Cursory remarks on corpulence, or, Obesity considered as a disease : with a critical examination of ancient and modern opinions, relative to its causes and cure / by William Wadd, Surgeon.

Cursory Remarks

ON

CORPULENCE;

OR

OBESITY

CONSIDERED AS A DISEASE:

WITH A

CRITICAL EXAMINATION

OF ANCIENT AND MODERN OPINIONS,

RELATIVE TO ITS

CAUSES AND CURE.

THIRD EDITION,

CONTAINING A REFERENCE TO THE MOST REMARKABLE CASES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THIS COUNTRY.

BY

WILLIAM WADD, SURGEON.

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PREFACE.

THE Remarks on Corpulency first appeared with a confession that they had never been prepared for the public eye. For that reason they were published without a name.

In this imperfect state they passed through two impressions; and as no pains were taken to conceal the author, he soon became generally known. It was therefore his wish to render the work more systematic; but professional duties, and publications, have pre-

vented his attempting more than to arrange such facts as have occurred in his practice or reading. They have gradually accumulated; and judging of the importance of the subject, by the reception with which such a trifle has been honored, he is induced to submit them again to the corpulent good-humoured part of the community, in their present shape.

Park Place, St. James's Street,
22d July, 1816.

INTRODUCTION.

A Gentleman with whom I was early in the habit of conversing on professional subjects, had often introduced his tendency to corpulence, expressing his fears, lest his pursuits, which were sedentary, should increase, what he already felt a growing inconvenience. At length he addressed a letter, earnestly requesting my reference, to such authors as might satisfy his curiosity, or give him information, on a subject which so much engrossed his thoughts. At the same time stating, some circumstances of his life illustrative of his complaints; particularly his observations on the effect a vegetable diet had on them.

He had approached his thirtieth year before he experienced any great inconvenience from his increase of bulk. From this period his mind was deeply impressed with the apprehension of corpulency. Indeed inactivity, somnolency, depression of spirits, and an inaptitude for study, were symptoms sufficient to produce anxiety. By an abstemious mode of living, and a vegetable diet, he became lighter, more capable of mental exertion, and in every respect improved in health—but whenever he resumed his former habits, his complaints returned in full force.

The variation in this gentleman's health and feelings, from an alternate change in his regimen, was not less decided and remarkable, than the alteration the declining strength of Cornaro experienced, when the return of the vintage enabled him to take his usual quantity of new wine.

CURSORY REMARKS,

&c. &c. &c.

IF the increase of wealth and the refinement of modern times, have tended to banish plague and pestilence from our cities, they have probably introduced the whole train of nervous disorders, and increased the frequency of corpulence.

Hollingshed, who lived in Queen Elizabeth's reign, speaking of the increase of luxury in his days, notices, "the multitude of chimnies lately erected; whereas in the sound remembrance of some old men, there were not above two or three, if so many, in most uplandish towns of the realm."* How

* Hollingshed's Chronicles, vol. II.

far corpulency has kept pace with the number of chimnies, I pretend not to determine; certain it is that Hollingshed and his cotemporaries, furnish no account of the front of a house, or the windows, being taken away, to let out, to an untimely grave, some unfortunate victim, too ponderous to be brought down the staircase.

The English nation has at all times been as famous for beef, as her sons have been celebrated for bravery. That they understood good living, even in the earliest ages, we may learn from Cæsar, who speaking of the diet of the Britons, says, "Lacte et carne vivunt." Nor have the "cibi crassi ac fæculentæ turbidæque potiones" of our ancestors, been a subject of less admiration, with all succeeding historians, down to the days of the good Sir Lionel Ducket, who anno 1573, restrained the "great house-keeping in the city, that had caused such great consumption of

venison, as to give offence to the Queen and Court." *

It has been conjectured by some, that for one fat person in France or Spain, there are an hundred in England. I shall leave others to determine the fairness of such a calculation.

