, there must also be one in America; or that because flakes of snow are falling upon my head, the winter has set in on the Gold Coast. Life is beautiful and warm; even mine was so once!"

But should some fortunate beings who have merely tasted the sweetness of life, and have wandered through its paths with very little reflection, think death bitter, let them be told, that nature has for them, as well as for others, done much to mitigate the horrors of the scene.

When man dies at an advanced period of life, when death appears the consequence of exhaustion, he sinks from a state of somnolency into his long sleep; and what bitterness can death then possess? Should he be carried off in youth, or by a violent illness, the superfluous vital powers are quickly destroyed, consciousness is weakened by the visions of fancy, and he departs from life in a dream. In consump-

tion, hope is never extinguished, and while death is hovering on his lips, the patient is still forming plans for a long life. In other disorders, such extraordinary calmness is often displayed, that the patient speaks of his own death as of that of another, and frequently settles the hour of it with precision. In those cases in which death appears terrible on account of bodily suffering or restlessness, or anxiety about the survivors, it is rather the illness than death itself that presents an image of horror to those who witness it. But who can have an accurate idea of the beauty of the harbour, if he confuses it with the storms of that ocean, from which it is a refuge, and which are hushed in its calm repose ! Even admitting that we can only reach this calm repose by a narrow path in the midst of rocks and whirlpools, what coward would hesitate to venture through it to such a termination of his journey ?

Even in the most painful disorders, death is usually preceded by some minutes of ease, or even by bright and cheerful visions ; its wings rustle more and more gently as it approaches nearer to us. Of one who has just expired, how placid is the countenance, how composed is the attitude ! The features which once were distorted by passion are smoothed by the hand of death, so that many persons are thus rendered, in a few minutes, more beautiful than they had ever been during their life. Death is not a horrid spectre ; he is our last friend ; a quiet spirit in the form of a fair youth, as the ancients represented him, who extinguishes his

torch and invites us to rest. What follows does not belong to *him*. The skeleton in the grave is no more death, than an animated being is that skeleton; and it is absurd to embitter our life and its end by images of horror which perhaps exist no where in reality.

ESSAY IV.—PRIDE.—(Page 49. line 16.)

It happened at W——, that a gentleman, whose pride was well known, was one evening refused admittance to the nobility's box. He was highly incensed; and the next morning it was found necessary to put him into an asylum for lunatics. No art could there succeed in restoring the disturbed equilibrium of his mental powers; and after a residence of ten years, he died there in a state of misery and stupefaction.

ESSAY V.—REMORSE.—(Page 64. line 21.)

As in the cultivation of science or the fine arts, our efforts should not be directed towards gaining a remuneration, so should virtue not strive for a reward. By such views and aims the nature of both is destroyed. The self-approbation accompanying every virtuous action is sufficient recompence, as the painful feelings attendant on guilt are sufficient punishment. The rewarding and punishing letters of credit upon eternity, are the wretched resources of an artificial morality which too often occasion the real value of virtue, and the real nature of crime, to be mistaken. No sophistry can avail in denying the power of what

we call a good or a bad conscience. It is, indeed, peculiarly modified in various nations and individuals, but it exists every where, an internal physical law in man, and to be regarded as a law of nature.

ESSAY X.—INTEMPERANCE.—(Page 171. line 18.)

DURING my daily intercourse with sick persons, particularly with those disordered in intellect, I have often met with this case, and it was usually the consequence of reading those authors who paint human crimes and frailties in the most terrific colors, with a view of deterring us from them. Such overwrought pictures of human misery are more calculated to plunge into ruin a depressed and suffering mind than to improve it, since hope of recovery alone can accomplish that end; and such writers from their passion for exaggeration completely leave that out of the question.

Note 2. (p. 180. l. 6.) Without due caution, good fortune may become the worst enemy of our physical and intellectual well-being. The favorite of fortune is little oppressed with the burthens of life; he gets with ease what others must toil to obtain, and hence he is too apt to believe that he has privileges beyond his fellow-creatures, that he may claim as right what is merely the result of circumstances. At length he loses all sympathy with others, and thinks he may with propriety drive away from him the unfortunate persons whose complaints disturb his enjoyments. To this

depravation of his moral character is added perhaps the loss of health. Easily disgusted, and as incapable of exciting as of feeling sympathy, he remains solitary and deserted, although surrounded by all the goods of the earth. How frequently has it happened to me to meet with men, who, having without merit risen to the highest honors and offices, were discontented with their lot, and complaining bitterly of the unfeelingness of others, forgetting that themselves were to blame for it. Surely such a favorite of fortune is rather an object of compassion than of envy.

The unfortunate man who has not been too heavily oppressed, nor his energies too much worn by calamity, will find it less difficult, than it is to the prosperous, to travel through life without stumbling. The want of exterior attractions opens to him the source of a more intellectual and refined existence, and gives him even here the foretaste of a better and a future one. In proportion as he is deprived of earthly comforts, do those of a heavenly nature shine more clearly and brightly to him. Should men refuse him their sympathy, yet silent nature will afford to his feelings, softened as they are by sorrow, joys which the happy know nothing of, but which they would envy him, had they once tasted them. Accustomed to privations, he is little shaken by the vicissitudes of fortune ; and being free from the mean anxieties of pride and ambition, he becomes not indeed indifferent to earthly good, but easily consoled under its loss.

ESSAY XII. — MORBID AFFECTIONS, &c.

(Page 191.)

IN the town of W—— I was one evening called to visit a young lady, who was supposed to be dangerously ill with convulsions. Her relations told me that other remedies having failed, she had for some time past been magnetised by her medical attendant. I found her lying on the sofa in a kind of ecstasy, and was informed that this state recurred several times in the day, but not with so much violence as then. She was accustomed during the fit to speak of higher things, and appeared quite unconscious of the world in which she lived. All belonging to her were assembled about her, to contemplate the wonder, as if she were a saint. As the lady had, in the paroxysms of a disease which was supposed to deprive her of her senses, placed herself in the most elegant attitude on the sofa, had arranged her fine light hair very nicely, and had bestowed great attention on the choice of her attire altogether, these circumstances, added to the state of her pulse, inspired me with some doubts respecting her unconsciousness, and supernatural visions. I therefore endeavoured to comfort those about her, by saying, “Be under no uneasiness; this is an ordinary case. Magnetism is not necessary to cure it. I will only cut off the patient’s hair, and apply a cold cataplasm.” The instant I drew out my case of instruments, the lady roused herself from her ecstasy,

and has never had a similar attack. She took some strengthening medicine, and is now a stout and healthy young woman.

NOTE 2. Page 122. — To give too much importance to these trifles, would tend to increase incalculably the number of causes that produce mental aberration; and if we must allow that such a case is occasionally to be met with, (and I have in my “Pathology and Cure of Mental Disorders” mentioned several,) yet it is certain, that, for the most part, there was a predisposition for the disorder. They may be compared to a heap of snow on a mountain, which a bird flying over may precipitate to the bottom, because from its foundation being already melted, it was predisposed to fall.

ESSAY XX. — LUNATIC ASYLUMS. — (Page 311.)

THE venerable M. Pinel, who was the first to free insane persons from ligatures and chains, and treat them with mildness and kindness, selects his superintendants and nurses from amongst those who have previously been in the same unfortunate state, and restored to reason by his skill and gentleness. When employed, therefore, in nursing and attending upon the patients, they perform the duty with real kindness and consideration, and are the better qualified to judge of their frame of mind, and even when most violent, to manage them by the force of sympathy more effectually than can be done by threats and fetters. I seldom perceived that such recovered persons relapsed into their former disorders, from their

constant intercourse with the insane. Most of them remained well, and happy in the consciousness of their incessant usefulness.

ESSAY XXI. — THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNTER-
ACTING THE TENDENCY TO MENTAL DISEASE.

(Page 317.)

WE should have fewer disorders of the mind, if we could acquire more power of volition, and endeavour by our own energy to disperse the clouds which occasionally arise within our horizon; if we resolutely tore the first threads of the net which gloom and ill-humour may cast around us, and made an effort to drive away the melancholy images of a morbid imagination by incessant occupation. How beneficial would it be to mankind, if this truth were universally acknowledged and acted upon, viz. that our state of health, mental as well as bodily, principally depends upon ourselves.

LUCID INTERVALS. — (Page 319.)

A GREAT disadvantage resulting from confining the insane in public asylums, is, that, during intervals of reason, the *apparatus* of madness cannot always be withdrawn from their observation, and that consequently surrounding objects are liable to recall to their memory their former condition. The screams and shouts of their companions, the indifference in the countenance of the attendants, sometimes also the unfavorable situation and arrangement of their apartment, may all tend to promote a return of their

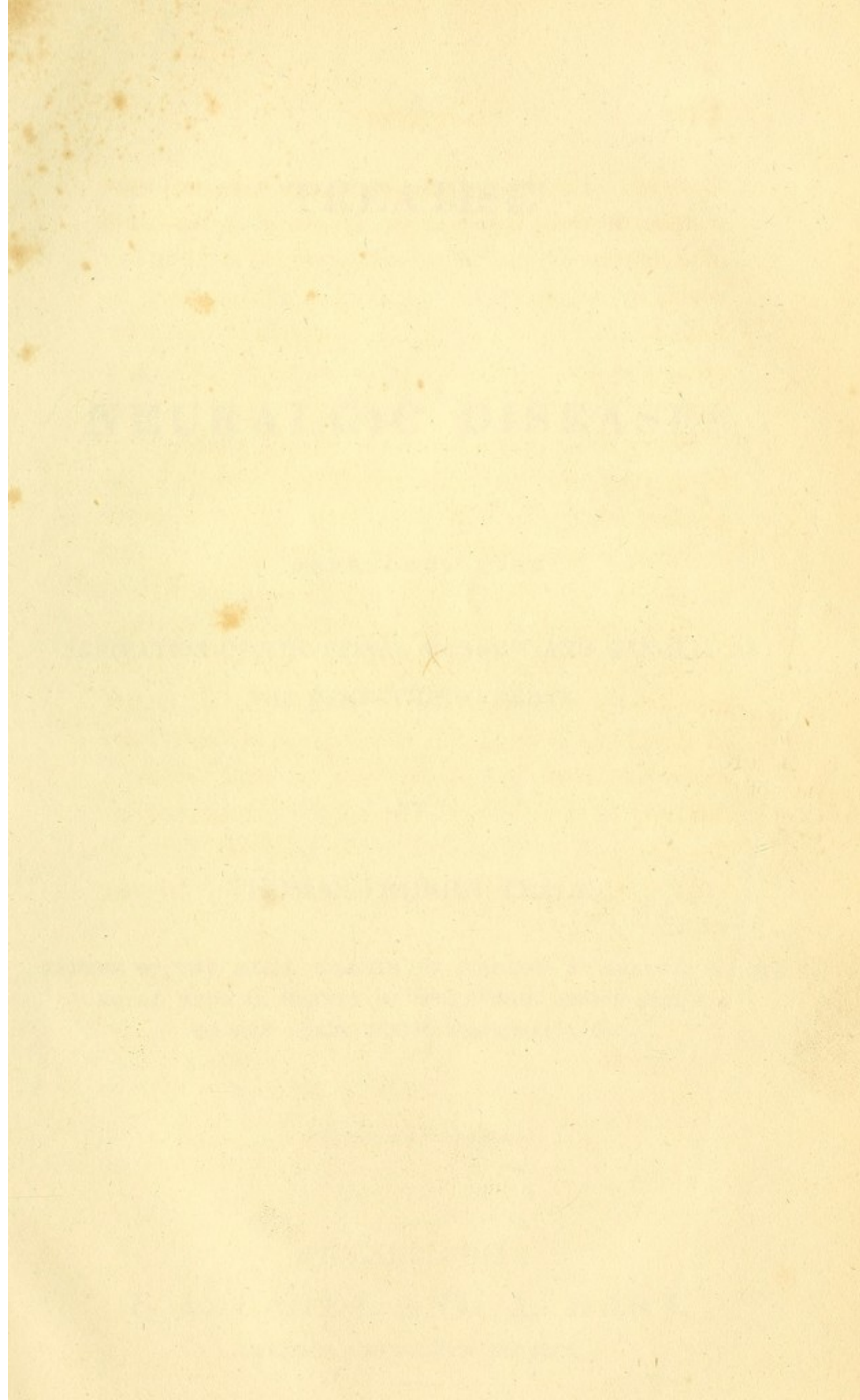
disorder. Let those whose lot it is to have an insane member in their family think, if placed in the hands of strangers, of the nameless misery he must endure when, in moments of returning consciousness, he finds himself alone and forsaken, confined with madmen, and those who, if not cruel, are indifferent to him.

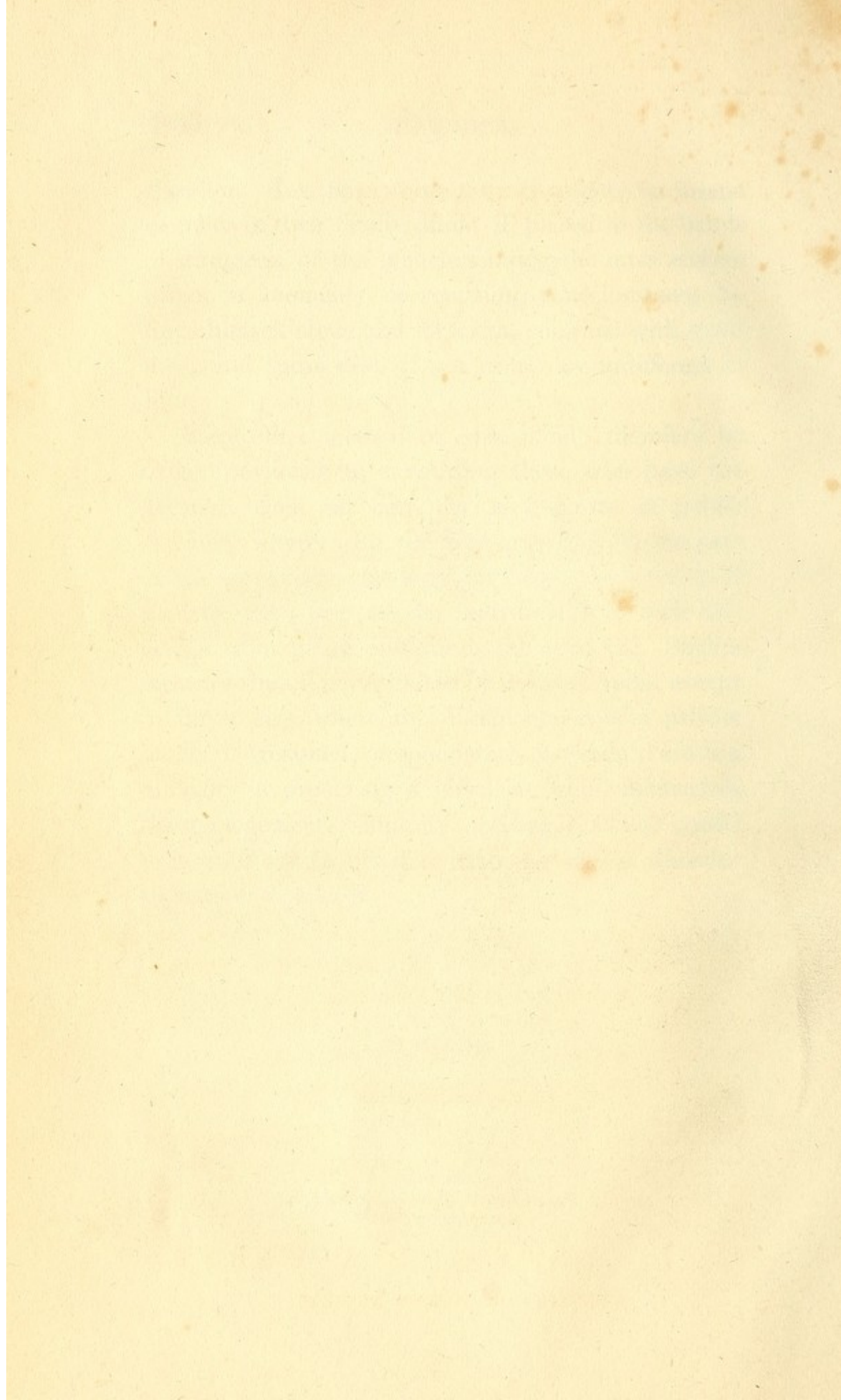
Every other method of cure should therefore be tried, previously to submitting those who have the greatest claim on our pity to the care of public asylums, where, with the best intentions on the part of the physicians and manager, the great number of patients must prevent the individuality of their disorders from being sufficiently attended to. Such a measure should never indeed be resolved upon, except in those cases where the disadvantages of a private mode of treatment preponderate, as when there is a difficulty in procuring a physician who understands the management of insanity, and has leisure to attend to it, or when the peculiar character of the disorder appears to require it.

THE END.

LONDON:

Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.





170

A

TREATISE

ON

NEURALGIC DISEASES,

DEPENDENT UPON

IRRITATION OF THE SPINAL MARROW AND GANGLIA OF
THE SYMPATHETIC NERVE.

BY

THOMAS PRIDGIN TEALE,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN LONDON, OF THE
ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH, SENIOR SURGEON
TO THE LEEDS PUBLIC DISPENSARY, &c.

PHILADELPHIA :

E. L. CAREY AND A. HART,

CHESNUT AND FOURTH STREETS.

1830.

THE

NEURALGIC DISEASES

OF THE

TRIGEMINAL, FACIAL, AND GLOSSOPHARYNGEAL NERVES

AND OF THE SCAPHODERMIC NERVE

BY

JOHN H. BURNETT, M.D.,
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO,
AND
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

CHICAGO:

1891.

THOMAS KITE, PRINTER.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
IRRITATION OF THE SPINAL MARROW	13
CASE I. Neuralgia of the scalp	22
II. Intermittent neuralgia of the scalp	22
III. Intermittent neuralgia of the scalp	23
IV. Neuralgia of the upper extremities and thoracic parietes	25
V. Neuralgia of the mamma, or "irritable breast"	26
VI. Neuralgia of the mamma and arm	28
VII. Intercostal neuralgia	31
VIII. Neuralgia of the abdominal parietes and lower ex- tremities	33
IX. Neuralgia of the knee	34
IRRITATION OF THE GANGLIA OF THE SYMPATHETIC NERVE	38
Neuralgia of the heart	42
Neuralgia of the stomach	47
Physiological and pathological observations	56
CASE X. Palpitations, dyspnœa, neuralgia of the upper extremities	73
XI. Palpitations, neuralgia of the arms and scalp	75
XII. Palpitations, neuralgia of the arm, gastrodynia, &c.	76
XIII. Dyspepsia, pulsation in the epigastrium, &c.	78
XIV. Extreme flatulence, neuralgia of the thoracic parietes	80

	PAGE
CASE XV. Flatulence, pyrosis, neuralgia of thoracic pa- rietes	82
XVI. Flatulence, &c.	83
XVII. Flatulence, &c.	84
XVIII. Palpitations, flatulence, neuralgia of the upper and lower extremities and of the thoracic parietes	85
XIX. Palpitations, affection of the stomach, leucor- rhœa, &c.	88
ANGINA PECTORIS	91
CASE XX. Angina, neuralgia of the left arm, flatulence, &c.	108
XXI. Angina, neuralgia of the left arm, palpitations, dyspepsia	111
XXII. Angina, neuralgia of the left arm and breast, flatu- lence, &c.	114
COLICA PICTONUM	116
CONCLUSION	118

INTRODUCTION.

THE term Neuralgia, which was originally employed to designate certain affections of nerves attended with severe pain, has of late, with great propriety, been extended, from its original and literal signification, to many other morbid affections of nerves, which are not characterized by pain, but by some other perverted state of their functions.

Neuralgia includes within its range a great variety of diseases, presenting an endless diversity both in their symptoms and in the parts where they are seated. That such variety should exist, ceases to excite surprise, when we consider how varied are the functions of the different nerves, and how diversified the tissues and organs to which they are distributed.