That we may however approach, or even exceed it, no one will doubt, who reflects on the

" —— expensive plans
" For deluging of dripping pans,"

introduced by the modern improvements in the art of grazing, and the condescension of some of our physicians, who have added the culinary department to the practice of physic. One learned Doctor (vid. Institutes of Health) is of opinion, that the vulgarism of " Kitchen Physic is one of those oracles of Nature,

* Stow, vol. II. p. 537.

that deserves much more attention than ridicule:" another asserts, that "no man can be a good physician who has not a competent knowledge of cookery," and ornaments "Culina" with a Roman stew-pan—while a third apologizes for descending from professional dignity, to culinary preparations, teaching us how to make "savory jelly" which may rally the powers of digestion, in that fastidious state of stomach, frequent after long fits of the gout. And it ought not to be omitted, amongst the great events of the present æra, that the combined efforts, of art and nature, produced, in the jubilee year 1809, the fattest ox, and the most corpulent man, ever heard of in the history of the world.

It is not a little singular, that a disease which had been thought characteristic of the inhabitants of this island, should have been so little attended to. Dr. Thomas Short's discourse on Corpulency, published in 1727, with

a small pamphlet by Dr. Flemyng, and some occasional remarks in a few systematic works, will, I believe, be found to comprise all that has been said in this country, on what Dr. Fothergill termed, "*a most singular disease.*"

In answer to this, we may be told, that sufficient has been written, for any man to be his own physician in this complaint, and that "le règime maigre," and Dr. Radcliffe's advice, of keeping "the eyes open, and the mouth shut," contains the whole secret of the cure.

That Lewis Cornaro and Thomas Wood, believed in this doctrine, and acted up to its principles, by a rigid perseverance in abstinence, is undoubtedly true; nor is it less certain, that the one emerged from a state of constant torment, and the other from the oppression of a load of fat.

There may be others, and probably many,

in private life, who have had good sense and courage enough to adopt this line of conduct; but the instances on record are, I believe, sufficiently rare to authorize a publication, altogether devoted to the subject. And as the history of persons who have actually died from the great accumulation of fat, for the most part only excites a temporary surprise, it may at least be worth the attempt, to see what may be affected by an accurate account of others, who have successfully struggled against a laborious existence and premature death.

The extraordinary case of the late Mr. Lambert, is a forcible example in point. From the detail of his life, it does not appear, that any decided attempt was made to arrest the progress of the disease, which, from an early period, seemed rapidly to increase, and the termination of which, must have been foreseen. But whether this inattention arose from ignorance, or from the common prejudice, that

the complaint is so connected and interwoven with the constitution, as to be irremediable, is matter of conjecture; and we are only left to wonder, that this prodigy of clogged machinery should have continued to move so many years.

It may be useful to some of my readers, to be informed of a few circumstances relative to the anatomy and physiology of the parts concerned, and of the nature and properties of the substance, the increased deposit of which is so injurious to the functions of life. This I shall do as concisely as possible.

The manner in which fat is distributed over the body, is now generally understood to be by the texture of the cellular membrane. Formerly it was supposed, that it merely adhered in clusters or lumps to the parts where it was found.

This membrane is thicker in some parts than in others, and is every where composed, as its name expresses, of a number of cells communicating with each other. Some have thought that the fat was contained in cells peculiar to itself; on which account, the name of adipose has been given to that part of the membrane in which it is found. The other has been called reticular cellular substance, and is considered as the universal connecting medium between the larger and smaller parts, extending itself to inconceivable minuteness, and constituting, according to the opinion of Dr. Hunter, one half of the whole body.

That celebrated anatomist, in his lectures, always described the fat as contained in little bags of its own, not communicating with each other. He observed, that if pressure was made on the adipose membrane, the oil did not recede into the surrounding cells, as water did in anasarca—and that water was often seen in parts of the membrane where fat was

never found.* This however would prove no more, than that in the economy of the system, certain parts only of the cellular membrane, are constituted to admit the deposition of fat. The fat, though from its transparency in the living subject, it may appear fluid, is certainly not to be considered as oil. If it were, it would probably descend like water.