To the attentive observer of disease, neuralgic affections, under this more extended signification, must repeatedly present themselves. The skin, for instance, may be the seat of every degree of exalted or diminished sensibility, from the slightest uneasiness to the most acute suffering, and from the most trivial diminution of sensibility to complete obliteration of feeling—symptoms not dependent upon disease affecting the different tissues of the part, but solely referable to a morbid condition of the sentient nerves. The voluntary muscles may, in like manner, indicate, in a variety of ways, a morbid con-

dition of the nerves with which they are supplied. They may be affected with weakness, spasms, tremors, or a variety of other disordered states included within the two extremes of convulsion and paralysis. The involuntary muscles may have the harmony of their actions interrupted, from a morbid condition of their nerves; the heart may be affected with palpitations; the vermicular motion of the stomach, or the peristaltic action of the intestines, may be subject to irregularity. The sensibility of the internal organs may likewise be affected, the heart, the stomach, the intestines being the seat of pain, referable to their nerves, and independent of inflammation, or any alteration of structure. The secretions may also undergo alterations, both in quantity and in quality, from a perverted agency of the nerves upon which they depend. Such is a very imperfect recital of the various morbid affections which may be included under the term Neuralgia, and so frequent is their occurrence, that they must be familiar to every practitioner. They are, however, often perplexing in their treatment, and not unfrequently exhaust the patience of the afflicted sufferer, and also of the medical attendant.

The difficulty and embarrassment which have attended the diagnosis and treatment of these affections, I am inclined to believe, has principally arisen from mistaken views of their pathology. They have too often been regarded as actual diseases of those nervous filaments which are the immediate seat of the neuralgia, instead of being considered as symptomatic of disease in the larger nervous masses from which those filaments are derived; hence *the treatment has too frequently been ineffectually applied to the seat of neuralgia, instead of being directed to the more remote and less obvious seat of disease.*

It is now pretty generally admitted as a pathological axiom, that disease of the larger nervous masses, as the brain and spinal marrow, is not so much evinced by phenomena in the immediate seat of disease, as in those more remote parts to which the nerves arising from the diseased portion are distributed. In the more severe forms of disease, this principle is readily admitted and recognized. When, for instance, one half of the body shall have lost its sensibility, and the corresponding muscles their power of action, the skin and the muscles are not regarded as the seat of disease, but the *brain* is immediately referred to. In the slighter forms of disease of the brain and spinal marrow, such as do not completely obliterate, but merely impair or pervert the functions of the nerves—such as do not paralyze the sentient and muscular powers of the part, but produce weakness, tremors, spasms, &c. in the muscular system, and numbness, pricklings, pains, and other morbid feelings in the nerves of sensation, this important principle, which as strictly obtains as in the former instance, is too often entirely overlooked; and a numerous class of complaints, of very frequent occurrence, are regarded as nervous or spasmodic diseases of the part affected, instead of being considered as actual diseases of that portion of the brain or spinal marrow from which the nerves of the part are derived.

The same pathological principle is, I believe, equally applicable to the sympathetic system of nerves; and although it may be difficult to establish this opinion by actual experiment, yet I think it may be rested upon a well-grounded analogy, which will justify us in regarding the nervous masses of the ganglionic system as bearing the same relation to the nerves derived from them,

as the large nervous masses of the cerebro-spinal system bear to their respective nerves. Hence, many nervous affections of the viscera ought not to be considered as diseases of the viscera themselves, but as symptomatic of disease in those particular ganglia whence their nerves are derived.

Influenced by such considerations, I have, for a few years, been in the habit of treating many of these nervous affections as diseases of some portion of the spinal marrow or ganglia; and have been still further confirmed in my opinion, by the frequent and almost uniform co-existence of tenderness on pressing some portion of the vertebral column, and the circumstance of the tender portion of the spine being in the particular situation where the nerves of the affected part originate.

During the early part of the year 1828, I was engaged in preparing for publication some observations on this subject, and had proceeded so far as to have arranged this treatise almost in its present form, when I was much gratified by the appearance of an interesting Essay, by Dr. Brown, on "Irritation of the Spinal Nerves."

About a year after the publication of Dr. Brown's Essay, a valuable communication on "Some forms of Cerebral and Spinal Irritation," by Dr. Darwall, of Birmingham, was published in the Midland Medical Reporter; and I have lately seen a short exposition of similar views, by Mr. Player, of Malmsbury, in a letter addressed to the editor of the Quarterly Journal of Science, as early as the year 1821.

I shall take the liberty of quoting largely from these authors, being glad to avail myself of their concurrent testimony in corroboration of the opinions which I have now to advance. On the appearance of Dr. Brown's Essay,

I at first relinquished the idea of publishing, as another had taken precedence of me in a somewhat similar course of observations. Having, however, at my leisure moments, taken into the fullest consideration what has been thus presented to the public, and being daily more convinced of the importance of the subject, I feel justified in attempting to reduce the facts which my own experience has afforded, into some definite form, and in deducing such practical conclusions as the phenomena of the various diseases dependent upon the causes adverted to, seem to warrant.

Mr. R. P. Player,* in his letter to the editor, "On Irritation of the Spinal Nerves," dated December 10, 1821, makes the following remarks:—"I take the liberty to submit to your notice a pathological fact, which has not, to the best of my knowledge, been generally remarked, and attention to which, as far as my own experience goes, promises some diminution of those difficulties with which the healing art has to contend. Most medical practitioners who have attended to the subject of spinal disease, must have observed that its symptoms frequently resemble various and dissimilar maladies, and that commonly the function of every organ is impaired whose nerves originate near the seat of the disorder. The occurrence of pain in *distant parts* forcibly attracted my attention, and induced frequent examination of the spinal column; and after some years' attention, I considered myself enabled to state, that in a great number of diseases, morbid symptoms may be discovered about the origins of the nerves which proceed to the affected parts, or of those spinal branches

* Quarterly Journal of Science, vol. xii. p. 428.

which unite with them; and that if the spine be examined, more or less pain will commonly be felt by the patient on the application of pressure about or between those vertibræ from which such nerves emerge.

“This spinal affection may, perhaps, be considered as the *consequence* of diseases, but of its existence at their commencement any one may satisfy himself; and this circumstance, combined with the success which has attended the employment of topical applications to the tender parts about the vertebræ, appears to indicate that the *cause may* exist there. Prejudice sometimes operates against the idea of connexions so remote; but in many instances patients are surprised at the discovery of tenderness in a part, of whose implication in disease they had not the least suspicion.”

Dr. Brown* proposes, in his Essay, to offer a few observations on the symptoms and treatment of some diseases of the spine, which he considers to be by no means of rare occurrence, but which appear to be occasionally overlooked or neglected. “I allude (says Dr. B.) chiefly to those morbid affections of the spinal nerves so often met with in young females, and occasionally also, although much less frequently, in women of more advanced life, and in males.

“In most instances, certainly, this irritated state of the nerves is not entitled to the name of a serious disease, since the symptoms are not acute, and since they are easily removed or prevented; but when it is allowed

* On Irritation of the Spinal Nerves, by Thomas Brown, M. D., Senior Physician to the Royal Infirmary of Glasgow. *Glasgow Medical Journal*, May, 1828.

Dr. Brown adds this note:—“Five years since, viz. in January, 1823, the following Essay, nearly, was read to the Medical Society of this city.”

to remain for any considerable length of time, it often produces nervous complaints and general bad health; and, of course, it becomes infinitely more unmanageable.

“I find some difficulty in giving a name to this disease, but as it consists, perhaps, in a state of increased irritability in some of the spinal nerves, we may name it *spinal irritation*.”

The following case is related in illustration. “Miss C. æt. 17, (Sept. 1822) of a robust make, and apparently in good health, for more than a year has complained of pain situated below the left mamma. This has been fixed to one spot for nearly the whole time. It is a gnawing bruized feeling, increased materially by fatigue of any kind, and, after fatigue, it is attended with restlessness. It is relieved by reclining in the horizontal posture. It is not sore to the touch. The complaint has been treated by a surgeon in the country as rheumatism. She has been bled and blistered for it without any good effect, and at last it has occasioned so much anxiety in the minds of her relations, that she is brought to Glasgow, from a considerable distance, for the benefit of farther medical advice. On examining the spine, it is found to be perfectly of the natural shape and appearance, but when pressure is made on it, about the seventh or eighth dorsal vertebra, she complains of a considerable feeling of tenderness, amounting even to pain: and she finds that the uneasy sensation shoots forward exactly to the affected part of the breast. She had not paid any attention to this affected part of the spine, indeed she had not any idea that there was any thing faulty there, till her attention was called to it by the examination.”

“When the affection of the spinal nerves is situated

about the middle of the lumbar vertebræ, it is apt to occasion severe pain in some part of the abdomen. I have seen it of a spasmodic nature, attended with flatulency, and occupying apparently the arch of the colon; and in one case, it seemed to be fixed in the caput coli. In these cases the severity of the complaint may appear to call for powerful evacuations, from the apprehension that inflammation exists; whereas, if the attention be directed to the share which nervous irritation from the spine has in increasing the acuteness of the pain, very active depletion will not appear necessary."

Dr. Brown thus divides these affections of the spinal nerves into two classes :—

"1. Those in which there is merely a morbid sensibility of a single nerve.

"2. Those in which there is a more general and constitutional irritability, in which the irritation is apt to affect different parts of the spine in succession, and to occasion a whole train of singular symptoms."

"Occasionally, disorder of the stomach and bowels is joined to this affection of the spinal nerves, and appears to arise from it, since it yields if the irritation of the spine is removed, and returns whenever this irritation is renewed."

"There is no part more frequently pained from nervous irritation, than the pericranium or scalp. The pain is often acute, and if we examine the parts minutely we find that it shoots along the various nerves which are ramified over this tendinous membrane. If we press immediately behind the mastoid process, the pain passes upwards along the cervical nerve which takes that direction, and ramifies even as far forwards as the forehead."

Dr. Brown proceeds to comment at considerable length on the nature of these affections, and several interesting cases and observations are recorded.

A short time after the publication of Dr. Brown's Essay, a well marked case of spinal neuralgia came under the notice of Mr. Allan, which is thus related by him in the Glasgow Medical Journal. "Mary Durand, a single woman, æt. 24, applied to me on the 25th of June last for relief, complaining of pain in the left side, under the mamma, not in the gland. The pain was much aggravated by pressing with the fingers against the ribs, but sometimes, she said, it extended down the side, as far as the crest of the ilium. It was accompanied with pain at the top and towards the back part of the left shoulder, which she described as a sensation of burning, not interfering with the movements of the joint, but so tender to the touch was the part, that she could not rest on that side in bed, and always awoke in severe pain, if she happened to turn upon it." "Having perused Dr. Brown's paper on irritation of the spinal nerves, I was led to examine her spine, when I found that there were three or four of the middle dorsal vertebræ, the most moderate pressure upon which gave her considerable pain in the part, and increased that in her side. She had never previously felt pain in that part of her back, although the tenderness was too unequivocal, and too distinctly limited in extent, to leave any doubt as to its reality."

Dr. Darwall,* in the interesting essay already alluded

* Observations upon some forms of Spinal and Cerebral irritation. By John Darwall, M. D. *Midland Medical and Surgical Reporter*, May, 1829.

to, after adverting to the recent discoveries relative to the functions of the nerves, proceeds to remark, "If however, the nervous system is more or less connected with every function of the animal body; if the circulation of the blood, the phenomena of respiration, and the operations of intellect, cannot be carried on without its intervention, the manner in which it is disregarded, cannot but be a most important defect. It has perhaps in great measure, arisen from always contemplating the brain as acted upon by the circulation, and never reversing the order of review."

Before entering more particularly into the consideration of the affections he is about to describe, Dr. Darwall considers the following circumstance ought to be referred to, "That disorders attacking the origins of nerves, or their attachment to the central mass, whether this be the brain or spinal chord, always disturb the functions of the organs to which such nerves are destined." The author then relates cases in which palpitations of the heart formed the prominent symptom, which were relieved by the application of blisters to the spine, after the usual remedies had failed, and in one case, after leeches had been applied to the region of the heart without benefit.

The following is the description given by Dr. Darwall of a form, in which cerebral and spinal irritation is frequently exhibited, particularly in young females. "It is attended by severe and constant pain in one or both hypochondria, extending to the shoulder and arm of the affected side, not always aggravated by pressure, and ceasing immediately upon or in a short time after lying down. It is this pain of which the patients generally complain, and it frequently endures for several

years. It is generally attended with much constitutional disturbance. There is headache, with great heat in the external surface of the head, severe throbbing of the temples, and pain in the nape of the neck. The temper is capricious, and the spirits very variable; and at the catamenial periods, the depression in many cases is excessive. The tongue, after some time, is furred, and at the back part greatly tuberculated. The stomach suffers under the various forms of dyspepsia, gastrodynia, flatulence, pyrosis, &c.; the bowels are in many instances much distended, and there is continual clangor intestinorum. Palpitation of the heart, more or less, is present, and often dyspœa attends. The most common disturbance, however, is in the uterine function, and I have scarcely seen an instance in which this has not occurred. Most commonly there is menorrhagia; in some few cases the catamenia are diminished, or they are completely suppressed. But whether they are increased or diminished, leucorrhœa almost invariably attends, and is generally more or less profuse, in proportion to the duration of the general disorder. When the catamenia are profuse, they are usually, in the earlier part of the period, dark-coloured and grumous, and are accompanied with severe pain. The urine for the most part deposits a light-coloured sediment, and varies much in quantity, being occasionally very copious and limpid. The bowels are constipated, and yet no great relief is obtained by purging."

Other circumstances attending these affections are also noticed as "pain on the side in the course of the descending colon;" "difficulty of breathing, which is sometimes so great as to induce great fear of organic mischief having taken place in the lungs, especially

when, as indeed is generally the case, it is attended by frequent cough. The stethoscope, in these cases, is a great assistant in the diagnosis; the respiratory murmur is heard in every part of the chest, and is even puerile; indeed, this heightening of the respiratory murmur is very characteristic of the disorder in question."

It is, however, impossible for me to do justice to Dr. Darwall by quotation. To be fully appreciated, his essay must be read entire. I would also recommend to those who may feel interested in the subject, a careful perusal of the essay by Dr. Brown, which contains many interesting observations and facts.

From the various testimonies which have now been offered, it is evident that numerous disorders are dependent upon some morbid affection of the large nervous masses which give origin to the nerves of the affected parts. I shall therefore, proceed to describe, according to my own opportunities for observation, various morbid phenomena exhibited by the spinal nerves, under the head of "Irritation of the Spinal Marrow," and several affections of the organs which derive their nerves from the sympathetic system, under "Irritation of the Ganglia of the Sympathetic."

I shall defer any pathological discussion of these diseases, until the phenomena, by which they are characterized, have been described.

IRRITATION

OF

THE SPINAL MARROW.

THE symptoms of this affection consist in an infinite variety of morbid function of the nerves of sensation and volition which have their origin in the spinal marrow, and the parts in which these morbid functions are exhibited, of course, bear reference to the distribution of the spinal nerves.

The morbid states of sensation include every variety, from the slightest deviation from the healthy sensibility of any part to the most painful neuralgic affections on the one hand, and to complete numbness or loss of feeling on the other; including pains which may be fixed or fugitive, or darting in the direction of the nerves, prickling and tingling sensations, a sense of creeping in the skin, of cold water trickling over it, and numerous other states of perverted sensation, of which words are inadequate to convey a description. In the muscular system we find weakness or loss of power, tremors, spasms or cramps, and sometimes a tendency to rigidity.

These symptoms sometimes exist in so slight a degree, that the patient considers them unworthy of notice, and only admits their existence when particular inquiry is made respecting them; the only complaint which he

makes, being of an unaccountable sense of weakness and inability of exertion. In other cases the tremors have excited alarm; sometimes the neuralgic pain in the scalp, or the fixed pain in the muscles, particularly when it occurs in the intercostal muscles, have suggested the idea of serious disease in the brain or in the lungs; and when the pain is seated in the muscles of the abdomen, a fear that some organic disease of the abdominal viscera has taken place, harrasses the mind of the patient. The muscular weakness, in some cases tending to paralysis, often suggests the fear of apoplexy, or paralysis from cerebral disease.

The affection is often of very protracted duration, undergoing alternate variations from the sanative powers of the constitution, and the different exciting causes of disease. There are many individuals in whom the complaint has existed, in varying degrees of intensity, for a series of years, without its real nature having been suspected; the patients and their medical attendants having regarded it throughout as a rheumatic or a nervous affection.

Many individuals, as young females and mothers of families whose domestic duties require the complete exertion of their energies, are often unjustly accused of indolence, when labouring under the state of muscular debility to which I have alluded. They have felt an unconquerable disinclination to exertion, and a desire for sedentary pursuits, without even themselves being aware of the cause of this inertness.

In this complaint, tenderness in the portion of the vertebral column, which corresponds to the origin of the affected nerves, is generally in a striking and unequivocal manner evinced by pressure. In some in-

stances the tenderness is so great that even slight pressure can scarcely be borne, and will often cause pain to strike from the spine to the seat of spasm or neuralgia.

This affection of the spinal marrow occasionally exists throughout its whole extent; more frequently, however, it is confined to some particular portion, and occasionally is seated in different and remote portions at the same time; the particular symptoms, and the tenderness on pressure indicating the affected part.

The symptoms, of course, vary considerably, according to the particular part of the spine which is affected, and bear reference to the distribution of the different spinal nerves.

When the upper cervical portion of the spinal marrow is diseased, we frequently find neuralgic affections of the scalp; the pain strikes in various directions over the posterior and lateral parts of the head; sometimes the twigs in the neighbourhood of the ear, sometimes those which ascend over the occiput to the superior part of the scalp, are more particularly the seat of the complaint; the nervous twigs distributed to the integuments of the neck, are occasionally affected, the pain darting across the neck to the edge of the lower jaw, and sometimes encroaching a little upon the face.* These neuralgic diseases frequently assume an intermittent form, the paroxysms generally occurring in the evening. A stiff neck, or impaired action of the muscles moving the head, frequently attend the affection of the upper cer-

* Vertigo frequently attends this neuralgia of the scalp, and it is sometimes accompanied with tinnitus aurium. These symptoms, however, are, I think, more properly attributable to a concomitant affection of the neighbouring nerves of the sympathetic system. Violent throbbing of the temples, and increased heat of the scalp, often attend the paroxysm.

vical portion of the spinal marrow; and occasionally the voice is completely lost or suffers alteration, and the act of speaking is attended with pain or difficulty.*

Irritation of the lower cervical portion of the spinal marrow gives rise to a morbid state of the nerves of the upper extremities, shoulders, and integuments at the upper part of the thorax. Pains are felt in various parts of the arm, shoulder, and breast; sometimes the pain takes the course of the anterior thoracic branches of the brachial plexus, occasionally the pain is fixed at some point near the clavicle scapula or shoulder-joint, at the insertion of the deltoid, or near the elbow, or shoots along the course of some of the cutaneous nerves. Frequently one or both of the mammæ become exquisitely sensible and painful on pressure, and some degree of swelling occasionally takes place in the breast, attended with a knotty and irregular feel, when the neuralgic pains have existed a considerable time in that part. Prickling and numbness, tingling and creeping sensations are often felt in the upper extremities; and also a sensation of cold water trickling over the surface. On rubbing the hand over the part affected, a soreness is frequently felt, which is described as not merely situated in the integuments, but also in the more deep-seated parts. In the muscular system are observed most frequently a weakness of the upper extremities, sometimes referred particularly to the wrists, tremors and unsteadiness of the hands; also cramps and spasms of various degrees of intensity. Occasionally there is an inability to perform complete extension of the elbows, the arm appearing restrained by the tendon

* Difficulty of speaking and swallowing frequently depends, according to Portal, on "engorgement" in the cervical portion of the spinal marrow.

of the biceps ; pain and tightness being produced in this part when extension is attempted beyond a certain point. As far as I have observed, the pains and other morbid feelings in the upper extremities and chest, are felt more frequently and more severely on the left than on the right side.

Females of sedentary habits appear particularly subject to these affections of the upper extremities, and it is not uncommon for them to complain of being scarcely able to feel the needle when it is held in their fingers, and that their needle or their work frequently drops from their hands.

When the upper dorsal portion is affected, in addition to various morbid sensations similar to those in the extremities, there is often a fixed pain in some part of the intercostal muscles, to which the name pleurodynia has been assigned ; and when this pain has existed a long time, there is tenderness on pressing the part. When the lower dorsal half of the spinal marrow is the seat of this irritation, or subacute inflammation, the pleurodynia when it exists, is felt in the lower intercostal muscles ; frequently there is also a sensation of a cord tied round the waist ; an oppressive sense of tightness across the epigastrium and lower sternal region ; and soreness along the cartilages of the lower ribs, or in the course of insertion of the diaphragm. Various pains, fixed and fugitive, are also felt in the parietes of the abdomen, throughout any part of the abdominal and lumbar muscles ; the pain is frequently fixed in some portion of the rectus muscle, and not unfrequently in the oblique muscle or transversalis, a little above the crest of the ilium, particularly when the origin of two or three of the lowest dorsal nerves is diseased.

The affection of the lumbar and sacral portion of the spinal cord often produces a sensation of soreness in the scrotum and neighbouring integuments, and the lower extremities become the seat of various morbid sensations, spasms, tremors, &c., for the most part resembling those which have been described as occurring in the upper limbs. The patients also complain of a sense of insecurity or instability in walking; their knees totter, and feel scarcely able to support the weight of the body.

In some cases very considerable relief is found from recumbency, the pain frequently being diminished as soon as the patient retires to bed, independently of any paroxysmal remission.

This irritation, or subacute inflammatory state of the spinal marrow is not necessarily connected with any deformity of the spine, or disease in the vertebræ. It may co-exist with these as well as with any other diseases, but it so repeatedly occurs without them, that they cannot be regarded as dependant upon each other. Where, however, inflammation and ulceration of the vertebræ or intervertebral cartilages exist, it is probable they may predispose to, and, in some instances, act as an exciting cause of an inflammatory state of the nervous structures which they contain; for we not unfrequently find inflammatory affections of the vertebræ in conjunction with symptoms of irritation of the spinal marrow. But these two affections, although co-existing, bear no regular relation to each other; and, during the progress of the vertebral disease, the affection of the nervous structures is subject to great changes and fluctuations. The local remedies employed for arresting the disease in the bones, often alleviate the affection of the spinal marrow at the very commencement of

the treatment, long before the vertebral disease is suspended; but as the neighbouring inflammation in the bones appears to predispose or excite the nervous mass which they contain, to disease, relapses of the nervous affections are repeatedly occurring during the whole course of the complaint.

The affections of the spine, termed lateral curvature and excurvation, appear to have no necessary connexion with the disease which I have been describing; and the proportion of cases in which they are found united, is so small, that lateral curvature can scarcely be considered even as predisposing to this disease. The most extreme degrees of deformity frequently are observed without any affection of the nerves; and when lateral curvature does occasionally co-exist, local antiphlogistic treatment will often speedily remove the nervous symptoms, whilst the curvature remains unrelieved. Hence there is an impropriety in considering these nervous symptoms as a result of the deformity, and in explaining them upon the mechanical principle of pressure and stretching, to which the nerves are supposed to be subjected as they issue from the intervertebral foramina. If the pressure and stretching produced by the curvature, were the cause of the nervous symptoms, they ought to continue as long as the deformity remains.

Symptoms of affection of the brain frequently occur in conjunction with these diseases of the spinal marrow. These however must be regarded as the result of extension of disease from one part to the other, most probably through the medium of the membranes. I shall however, purposely avoid touching upon these subjects, as it would be foreign to my present purpose to enter upon the discussion of cerebral neuralgiæ.

Treatment.—When the different neuralgic symptoms which have been enumerated, can be traced to this morbid state of some portion of the spinal marrow, the treatment that ought to be pursued, is readily decided upon. Local depletion by leeches or cupping, and counter irritation by blisters to the affected portion of the spine, are the principal remedies. A great number of cases will frequently yield to the single application of any of these means. Some cases, which have even existed several months, I have seen perfectly relieved by the single application of a blister to the spine, although the local pains have been ineffectually treated by a variety of remedies, for a great length of time. A repetition of the local depletion and blistering is however often necessary after the lapse of a few days, and sometimes is required at intervals for a considerable length of time. In a few very obstinate cases issues or setons have been thought necessary; and where the disease has been very unyielding, a mild mercurial course has appeared beneficial.

It is of course necessary that proper attention be paid to the regular functions of the bowels, and to the treatment, by appropriate means, of any other affection which may co-exist. It is needless, in this form of disease, to offer any directions respecting diet, as the judgment of every medical man will enable him to decide best on the general management of the case immediately under his notice.

When my attention was first directed to this subject, I considered recumbency a necessary part of the treatment; it is, for a moderate length of time, undoubtedly beneficial, and frequently very much accelerates recovery; but subsequent observation has convinced me that it is

by no means essential. I have seen several instances of the most severe forms of these complaints, occurring in the poorer classes of society, where continued recumbency was impracticable, which have, nevertheless, yielded without difficulty to the other means of the treatment, whilst the individuals were pursuing their laborious avocations.

These observations, however, are not intended to apply to those cases in which there is actual disease of the vertebræ.

When there exists a tendency to relapse, I have thought it advantageous to continue the use of some stimulating liniment to the spine for a few weeks after the other means of treatment have been discontinued. A liniment, consisting of one part of spirit of turpentine, and two of olive oil, is what has generally been employed.

In illustration of these observations a series of cases will be recorded from my note books, and my object will be, not so much to swell their number as to select a few which may exhibit the principal varieties of these complaints. In relating them, I shall adhere as much as possible to anatomical order, commencing with the affections of the upper portions of the spinal chord, and gradually proceeding to those seated in the lower parts of it. I shall endeavour, in each case, to give a full description of the symptoms as they were observed at the first consultation, but shall avoid the tedious detail of daily reports, by condensing, as much as possible, the subsequent history, not, however, omitting a careful record of the effect of remedies, and of such peculiarities as some instances may present.

CASE I.

Neuralgia of the Scalp.

June 5th, 1827. Mr. L., æt. 26, complains of a feeling of indisposition, having suffered for a few days from stiffness in the neck, and pain at the back of the head, extending laterally towards the ears, and upwards over the back part of the scalp; perspires much at night; feels languid and unable to attend to business. About four weeks ago he was exposed to the wet and cold, and has ever since been affected with these symptoms.

On pressing the spine there is tenderness in the first cervical vertebra, but no pain whatever is produced by firm pressure on any other part of the spine.

Leeches to be applied to the neck.

June 10th. The pains in the scalp were immediately relieved, on the application of the leeches, and the perspirations have gradually ceased. The spine bears pressure without any uneasiness.

CASE II.*Intermittent Neuralgia of the Scalp.*

June 18th, 1827. Mrs. B., a week after her accouchement, complained of pain in the head occurring in the afternoons in a violent degree. It was described as a dull, aching pain principally seated in the occipital region, but extending from that part over the parietal bones towards the temples, and in the neigh-

bourhood of each ear there was a small space more acutely painful than the rest; there were also pains darting over the scalp and along the upper part of the neck transversely towards the cheeks, and terminating along the edge of the lower jaw. She complained of violent pulsating sensations in the head, accompanied with distressing sounds, which she compared to the "beating of hammers." In other respects she was as well as her situation could admit of. She had suffered in a slighter degree from these symptoms for some time previous to her confinement. Leeches had been applied to the temples, but the paroxysms returned with equal or greater violence on the two following days.

On examining the spine, very great tenderness was detected on pressing the two upper cervical vertebræ, of which she had not been previously aware.

Leeches were applied over the cervical vertebræ, and immediate relief was obtained. No further return of the paroxysms was experienced.

In this case it should be observed that leeches had been applied to the seat of neuralgia without benefit, but the relief was immediate when they were applied near the origin of the affected nerves.

CASE III.

Intermittent Neuralgia of the Scalp.

August 10th, 1829. W. S., a stout healthy-looking young man, complains of pain in the head and giddiness. The pain is described as a dull, heavy sensation at the back of the head, frequently extending over the crown

to the forehead. He also suffers from acute pains, which frequently dart from the occipital region to the front part of the head. Occasional feeling of weariness and aching about the shoulders. These uneasy sensations occur in paroxysms, generally in the mornings, which continue about two hours. Vertigo occurs frequently, not only during the paroxysm of pain, but also in the intervals. These complaints have been gradually increasing for several weeks. The bowels are regular, appetite good, and in other respects he is in good health.

Tenderness in the third and fourth cervical vertebræ. Leeches to be applied to the tender part.

14th. Much better. The pain returns at the usual time, but in a very slight degree. The vertigo is diminished, but still continues rather troublesome.

Blister to be applied to the neck.

18th. On the day after the blister had been applied, the vertigo was greatly diminished, and has since entirely disappeared. No tenderness on pressure is now perceived.

Similar cases of affections of the scalp might be multiplied to a great extent; they are of frequent occurrence, not only in these simple forms, but also in conjunction with other diseases. The pains in the head which occur in fevers, will often be found to be of this neuralgic character, and altogether independent of any cerebral affection. A few leeches to the tender vertebræ of the neck will generally produce immediate relief of this distressing symptom.

CASE IV.

Neuralgia of the Upper Extremities and Thoracic Parietes.

December 10th, 1827. Mrs. B., æt. 53, mother of a large family, represents herself as having been severely afflicted with rheumatism during the greater part of her life. She now suffers from pain in the neck and head, pains about the clavicles, difficulty in moving the arms, which feel fixed at the shoulder joints. The pain in the neck and between the shoulders is fixed and constant, being nearly the same both day and night; it is a little alleviated by supporting the back against a chair. There are also darting pains extending from the cervical portion of the spine upwards over the occiput, and downwards across the neck and over each shoulder. Both arms are affected with aching pains over their whole extent, and with a sense of soreness on pressing or rubbing the skin; prickling sensations, cramps, and numbness in the fore-arms, hands, and fingers. Difficulty in moving the arms, and in using her fingers in sewing or knitting. Frequent sudden "twitching" pains in the neck, arms, and trunk; occasional pains in the abdominal muscles, relieved by recumbency. No affection of the lower extremities; appetite poor; no fever; no cough or difficulty of breathing; catamenia ceased about six years ago.

She has always considered the disease to be rheumatism, and has tried a great variety of remedies usually employed in that disease, but without much benefit.

Tenderness in the two lower cervical and six upper dorsal vertebræ.

Leeches were directed to be applied to the tender portion of the spine, and on the following evening a blister to the same part. Recumbency was also recommended.

The blister produced an unusual degree of inflammation in the skin, which continued several days, and was accompanied with considerable fever. During the febrile state the neuralgic symptoms were rather aggravated, but as the fever subsided, they gradually disappeared. On the 29th of December I took leave of her, as she was then perfectly well; she felt a degree of muscular power, particularly in the upper extremities, which she had not been accustomed to for several years; she was quite free from pain.

June 20th, 1829. Since the last report she has enjoyed good health, with the exception of occasional returns of the pain during winter, which were so slight as to produce but little inconvenience, and were soon relieved by leeches and the application of turpentine liniment to the spine. These last attacks were attended with flatulence.

CASE V.

Neuralgia of the Mamma or "Irritable Breast."

Mrs. —, æt. 48, but without having experienced any change in the catamenia, of a healthy appearance, and mother of a large family, had suffered about seven years from a painful affection of the left breast. On examination it was found to be exquisitely sensitive to the slightest touch; it was somewhat increased in size,

and irregularly indurated, having a knotty feel, and an obscure sense of tumours as if the glandular structure were enlarged at different parts. The integuments and cellular substance between the breast and clavicle, and towards the axilla, were thickened. There was a constant sense of uneasiness in the part, but her chief sufferings arose from its highly sensible state, which constantly exposed her to pain from the irritation of her dress, or any accidental contact. Her spirits were depressed, and an apprehension that the disease would prove cancerous, although she was repeatedly assured of the contrary, was a source of great anxiety. Leeches, evaporating lotions, and warm fomentations had been employed, and medical treatment had been particularly directed to the digestive organs; these means were occasionally productive of slight alleviation, but never of permanent benefit. The complaint varied in degree, being sometimes less severe for a few weeks, without any obvious cause for the temporary amendment.

Whilst in this state (September, 1827,) she became subject to pains in the scalp, and vertigo, attended with flatulence. The symptoms directed my attention to the spine, which on examination was found to be tender in several parts. The most painful vertebræ were the second cervical, the seventh cervical, and two upper dorsal. Leeches were applied to these parts, with considerable relief to the pains in the scalp and vertigo. Since that time she has been occasionally in the habit of applying leeches, a blister, or a sinapism, of her own accord, when there has been any return of uneasiness in the head.

On making inquiry (August 10th, 1829,) respecting the complaint in the breast, of which I had not heard any

mention for several months, she tells me that from the time of her commencing the treatment by local applications to the spine, the affection of the breast has disappeared. The pain and swelling are removed, and the breast resembles the other in every respect.

The circumstance of finding a portion of the spine tender, and the removal of the tenderness by suitable remedies being unexpectedly accompanied with relief of the fulness and pain in the breast, could not fail to produce a powerful impression on my mind, and to excite a suspicion that this irritable affection of the breast was a neuralgia of that part dependent upon disease of the spinal marrow.

CASE VI.

Neuralgia of the Mamma and Arm.

August 28th, 1828. Miss L., æt. 30, consulted me respecting an affection of the right breast.

The breast is considerably enlarged, and has an irregular knotted feel, particularly in the portion next the axilla. The slightest touch or pressure produces acute suffering. There is a constant gnawing sensation in the breast, shoulder, and arm. "Sharp darting pains" are often felt in the breast and arm. The right arm feels numb; is a little tumefied. The whole arm feels weak, particularly the wrist, so that she is scarcely able to sew. On suddenly touching the tips of the fingers pains are sometimes felt to strike up the arm to the neck and head, and down to the breast.

In other respects the health seems tolerably good. She is sometimes subject to indigestion, and the bowels

are generally confined. The catamenia regular and unattended with pain in the lumbar or pelvic regions.

For a few years she has had more or less of the pain in the breast, and irregular knotty induration, particularly at the menstrual periods; the affection, however, has seldom been very severe, until within the last four weeks, when the pain has become much more intense, and the swelling greater; and the usual subsidence of these symptoms after the catamenial period has not taken place.

Slight pressure on the fourth cervical and three upper dorsal vertebræ, produces great uneasiness.

August 28th. Eight leeches to be applied to the tender vertebræ, and a mixture of salts and senna to be taken until the bowels are moved.

29th. Pains rather less acute, but the tumefaction continues. Bowels have acted freely. A blister to be applied to the upper part of the spine.

30th. Has passed a bad night from the irritation of the blister; slight fever; affection of the breast and arm much the same. Take an effervescing draught every four hours.

September 3d. The irritation produced by the blister has subsided, and she feels much better. The breast bears pressure without inconvenience, and the tumefaction has considerably diminished. She can move the arm with rather more freedom.

10th. The pains in the breast and arm have a little increased. Ordered another blister to the same part of the spine.

17th. The pains have entirely ceased during this week, and the breast has nearly returned to its natural

size; she has attempted to sew, and can move the arm with considerable facility.

August 26th, 1829. I called upon this patient to-day to make inquiry respecting these complaints. She has not had any return of the affection of the breast, but occasionally feels a weakness and numbness in the right arm.

A few weeks ago, when at a distance from home, I was consulted by a lady respecting a painful affection of the left breast, which was enlarged and indurated in one part towards the axilla; the tumour appeared to have been produced by a simple enlargement of the glandular structure; the whole surface of the breast was painful on pressure, and she suffered from frequent pains darting from the neck over the breast and shoulder. The tumour had continued obstinate, notwithstanding the frequent use of leeches and iodine. On examining the spine the lower cervical vertebræ were found to be tender. I advised the occasional application of a blister to this part, but have not since heard from the surgeon who attended her.

These cases render it highly probable that the affection usually known as the "irritable breast," is a neuralgic affection of the part, dependent upon a morbid state of the lower cervical portion of the spinal marrow.

The description given by Sir Astley Cooper* of the irritable state of the breast, exactly coincides with the phenomena attendant upon these neuralgic affections.

* Illustrations of Diseases of the Breast, by Sir Astley Cooper, p. 76.

“When,” says he, “the complaint affects the glandular structure of the breast, there is scarcely any perceptible swelling, but one or more of the lobes becomes exquisitely tender to the touch; and, if it be handled, the pain sometimes continues for several hours. The uneasy sensation is not confined to the breast alone, but it extends to the shoulder and axilla, to the inner side of the elbow, and to the fingers; it also affects that side of the body to the hip,” &c. “Patients also state that heat and cold frequently succeed each other in the breast, and it would seem that the pain resembles that in tic-douloureux, darting like electricity through the part, and through the neighbouring nerves.”

CASE VII.

Intercostal Neuralgia.

Jan. 1, 1828. I was requested to visit Mr. H., æt. 40, who had been much out of health for several months. He complained of a constant pain in the right side of the chest, occupying the intercostal spaces between the fourth and seventh ribs. These spaces, to the extent of a few inches, were tender on pressure, and the pain was increased by deep inspiration; the intercostal muscles at this part were occasionally affected with spasm. His most intense sufferings, however, were caused by acute pains shooting through this part of the chest, extending to the back, and darting thence towards the shoulder; these pains would sometimes strike through the left side also, and then the chest felt completely encircled by the pain. The dull, fixed pain was constant

during the day, and became a little relieved by recumbency; the darting pains recurred at intervals of a few minutes throughout the day, were less frequent, but occasionally very severe during the night. He suffered sometimes from similar darting pains, but of less violence, in the scalp. Pulse natural; tongue slightly furred; bowels regular; appetite deficient; occasional flatulence; frequent cough, without expectoration; considerable emaciation.

His symptoms have existed in this degree of severity, about five or six weeks; but for a few months he has been much out of health, and has gradually lost flesh. He has frequently suffered from the pain in the side for ten years, and has seldom been entirely free from it. A few years ago, considerable fear was entertained that he was consumptive; and his friends have lately felt great anxiety from a similar apprehension, more particularly as he has sustained the severe loss of an amiable wife from pulmonary disease a few months ago. He has lately undergone a great variety of medical treatment, without relief; leeches and blisters have been applied to the painful part of the chest, without benefit.

On examining the spine, there was a very decided tenderness in the third and fourth dorsal vertebræ, of which he was not previously aware; but on his attention being directed to this part, he recollected that it had often been the seat of a sensation of heat and of some uneasiness; and remarked, that the darting pains in the chest appeared to strike to and from that part.

The plan of treatment recommended, consisted in recumbency, and local antiphlogistic remedies to the tender part of the spine. From the 1st to the 25th of

January, dry cupping was twice employed, leeches twice, a blister three times, and a sinapism once. This may appear a rapid repetition of painful remedies in so short a time; but they were generally repeated at the request of the patient, from the decided relief of the pains in the chest, which he obtained after each application. After the 25th, a degree of irritation was kept up in the skin over the tender vertebræ, by a liniment containing oil of turpentine. The medical treatment was extremely simple; consisting of an occasional dose of rhubarb, and an effervescing draught, which he found grateful in allaying a troublesome sensation of thirst. By the 25th of January he was so much relieved as to resume his usual avocations, the pain in the side could only be perceived occasionally, and in a very slight degree. He was directed to take the sulphate of quinine, and to continue the use of the liniment for a few weeks. On the 20th of February he considered himself perfectly well.

Aug. 26th, 1829. Since the last date he has enjoyed better health than for several preceding years, has gained flesh and become stout in figure. He has entered with great activity both into his business and recreations. A few times, "after taking cold," he has felt slight uneasiness in the back and pain in the side; but these were so trifling as to occasion no inconvenience.

CASE VIII.

Neuralgia of the Abdominal Parietes and Lower Extremities.

June 10th, 1828. Mr. Thomas B., æt 20, complains of "pain across the body, weakness in the lower extremities, and soreness in the thighs." The pain in

the abdomen is fixed, not much increased on pressure, and appears seated in the middle portion of the recti-muscles; the soreness of the thighs extends along their anterior and inner surface, and down the legs in the direction of the anterior surface of the tibiæ; his legs totter, and he frequently feels a tendency to falling, from the legs sinking under him. He does not appear to have any affection of the stomach, or any internal disorder. The present symptoms have existed three or four weeks, and are gradually increasing.

Great tenderness on pressing the second and third lumbar vertebræ.

Ten leeches to be applied over the lumbar vertebræ, and a dose of castor oil to be taken in the morning.

15th. The soreness of the thighs and the feeling of weakness in the lower extremities perfectly relieved; the pain in the abdomen is diminished, but still exists. Apply a blister to the back.

19th. He is now free from the pain in the abdomen, feels languid, but in other respects is quite well. No tenderness in the vertebræ can now be perceived. Take an ounce and a half of infusion of cascarilla three times a day.

CASE IX.

Neuralgia of the Knee.

August 10th, 1829. E. B., æt. 18 years, a girl of a delicate constitution and in a very humble station of life, is admitted a patient of the dispensary on account of an affection of the left knee.

She complains of violent pain in the knee, principally

situated about the ligament of the patella and in the popliteal space; from these parts the pain darts upwards along the outer side of the thigh towards the loins. It comes on suddenly for a few minutes and then leaves her free for a short time; towards afternoon the intervals of ease become shorter, until at last the pain is almost constant; during the evening it gradually diminishes, and before she retires to bed in a great measure ceases. Whilst the pain is severe, there is considerable tumefaction of the knee, but no redness, and the skin is exquisitely sensible to the touch; in the absence of the paroxysms the swelling subsides, and the skin bears pressure without inconvenience. The pain is often accompanied with a feeling of numbness across the middle of the thigh. No affection of the right leg, or of the upper extremities. She has suffered severely during the last month, and since November has had several attacks of a similar kind lasting for a few weeks. The complaint was produced, she supposes, by working in a damp kitchen.