There is another membrane which ought also to be noticed, namely, a duplicature of the peritoneum, called the omentum, situated in the front of the abdomen, immediately before the intestines. It is generally known by the term caul, and is the cause of the thickened waist in elderly people. A

* An instance is mentioned, however, by Mons. Lorry, in "Memoires de l'Academie de Medicine," of the fat falling down to the foot, and forming a tumor. In this paper Mons. Lorry gives an account of diseases he supposed were produced of fat, from its mixture with various other substances, as milk, pus, &c. He contends, there is a reciprocity of action between fat and bile, by which he endeavours to account for many of the appearances met with in bilious diseases.

great many fanciful conjectures have been entertained concerning the uses of the omentum. Some have questioned whether it was not the common root of fat, having an undiscovered communication with the membrana adiposa. Others have thought it subservient to the liver, and that it co-operated in the formation of the bile, &c. It were well if this were the only part of the body of which we are uninformed. In a healthy state it seldom weighs more than half-a-pound, but it has been found increased to many pounds. I have met with three instances very lately, in which it weighed upwards of eight. Dr. Hanly, in the Edinburgh Medical Commentaries, notices a local deposit of fatty matter, the consistence of tallow, weighing seven pounds, which he considered as part of the omentum: but this was probably a steatomatous tumour, partaking of the properties of the wen. Of those who have died under similar circumstances, is the Marquis of St. Albans, mentioned by Boerhaave in his "Atrocis raris-

simeque morbi historia altera." Dr. Wade's case of preternatural fatness, in the Medical Observations and Inquiries, v. 3, is another. "Though suffocation and death from corpulency be not uncommon," says the doctor, "I have no where read of a case, where the internal adeps had acquired so enormous an increase, without manifesting it by a great external corpulency." Boerhaave mentions a case of a man whose belly grew so large, that he was obliged to have it supported by a sash; and had a piece of the table cut out to enable him to reach it with his hands. After death his omentum weighed thirty pounds.

A preternatural accumulation of fat in this part, cannot fail to impede the free exercise of the animal functions. Respiration is performed imperfectly, or with difficulty; and the power of taking exercise is much lessened. From the general pressure on the large blood vessels, the circulation through them is obstructed, and consequently the ac-

cumulation of blood increased in those parts, where there is no fat, as the brain, lungs, &c. Hence we find the pulse of fat people weaker than in others, and from these circumstances also, we may easily understand how the corpulent grow dull, sleepy, and indolent.

The quantity and quality of fat varies according to the age, and the parts in which it is deposited. It is firmer and higher coloured in old persons, than in young ones. It is also more condensed and solid in parts liable to compression, than in the omentum, or about the heart, stomach, and intestines. In children the fat is distributed over the surface of the body, but as we grow older, it diminishes on the surface in proportion as it becomes deeper seated.

Boerhaave and Vanswieten were of opinion, that fat is deposited from the blood by its slower circulation in the extreme vessels. Malpighi and other anatomists have thought

that there was a glandular apparatus superadded to the cellular membrane, to assist in the formation of fat. But this, though consistent with the general system of the economy, has never been discovered.

It is supposed, that a person weighing one hundred and twenty pounds, generally contains twenty pounds of fat. The accumulation of fat, or what is commonly called corpulency, and by nosologists denominated *polysarcia,* is a state of body so generally met with in the inhabitants of this country, that it may exist to a certain degree without being deemed worthy of attention. But when excessive, is not only burthensome, but becomes a disease, disposes to other diseases, and to sudden death.

The predisposition to corpulency varies in different persons. In some it exists to such an extent, that a considerable secretion of fat

will take place, notwithstanding strict attention to the habits of life, and undeviating moderation in the gratification of the appetite. Such a predisposition is often hereditary, and when accompanied, as it frequently is, with that easy state of mind, denominated "good humour," which, in the fair sex,

. . . . . "teaches charms to last,
"Still makes new conquests, and maintains the past."

Or when in men, the temper is cast in that happy mould, which Mr. Hume so cheerfully congratulates himself upon possessing, and considers as more than equivalent to a thousand a year, "the habit of looking at every thing on its favourable side."—On such dispositions of body and mind, corpulency must, in a certain degree, attend.