She appears in a delicate state of health in other respects, having a cough and some expectoration. The catamenia are regular. The appetite is deficient, and the bowels are relaxed and rather irritable.

She feels a great degree of aching and weariness in the lower part of the back, and the lower lumbar vertebræ are very tender on pressure.

Since November, she has frequently had leeches and blisters applied to the knee, and the pain was always mitigated in violence by them, for two or three days, but never entirely removed, and always returned in a short time; when any more permanent amendment took

place it appeared independent of any remedies that were used.

August 10th. Ordered a blister to the lumbar vertebræ, recumbency, a mucilaginous mixture for the cough, and a medicine containing small doses of tincture of opium combined with magnesia, to allay the irritable state of the bowels.

August 17th. The day after the application of the blister, the pain was removed, and throughout the week she has scarcely perceived it; a great degree of weakness continues and a feeling of numbness. From the benefit derived from the blister, she is anxious to have another applied, and her request is granted.

August 24th. She has continued almost entirely free from pain; the limb still feels weak, but she can walk better than she has done since last November. The disease of the lungs continues, and I fear may ultimately prove serious.

This case shews clearly the effect of the treatment upon the neuralgia, and, although the pulmonary symptoms remain, it is quite certain that they are totally independent of any affection of the nervous system.

I am aware that this is one of those affections of the knee, which have been termed "Hysterical," but I cannot help thinking that our knowledge of diseases is retarded, rather than advanced, by assigning to them names which have no definite signification.

A few weeks ago, another case of neuralgia of the left knee was under my care at the dispensary, which was relieved by blisters over the lumbar vertebræ. They were applied four times at intervals of a week. The complaint has not returned, although it had previously existed many weeks.

In laying great stress upon the nature of these diseases and the treatment applicable to them, I would by no means have it supposed that success is invariably attendant, or that disappointment may never occur. Medical science has not yet arrived at a state of perfect infallibility, and failures will occasionally be met with in the treatment of these as well as of most other diseases, although the diagnosis may have been correct and the plan adopted most judicious.

IRRITATION

OF THE

GANGLIA OF THE SYMPATHETIC NERVE.

THE ganglia of the sympathetic nerve appear subject to a state of disease similar to that which has been described in the preceding chapter, as occurring in the spinal marrow.

As the disease may be confined to one part of the spinal marrow, or may exist simultaneously in different portions, or may even pervade its whole extent, so the affection of the ganglia may be confined to one of these nervous masses, may exist in several which are contiguous, or in ganglia remote from each other; and, as there is reason to believe, the whole chain may occasionally be affected.

The disease of the ganglia is seldom found, except in conjunction with that of the corresponding portion of the spinal marrow, whereas the spinal marrow is often affected without the neighbouring ganglia being under the influence of disease. Thus we frequently find symptoms of disease in a portion of the spinal marrow without any evidence of its existence in the corresponding ganglia, frequently the symptoms of both combined,

and occasionally, but rarely, symptoms referable to the ganglia, without the spinal marrow being implicated.

The principal symptoms resulting from irritation of the ganglia of the sympathetic, are to be found in those organs which derive their nerves from this source. They consist of perverted functions of these organs, and are exemplified by a variety of phenomena. The *involuntary muscles*, deriving their power from the sympathetic, have their action altered, as is evinced by spasms and irregularity in their contractions. The heart is seized with palpitations, the large vessels with inordinate pulsations; the muscular fibres connected with the bronchial apparatus are thrown into spasm, constituting a genuine asthma independent of bronchial inflammation. The muscular-fibres of the stomach and intestines become the seat of spasm, and of various other deviations from their natural operations. The *sensibility* of the organs, which derive their sentient power from the great sympathetic, is variously perverted, the nervous filaments being the seat of pains. The heart and lungs, for instance, are subject to morbid sensations, bearing great analogy to those which have been designated "*tic douloureux*" when occurring in the spinal nerves. The stomach and intestines are liable to similar neuralgiæ, to which the names gastrodynia and enterodynia have been applied. The kidneys, the bladder, and the uterus, are liable to the same perverted state of their sensibility. The *secretions* also undergo alteration, products being formed, which in health have no existence. This is exemplified by the enormous secretions of air which sometimes occur in the stomach. Large quantities of clear transparent liquid are also

secreted by this organ, constituting what is called pyrosis. The secretions of the stomach undergo variation in their qualities, rendering them unfit for the digestive process. It is probable that the secretion of the liver also experiences some alteration in these complaints. The urine is sometimes influenced, and I am inclined to suspect that some forms of diabetes partake of a neuralgic character. Leucorrhœa is frequently a concomitant of these diseases, and ceases on their removal; but I am not prepared to say that is ever symptomatic of them. Irregularities in the catamenia are often observed, the discharge being generally in excess.

The ganglia most liable to the disease are the middle and lower thoracic, from which the splanchnic nerves are derived, giving rise to various disorders of the stomach and digestive organs, which will hereafter be more fully discussed. Next in frequency is the affection of the cervical ganglia, producing painful and spasmodic states of the heart. The symptoms denoting disease of other ganglia, although occasionally met with, are less frequent in their occurrence. Irritability of temper and depression of spirits often attend these complaints, particularly when the stomach is the part which suffers.

The disease of the ganglia, like that of the spinal marrow, is not necessarily connected with disease of the vertebræ or distortion of the spine. It may co-exist with these complaints, and, when it does so, the symptoms proper to the ganglionic disease are often erroneously supposed to be produced by distortion, or by disease of the vertebræ; they are, however, frequently relieved by treatment, whilst the disease of the bones remains uninfluenced by it, and the most extreme dis-

tortion of the spine or destruction of the vertebræ from inflammation, may exist without there being any symptoms attributable to neuralgia of the sympathetic nerves.

In conjunction with the symptoms denoting disease of the ganglia, tenderness to a greater or less degree may generally be found on pressing some part of the spine, and the tender portion invariably corresponds with the symptoms; or rather, the seat of tenderness is near the part occupied by the particular ganglia from which the nerves of the disordered organ are derived; for example, when the heart is affected, the tenderness is found in some of the cervical vertebræ, and when the stomach is the seat of complaint, it is in some of the middle or lower dorsal vertebræ.

With respect to the treatment, I have but little to add to what has been said in the preceding chapter respecting the treatment of irritation of the spinal marrow. Leeches, cupping, blisters, &c., to the neighbourhood of the affected ganglia, constitute the essential part. Some internal remedies are useful as adjuvants or palliatives; as quinine, iron, and other tonics, when the violence of the complaint has been subdued, and an intermittent state still continues; digitatis and prussic acid, in palpitations and unnatural pulsations; prussic acid, bismuth, and opium in gastrodynia, pyrosis, and unnatural sensibility of the stomach; and opium in severe spasms or pains in the nerves. These remedies, however, are seldom necessary; and when alone relied upon, without any treatment being directed to the affected ganglia, often fail, even of giving temporary relief. Of still less efficacy, either temporary or permanent, are external remedies, as leeches or blisters,

when applied to the region of the heart or stomach, if these organs are the seat of neuralgia. I have seen cases of nervous affections of the heart, (palpitations unattended with organic disease,) which for months had resisted the employment of digitalis, blisters to the chest, and various other remedies, yield immediately to the application of a blister over the cervical portion of the spine. Numerous instances of stomach complaints, which for a length of time had been an annoyance to myself as well as others, when treated by local remedies to the epigastrium, and by medicines called stomachic, have disappeared as if by magic, on the employment of leeches or a blister over the lower dorsal vertebræ.

To illustrate more fully these affections of the sympathetic system of nerves, I will separately treat of neuralgia of the heart, and neuralgia of the stomach.

NEURALGIA* OF THE HEART.

Palpitations, unconnected with any structural disease of the heart, are not of unfrequent occurrence. They are generally considered as dependent upon some disease of the nerves of the heart, from which they are designated "nervous palpitations." As far as I have observed, all ages are liable to the complaint, and nearly in an equal degree. The sexes appear almost equally obnoxious to it; perhaps, however, the preponderance may be given to females. These

* It must be borne in mind that the term neuralgia is here used in its more extended signification, not being confined to those affections which are attended with *pain*, but also applied to other morbid states of the functions of nerves.

unnatural beatings or contractions of the heart, at the commencement of their attack, or when they exist but in a slight degree, occur in paroxysms at distant intervals, and only after exercise or some mental emotion, and after a short interval of quietude gradually disappear. As the complaint advances, the paroxysms become more frequent, violent, and of longer duration; they are produced by slighter causes, until at length the heart becomes so irritable that the mere act of walking or of speaking, changes of position from the sitting to the erect posture, and the reverse, the slightest mental agitation, in fact any cause sufficient to produce a momentary though slight increase in the afflux of blood to the heart, becomes sufficient to disturb the harmony of its contractions. The intervals of the paroxysms gradually become less and less distinct, until at length the state of irritable, incomplete, and irregular action is seldom or never superseded by regular, decisive, and rhythmical contractions.

This state of the heart, I have already remarked, depends generally, if not always, on a morbid state of the cervical ganglia of the sympathetic.

The palpitations are often attended with other symptoms peculiar to or dependent upon the same disease of this portion of the ganglionic system; as pains in the heart and lungs; there being frequently a dull, aching sensation, sometimes decidedly referable to the heart itself, sometimes felt through a part or the whole of the pulmonary structure. These pains are often compared to rheumatism. Occasionally they are seated in the upper portion of the aorta, or in the neighbourhood and somewhat pursuing the course of the carotids and subclavians. The muscular apparatus of the

bronchial tubes is occasionally affected with spasm producing a true asthma, but this is far from being a constant or even frequent attendant upon nervous palpitations.

I have already alluded to the fact, that this affection of the ganglia is generally attended with the disease of the adjacent portion of the spinal marrow, the symptoms of which have already been described. Hence we generally find nervous palpitations and neuralgic affections of the heart and lungs, accompanied with certain symptoms referable to the cervical spinal nerves; as pains of a great variety of kinds, sometimes darting along the cutaneous nerves of the head and neck; fixed pains about the clavicles, scapulæ, or shoulders; pains, numbness, tremors, and weakness in the arms and in the upper and anterior parts of the chest. These symptoms often form a prominent feature in the account which the patient gives of his complaints, and in his mind take precedence of the palpitations. Upon the whole the pains exist most frequently and most intensely on the left side of the body, sometimes equally on both sides, occasionally, though rarely, they are confined to the right.

Palpitations, purely nervous, are principally distinguished from palpitations dependent upon organic disease of the heart, by the absence of other symptoms which denote a change of structure in that organ; in hypertrophy, the pulsations of the heart are more vehement and more uniform; in dilatation, they are felt over an unnatural extent of the chest; when there is obstruction to the circulation from contracted orifices, from loss of function in the valves, or from morbid alterations of the muscular structure, there are generally, in a greater or less degree, blueness, œdema, &c. These symptoms, in general, are sufficient to distinguish the two affections;

I will, however, add to them the stethoscopic distinctions enumerated by Laennec: 1. The heart is found to be of natural size; the sound, though clear, is not strongly heard over a great extent. 2. The shock, although apparently strong at first, has, in reality, but little impulse, for it does not sensibly elevate the head of the observer. The last sign he regards as most important, when, in addition to it, we consider the frequency of the pulsations, which is always greater than natural.

The nervous affection of the heart may also exist in conjunction with organic disease, and is a frequent, though by no means universal cause of the paroxysmal exacerbations in diseases of the heart. I have seen several instances of *organic disease of the heart*, connected with tenderness in the cervical portion of the spine, in which the paroxysms have been greatly relieved by means directed to the neighbourhood of the cervical ganglia. It is an interesting subject for inquiry, how far nervous affections of the heart predispose to or excite organic diseases of this part. I confess myself unable to speak decidedly upon this point. Dr. Darwall seems to favour the supposition. Laennec, however, remarks, "It is commonly supposed, that nervous palpitations, (supposing the action of the heart to be habitually in excess,) will at length produce hypertrophy of this organ. I do not deny the possibility of it, but I must say that I have never seen any thing which proves this opinion to be well-founded. I know some persons who have suffered from habitual palpitations more than ten years without there being any real sign of hypertrophy or of dilatation."*

* *Traité de l'Auscultation*, &c, vol. ii. p. 753.

Other symptoms are occasionally met with in conjunction with nervous palpitations, but they must not be regarded as essential to the complaint; these are the corded sensations round the waist, constriction across the epigastrium or lower portion of the sternum, flatulent distention of the stomach, &c.; these symptoms frequently attend the affection of the cervical ganglia, are by no means univervally connected with it, and will hereafter be shown to depend upon disease of another portion of the ganglionic and spinal systems. They frequently co-exist with organic affections of the heart, from which cause they are often erroneously arranged amongst the symptoms of those diseases.

The treatment of nervous palpitations and neuralgic affections of the heart and lungs, has in general proved very unsatisfactory. The means employed as remedies have been various in the extreme. These complaints have been treated by anodynes, antispasmodics, and tonics; by bleeding, digitalis, and prussic acid; by electricity, galvanism, and magnetism; and by irritants and depletory measures applied to the *anterior* parts of the chest. These means have generally failed to give relief, and some of them have even aggravated the disease. Not unfrequently has it happened that the unfortunate subject of nervous palpitations, after having tried in succession almost innumerable remedies, and having repeatedly changed his medical attendant, is obliged to endure with patience his distressing nervous companions, and console himself with the assurance that his complaint is "*seldom attended with danger.*" I feel considerable confidence in stating, that when the disease is treated upon the principle which I have laid down, namely, of referring the palpitations and pains in the heart to disease of

the cervical ganglia, the most beneficial results will, in the generality of cases, be obtained.

NEURALGIA OF THE STOMACH.

Various diseases are included under the terms dyspepsia, indigestion, and stomach complaint, and depend upon different morbid conditions of the stomach. Perhaps the most frequent cause of these complaints is chronic gastritis, under which I would include all the varieties of chronic irritation and chronic inflammation of the stomach, regarding these terms as denoting different grades of the same affection. This form of dyspepsia usually yields to the employment of leeches to the epigastrium, and moderate abstinence; and when the sensibility of the stomach is morbidly increased, opium or prussic acid in small doses are often given with advantage. A state of simple indigestion, apparently from mere atony of the stomach, is often observed during convalescence from other diseases; in this form of complaint the stomach appears to participate in the debility of the general system, and tonics, as quinine and other vegetable bitters, the mineral acids, &c., are influential in restoring the digestive powers.

There are, however, numerous other cases of stomach complaints, bearing considerable resemblance to the two forms already mentioned, which, nevertheless, are not remedied by the treatment found so beneficial in those affections. Leeches to the epigastrium and abstinence are of no avail; anodynes produce no permanent relief, tonics and astringents are inert; emetics and purgatives, particularly when in opposition to reason and common sense, their employment is persevered in for a great

length of time, often aggravate the disease and render it complicated with gastritis. Cases of this kind must have occurred to most medical men, and I freely acknowledge, that I have often been teased and perplexed with them, and have felt it a relief when my patient has been induced to betake himself into the country, or has transferred his confidence to some other member of the profession. Many of these cases, which had resisted the usual mode of treatment, I have since found to be connected with tenderness on pressing some of the middle or lower dorsal vertebræ; and on removing the tenderness in the spine and neighbouring parts by proper remedies, the stomach affection and attendant symptoms have been almost immediately relieved. From observing several instances of this kind, I was led to consider this disordered state of the stomach strictly as a nervous affection of that organ, dependent upon irritation or inflammation of those nervous masses or ganglia from which the splanchnic nerves are derived. The tenderness in the neighbourhood of these ganglia strengthened the supposition, and the result of the treatment still further confirmed it.

In the affection, which I have now more particularly to describe, the functions of the stomach are impaired, and it becomes the seat of various morbid phenomena, which may be easily mistaken for chronic gastritis.

The principal symptoms denoting the complaint, in addition to tenderness in the neighbourhood of the middle and lower thoracic ganglia, are,

1. Indigestion, or simple impaired digestive power, from which the food, instead of undergoing those changes which constitute healthy digestion, becomes subject to the control of the ordinary chemical affini-

ties; decomposition takes place, new compounds are formed which differ materially from healthy chyle, acids in unnatural quantity are produced, air is disengaged, and a variety of distressing symptoms are the result; as flatulence, acidity, distention of the stomach, and several others, in which the whole system more or less participates.

2. Pain in the stomach.—The pain is sometimes diffused over the whole epigastrium, occasionally it is concentrated in a comparatively small compass; it is often described as an aching pain resembling rheumatism, as a gnawing sensation, or as a feeling of a heavy ball in the stomach. Frequently, when the pain has been of long duration, there is actual tenderness on pressing the epigastrium, such as we often find on pressing those parts which have been for a length of time the seat of neuralgia from an affection of the spinal nerves. Under this head might be ranged a sense of faintness, and what is described as a *sinking* sensation at the stomach.

3. Flatulence.—One of the most marked symptoms of the affection of the ganglia, and which is more regularly found than any other, is Flatulence. It differs from the slight disengagements of air from *decomposition* of undigested aliment, already described in speaking of indigestion. This slight degree of flatulence, which is generally attended with acidity, is simply indicative of indigestion, and may occur in this nervous affection, in gastritis, or in any other complaint when a portion of food remains a considerable time undigested in the stomach; but the flatulence to which I now allude, and which I consider more particularly

characteristic of the affection of the ganglia, consists in a copious *secretion* of air. Occasionally, the air is formed almost instantaneously, the stomach becoming suddenly distended, and at length relieved by loud and copious eructations. Sometimes the secretion of air is less rapid in its formation, but more protracted, the discharges taking place at short intervals, and continuing many hours and even days. Sometimes the secretion is slightly alleviated by recumbency; frequently it is increased by the indigestion of food, which seems not merely to add to the quantity of air in the stomach by its decomposition, but also by actually increasing the secretion. Pressure on the painful vertebræ, in some instances, causes a sudden extrication of gas.

4. *Pyrosis*.—A copious secretion of clear liquid is not an unfrequent attendant upon this affection. It is not so common as the former symptom; sometimes the two are combined; sometimes the pyrosis is connected with *gastrodynia*; and occasionally it is the only symptom of stomach affection to be detected.

5. *Pulsation* in the epigastrium is of frequent occurrence.

6. *Affections of the spinal nerves*.—In treating of the affection of the cervical ganglia, it was remarked that the symptoms of disease in those ganglia were generally attended with symptoms denoting an affection of the corresponding portion of the spinal marrow. In like manner, when we are led to believe the lower thoracic ganglia to be the seat of disease, we generally, though not always, find some phenomena of an affection of the dorsal spinal marrow. These are, a corded sensation round the waist, constriction across the epi-

gastrium even when the stomach is not distended, soreness along the edges of the ribs sometimes increased on pressure, pains in the lower intercostal muscles, or in the muscles of the abdomen.

On reviewing these symptoms, it will be seen that some of them are common to gastritis as well as to the affection of the ganglia, and others are more particularly characteristic of the latter. Indigestion and its consequences, as acidity, flatulence from decomposition, &c., may arise equally from disease affecting the surface where digestion is performed, or from disease of the part where the nerves engaged in digestion originate. Pain in the epigastrium is common to both diseases, but in the nervous affection it is generally described as a dull, aching sensation; in gastritis the pain is more frequently accompanied with a feeling of heat, and is more particularly, though not always, increased by the ingestion of warm liquids. Tenderness on pressing the epigastrium more commonly attends chronic gastritis than the disease of the ganglia. The sensations of faintness and sinking seem common to both complaints. Flatulence from secretion, I believe, is seldom dependent upon gastritis, and is the most frequent of any symptom of the ganglionic affection. Pyrosis, I believe, is always attributable to the affection of the ganglia, and I think is never produced by inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach. The various affections of the spinal nerves, though not always attendant upon disease of the ganglia, are seldom absent, but they are never essential to, and but rarely accompany chronic gastritis; writers on dyspepsia, however, often confound these affections, and explain the spinal neuralgic symptoms on the vague

principles of sympathy. In addition to these diagnostic marks, one peculiar to gastritis may be mentioned; this is the red, and sometimes prominent state of the papillæ of the tongue, particularly at its tip and edges; the tongue is also loaded, and a slight febrile state is more frequent in chronic inflammation of the stomach, than in the nervous affection.

From a careful consideration of the symptoms, it will not in most cases be difficult to establish a diagnosis, particularly when the suspicion of disease of the ganglia is corroborated by the circumstance of there being tenderness in the neighbourhood of the splanchnic ganglia.

Although there is a decided difference in the two complaints, yet it is not uncommon to find them co-existing. This occurrence is what might be expected, for we can scarcely suppose the long existence of disease in the ganglia impairing the digestive functions, and consequently subjecting the mucous membrane of the stomach to the repeated and long continued irritation of imperfectly digested aliment, without the production of actual inflammation in that organ; hence, we not unfrequently find the co-existence of symptoms peculiarly characteristic of each complaint, and consequent advantage from the treatment being directed not merely to the spine, but also to the epigastrium.

A very frequent complication of this disease of the splanchnic ganglia is with the same affection of the cervical ganglia and spinal marrow, which has already been described. Hence there is often found tenderness in some of the lower dorsal and in some of the cervical vertebræ at the same time; consequently there are symptoms of affection of the stomach, as flatulence,

pain, distention, pyrosis, &c. with stricture across the epigastrium, corded sensations round the waist, and neuralgic pain in the trunk, and these are accompanied by palpitations of the heart, and pains, weakness and numbness of the upper extremities.

The affections which have been described principally refer to the heart and stomach; other organs, however, I believe are occasionally affected from a similar cause; the lungs are the seat of painful and spasmodic affections, producing true asthma; the small and large intestines, the kidneys, the bladder, and uterus, are not unfrequently the seat of neuralgia, connected with tenderness in the spine, and remediable by means directed to the tender part.

It is of great importance to bear in mind the circumstances that these nervous affections sometimes accompany other diseases. When the vertebræ, or intervertebral cartilages are inflamed, the neighbouring nervous tissues often participate, and neuralgic symptoms are the result. These nervous affections often constitute the most distressing part of the complaint, and, by proper attention to them the sufferings of the patient may from time to time be alleviated during the lingering progress of the vertebral disease. In fevers, symptoms of a neuralgic character often make their appearance, and aggravate the sufferings of the patient. The following case lately occurred to me. A young lady, having proceeded in a favourable manner for two or three weeks under common fever, became affected in the afternoon with paroxysms of oppression in respiration, attended with severe aching pain and constriction round the waist.

These symptoms returned about the same hour for four or five days, gradually increasing in violence until they became truly alarming; tenderness was discovered in two or three of the dorsal vertebræ, and a few leeches applied to the painful part, prevented the recurrence of the attacks. The fever afterwards pursued the usual course, and ultimately terminated favourably. Neuralgic affections of the scalp, connected with tenderness in the cervical vertebræ, often occur in fever, and are sometimes mistaken for pain of the encephalon. In phthisis, pains in the intercostal muscles, and oppression of respiration, are often of a neuralgic character, and readily admit of alleviation; the more formidable disease of the lungs, however, seems to predispose to their recurrence.

Dr. Brown has observed neuralgic pains in the neck and scalp accompanying severe inflammatory affections of the fauces, and has also met with similar symptoms in conjunction with hepatitis. My own observation enables me to confirm these remarks of Dr. Brown. The principal neuralgic symptoms which I have observed in conjunction with hepatitis, are constriction across the epigastrium and pain or tenderness along the cartilages of the ribs. The pain is sometimes supposed to be seated in the liver when the right side is affected, but a precisely similar affection is as frequently met with on the left. I have known this neuralgic affection to be treated as hepatitis when there has not been any real evidence of disease of the liver. A patient is now under my care, who is suffering from hepatitis, as denoted by yellowness of the skin, bilious urine, clay-coloured fæces, and deep-seated tenderness beneath the cartilages of the ribs; during the course of this complaint, he was for several mornings in succession attacked, about five o'clock, with

pain and constriction across the epigastrium which he compared to cramp, flatulent distention of the stomach and intestines, pain along the cartilages of the lower ribs on each side and on pressing these parts a degree of soreness was felt; the attacks continued from one to two hours, during which great restlessness was produced. Tenderness was detected in the vertebræ, and a blister has quite removed the paroxysms.

These circumstances point out the important fact that irritation of the capillary expansions of nerves may sometimes excite actual disease in the parts where the nerves originate.

PHYSIOLOGICAL

AND

PATHOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS.

BEFORE adducing any cases in illustration of the opinions which have been advanced, it may be well to inquire how far the views which have been taken are consistent with anatomical and physiological facts.

This inquiry becomes necessary, since the organs, which are most frequently the seat of these affections, are supplied with nerves from two sources. From the cerebro-spinal system, through the medium of the pneumo-gastric nerve, and from the sympathetic system through the filaments derived from the ganglia. On this account it is an interesting subject for inquiry, how far the symptoms are dependent upon an affection of the cerebro-spinal or of the sympathetic system of nerves. The prosecution of this part of the subject will be best facilitated by investigating the following queries.

1. Is the muscular action of the heart, arteries, stomach, and intestines, dependent upon the cerebro-spinal or upon the sympathetic system?

2. Are painful affections of the heart, lungs, stomach and intestines, seated in the filaments of the pneumo-gastric or of the sympathetic nerves?

3. Is the pneumo-gastric nerve the *only* nervous agent in digestion, or do the nerves of the sympathetic system exert any considerable influence in the digestive process?

1. *Is the muscular action of the heart, arteries, stomach, and intestines, dependent upon the cerebro-spinal or upon the sympathetic system of nerves?*

This part of the inquiry may appear unnecessary, as the dependence of the muscular action of these organs upon the sympathetic system is now so universally admitted; it may, however, be well to state the grounds upon which this fact is established.

Haller ascertained, by experiment, that the heart was capable of acting after the brain was destroyed.

Many acephalous fœtuses have been observed without brain and spinal marrow, in which the heart and arteries must have been for several months in continual action, as evinced by the formation from the blood of the various structures of which the malformed bodies were composed. In the *Histoire de l'Academie Royale des Sciences* for the year 1711, a case is related which M. Fauvel exhibited to the academy. The fœtus was of the full term; it had neither brain, cerebellum, nor spinal marrow, although it was well formed in other respects. In the volume of the same work for the year 1712, another case is recorded. This, also, was a fœtus of the full term, which had neither brain nor spinal marrow; the dura and pia mater formed a canal in the vertebræ. Numerous other instances, similar to the above, have been observed.

In the experiments of Dr. Wilson Philip it was seen that the cervical portion of the spinal marrow, the whole spinal marrow, and even the brain also, might be destroyed, without apparently affecting the action of the

heart, provided artificial respiration be maintained. It was observed that, when the brain and spinal marrow were destroyed, and artificial respiration maintained, *the circulation remained vigorous*, and black or red blood flowed according as artificial respiration was performed or not.* Similar results had previously been obtained by Le Gallois,† and have since been confirmed by the experiments of Mr. Clift on the carp. He found, that “the action of the heart continues long after the brain and spinal marrow are destroyed.”‡

The capillary or secreting vessels, like the heart and large vessels, appear equally independent of the brain and spinal marrow. Dr. W. Philip, after removing the head of a frog, and preventing hemorrhage by ligature round the neck, and afterwards destroying the spinal marrow, brought the web of the hind legs before the microscope, and “found the circulation in it vigorous for many minutes, and in all respects resembling that in the web of a healthy frog.”§ Nor is it merely ascertained that the capillary or secreting vessels are capable of transmitting or circulating the blood, independently of the brain or spinal marrow, but actual secretion may take place, as is observed in the formation of bone, cartilage, muscle, &c. in those monsters which have no brain nor spinal marrow. In a case related by Mr. Young,|| in addition to the secretions which contribute to nutrition, meconium was found in the intestines.

With respect to the muscular action of the stomach

* Philosophical Transactions, 1815.

† Experiences sur la Principe de la Vie, &c. p. 37. Paris, 1812.

‡ Phil. Trans. 1815.

§ Experimental Inquiry into the Laws of the Vital Functions. Second Edition, p. 77.

|| Medico-chirurgical Transactions, vol. i.

and intestines, we have abundant proof in the experiments of Dr. W. Philip, of its independence of the cerebro-spinal system. After relating an experiment in which the spinal marrow was removed, he records the following:—"The spinal marrow was wholly removed in another rabbit, also deprived of sensibility by a blow on the occiput, without at all affecting the motion of the stomach and intestines. The removal of the brain we found produces as little effect upon it, as that of the spinal marrow. When both were removed at the same time, it remained unaffected. It continues till the parts become cold, &c."*

From the various facts which have now been related, it is evident, that the involuntary muscles, which derive their nerves from the sympathetic, have a power of action independent of the nerves of the brain and spinal marrow. It is true, that the action of the heart is a little influenced by the brain and spinal marrow. Dr. W. Philip found that the application of stimulants and sedatives to these organs, produced a slight alteration in the pulsations of the heart; and Mr. Clift observed that the pulsations of the heart were sometimes rendered a little slower, sometimes quicker for a few beats, after the infliction of various injuries on the brain and spinal marrow. This slight influence which the brain and spinal marrow exert over the action of the heart, is what might be expected from the numerous nervous connexions which exist between the cerebro-spinal system of nerves and the nerves of the sympathetic system; but how trifling does this influence appear, when we find that the heart continues to beat with regularity and

* Experimental Inquiry, p. 130.

decision, and can maintain the circulation after the brain and spinal marrow have been removed, and that secretion can take place even where they have never existed.

2. *Are painful affections of the viscera seated in the filaments of the pneumo-gastric or sympathetic nerves? or, is the pneumo-gastric nerve ever the seat of pain?*

It was the opinion of Desportes,* that painful affections of the heart and lungs had their seat in the pneumo-gastric nerve; and Laennec† supposed that these pains were sometimes seated in the pneumo-gastric, and sometimes in the filaments of the great sympathetic.

That these opinions are unfounded will appear from the following observations.

The analogy and connexion between the portio dura of the seventh nerve and the pneumo-gastric are so striking as to excite the strongest suspicion that their functions or properties are similar. They both arise by a single series of fibrils from a distinct portion of the spinal marrow, and not by double origins, or by distinct roots from the two great spinal columns, like the fifth pair, and the spinal nerves, which bestow sensibility. In many animals these nerves are intimately connected towards their origin. In fishes and birds the portio dura arises with the branches of the eighth pair. In the duck, the portio dura is closely connected with the eighth, and has but little connexion with the auditory.

Mr. Bell observes, that there is, in fact, no portio

* *Traité de l'Auscultation Médiate, &c. par R. T. H. Laennec, 2nd edition, vol. ii. p. 748.*

† Ditto.

dura of the seventh in fishes, the nerve resembling it *being a branch of the eighth pair.*"*

From the intimate connexion and resemblance between these two nerves, any experiments tending to illustrate the functions of the one, would establish a great probability as to the functions of the other. The following observations have been made respecting the portio dura. Mr. Bell remarked, in numerous experiments, that the act of cutting this nerve was unattended with any expressions of pain, and that it might be touched and irritated without pain being produced; these facts were strongly contrasted with the effects of cutting or irritating the fifth, for, by even touching this nerve, acute pain was produced. These effects were so striking, as Mr. Bell observes, that, when the two nerves are both exposed, in the living animal, not the slightest doubt will remain in the mind of the experimenter which of the nerves bestows sensibility. Mr. Broughton,† having exposed the trunk of the portio dura in a horse, states, that "it was transfixed with a pin, pinched, and cut through slowly with scissors, and not the slightest sign of sensation was manifested." These experiments of Mr. Bell and Mr. Broughton establish the fact that the portio dura is not a nerve of sensation; and the similarity of this nerve to the pneumo-gastric would lead one to infer that the latter also is not a nerve bestowing sensibility. This inference, however, does not rest solely upon conjecture, the fact has been placed beyond the reach of dispute by Mr. Broughton. In the same horse which was the subject of the experiment on the portio dura, "the par vagum

* An Exposition of the Natural System of the Nerves, &c., by Charles Bell, p. 98.

† London Medical and Physical Journal, June, 1823.

was exposed in the neck on one side, and insulated from its cellular connexions, but carefully retained in its place. It was repeatedly transfixed with a pin, pinched, and slowly cut through with scissors, and not the slightest degree of sensation was manifested. When pulled out from its natural position, or squeezed by the forceps, the animal appeared to wheeze as in obstructed respiration, but exhibited nothing like the twitches and startings which peculiarly mark the production of pain in irritating sensible nerves."

Nothing further, I presume, need be said to prove that the pneumo-gastric is not a nerve of sensation; and, consequently, that it cannot be the seat of pain.

3. *Is the pneumo-gastric nerve the sole nervous agent in digestion, or do the nerves of the sympathetic system exert any considerable influence in the digestive process?*

That the pneumo-gastric nerves exert a powerful influence in digestion appears to be satisfactorily established. Haller, I believe, was the first that observed the division of these nerves to suspend digestion. This result has also been frequently observed by Dr. W. Philip, Dr. Hastings, and others. The observations of some experimentalists, however, would lead us to suppose that the same effect is not invariably produced. Le Gallois did not find that digestion was generally arrested. Mr. Brodie, I believe, divided these nerves just above the stomach, and found that digestion proceeded as usual. Magendie is said to have obtained the same result. These observations would induce a suspicion, that digestion does not solely depend upon that pneumo-gastric, and this inference does not rest merely upon supposition, but it is incontrovertibly established by the fact of there being numerous animals

capable of digesting very crude substances, which have no nerve analogous to the par vagum, distributed to the stomach. Hence some other nervous agent must possess considerable influence in the digestive process, and the source of this nervous energy must necessarily be the sympathetic, and disease situated in that portion of the sympathetic which is devoted to the stomach, may consequently interfere with the due performance of digestion.

Even admitting that the part of the digestive process which consists in the due secretion of gastric juice depends upon the pneumo-gastric, it is probable that any disease affecting the muscular action of the stomach (which depends upon the sympathetic) may thereby prevent the superficial layers of digested aliment from being regularly removed so as successively to expose fresh portions to the action of the secreting surface, and almost as effectually interrupt digestion as if the secretion had never been formed.

It is also probable that even the *secretions* of the stomach are considerably dependent upon the sympathetic, for we frequently find enormous secretions of air, and also of liquid, as in pyrosis, accompanied with tenderness in that part of the spine near which the splanchnic ganglia are situated, without there being any reason to suspect the existence of disease near the origin of the pneumo-gastric nerves.

I will briefly recapitulate the inferences which appear deducible from the preceding observations.

That painful affections of the nerves of the heart, lungs, and stomach, are not seated in the filaments of the pneumo-gastric nerve, since this nerve is not a nerve of sensation, and therefore cannot be the seat of pain;

consequently that they must be seated in the filaments of the sympathetic.

That the action of the blood-vessels and muscular viscera is dependent upon the sympathetic, and consequently that irregularities in the action of these involuntary muscles may with much greater probability be referred to disease in the sympathetic than in the cerebro-spinal system.

That as digestion has been observed to take place in some instances after the division of the eighth pair, and that it proceeds in animals which have not this nerve distributed to the stomach, it is evident that some other system of nerves (the sympathetic) exerts a considerable influence in digestion, and consequently that disease in the sympathetic may disorder or interrupt the digestive process.

I must now refer to the pathological principle with which I commenced; namely, that disease of the nervous masses is not so much evinced by symptoms in the immediate seat of disease, as by phenomena exhibited in those remote parts to which the nerves arising from the diseased portion are distributed. Upon this principle those nervous diseases of the heart, lungs, and stomach, which have been shewn to be more probably dependent upon the sympathetic than upon the cerebro-spinal system of the nerves, *should not be regarded as diseases of the particular filaments distributed to these organs, but as diseases of the ganglia or masses from which the filaments are derived.*

The *probability* that these diseases depend upon an affection of particular ganglia is still further corroborated by the fact that tenderness may generally be detected in that part of the spine which is contiguous

to the particular ganglia. Thus, when the heart is affected, there is tenderness in the cervical vertebræ; when the stomach is affected, the tenderness is seated in the middle or lower dorsal portion of the spine. The result of treatment directed to these parts may be still further adduced in corroboration.

In the absence of direct evidence from dissection, the precise nature of these affections of the spinal marrow and ganglia must to a certain degree remain conjectural. The collateral evidence, however, is of such a nature as to leave but little doubt of the disease being inflammatory.

Throughout this treatise, I have in general used the term irritation in preference to inflammation, supposing that to many the former would be less objectionable during the present deficiency of *post mortem* evidence. I wish, however, to be understood as using the word irritation in the same sense as many continental writers have lately employed it, regarding irritation and inflammation as morbid states, differing from each other merely in degree, and exhibiting no distinct line of demarcation.

The supposition that these diseases are inflammatory is greatly strengthened by a comparison of the symptoms which they present with those attendant upon the more severe forms of inflammation of the spinal marrow, which have proceeded to a fatal termination, and have left unequivocal traces of their existence. The symptoms of the former, on careful examination, will appear simply as slighter shades of the more severe affections. The skin, instead of being entirely deprived of feeling, has its sensibility merely perverted or impaired; and the muscles, instead of being paralysed,

are simply enfeebled or affected with tremors or spasms. And if the symptoms which mark the *commencement* of the more severe diseases of the spinal marrow be carefully observed before they have reached their advanced state of development, they will often be found precisely similar to and even identical with the signs which denote these milder forms of disease. There may also be observed every gradation of symptoms, from those which denote the mildest irritation of the spinal marrow to those which attend its complete disorganization. Hence it may be inferred that they are but slighter shades of the same disease—inflammation ; which, however, may exist, as we observe in other organs, in so low a degree as to produce annoying functional disturbance without tending to actual disorganization ; and seldom, unless aggravated by accidental circumstances, proceeding to a fatal termination.

It might be urged in objection that inflammation could not exist for so long a period without producing disorganization of the affected parts. I would, however, ask, Do we not in the children of the poor repeatedly observe a chronic form of inflammation of the eyelids (*ophthalmia tarsi*), which will continue for months or years without any disorganization or destruction of parts?

The tenderness of the spine in that particular part, which the nervous symptoms would indicate as the seat of disease, may be considered as corroborative of the inflammatory nature of the disease. It might, however, be argued that the tenderness is not confined to the exact site of the spinal marrow and its membranes, but is more diffused, being perceived over the whole extent of the affected vertebræ ; or it might be urged that the

spinal marrow and its membranes are so securely protected by the vertebral column as not to be influenced by any moderate degree of pressure upon the vertebræ. To these objections I would reply that the affection most probably is not confined to the spinal marrow and its membranes, but that the surrounding tissues, as the ligaments, the cellular connecting medium, &c., are all involved in a state of phlogosis. This would account for the sensibility to pressure whenever the connecting ligaments of the vertebræ were thereby disturbed. When the symptoms would lead one to suspect that both the ganglia and the corresponding portion of the spinal marrow are affected, it is probable that the disease may have extended from one to the other through the medium of the connecting or anastomosing nervous branches. This receives support from a case related by Lobstein, which will hereafter be quoted. In this instance "there was phlogosis of the ninth and tenth thoracic ganglia, and of the *two anastomosing branches* sent from the costal nerves."

As these diseases seldom prove fatal, it rarely happens that the aid of dissection can be obtained in elucidation of their pathology; and even if opportunities for *post mortem* examinations should occur, as when death has been produced by some other cause during the existence of these diseases, it is probable that the investigation may only prove unsatisfactory in detecting any morbid appearances. But it must be recollected that, although the parts after death may not exhibit any traces of inflammation, we are not warranted in concluding that they have not recently been the seat of disease. When the conjunctiva has been intensely injected from inflammation, or the skin the seat of redness

from erysipelas, how slight are the traces of inflammation after death! And if the conjunctiva and the skin may be intensely red from acute inflammation, and yet exhibit scarcely any traces of disease after death, it is more than probable that the spinal marrow should be equally destitute of the marks of disease. Indeed, it would even be a subject for surprise if any permanent changes in this structure had been effected, since the diseases in question are presumed only to consist in the lighter shades of inflammation, seldom attaining those violent degrees of intensity which are attended with obvious disorganization.

The same train of reasoning is equally applicable to the ganglia, and it is probable that the chronic or sub-acute forms of inflammation in these structures may be equally unproductive of morbid appearances discoverable after death. The ganglia, however, are occasionally the seat of disease, of such intensity as to produce permanent alteration in these structures; and in some of the instances which have been recorded, the symptoms produced by these diseases were principally exhibited in the remote organs to which the nerves of the affected ganglia were distributed. The following instances of disease in the ganglia are related by Lobstein.*

“A female of regular habits had suffered from spasmodic and hypochondriacal symptoms from the age of puberty, and had twice been attacked with incomplete apoplexy, which left a slight paralysis of the right side of the face; at forty-two she was married, and became

* *De Nervi Sympathetici Humani, Fabrica, Usu, et Morbis, &c.* Auctore J. F. Lobstein, &c. Parisiis, 1823.