Yet even such dispositions seem to require certain exciting causes to bring them into action. Of these a free indulgence of the table is the principal. For it must be admitted that the lower orders of society, the poor and

laborious, are seldom thus encumbered, and that it is only among those who have the means of obtaining the comforts of life, without labour, that excessive corpulency is met with. Of this Dr. Arbuthnot gives a lively illustration. "Spare diet and labour," says that ingenious writer, "will keep constitutions, where this disposition is the strongest, from being fat. You may see an army of forty thousand foot soldiers without a fat man; and I dare affirm, that by plenty, and rest, twenty of the forty shall grow fat."

Many other causes have been adduced, as co-operating. Dr. Beddoes has applied the theory of Pneumatic Chemistry to this subject, and attaches great importance to deficiency of oxygen. But Dr. B. remained so inconveniently fat during his life, that a lady of Clifton used to denominate him the walking feather-bed. Dr. Malcolm Flemyng, lays great stress on the defective evaporation of fat, or oil, through the outlets of the body. To

these causes we may add the total cessation of any natural discharge—much sleep—and a sedentary life. Thus we find persons who have been long confined to their rooms, from any accident, not interfering with the digestive powers, usually grow corpulent. I lately attended a gentleman, about thirty-five years of age, of a thin spare habit, with a broken Tendo Achilles. In the course of three months he increased so much in size, that a coat which sat loosely on him, before he met with his accident, would not meet to button, by nine or ten inches.

Presuming what is said to be sufficient on the cause and nature of the disease, I shall proceed at once to take a slight view of the various medicines that have, at different times, been recommended as specifics.

Cœlius Aurelianus, to whose diligence in collecting the opinions of preceding writers,

we are much indebted, divides the mode of cure into two parts; first, taking food that has little nutrition in it; secondly, by observing certain rules of exercise. He enjoins the patient to ride on horseback, or take a sea voyage, to read aloud, and to give the limbs motion by walking quickly. He recommends the body to be sprinkled with sand, and rubbed with a coarse dry towel. Sweating is to be produced by the aid of stoves and the warm bath; occasionally using the cold bath to strengthen and invigorate the body. He orders the patient to be covered with hot sand, and to be put into medicated waters, after having been in the sweating bath, and then to be sprinkled with salt, or rubbed with pulverised nitre. He is to drink little, and acid wines should be mixed with his liquors. His food is to be chiefly bread made with bran; vegetables of all kinds; a very small quantity of animal food, which should be dry and free from fat. He advises very little sleep, and positively forbids it after meals. He condemns

the practice of bleeding, and particularly objects to vomiting after supper, so much recommended by his predecessors.

Borelli advises chewing tobacco; a practice objected to by Etmuller, as he thinks it may lead to consumption. Etmuller asserts, there is not a more efficacious remedy than vinegar of squills. Cooke, in his Marrow of Chirurgery says, fennel water, to my knowledge, hath been effectual.

Few things have been more generally administered in the cure of corpulency, than acids of various kinds. The emaciating properties of acid liquors, particularly vinegar, are very well known. It is said, that the famous Spanish General, Chiapin Vitellis, well known in the time he lived for his enormous size, reduced himself, solely by drinking of vinegar, to such a degree, that he could fold his skin round his body. It is remarked, that in countries where cyder is drank as the com-

mon beverage, the inhabitants are leaner than in those where beer is the common liquor.

Soap, is strongly recommended by Dr. Flemyng, on account of its diuretic properties. After making some observations on the quantity and quality of food, and enforcing the necessity of abstinence; he considers what is the most effectual method of increasing the evacuation of animal oil, which, he says, is to be done, with the greatest safety, by diuretics. For this purpose he recommends soap, considering it as a specific. Purgative medicines, he observes, are dangerous; and that little is to be done by perspiration. But where there is no morbid obstruction, mild diuretics, particularly soap, will, he thinks, effect a cure, without inconvenience or danger to the constitution.