I quote these cases from the *Medical and Physical Journal* of March, 1824, not having been able to consult the original work.

pregnant fifteen months after. At the eighth week of utero-gestation, a train of symptoms arose which subjected the patient to great misery. She had vomiting to such an extent that, for three months, she immediately rejected every thing taken into the stomach; no relief being afforded by any internal medicine or external application. During the last seven days of her life, even a drop of water when swallowed, was refused by the stomach. The internal fauces and the mouth first became inflamed, and subsequently mortified, from the continued excitement of vomiting; and the patient's fingers in consequence of her sometimes putting them into her mouth, were ulcerated by the acrid discharge. The most distressing symptom of all, however, was a burning pain along the course of the spine, and in the lower part of the right hypochondrium, by which a constant jactitation was produced, and the strength of the patient exhausted. The only means by which this pain could be at all alleviated, was dry friction, so that the skin was quite excoriated. The unfortunate patient at last died in a state of miserable extenuation. The body was examined forty-eight hours after death. Much attention was given to the brain, but no unnatural appearances of any kind discovered. The head was thought to be rather under the usual size, but the patient had not been deficient in mental endowments. The thoracic viscera were in a state equally sound; the stomach presented no organic lesion, although there had been black vomiting; neither did the rest of the alimentary canal, nor the urinary system, differ from their healthy condition. The liver was soft and livid. The uterus, in the fifth month of pregnancy, shewed no marks of disease, except some fibrous tumours in its

substance, equalling walnuts in size. The cervix uteri was hard, perfectly closed at its external orifice, by which it had resisted the attempts made to procure abortion, and thus get rid of the vomiting by removing its cause. The foetus was healthy and in its natural situation. The viscera were now all removed, and the semilunar ganglion cut out; it was not, indeed, converted into a foreign substance, but its colour was intensely red, which was regarded as true and genuine inflammation, by some men of experience, and great cultivators of anatomy, to whom this observation was communicated. The inflammation was so obstinate, that the ganglia were but little paler after three days infusion in cold water; and I took care to have the right ganglion drawn in this state, and represented in the seventh plate of this treatise. Its upper part is of a vivid red, but the inferior, from which the mesenteric branches go off, is more livid. The splanchnic nerve appeared to me much broader than usual, before its entry into the ganglion."

"The body of a girl was examined, who had been attacked with epidemic cough, which was converted by metastasis first into spasmodic vomiting, and then into atonic convulsions, which could not be overcome by any remedial means. In this case the left portion of the solar plexus was inflamed; the right being healthy."

"A man, aged forty-seven, had a fibro-cartilaginous tumour, which adhered loosely to the spine, cut out. In two years he returned to the hospital, having another tumor on the same site: he was seized with tetanus, and died in two days. On opening the body, were found, first, a vascular cyst well filled with blood, at the surface of the medulla spinalis, and a quantity of

serum effused within the sac formed by the dura mater; secondly, very distinct inflammation of the semilunar ganglia."

"In a boy of ten years old, who died with symptoms of anxiety and oppression in the chest, and rattling at the pit of the stomach, in consequence of the retrocession of an exanthematous eruption, the author found a part of *the trunk of the sympathetic nerve inflamed, with phlogosis of the ninth and tenth thoracic ganglia, and of the two anastomosing branches sent from the costal nerves.*"

It is too much the fashion, even in the present day, to attribute numerous neuralgic symptoms to sympathy, or to disorder of the digestive organs.

If a child be seized with convulsions from an irritating cause in the gums, stomach, or bowels, the convulsions are said to be *sympathetic* of such irritation. It is true that the irritation* alluded to may have been the primary cause of the convulsive affection, but, previous to such an effect, it must have produced some derangement in the vascular action of the brain. Of this cerebral disturbance the convulsions are, in reality, symptomatic, and not of the original irritation. The danger and impropriety of regarding the convulsions as a sympathetic affection will still further appear, when we consider, that a frequent repetition, or long continuance of the vascular disturbance of the brain, will often be followed by more permanent disease, which may continue to advance after the original irritation which produced it has been removed, and may even proceed to a fatal termination.

* Irritation is here employed to designate an *irritating cause*, and not a *morbid condition*, as in some of the preceding pages.

The same objections exist against regarding many neuralgic symptoms as dependent upon *disorder of the digestive organs*. Under this vague term are included a variety of affections of the chylopoietic viscera, which occasionally excite a disordered state in some portion of the nervous masses,* as indicated by various neuralgic symptoms; these affections of the nerves, however, must be regarded as denoting a diseased or deranged state of the nervous masses from which they are derived, and not as symptoms of the irritation in the stomach and bowels. It should also be particularly borne in mind, that this disordered vascular state of the nervous masses, which was at first temporary or transient, may, by continuance or repetition, pass into a more permanent state of disease, and may proceed as an independent affection after the primary irritation or disorder in the digestive organs, has been removed.

Another fashionable error consists in referring an assemblage of neuralgic symptoms to hysteria, which, in the imagination of many people, appears not to be a disease, but some mischievous demon, who dances along the nerves, and plays strange vagaries in his course. How frequently do we see a female, labouring under a variety of distressing symptoms, referable to the nervous system, and hear the consoling remark, "It is only a fit of hysterics." By this the minds of the anxious relatives are composed, and the medical man also sometimes calms his own fears by thinking, that, as the complaint is what is called hysteria, there can be no *actual disease*. But, I would ask, can the pupils be dilated, the senses temporarily obliterated, the whole

* Under this term I wish to include the larger masses of nervous matter, as the brain, spinal marrow, and ganglia, as distinguished from the nerves.

system of voluntary muscles thrown into spasm, without the existence of disease? No; the vascular system is seriously disturbed; the large nervous masses, as the brain, spinal marrow, and ganglia, are the seat of congestion, which also, by continuance and repetition, may so far impair the tone of the capillaries as to produce a state of actual inflammation.

With these remarks I must close the discussion of the pathology of these neuralgic affections, and for the barrenness of this part of my subject, an almost total inability to bring forward the aid of morbid anatomy, must plead my apology. Future opportunities of investigating these affections may perhaps obviate the difficulties under which I now labour.

I will proceed to relate a few cases in illustration of the diseases of the ganglia and spinal marrow. The simpler forms of the affections will be first brought forwards, afterwards those which are more complicated and extensive.

CASE X.

Palpitations, Dyspnœa, Neuralgia of the Upper Extremities.

September 8th, 1828. Mrs. H——, æt. 53, complains of a violent beating of the heart and difficulty of breathing. The palpitations occur many times during the day, even when she is sitting still, but more frequently and violently after exertion. In the night she is often awoke by the violent beatings of the heart, during which she is seized with great difficulty of

breathing, sometimes so severe as to threaten suffocation; this is attended with a wheezing sound throughout the upper part of the chest, and on applying the hand to the chest a peculiar vibration can be perceived. After the dyspnœa and palpitations have continued about a quarter or half an hour, the respiration and the action of the heart are restored to a natural state. The most violent attacks are at night soon after she has retired to bed. She is also much teased with "fluttering" sensations in the upper extremities, and frequent sudden twitchings of the muscles; she feels a stiffness on moving the neck. Her appetite is generally deficient, and she is a little disposed to indigestion. A hoarse cough without expectoration is often troublesome. She has been subject to palpitations and difficulty of breathing many years, which have varied in severity from time to time. Her complaints have been considered as hydrothorax.

There is considerable tenderness in the third, fourth, and fifth cervical vertebræ, and a slight degree in a few of the upper dorsal.

Sept. 8th. I directed leeches to be applied, and on the following evening a blister. She felt great relief immediately after the bleeding, and still more the day after the blister had been applied. On the 15th, the twitchings in the arms continued troublesome, and the palpitations were felt in a slight degree. Another blister was recommended, and on the 22d she had not perceived any of the symptoms for three or four days. On the 20th of December I was again requested to visit her, and found that her complaints had been gradually making progress for about a fortnight; the same part of the spine was tender; leeches and a blister were again

applied with most decided relief. She continued quite well until May, when she became subject to similar attacks, which were as speedily removed as before by the same treatment.

August 29th, 1829. Being in the neighbourhood where this patient resides, I called to enquire into the present state of her health. She is looking cheerful and well, and is much stouter, having gained considerable weight during the last year. The spine bears pressure without uneasiness. Since May she has had very good health, and but rarely feels any return of the palpitations or other symptoms, and that in so slight a degree as to occasion neither alarm nor inconvenience.

CASE XI.

Palpitations, Neuralgia of the Arms and Scalp.

August 14th, 1828. Sarah B., æt. 17, has been five months affected with palpitations and pain in the region of the heart. The palpitations occur in violent paroxysms several times during the day; at night they are less violent, but are frequently troublesome. The pain is referred to the immediate seat of the heart, and occasionally spreads over the lungs. There is often an oppressive tightness across the upper part of the sternum; and also pain darting down the arms and over the scalp. In other respects she enjoys good health.

Great tenderness in the five upper cervical vertebræ.

Leeches to be applied, and a blister on the following night.

19th. She has been feverish for a few days, and

is still troubled with the pains and palpitations. Ordered saline mixture.

25th. Much better; palpitations continue in a slight degree, but are much relieved.

Sept. 1st. She is quite free from all the symptoms. Directed to use the turpentine liniment for a few weeks to guard against relapse.

CASE XII.

Palpitations, Neuralgia of the Arm, Gastrodynia, &c.

June 25th, 1828. Harriet J., æt. 19, complains of palpitation of the heart, occasional tightness across the chest, a frequent tendency to fainting, and pain at the stomach.

The palpitations occur frequently during the day from any change of posture, as from the erect to the sitting, and the reverse. They are greatly increased by exercise, and sometimes occur, though less violently, when she is recumbent. In walking she is often obliged to stop instantaneously on account of the sudden occurrence of a painful sense of oppression, or tightness across the lower part of the sternum and epigastrium. There is pain in the muscles of the neck, and a stiffness or difficulty in moving the head and neck; pains are felt extending from the left clavicle over the left breast, which becomes highly sensible to the touch when the pains have existed a long time; pains also extend down the left arm and fore arm to the tips of the fingers; there is a feeling of weakness in the left arm, so as to cause

difficulty in holding her work in sewing. No affection of the right arm, nor of the lower extremities, except a slight feeling of weakness. Pain in the lower intercostal muscles on the right side; occasional sense of pain and distention at the stomach, which occur at intervals with great severity. Catamenia regular. Bowels torpid.

These complaints have been troublesome during the last six months, and she attributes them to having taken cold in the winter.

The four upper cervical vertebræ are extremely tender on pressure, and the fourth, eighth, ninth, and tenth dorsal are tender in a slighter degree.

As the pain at the stomach during the last few days has been unusually severe, a blister to the dorsal vertebræ is recommended, aperient medicine, and quietude.

July 2d. Pain at the stomach only occurs at intervals in a slight degree, and the flatulence after taking food. Palpitations continue, but are rather less frequent. She has not felt the sudden tightness across the chest, causing her to stop when walking. She dates the improvement from the time the blister was applied.

A blister to be applied to the cervical portion of the spine.

9th. Palpitations have only occurred once, for about an hour, during the last four days. She has no pain at the stomach, nor tightness across the chest. A little pain in the arm continues, and acidity after eating.

A mixture containing the carbonates of magnesia and soda to be taken occasionally.

16th. Feels better than she has done the last six months. Palpitations occur slightly. Ordered to apply a blister to the neck.

23d. Tightness and pain at the stomach continue relieved; palpitations ceased for a few days after the application of the blister on the sixteenth, but have since returned. There is tenderness in the second and third cervical vertebræ; the dorsal are free from pain. Eight leeches to be applied to the neck, and on the following night a blister.

30. Feels much better, occasionally perceives the palpitations in a very slight degree.

Sept. 15th. In a few days after the last report, the palpitations entirely ceased. She now feels quite well, and has not any affection of the stomach.

CASE XIII.

Dyspepsia, Pulsation in the Epigastrium, &c.

June 5th, 1828. Mrs. W. æt. 23, married, but has had no children; complains of pain in the left side of the abdomen, an oppressive weight or load at the stomach after eating, constant weariness, and extreme muscular debility. These unpleasant symptoms have affected her during the last five weeks. The pain in the left side is seated in the muscles, extends between the lowest ribs and crista of the ilium, for about five inches transversely; it is a little increased on pressure; is fixed, and continues both day and night. There is a sense of constriction at the lower part of the chest, and a feeling as if a cord were tied round the waist, midway between the ensiform cartilage and umbilicus, which compels her to stoop forward. At night this corded sensation is sometimes so violent as to cause her to

raise herself into a sitting posture, with the body bent forward. After taking food, either liquid or solid, the sensation of a heavy ball or weight is felt at the stomach, and continues generally for about an hour and a half. There is almost always a distressing pulsation in the epigastrium, which never ceases entirely, but only at intervals abates in violence, and is much aggravated by the ingestion of food. Frequent vomitings occur soon after taking food, and often, when it has been swallowed, it is gradually regurgitated by mouthfuls, until the stomach is evacuated; flatulence in a slight degree, and acidity constantly attend the digestive process.

On enquiry, I find that she has aching pains in the legs, and such a feeling of weakness that the exercise of walking is attended with great difficulty and exertion; there is soreness of the skin, extending over the thighs, particularly felt on rubbing the hands over them, and prickling sensations, which principally take the course of the saphenus nerve. The toes are frequently drawn into an involuntary state of flexion, particularly at night, and she is unable to rectify them by the effort of the extensors. On examining the spine there does not appear any deviation from its natural form, but there is considerable tenderness on pressing the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth dorsal vertebræ; a slight degree of tenderness below, and a still slighter degree in a few of those above.

A blister to be applied over the tender vertebræ.

10th. She feels much better, and says she is "not like the same being." The blister was applied on the evening of the 6th, on the next morning the pain in the abdomen had vanished; since that time she has not

felt the pain and weight at the epigastrium, and the pulsation is greatly diminished. The food has not been regurgitated; digestion has been performed comfortably; she feels that "her food does her good." She is free from flatulence and acidity; the muscular power of the lower extremities is increased, and the prickling sensations and numbness have left her entirely.

On pressing the spine, only a slight trace of tenderness can be detected in the original situation. Ordered another blister, to guard against relapse.

16th. She considers herself perfectly recovered.

Eight months after this date, she had continued well, and had enjoyed better health than for several preceding years.

CASE XIV.

Extreme Flatulence, and Neuralgia of Thoracic Parietes.

February 26th, 1828. G. S., cloth-dresser, æt. 28, complains of great distention of the stomach from flatulence, accompanied with constant eructations, pain at the stomach, and pain in the back. He is quite incapacitated from working.

The discharge of air from the stomach is unusually great; it is almost incessant, an interval of a few minutes during the day seldom occurring; at night the formation of air is a little diminished, but he is far from being released from it. He frequently sits for some hours, with the body bent forward, and the head resting upon the table, in which attitude there are continued loud discharges of air from the mouth. The pain is seated

deep in the epigastrium, is increased by long standing, is constant both day and night, but less severe in the latter, and is described as an aching sensation. Constriction and pain encircling the waist, increased by various kinds of exertion, as stooping forwards, carving meat at dinner, &c. Acidity attends the eructations, not merely after eating, but at all times. No palpitations: no affection of the extremities. Appetite good, but food generally regurgitated by mouthfuls. His complaints commenced in October last, and have gradually increased. Since the beginning of February he has been unable to attend to his employment.

The seventh and eighth dorsal vertebræ are very tender on pressure, but the rest of the spine is not in the least painful.

He first consulted a surgeon, who prescribed some medicines and a "warm plaster" to be applied over the stomach; but whilst under this treatment the complaint continued to increase. Another gentleman was afterwards consulted, and bitters and the ordinary stomachic medicines were recommended, but the disease was uninfluenced by them; lastly, he applied to an empiric, who advised dandelion tea, which he took for some time without experiencing any benefit.

February 26th. Leeches directed to be applied to the spine, and in a few days a blister; recumbency to be observed for several hours during the day; milk with flour or oatmeal to form a principal article of diet.

At the end of a week, the pain at the stomach and tightness across the epigastrium were diminished, and the eructations a little relieved. During the following month blisters were applied four times, and after each application the discharges of air decreased. He

was afterwards directed to apply a sinapism once every week.

July 2d. He has progressively improved, and the relief has been greatest during two or three days after each application of the sinapisms. The flatulence now only occurs after meals, in a slight degree, particularly when the stomach has been overloaded. He has no pain round the chest or tightness, even after walking fifteen miles. A very slight degree of tenderness can be detected in the seventh and eighth dorsal vertebræ. Another blister is recommended.

July 6th. Has not had any flatulence whatever since the last blister was applied.

In September he experienced a return of the complaint, but in a much more trifling degree, and the spine was again found tender in the same part. A seton was inserted near the tender vertebræ; in two or three weeks the disease had disappeared, but the seton was continued a few weeks longer.

August 30th, 1829. He has since continued perfectly well, and has been able to pursue his employment without further interruption.

CASE XV.

Flatulence, Pyrosis, Neuralgia of Thoracic Parietes.

June 12th, 1828. Mrs. B. æt. 64, an emaciated old woman, complains of being greatly annoyed by discharges of air from the stomach. She has pain across the epigastrium, resembling cramp, increased at intervals, and when it abates a little, is replaced by a sense of soreness

in the region of the stomach; corded sensation round the waist; sudden and copious discharges of air from the stomach, occurring frequently during the course of twenty-four hours, and sometimes continuing for an hour at a time; pyrosis in a great degree. No affection of the extremities. She has suffered from these symptoms for several months, but in a more violent degree during the last fortnight. Great tenderness on pressing the fourth, fifth, seventh, and lower dorsal vertebræ. Four days ago she applied a blister to the epigastrium, but without the slightest relief, indeed she considered the symptoms were aggravated by it.

Apply a blister to the lower dorsal vertebræ.

19th. The corded sensation and pyrosis ceased during the application of the blister; the attacks of flatulence and distention are much reduced in frequency, violence, and duration. There is a little tenderness in the fifth dorsal vertebræ; the lower part of the spine cannot be examined, as the skin remains painful from the blister.

Six leeches to be applied near the fifth dorsal vertebra.

On the 24th, the flatulence caused very slight inconvenience, and on the second of July she considered herself quite well.

CASE XVI.

Flatulence, &c.

June 26th, 1828. Mrs. W. æt. 22, says she is "weak and nervous, and scarcely able to attend to the duties of her family;" she also complains of pain in the muscles of the back and loins, and of extreme flatulence.

The eructations consist of discharges of small quantities of tasteless air, at intervals of five or ten minutes, both day and night. The formation of air on the stomach is greatly increased by exercise, particularly by walking; it is also much increased by taking food. This affection is accompanied by a constant sense of distention at the stomach, which is partially relieved whenever a small quantity of air has been discharged, but returns to its former state in a few minutes. No pain in the epigastrium; pain along the cartilages of the ribs, increased on pressure, particularly on the right side. Appetite defective; bowels regular. No affection of the extremities, or palpitations. The symptoms have gradually increased for the last eight months, during which time she has become considerably emaciated.

Pain on pressing the seventh, eighth, and ninth dorsal vertebræ; no tenderness in any other part of the spine. On pressing these vertebræ the stomach becomes suddenly distended with air.

Blister to the tender portion of the spine.

28th. Flatulence and pain greatly diminished. The blister continues painful.

July 4th. No flatulence or pain for the last two days; her strength and spirits are improved, and she says she is quite well.

CASE XVII.

Flatulence, &c.

June 16th, 1828. Mr. P., æt. 24, complains of nervousness, oppression at the chest, and flatulence. The flatulence consists of frequent copious eructations of air,

preceded by a sense of fulness at the chest. Pains are frequently felt in the parietes of the abdomen above the ilia, appetite good, bowels regular, slight tenderness on pressing the seventh dorsal vertebra.

Leeches to be applied to the painful part.

18th. Much better; has lost the feeling of nervousness, the oppression at the chest only occurs in a slight degree when air is formed in the stomach, which is much diminished.

21st. He has been exerting himself too violently, and finds a little increase of the flatulence and uneasiness across the chest; but no tenderness can be detected in the spine. Ordered a blister.

28th. Has not had any flatulence or pain since the blister was applied.

CASE XVIII.

Palpitations, Flatulence, Neuralgia of the Upper and Lower Extremities, and of the Thoracic Parietes.

May 20th, 1826. Eliz. F., æt. 16, became a patient of mine at the Dispensary, on account of a painful affection of the left knee; she complained of many disordered feelings in other parts of the body. She suffered also from pain in the lower part of the back, and could not bear pressure on the vertebræ. The following is a statement of her symptoms:—

Great muscular debility and nervousness; palpitations of the heart, occurring on the average about three times a day, and continuing about an hour, occasionally in a slighter degree in the night; distention of the stomach; copious and long continued eructations; regurgitation of

undigested food an hour or two after eating; a distressing tightness around the waist impeding respiration, which varies in violence, but is never entirely absent; pain in the lower intercostal muscles on the left side, and occasional pains extending from the loins across the lower part of the abdomen. Numbness of both arms from the shoulders to the wrists, in such a degree that pinching can scarcely be felt; prickling sensations in the fingers, and also in the benumbed parts of the arms; loss of muscular power in the arms, so as to disable her from sewing, or lifting any considerable weights; inability to perform complete extension of the elbows, as if from slight contraction of the biceps. Similar muscular debility of the lower extremities; pain darting down the right leg along the anterior surface of the tibia; a more fixed pain in the left knee, at intervals greatly increased in severity, and attended with slight tumidity and sense of soreness on rubbing the skin; numbness in both thighs; dull pain in the occipital region, and occasional acute pain darting over the scalp; vertigo frequently occurring in a great degree. A slight febrile state is occasionally present. No cough. Menstruation regular. Bowels torpid. The whole spinal column is tender on pressure; some parts being more particularly so than others. Since the age of eleven years she has been a weak and delicate girl, and has suffered more or less severely from these symptoms since that time.

This case remained under treatment longer than usual, and was more obstinate than the generality. I will not give a lengthened detail of the particular steps of the treatment, but will confine myself to a brief summary. Recumbency was maintained either in bed or on a couch for sixteen weeks, at the end of which time she was perfectly

recovered, and was able to take an active share in domestic duties. Leeches, cupping, and blisters were frequently applied, generally at intervals of a week or ten days; towards the end of her confinement the turpentine liniment was substituted for the more painful remedies; a proper attention was paid to the regular action of the bowels; and a mixed diet of farinaceous vegetables and liquid animal matter was adopted. She now speaks most decidedly of the benefit derived from each application of the remedies to the spine, and I may remark that they were generally repeated at her own request. The affection of the heart and upper extremities speedily yielded, and she was soon able to amuse herself with sewing during her recumbency. The disorder of the stomach, constriction round the waist, and pain in the knee were more obstinate, but gradually yielded to the treatment. At the end of this time the spine would bear pressure without any inconvenience. She continued well until December, 1827, when she became troubled with a nearly similar train of symptoms, with tenderness in the spine, and her complaints increased in a few weeks to such a degree as to render confinement necessary. The same treatment was adopted during a recumbency of fourteen weeks with complete success. Since that date until the present, (September 2, 1829,) she has felt slight returns about three times, which have yielded to the use of cupping or a blister in two or three days.

CASE XIX.

Palpitation, affection of the stomach, Leucorrhœa, &c.

May 19th, 1827. Miss H——, æt. 22, complains of pain and oppression at the stomach, vomitings, pain in the head, palpitations, and general debility.

On more particular enquiry I find she is subject to frequent vomitings, especially after eating; painful oppression, a tightness across the epigastrium, increased by taking food, and slightly though not entirely relieved by vomiting; pain in the left side between the seventh and eighth ribs; tightness across the upper part of the chest; attacks of palpitations which continue for a few minutes, and recur after short intervals both day and night, but more violently towards evening and in the early part of the night; when the attack of palpitations has been more violent than usual, the interval is rather longer; the palpitations are always accompanied with dyspnœa and a wheezing sensation which is perceptible on applying the hand over the upper part of the chest. She also suffers from a frequent loud cough unattended with expectoration; a constant tickling sensation in the throat, a little above the upper part of the sternum; aching pains in the elbows and shoulders; prickling sensations at the tips of the fingers; aching pain at the upper part of the neck, and in the occipital region; acute darting pains in both temples, varying in intensity, and attended with violent throbbings; vertigo on suddenly moving the head, or on directing the attention to any thing; fixed pain in the abdominal muscles on each side; aching in the loins; pain in the bladder both before and after

evacuation, and frequent inclination to pass urine; profuse leucorrhœa; pain in the thighs and knees; occasional prickling sensations in the legs; frequent cramp in the calves of the legs; shiverings, and sensation of cold water trickling down the back; catamenia regular, but attended with pain; bowels regular.

Her complaints undergo considerable aggravation in the evening and in the early part of the night; the exacerbations occur even if she be entirely recumbent.

She has not enjoyed good health for many years; but has been more severely afflicted during the last fourteen weeks. Has been habitually subject to leucorrhœa for upwards of five years, and has been more or less troubled with the palpitations and disorder of the stomach during that time. She has undergone a great variety of medical treatment.

The spine is tender throughout its whole extent, but more particularly at the second and third cervical vertebræ, from the fifth to the tenth dorsal, and at the two lower lumbar vertebræ and sacrum.

Recumbency, and the abstraction of blood from the neighbourhood of the spine by cupping were recommended. She was confined to bed five weeks, during which time the most tender parts of the spine were cupped three times, and the turpentine liniment was used night and morning. After the first operation she felt greatly relieved both of the palpitations and vomiting, and was able to sleep comfortably, although for a length of time she had been subject to watchfulness, and had not been able to procure repose even from opiates, which had previously been freely administered. After each succeeding abstraction of blood by cupping, most decided improvement was experienced, and at the

end of five weeks she was so far recovered as to leave her bed, but occasionally reclined upon the sofa when she felt weary. She also persevered in the use of the turpentine for a few weeks longer, after which she perfectly regained her health, and became active and strong. The palpitations, pains, and affections of the stomach entirely disappeared; and what must be particularly noticed is that she became quite free from leucorrhœa. She continued well until June, 1829, when I was again consulted on account of a recurrence of her complaints, more particularly of the palpitations and leucorrhœa; she remained under treatment about a month, but was only recumbent a week; leeches were applied twice, and a blister three times to the spine, after which she perfectly recovered. I have seen her this day (September 4th, 1829); she is looking well, and is free from all unpleasant symptoms. She has no leucorrhœal discharge.

ANGINA PECTORIS.

THE disease to which Dr. Heberden assigned the name of Angina Pectoris* in the year 1772, has, since that time, remained in considerable uncertainty, as to its symptoms, pathology, and treatment. The most prominent symptom by which it is characterised, and from which it derives its name, is the peculiar constriction, anguish, pain, or oppression, which is experienced in the epigastrium or lower part of the chest. To this several other symptoms are added, but authors are far from being agreed as to those which peculiarly characterise the complaint.

In describing this affection in its commencement, Dr. Heberden says, "Those who are afflicted with it are seized, while they are walking, and more particularly when they walk soon after eating, with a painful and most disagreeable sensation in the breast, which seems as if it would take their life away, if it were to increase or to continue: the moment they stand still, all this uneasiness vanishes. In all other respects the patients are, at the beginning of the disorder, perfectly well, and in particular have no shortness of breath, from which it is totally different." "The os sterni is usually pointed at

* Med. Trans. vol. ii. art. 6.

as the seat of the malady, but it seems sometimes as if it were under the lower part of it, and at others under the middle or upper part, but always inclining more to the left side; and sometimes there is joined with it a pain about the middle of the left arm. What the particular mischief is, which is referred to these different parts of the sternum, it is not easy to guess, and I have had no opportunity of knowing with certainty. It may be cramp, or an ulcer, or possibly both."—p. 64.

In addition to the symptoms enumerated by Dr. Heberden, Dr. Wall* mentions the following as attending all the cases which he had seen. "The pain under the sternum constantly extended itself on each side across the breast in the direction of the pectoral muscle, and affected one or commonly both arms, exactly in the place where the muscle is inserted into the os humeri." p. 13.

In the case of R. M., Esq., related by Dr. Fothergill,† the sensation at the chest is described as "a sort of stricture surrounding the chest, principally in a line with the mammæ, in such a manner as to render it impossible to take a step further without the hazard of immediate suffocation. A sharp pungent pain most particularly affecting the parts under the left breast, extending itself upwards on that side, and down the inner part of the left arm to the elbow," p. 236. These symptoms were frequently terminated by eructations.

In the case of J. Simpkins, related by Dr. Johnstone,‡ the patient "complained of sharp pain under the middle of the sternum upon quick motion, and especially on go-

* Medical Trans. vol. iii. art. 2.

† Medical Observations and Inquiries, vol. v. art. 21.

‡ Memoirs of Medical Society of London, vol. i. art. 22.

ing up hill, which gradually extended internally through the breast, on each side down the arm to the wrists (where he had a sensation similar to that occasioned by an electrical shock, or as if it was breaking) and so out of the ends of the fingers, attended with violent palpitations of the heart and difficult respiration," p. 307.

In Dr. Johnstone's* second case, the attack was preceded and accompanied by pain in the stomach, flatulence and indigestion.

Dr. Butter† considers that difficulty of breathing may attend both the paroxysms and the intervals.—That between the paroxysms, the patient is affected with bad digestion.—That the paroxysms are generally attended with flatulence; and that relief is often obtained from eructations.

An interesting case is related by Dr. Black, in the fourth volume of the memoirs of the Medical Society.‡ His patient, whilst walking up an acclivity, found a sudden pain strike him a little below the left mamma, which was accompanied with a sense of anxiety and oppression in the chest: these attacks were easily produced by walking after dinner or in the evening, and were "always accompanied with what he called a numbing though severe pain diffusing itself from the left side of the thorax towards the shoulder and thence down the arm, terminating at the insertion of the deltoid muscle." Afterwards were added to these symptoms "a most severe dyspnœa and intolerable sense of anguish at the heart, resembling that which is felt by a person exhausted and ready to faint from running, and

* Memoirs of Med. Society, vol. i. art. 31.

† Treatise on Angina Pectoris by W. Butter, M. D., London, 1791.

‡ Memoirs of Med. Society, vol. iv. art. 20.

a sensation which the patient compared to that which would be excited by a lump of hard bread, not sufficiently chewed, sticking in the lower part of the œsophagus. The paroxysm usually attacked about two o'clock in the morning, and always during sleep. The symptoms gradually increased in violence for an hour nearly. They then began to decline, and in about another hour they totally ceased. In one or two paroxysms of unusual severity the right arm was affected with a pain similar to that above described in the left."

In the year 1799 the attention of medical men was more particularly directed to this disease by the valuable publication of Dr. Parry.* He does not, however, allow the same latitude to the symptoms as preceding authors have done. Dyspnœa and palpitations he excludes from the catalogue, and does not consider any case as a true specimen of the disease in which those symptoms occur. In the first case related by Dr. Parry, which was communicated to him by his friend Mr. Paytherus, the patient was attacked soon after retiring to rest, with a violent pain in the chest, darting through from the sternum to the spine, accompanied with a sense of stricture, difficulty of breathing, sickness and vomiting; a weak irregular pulse, pale countenance, and cold, but profuse perspiration. The going off of the paroxysms was preceded by loud and frequent eructations. As the disease advanced he complained of pain in the left arm, afterwards in both; at length his hands and fingers became affected to so great a degree, that the power of moving them was sometimes suspended

* An Inquiry into the symptoms and Causes of the Syncope, Anginosa, &c. by Caleb Hillier Parry, M. D. London, 1799.

during the attack. The paroxysms gradually became more severe, and the remissions less perfect; œdema supervened, and life was terminated suddenly.

In Dr. Parry's second case the patient at first began "to complain of some pain across the left breast, stretching along the inside of the left arm, which he said was in some measure alleviated by breaking wind upwards;" the pain afterwards stretched into the fingers of the left hand.

The fourth case is a well marked example of the disease, from which I shall quote rather freely, as I am desirous of enumerating the symptoms in the same words as they have been related by different writers. Mr. M., æt. 77, returned from the East Indies to Europe, "in consequence of violent pains about the breast, which he was supposed to have contracted from much stooping to write." "On his return to England he led a very sedentary life; and, after the lapse of a few years, became subject to indigestion and flatulency." "But the malady to which he was more especially liable, was occasional paroxysms of violent pain, attacking successively, but irregularly as to period, duration, and order, his head, breast, back, shoulders, elbows, wrists, hands, and knees, attended with a sensation of great heat in the parts affected, and much soreness of the limbs, after he had long suffered, but totally unaccompanied with swelling, or any other mark of inflammation." "In addition to the pains which I have described, Mr. M. was subject to cramps in the muscles of the legs, and to a great and indescribable uneasiness and distention about the stomach and lower part of the ribs, more especially after eating. This

latter symptom was attended with a sense of coldness striking through to the back, and was relieved by eructations. Mr. M. was never affected with palpitations of the heart, and was in general free from all cough or difficulty of breathing from exertion or lying down, but, for some years previously to his death, he had now and then complained of a little tightness across the chest." He did not complain of the pain in either arm, or in the upper part of the chest, as is generally observed in these cases.

Dr. Parry considers the case of J. Simpkins, related in the first volume of Medical Memoirs, in which *palpitations* occurred, but where the other symptoms corresponded with those of angina pectoris, "to have been mistaken" for a case of the latter disease. In another place, he remarks, "the worst state of angina pectoris is unaccompanied with any difficulty of breathing."

In the London Medical and Physical Journal for 1800, a case is related by Dr. Cappe. The patient suffered from "fits of gasping for breath," had an inexpressible sensation of severe pinching at the pit of the stomach; after the fit he experienced a sense of fluttering at the heart; he never had pain in the arms.

In 1809, Mr. Burn's work on the Heart appeared, in which he fully adopts the opinions of Dr. Parry respecting the characteristic symptoms of this disease; and he considers, that if palpitation be present, it is not the genuine disease, or that it is "complicated with other affections of the heart."

In the sixteenth volume of the London Medical and Physical Journal, a case of angina pectoris is related by Mr. Weldon, in which *palpitations* were present.

In 1813 Dr. Blackall published his work on Dropsies, in the appendix of which are related several very interesting cases of angina pectoris.

In the first case there was "pain at the lower part of the sternum, extending over the breast, and down the arms to the tips of the fingers, together with *great oppression of breathing*."

Wm. Duffell, the subject of the second case, was affected with severe attacks of pain in the region of the heart, attended by most dreadful anxiety and sense of faintness. The pain was brought on by the slightest exercise, and obliged him to remain perfectly still for some minutes, when it moved towards the left shoulder and clavicle, but never down either arm. Eructations always accompanied, and, in some degree, relieved it.

In the third case the patient experienced attacks of pain at the pit of the stomach, which after a few minutes passed off between the shoulders and down both arms to the elbows. "The nightly paroxysms were generally foretold by *palpitations*." He was perfectly free from dyspnœa.

The fourth case was attended with pain in the region of the heart; *palpitations*; pain at the shoulders and down both arms; difficulty of breathing during the paroxysms; and pyrosis.

In the fifth case there was pain in the region of the heart, spreading rapidly to the left arm, with faintness and inability of movement; frequent tendency to delirium, and great anxiety.

In commenting upon the symptoms, Dr. Blackall considers that palpitations frequently co-exist with this disease.

I cannot better conclude these quotations respecting

the symptoms of angina pectoris, than by relating the concise description of the disease which is given by Laennec.

“The attack commences with a sense of pain, pressure, or constriction in the cardiac region, or at the end of the sternum. There is, at the same time, a numbness, occasionally attended with pain in the left arm, rarely in both arms, or in one half of the body; more rarely still in the right arm only; and sometimes in all the limbs. The painful sensation is particularly felt on the inner side of the arm, as low as the elbow; and sometimes, as already mentioned, it shoots still further down. It is not unusual for the patient to suffer, at the same time, from pains over the fore part of the left side of the chest; and in the female these sometimes so affect the *mammæ*, that the slightest pressure becomes painful. Sometimes, particularly when the paroxysm is severe but short, the patient feels as if the same parts were pierced by iron nails or the claws of an animal. There are also pains in different points of the chest, dyspnœa, (in extreme cases suffocative orthopnœa,) violent palpitations, congestion of blood in the head, and sometimes syncope or convulsions; when the attack is over, the patient merely retains a slight feeling of these various symptoms, particularly the numbness of the limbs, the left more especially.”

On reviewing the symptoms of this disease, as they are related by different authors, it is evident that they are subject to great variation; and that the disease is not confined to any particular set of symptoms, but that various groups of morbid phænomena may be included within its range. The most essential symptom is the sense of stricture or oppression at the epigastrium, to

which is generally added flatulence and eructations ; most frequently there also co-exists pain in the chest and arms, particularly on the left side, and not unfrequently palpitations or dyspnœa.

With respect to the pathology of angina pectoris, the greater number of writers, particularly those of earlier date, consider the symptoms to be produced by some morbid condition of the heart, more especially ossification of the coronary arteries, whereby its muscular powers are impaired, and it is rendered incapable of freely propelling the blood which it receives. This opinion was principally advocated by Dr. Parry, who found that ossification of the coronary arteries, or of the valves of the heart, or softening of the muscular structure of this organ, existed in almost all those fatal cases in which dissection had been practised, either by himself or by those who had previously written on the subject. This opinion was also confirmed by various subsequent writers ; Burns fully coincides with Dr. Parry, and Dr. Blackall also attributes the disease, at least in the advanced stages, to some organic change in the heart or large vessels.

These conclusions, however, have not received confirmation from more recent investigations. Numerous cases have occurred, presenting the characteristic signs of angina pectoris, in which a perfect recovery has taken place, which could scarcely have been possible if any considerable organic change had existed in the structure of the heart. Many other cases of angina, which have proved fatal, and have been inspected after death, have not exhibited any traces of diseased structure in that organ ; and repeated instances of ossification of the coronary arteries have been met with, in which the symp-

toms of angina were not present. From these circumstances, we must conclude that the organic changes in the structure of the heart are not essential to the disease, and that although they frequently co-exist with angina, yet they are not the cause of those symptoms to which that name has been assigned. We must then look to some other source for the explanation of the phenomena.

In the various writings on the subject, there are occasional surmises found relative to some portions of the nervous system being affected; but this appears to have been considered more as an accidental or collateral circumstance, the affection of the heart being regarded as the principal disease; and the only practical inferences which were deduced from these surmises respecting the nerves, consisted in the employment of certain remedies which were formerly termed nervous, or antispasmodic. I think it necessary, however, to quote some of those remarks which have been made relative to the nerves, as they will tend materially to identify the cases which have been quoted with those which I shall hereafter adduce.

In the third volume of the Medical Transactions, Dr. Wall* observes, "It may be difficult to account for the symptoms above taken notice of, when the pectoral muscle is so particularly affected; but this appears to be merely spasmodic, and to arise from an irritation of the nerves of the thorax and heart. It may throw some light on this affair to consider that the *nervi intercostales*, or sympathetic, distribute many branches to the heart, *arteriæ pulmonales*, and aorta; the other branches

* Dr. Wall, Med. Trans. vol. iii. art. 2.

of the same nerves surround the subclavian arteries and veins, and communicate with the cervicales, which latter terminate in the insertion of the deltoid muscles into the os humeri, which is precisely the place affected by the spasm already mentioned."

Dr. Fothergill* remarks, "from the description of the pain, its course, which was across the breast, and down both arms to the elbows, I could not forbear suspecting that the sixth pair of nerves and their numerous connexions, were the seat of this disease. That some irritating cause, excited by motion, affected them, and that the parts they were principally distributed to, suffered in consequence."—p. 242.

In the case of the Rev. Gregory P——y, related by Dr. Johnstone,† are the following remarks. "It is in this state (in which the heart from any disease is hindered in freely distributing the blood, &c.) so immediately threatening to life, in this convulsive and agonizing struggle for existence, that the cardiac nerves, derived from the thoracic (cervical) ganglions of the great sympathetic nerves, are stimulated in an extraordinary manner indeed, and that all the wide extended connexions of the sympathetic nerves, particularly those in the chest and upper extremities, are irritated thereby into painful spasms, such as are felt in the angina pectoris, though least of all in the organ from which they originate, the heart itself."—p. 38.

In Dr. Butter's‡ treatise, the following observation occurs, "the course of this pain along the neck and shoulders, and down the arms, arises from the near

* Dr. Fothergill, *Med. Obs. and Inq.* vol. v. art. 21. 1776.

† *Memoirs of Medical Society*, vol. i. art. 31.

‡ *Treatise on Angina Pectoris*, by William Butter, M. D. 1791.

connexion that subsists between the diaphragmatic and brachial nerves.”—p. 47.

Dr. Blackall* makes the following observation, “Is it not probable that the appearances here and in other cases on dissection, shew only the effects of the disease, and that the attack was at first no organic or inflammatory affection of the vessels near the heart, but partook of the nature of spasm?” “We know that spasm exists at times in all the muscles which carry on the vital and involuntary functions.”—p. 361.

M. Desportes,† in an essay published in 1813, advances an opinion, that angina pectoris has its seat in the pneumo-gastric nerve.