To the same author we are indebted for the following case:—" A worthy acquaintance of mine," continues he, " a judicious and ex-

perienced physician, in his younger days had been very active, and used much exercise, both on foot and on horseback, and for many years seemed as little liable to corpulency as most people. By insensible degrees, as he diminished his daily labours, fatness stole upon him and kept increasing, insomuch, that when I met with him about six years ago, I found him in the greatest distress, through mere corpulency, of any person, not exceeding middle age, I ever knew. He was obliged to ride from house to house to visit his patients in the town where he practised, being quite unable to walk an hundred yards at a stretch; and was, in no small degree, lethargic. In other respects he seemed pretty clear of any remarkable disease, except gout, of which he had felt some, not very violent, attacks. I warmly recommended the inward use of soap, in order to reduce his corpulency, as the safe and effectual remedy in his case, and a remedy which he might continue to use the longest; I enforced my advice by the reasonings above urged,

of which he was too good a judge not to perceive their full cogency: accordingly he began to take it July 1754, at which time he weighed twenty stone and eleven pounds, jockey weight; a vast load for him to bear, who was little above middle stature, and withal small boned. He took every night at bed-time, a quarter of an ounce of common home-made castile soap, dissolved in a quarter of a pint of soft water; in about two or three months time he began to feel more freedom, and an increase of activity, which encouraged him to persevere; and that he did with success, that in August 1756 (as he informs me in a letter now lying before me) his bulk was reduced two whole stone weight, and he could walk a mile with pleasure. He had continued the use of the soap all the time between June 1754, and August 1756, with very short interruptions, in the manner and quantity above mentioned; it operated remarkably, without ever producing the least troublesome effect. And now, while I am sending these pages to the press (April 1760)

I am certainly informed that he is hearty and well."

As this remedy, which is certainly more safe than acids, may to some appear disgusting, I shall subjoin the following account, drawn up by a philosopher and member of parliament, an account, in which as he was at once physician, apothecary and patient, he could not be well deceived. William Hay, Esq. at the end of his Essay on Deformity, in stating some particulars of his case, says, "I took Mrs. Steven's Medicine in the solid form, three ounces a day, for about five years; when I changed it for the same quantity of Castile soap; which about a year since I reduced to two ounces, and lately to one ounce, with about a pint of lime-water mixed with milk. This regimen I have incessantly pursued; except some few days that I have purposely omitted it, to observe the consequences of such omission." He adds, "I never altered my common diet on account of this medicine; or the times of my meals, which

have ever been very irregular. I have always taken an ounce at a time; sometimes before, sometimes at, and sometimes after meals; and I have often made a meal of the medicine itself, only with a glass of small liquor, and a little bread, which I have always taken with it. I generally took the three ounces at proper intervals; sometimes at very short ones. This medicine has always agreed with me; and I never once felt it on my stomach, or any other inconvenience from it."

A near relation of mine, many years ago, was requested by a gentleman in the country to purchase him a quarter of a hundred weight of Castile soap, for the sole purpose of eating it in a similar case.

The author of " Zoonomia" is of opinion, that the eating of much salt, or salted meat, is more efficacious than soap, as it increases perspiration, and produces thirst, by which, if the patient can bear it, the absorption of his

fat will be greatly increased, as in fever. He advises that one entire meal should be omitted, as supper; to drink as little as possible of any fluid, but aërated alkaline water, which he recommends from an idea of its rendering fat more fluid.*

Dr. Cullen, is however, of opinion, "that the inducing a saline and acrid state of the blood," (which are supposed to be the effect of vinegar and soap) "may have worse consequences than the corpulency it was intended to correct, and that no person should hazard those, while he may have recourse to the more safe and certain means of *abstinence* and *exercise*. The diet," he adds, "must be sparing; or rather, what is more admissible, it must be such as affords little nutritious matter; it must therefore be chiefly or almost only of vegetable matter, and at the very utmost, milk. Such a diet should be employed and generally ought to precede exercise, for obesity does not easily

* Zoonomia, vol. II. c. 1. 23.

admit of bodily exercise, which, however, is the only mode that can be very effectual."*

The theory of the celebrated Brown, naturally led him to prefer and recommend the free use of animal food in our general diet; but he agrees with Dr. Cullen in the chief points, " that as animal food is the principal noxious power, the quantity should be reduced, and more exercise taken. These means," he observes, " are sufficient for the cure."

Dr. Fothergill, to whom we are indebted for two curious cases of corpulency, holds the same language. " A strict vegetable diet," says the doctor, " reduces exuberant fat more certainly than any other means I know. Perhaps a reasonable use of wine, not a generous one, should here be allowed, lest the strength should be diminished too much in proportion. All the means of increasing the thinner secretions, are evidently pointed out as necessary,

* First Lines, vol. IV. p. 131.

if to these we join small doses of chalybeates, or other medicines; and an abstinence from animal food, so far as the patient's health, situation, and manner of life, will admit of it; we are, perhaps, rendering all the reasonable assistance we can, till future discoveries make us better acquainted with the real causes of this singular distemper."*

We have before mentioned Dr. Beddoes's opinion of the nature and cause of this disease. His remedy is directed to the removal of such a cause, by introducing a greater quantity of oxygen, independent of the mechanical effects of exercise, which increases absorption. The doctor asks, " May it not also, by introducing more oxygen into the system, by diffusing it more widely, check the formation of a substance containing little oxygen, while the fat, with the other fluids and solids, is absorbed?"†

* Med. Obs. and Inq. vol. V. p. 251.

† Obs. on Calculus.

Salivation, decoction of guaicum with sweating, have* been proposed; and in cases of enlarged omentum, a bandage has been recommended, that might be tightened and relaxed at pleasure.

These, I believe, are the principal articles that have been resorted to in the treatment of this disease; and the person who depends solely on the benefit to be derived from the use of any of them, will find himself grievously disappointed.

" How can a magic box of pills,
" Syrup, or vegetable juice,
" Eradicate at once those ills,
" Which years of luxury produce?"

It has been observed by an experienced surgeon, that in hereditary diseases, " more dependence is to be had upon diet than medicine; and that the whole constitution may be changed by a proper choice of aliment."†

* Med. Obs. and Inq. vol. III. p. 69.

† Kirkland's Surgery, vol. II. p. 466.

The truth of this opinion will not, I presume, be doubted, nor its application to the subject before us. Unfortunately, however, the continued perseverance necessary to render such a plan effective, makes it one of the most difficult tasks that can be imposed on corpulent persons, whose habits are generally connected with great inactivity of body and indecision of mind, and who are consequently, little inclined to administer to themselves.

Soap has been tried, and has not answered the expectations Dr. Flemyng's conjectures gave rise to. The emaciating properties of vinegar are well known; but the experiments of modern chemists, particularly Mr. Pilger, are decisive of its highly deleterious effects on the organs of digestion, when taken in sufficient quantity to effect the diminution of fat. Haller, in his pathological observations, mentions the case of a gentleman in the following terms:—"He was corpulent, and being by profession an architect, which obliged him to use

a good deal of exercise, the weight of his belly was very troublesome to him. He had been advised to use acids, and even vinegar, nay perhaps, some mineral acid or other; and after having strictly complied with this prescription for above a twelve-month, he found a gradual diminution of his burthen indeed: but the remedy did not stop here, for he fell into a consumption, and from a corpulence, which was only inconvenient, he was reduced to a fatal marasmus, nauseating food, and throwing up whatever he eat or drank."

Nor will any of the other medicaments proposed afford better prospects of success. As auxiliaries they may occasionally be useful, but the only certain and permanent relief, is to be sought in a rigid abstemiousness, and a strict and constant attention to diet and exercise. "J'ai pour garants de mon sentiment, les medicins les plus fameux tant anciens, que modernes."

The ancients were by no means inattentive to these instruments of medicine. Herodicus is said to have been the first who applied the exercises and regimen of the gymnasium to the removal of disease, or the maintenance of health. Celsus refers us to Asclepiades, as the physician who introduced friction into the Roman practice; remarking at the same time, that he did no more than revive, with some improvements, the precepts of Hippocrates, who has said, that by friction, if violent, the body may be rendered harder—if gentle, softer—if frequent, that it may be lessened or extenuated—if moderate, that it may be filled or rendered more sleak. Hence it follows, continues Celsus, that this remedy, if used with judgment, may be applied with advantage in any condition of the body: it certainly is a remedy too much overlooked by the moderns in colder climates. Mr. Grosvenor has turned it to much advantage in many stubborn local complaints.