Laennec‡ assigns to the complaint a seat in the nerves, but is of opinion that the particular nerves in which it is seated may vary. “When,” says he, “there exist at the same time painful sensations both in the heart and lungs, it is right to consider the pneumo-gastric nerve as the principal seat of the affection; when, on the contrary, there is merely a sense of oppression at the heart, without any pain in the lungs, or difficulty in respiration, one would rather suppose the seat of the complaint to be in the filaments which the heart receives from the great sympathetic. Other nerves are sometimes affected at the same time, either from sympathy, or from their anastomosis with those which are the chief seat of the affection. The nerves derived from the brachial plexus, and particularly the cubital nerve, are almost always affected; frequently also the anterior thoracic branches which arise from the superficial cer-

* Observations on the Nature and Cure of Dropsies, &c. by J. Blackall, M. D. Exeter, 1813.

† De l'Angine de Poitrine. Paris, 1813.

‡ Traité de l'Auscultation Mediate, &c. Second Edition.

vical plexus, and occasionally the nerves from the lumbar and sacral plexus, since the thigh and leg in some cases partake of the numbness and pain.”—p. 748.

I am fully convinced that it is to the nervous system we must look for the seat of this disease; but the great error, which has been committed by those who have assigned to angina pectoris a seat in the nerves, consists in their having overlooked the pathological fact, to which I formerly alluded, namely, that when any of the nervous masses, as the brain, spinal marrow, or ganglia, are the seat of disease, the morbid phenomena are not so much exhibited in the masses themselves as in the parts to which the nerves arising from them are distributed. Thus Laennec, whose views are by far the most definite of any that have been quoted, expressly states that he considers the seat of the disease to be in the pneumo-gastric nerve, or in the *filaments* of the great sympathetic, “dans les *filets* que le cœur reçoit du grand sympathique.” The treatment has also been conducted with reference to such pathological views; blisters, issues, and other remedies have been applied by the earlier writers to the neighbourhood of the heart or stomach; most frequently, however, without much benefit; and Laennec has recommended magnetism, for which purpose he employed two strongly magnetized plates of steel, of a line in thickness, of an oval form, and slightly bent to the form of the chest; one of the plates he applied to the left præcordial region, the other to the opposite part of the back, so that the magnetic current might traverse *the affected part*; and when the magnet gave but little relief, he applied a blister under the *anterior* plate. Hence it is evident that his pathological and therapeutic views extended only to the

nervous filaments; or, what amounts to the same thing, to the parts which were the immediate seat of pain, oppression, or morbid sensibility.

On the contrary I think it would be much more consistent with actual facts, if we were to consider these local affections of the nerves merely as symptomatic of disease in the nervous masses from which they are derived; and to refer the morbid affections of the spinal nerves to disease in those portions of the spinal marrow whence they originate, and the morbid train of symptoms dependent upon the ganglionic nerves to the ganglia from which they are derived.

Upon this principle the constriction or oppression at the lower part of the thorax or epigastrium, the tightness round the waist, the pains in the lower intercostal and in the abdominal muscles, should be referred to disease of the lower dorsal portion of the spinal marrow.

The pain in the stomach, flatulence, pyrosis, &c., to disease of the lower thoracic ganglia of the sympathetic.

The pains, numbness, weakness, and the morbid sensations in the neck, breast, and upper extremities, to an affection of the cervical portion of the spinal marrow.

And the palpitations of the heart, and painful affections of the heart and lungs, to the cervical ganglia of the sympathetic.

On referring to the various cases of angina pectoris which have been recorded, we find that the disease, in its simplest form, consists in the affection of the lower dorsal portion of the spinal marrow, attended with constriction and tightness across the epigastrium; to this is most frequently added an affection of the corresponding thoracic ganglia of the sympathetic from which the great splanchnic nerves are derived, producing disten-

tion, flatulence, and pain in the stomach; frequently there also exists an affection of the cervical portion of the spinal marrow, causing the pains, and other morbid sensations, in the neck, breast, and upper extremities, particularly on the left side, and perhaps occasionally dyspnœa from impaired action of the diaphragm; and not unfrequently there exists a similar affection of the cervical ganglia of the sympathetic, producing, in addition to the former symptoms, palpitations and painful affections of the heart and lungs.

This inflammatory affection of certain portions of the ganglionic system, and of the spinal marrow, is not unfrequently accompanied by various organic diseases of the heart itself, as ossification of the coronary arteries, of the valves, or of the aorta; softening, hypertrophy, or dilatation; producing, in addition to the symptoms peculiar to disease of the ganglia and spinal marrow, additional symptoms, peculiar to disease of the heart itself, as the more severe forms of palpitations, intermittent pulsations, obstructed circulation, and consequent lividity, anasarca, &c. From this combination we may easily comprehend why these affections so often prove suddenly fatal, and why organic diseases of the heart are so generally, though not universally, found on the dissection of those subjects who have died of angina, since the disease seldom proves fatal, unless accompanied with some organic disease of the heart. It is also possible, and even probable that the disordered state of the nerves of the heart, from an affection of the cervical ganglia, may predispose to the organic changes in that organ which have been so frequently observed.

The paroxysmal exacerbations of the complaint depend upon undue accumulations of blood in the heart,

which render it incapable of acting with sufficient energy to propel the blood with freedom, particularly when its muscular structure is in a state of atony, or atrophy, from ossification of the coronary arteries, fatty degenerescence, or softening; or when there exists any obstruction at the different apertures. And it is not improbable that, when the nerves of the heart are simply affected from disease of the ganglia and a consequent state of nervous palpitation without organic disease of the heart exists, that the muscular structure may be so weak and irritable as to be unable to act with that regularity and decision which is necessary for maintaining a regular and equable transmission of the blood. The causes which excite these paroxysms are such as accelerate the circulation or determine the blood more rapidly to the heart than it has the power of transmitting; as passions of the mind, exercise, and that state of the system which of late has been termed congestion, in which the blood ceases to circulate freely in the superficial parts of the body and in the extremities, and is accumulated in some of the internal organs; a state attended with coldness and pallor of the surface, and oppressed functions of those organs which are more particularly the seat of the congestion. From any of these causes blood may be accumulated in the heart and large vessels, and, when the muscular apparatus of this organ is impaired by any alteration of structure or by disease of its nerves, it may be unable, at least for a time, to restore an equable state of the circulation; a sense of anxiety, of pain, or of fullness in the region of the heart, and an impression that life is actually on the point of being suspended, is the result. In this state, after ineffectual efforts to propel

its contents, the heart, as it were, feels its inability, and sometimes yields to a temporary paralysis or syncope, and, not unfrequently, its tone is so completely overpowered, that it remains for ever paralysed.

The earlier writers applied the term *angina pectoris* only to the more severe forms of the affection, from which arose the opinion that it was a disease of extreme danger. Daily observation, however, abundantly testifies that it may exist in every degree of violence, from the slightest sense of oppression and flatulence to the inexpressible anxiety, constriction, and suffocation, which mark the more aggravated forms of the disease, particularly when they are combined with an organic affection of the heart. On this subject I am glad to find my views correspond with those of Laennec, who considers that in a slight degree it is a disease of very frequent occurrence.

I have been induced to refer the various groups of symptoms which have been described as *angina pectoris*, to an affection of some portion or portions of the spinal marrow, and of the corresponding ganglia of the sympathetic, by the following considerations.

1. The fact, as I have before observed, that most of the morbid phenomena exhibited in the extreme filaments of nerves, are seldom owing to disease in the nerves themselves, but to an affection of the nervous mass from which they are derived.

2. The co-existence of pain on pressing some portion of the spine with the symptoms constituting *angina pectoris*; and the correspondence of the painful part of the spine with the particular symptoms which are present; namely, tenderness in the lower dorsal portion of the spine in conjunction with the stomach

affection, constriction, &c. and tenderness in the cervical spine, with pains in the arms, breast, and shoulders, and palpitations.

3. The relief obtained by local antiphlogistic measures to the spine; for instance, to the lower dorsal portion when the stomach is affected, and there is constriction, and to the cervical portion when there is an affection of the arms and palpitations.

CASE XX.

Angina Pectoris, Neuralgia of the Left Arm, Flatulence, &c.

December 13th, 1827. I was requested to attend Mrs. L., æt. 72, a lady of delicate appearance, who has many years been afflicted with gout.

She now required medical assistance on account of frequent attacks of oppression at the chest, attended with many distressing symptoms. The paroxysms commence with an indescribable sense of tightness across the thorax situated about the lower portion of the sternum, accompanied by pains extending from the neck over the left breast and down the left arm. Near the elbow the pain is very severe; below this part there is not any pain, but a sensation of itching, tingling, and prickling. The pain in the arm is sometimes so severe, that she grasps it with the right hand, from which she finds a little relief. The right arm is free from uneasiness, except a slight tingling; she has no palpitations, but has pulsation in the epigastrium. A sensation of globus is sometimes felt, which produces a sense of

suffocation, and a temporary loss of speech. The attacks are attended with coldness of the feet and legs, pallor of the countenance, and a feeble oppressed pulse. After this state has continued from one to two hours, the oppression and pains begin to be alleviated by loud and continued discharges of air from the stomach: large quantities of air are often discharged in succession for an hour. Afterwards, the oppression in a great measure disappears, the pains in the arm abate, the warmth of the extremities returns, and she feels tolerably well, a sense of numbness remaining in the left arm and breast.

During the intervals, she experiences weakness of the left arm, and frequent prickling sensations; a continued sense of a weight at the stomach is also very oppressive.

Mrs. L. has been subject to this disease about twenty-seven years. At the age of forty-three she ceased to menstruate; in about two years afterwards the attacks first occurred. They generally came on about three times a day, and during the first year they were slight, but she seldom was a day entirely free from them; the digestion was weak, and a little food not very digestible, or over-exertion, would induce a paroxysm. Afterwards, for several years, she had longer intervals of ease, but the returns were more severe, and, during the last ten years, the complaint has greatly increased, both in violence and frequency. She has now an attack generally, both in the morning and evening.

On examining the spine in the absence of the paroxysm, the second and third cervical, and the eighth, ninth, and tenth dorsal vertebræ are exquisitely sensible to pressure, and the intermediate portion is slightly tender.

Directions are given to restore the warmth of the body, and thereby relieve the congestion, by the application of heat externally, during the attack. A long blister to be applied to the spine, so as to cover the tender portions, and a dose of aperient medicine to be taken when the bowels require it; recumbency is also advised.

14th. Has passed an uneasy night, from the blister, and is rather feverish. She says, that during the application of the blister she felt the weight at the stomach and the fixed pain in the arms to abate. She continues to feel darting pains about the left breast and arm.

16th. The blister has produced violent inflammation in the skin, and considerable fever. The darting pains have been rather more severe. A poultice to be applied to the blistered surface; a dose of aperient medicine to be taken, and occasionally an effervescent draught.

19th. Much better: pulse natural, tongue clean, and skin free from unnatural heat. The pains have much diminished; but last evening she felt a threatening of the paroxysm, became rather cold, and perceived some little oppression about the sternum. Blister less inflamed, and healing.

23rd. Has sat up a little for the last three days; felt slight tendency to the attacks in the afternoons; but they appear to become gradually weaker.

26th. She feels quite free from any constriction across the chest; the pains at the stomach, breast and arms, have disappeared; a slight prickling sensation in the fingers only remains.

29th. I took leave, as she considered herself quite well.

June 21st, 1828. Having occasion to be at the house,

I made inquiry respecting Mrs. L.'s health. Since the last report she has had slight returns of the oppression at the chest, and other attendant symptoms, on the average about once in two or three weeks; they have, however, been so inconsiderable as to excite scarcely any inconvenience or alarm; she has only once perceived the sensation of globus; has not felt the pain in the arm during the last four months; the flatulence occurs occasionally in a trifling degree. The spine bears pressure without uneasiness, except in a slight degree at the eighth and ninth dorsal vertebræ.

CASE XXI.

Angina, Neuralgia of the Left Arm, Palpitations, Dyspepsia, &c.

June 30th, 1828. Mrs. Y., æt. 30, mother of four children, and of healthy appearance, complains of severe attacks of illness occurring regularly every evening. They commence with an aching sensation and tightness across the middle of the sternum, great difficulty of breathing, dull heavy pain in the left arm and shoulder, apparently proceeding from the painful part of the sternum, pains darting from the neck into the neighbourhood of the left ear. No pain in the right arm. The paroxysms occur every evening about seven o'clock, are attended with a sense of exhaustion and faintness, a cold and pallid state of the skin; and continue about three hours.

Her appetite is deficient, food remains a long time undigested in the stomach, and what she has eaten at

dinner is often regurgitated during the paroxysm, along with oily eructations. She has a difficulty in moving the left arm. Pains frequently occur in different parts of the abdominal parietes. Pain is felt in the hypogastrium at the time of making water, and a sense of difficulty in passing the urine, which is turbid, high coloured, and scanty. Occasional sensation of globus, particularly during inspiration. Palpitations occur two or three times a day; and she labours under a constant feeling of muscular debility. Bowels generally confined. In other respects her health is good. She has been nine months suffering in a greater or less degree.

There is tenderness on pressing the first and second cervical, and the six lower dorsal vertebræ.

June 30th. Twelve leeches to be applied over the lower dorsal portion of the spine, and an aloetic pill to be taken at bed-time occasionally.

July 2d. Feels much better, had less oppression last night than for several weeks, and less pain under the sternum. The pains in the head returned in the usual manner, but in a slighter degree. She can put the arm behind her with greater facility; sense of debility diminished; food has been digested better; no pains in the abdomen; palpitations less violent. A blister is now recommended, but some domestic arrangements prevent this part of the treatment being carried into effect at present.

9th, 10 p. m. For two days after the last report she was much better. On the 5th she had a little return of the complaint in the evening, and it has gradually increased until the eighth, when the attack was very severe, and the present evening has been still more violent. This last attack was attended with a sense of

suffocation, palpitations, and shortness of breathing, the inspirations becoming shorter and shorter until she was at last obliged to take deep and laborious sighs. The same parts of the spine are tender. The paroxysm has now subsided, but she remains very languid. The arm is numb and almost powerless; there is considerable sense of weight at the stomach.

Leeches to be applied to the cervical, and a blister to the dorsal vertebræ; a draught containing two minims of prussic acid to be taken three times a day; recumbency to be observed for a few days.

12th. She has had no attack since the 9th, and the pain at the stomach and numbness of the arm are much diminished. Food, consisting of milk, with farinaceous articles, is easily digested. Bowels act regularly.

15th. Continues improving; has no unpleasant symptoms, except weakness of the left arm. The blister being healed, she is directed to apply the oil of turpentine to the spine every night.

She continued well until the end of December, when she again became subject to the same kinds of attack, and in June, 1829, she was similarly affected. The same plan of treatment was successfully adopted on both occasions, with the omission of the prussic acid. She was under treatment about a fortnight each time, and during the interval remained quite well.

CASE XXII.

Angina, Neuralgia of Left Arm and Breast, Flatulence, &c.

August 18th, 1828. Mrs. R., æt 56, whilst on a visit in Leeds, consulted me respecting a variety of nervous symptoms, which for a great length of time, had given her considerable anxiety. On inquiry, I found that she had tightness across the epigastrium, flatulence, palpitations, and general muscular debility. There was tenderness on pressing most of the cervical, and some of the lower dorsal vertebræ. Leeches were applied to the spine, and on the following night a blister, which produced great relief, and in a few days she was considered convalescent, being better than she had been for many months. On the evening of the 25th, she was suddenly seized with coldness, inexpressible sense of suffocation, tightness and oppression at the chest, a feeling, as if she were immediately about to die, pain striking down the left arm to the elbow, and down from the neck to the left breast. Some relief was obtained after the discharge of great quantities of air from the stomach. Stimulants were administered, a sinapism applied to the spine, and warmth, externally, to the extremities. As soon as the heat of the body was restored, she felt comparatively well. On the next day, tenderness was felt in the same parts of the spine as before, and the symptoms mentioned at the commencement of this account were perceived, though in a moderate degree. As she was obliged to return home, she was directed to apply a blister alternately to the cervical and lower dorsal vertebræ, at intervals of ten days or a fortnight, for a few

months. She has, for some years, been subject to occasional paroxysms of this kind. I have not heard of her since she left.

This case is of importance, as it shews that the occurrence of congestion, in an individual labouring under or barely recovered from irritation of the spinal marrow and ganglia, produces that train of symptoms which has been designated angina pectoris.

COLICA PICTONUM.

THIS is a disease which I have had very few opportunities of observing, but from the numerous descriptions that have been given of it, the symptoms appear attributable to neuralgia of several nerves, both of the spinal and of the sympathetic systems. In two instances which I have seen, I well remember that after cupping in the loins had been employed, on account of severe aching pain in the lumbar portion of the spine, the abdominal symptoms and pains in the limbs were very strikingly alleviated.

Various continental writers have considered this disease to be a real inflammation of the spinal chord; and, on this account, Astruc has proposed to treat it by bloodletting.

Andral,* after extensive opportunities for observation, concludes, that the alimentary canal is not the sole organ affected in those individuals who are suffering from the absorption of lead, but that the nervous system is often influenced in a remarkable manner. In speaking of this form of colic, he says, if we attend to the different nervous affections with which it is complicated, and which may even exist without it, we shall be led to think

* Clinique Médicale, &c., par G. Andral, fils. 4me. partie, p. 448.

that the symptoms which are exhibited in the alimentary canal, result from a disorder of that portion of the nervous system, which presides over the digestive organs. The lead colic is, in his opinion. a disease of the nervous system, in which the spinal marrow and the plexus of the great sympathetic appear particularly implicated. The constipation appears to depend either upon the loss of muscular power of the intestines, or the suspension of the secretion of mucus in the alimentary tube.

CONCLUSION.

IN concluding this short treatise, I have to apologize for its numerous imperfections, of which no one can be more fully sensible than myself. Conscious, however, of the defects of my undertaking, yet firmly convinced of the practical importance of the pathological views which have been adopted, I have thought it a duty to submit to the profession the result of my observations.

I have again to request that I may not be thought desirous of advocating a theory of uniform infallibility, or a practice invariably successful. Disappointments will occasionally occur, and failure must sometimes be encountered. As an instance of disappointment the following case may be related. I was lately consulted about a young lady who suffered from a fixed pain in the right side of the abdomen, palpitations, and pains in the head. For many years she had been subject to pain in the side, which had always been regarded as hepatitis, though without there being any symptoms strictly characteristic of that disease. On examination, I found that the pain was seated in the abdominal muscles, and occupied about three fingers' breadth between the cartilages of the right ribs and the crista of the ilium; it sometimes varied in intensity, but the exacerbations did

not observe any regularity in their recurrence. The seventh and eighth dorsal vertebræ were extremely tender, and remained painful for some hours after pressure had been made, and nearly the whole of the cervical vertebræ were also tender. This lady remained under my care between five and six weeks; leeches were applied to the affected parts of the spine, dry cupping, and three blisters. The pains in the head and palpitations were relieved almost from the commencement, the appetite improved, but the pain in the side, although a little diminished in violence, continued troublesome, and occasionally returned with considerable severity. It is right to state, that once, for the space of three days, she was entirely free from pain, and this occurred immediately after the application of one of the blisters to the lower dorsal vertebræ. On the return of the pain she was desirous of trying the effect of a blister to the side, but it produced no alleviation whatever. A removal into the country, and perseverance in the use of applications to the spine were now recommended, but as the pain in the side had not yet been completely relieved, her friends became impatient, and were induced to place her under the care of an empiric. Such disappointments we must be prepared to expect, but their occurrence is so rare, as not to invalidate the general principle.

When these diseases have proved unusually obstinate, or the treatment has entirely failed, I have generally found that they have been complicated with others. The bones or intervertebral cartilages are in some instances affected, and the nervous structures are thereby disposed to repeated relapse. The heart may be the seat of incipient organic changes, which seems to keep up irritation in the nervous masses from which

its nerves are derived; or the stomach may have undergone some alteration of structure, which, by its continued irritation, may keep up a disordered state of the ganglia, and thereby produce obstinate neuralgic symptoms.

In some irritable constitutions a feverish state is occasionally produced by the blisters, and the disease of the nerves will, during the continuance of fever, often be a little aggravated, but, on its subsidence, the nervous affections generally abate. In these cases a sufficient interval should be allowed for recovery from the effects of the blister, before we have recourse to a repetition of it, and probably it would be more judicious in the future treatment to give preference to leeches or cupping, and such irritating applications as act locally, without producing much feverish excitement.

It sometimes occurs that after the violence of the symptoms has been subdued by the treatment directed to the spine, the neuralgic affections, in a mitigated form, assume an intermittent character, and a languid state of health continues. Such cases are benefited by tonic medicines, and more particularly by change of air.

THE END.