Every cure was commenced by a rigid enforcement of the *diatrition*, or three days entire abstinence, which was resumed in obstinate cases, a second and a third time, after intervals barely sufficient to allow as much nourishment, as might keep the patient from dying of hunger and thirst.*

This old-fashioned practice, would be an excellent mode of treating some of our new diseases; and, in truth, some modern philosophers seem to think so. Abstinence from animal food, was considered a moral duty, by the learned Ritson, ten years ago; and we have very lately had an erudite exhortation, to "return to nature," and vegetable diet, by a gentleman

* We might almost suppose our early legislators had taken a hint from the ancient doctors. By a statute of Edward I. felons sent to suffer "Prison forte et dure," were committed "ad dietam"—a term ironically expressive of the sad sustenance the sufferer was allowed; viz. on the first day three morsels of the worst bread; on the second, three draughts of water from the next puddle: this was alternately his diet till he died. Gloomy as this retrospect is, it might have proved an important document, if any register could inform us how long life could be protracted by such means.

whose whole family live according to the following bill of fare. "Our breakfast," he observes, "is composed of dried fruits, whether raisins, figs, or plums, with toasted bread, or biscuits, and weak tea, always made of distilled water, with a moderate portion of milk in it. The children, who do not seem to like the flavour of tea, use milk and water instead of it. When butter is added to the toast, it is in very small quantity. The dinner consists of potatoes, with some other vegetables, according as they happen to be in season; macaroni, a tart, or a pudding, with as few eggs as possible: to this is sometimes added a dessert. Onions, especially those from Portugal, may be stewed with a little walnut pickle, and some other vegetable ingredients, for which no cook will be at a loss, so as to constitute an excellent sauce for all other vegetables. As to drinking, we are scarcely inclined, on this cooling regimen, to drink at all; but when it so happens, we take distilled water, having a still expressly for this purpose in our back kitchen."

Newton's Return to Nature, p. 144.

The article of *drink* requires the utmost attention. Corpulent persons generally indulge to excess; if this be allowed, every endeavour to reduce them will be vain.

Newmarket affords abundant proofs, how much may be done by exercise. Jockies sometimes reduce themselves a stone and a half in weight in a week; and we learn by the answer of a person well versed in the business of training, to the question "Would he recommend a similar process to reduce corpulency in other people, whether male or female?" "That he would recommend a similar process to reduce corpulency in either sex, *as from experience he perceives, that the constitution does not appear to be injured by it.*"*

Herodicus, in ancient times, ordered a patient to walk from Athens to Megara, a distance of twenty miles, with a strong injunc-

* Vide Code of Health, by Sir John Sinclair.

tion to walk back again as soon as he had touched the walls.

Many would willingly submit to any violent remedy, so that an immediate benefit could be produced; but unless the disease speedily gives way, they despair of success; consider it as unalterably connected with their constitution, and of course, return to their former habits. This feeling is too often encouraged by the ill-judged advice of friends, who thus become unthinking accomplices in the destruction of those whom they esteem and regard.

The case of Mr. Wood, (the Miller of Billericay) as given by the late Sir George Baker, in the Medical Transactions of the Royal College of Physicians, is so much to our purpose, that I cannot omit giving the result in this place.

Mr. Wood had arrived at his forty-fourth year, before his complaints were sufficiently

serious to attract his attention, when the life of Cornaro fortunately suggested to him the salutary course of living he afterwards pursued, by which, to use his own words, " he was metamorphosed from a monster, to a person of moderate size; from the condition of an unhealthy, decrepit old man, to perfect health, and the vigour and activity of youth."

He began by using animal food, sparingly, and leaving off malt liquor, and by degrees, he brought himself to do without any liquor whatever, excepting what he took in the form of medicine; and latterly the whole of his diet consisted of a pudding made of sea biscuit; by this plan, it is supposed, he reduced himself ten or eleven stone weight.*

* The idea of a specific is peculiarly flattering to a patient, for whilst it encourages an implicit reliance on a single remedial process, it tends strongly to shake his confidence in the slow and disagreeable operation of diet and regimen. A gentleman who was fond of good living, and found himself becoming more corpulent than he thought convenient, having heard of the salutary effects of Mr. Wood's regimen, ordered his cook to prepare the miller's pudding, which he ate with great regularity every day after his usual dinner.

The salutary effect of vegetable diet and rigid abstemiousness, is further corroborated by Dr. Fothergill, under whose direction a case of obesity, in a person thirty years of age, was completely cured. Another greatly relieved, but afterwards terminated fatally from the interference of friends, who dissuaded the patient from continuing the plan. As they are related in a medical work * that may not fall in the way of many of my readers, and as the account is short, I will take the liberty of quoting them.

"A country tradesman, aged about thirty, of a short stature, and naturally of a fresh sanguine complexion, and very fat, applied to me for assistance. He complained of perpetual drowsiness and inactivity; his countenance was almost livid, and such a degree of somnolency attended him, that he could scarce

* Medical Observations and Inquiries.

keep awake whilst he described his situation. In other respects he was well.

" I advised him immediately to quit all animal food, to live solely on vegetables, and every thing prepared from them, allowed him a glass of wine or a little beer occasionally, but chiefly to confine himself to water. He pursued the plan very scrupulously, lost his redundant fat, grew active as usual in about six months. I recommended a perseverance for a few months longer, then to allow himself light animal food once or twice a week, and gradually to fall into his usual way of living. He grew well and continued so."

" A young unmarried woman, about twenty-three years of age, of a low stature, and very fat, applied to me for assistance, in a great difficulty of breathing, somnolency, and inca-

pacity for any exercise. It was a hardship to her to be obliged to go up stairs, and at last to cross the floor of her apartment.

"It seemed to me that mere obesity was her principal malady: indeed she had no other complaint, but such as apparently might be accounted for from this supposition. She was ordered to pursue a vegetable diet, and, in the summer, to drink the waters at Scarborough. She comformed to these directions, became more agile, less sleepy, less averse to exercise: she walked up the stairs at Scarborough from the Spa, a task of no little difficulty to people much less incumbered. I urged a continuance of the same diet; she was dissuaded from it by her friends, and died of fat in the twenty-seventh year of her age."

These cases afford strong evidence of the efficacy of vegetable diet, and at the same

time prove the necessity of attending to *quantity*. Some writers however have been of opinion, that the basis of fat was a light nutritious oil, principally extracted from vegetables, and Lorry considers the *abundant* use of succulent vegetable aliment, as an irresistible cause of corpulence. Negroes in the West Indies always get fat in the sugar season.

The following case, which occurred in my knowledge, seems to prove how readily the saccharine particles of vegetables contribute greatly to increase bulk.

A few years ago, a man of about forty years of age, hired himself as a labourer, in one of the most considerable Ale-breweries in the City: at this time he was a personable man; stout, active, and not fatter than a moderate-sized man in high health should be. His chief occupation was to superintend the working of the new beer, and occasionally to set up at

night to watch the sweet wort, an employment not requiring either activity or labour; of course at these times he had an opportunity of tasting the liquor, of which, it appears, he always availed himself; besides this, he had constant access to the new beer. Thus leading a quiet inactive life, he began to increase in bulk and continued to enlarge, until, in a very short time, he became of such an unwieldy size, as to be unable to move about, and was too big to pass up the brewhouse staircase; if by any accident he fell down, he was unable to get up again without help. The integuments of his face hung down to the shoulders and breast: the fat was not confined to any particular part, but diffused over the whole of his body, arms, legs, &c. making his appearance such as to attract the attention of all who saw him. He left this service to go into the country, being a burthen to himself, and totally useless to his employers. About two years afterwards he called upon his old masters in very different shape to that above described,

being reduced in size nearly half, and weighing little more than ten stone. The account that he gave of himself was, that as soon as he had quitted the brewhouse he went into Bedfordshire, where having soon spent the money he had earned, and being unable to work, he was brought into such a state of poverty, as to be scarcely able to obtain the sustenance of life, often being a whole day without food; that he drank very little, and that was generally water. By this mode of living he began to diminish in size, so as to be able to walk about with tolerable ease. He then engaged himself to a farmer, with whom he staid a considerable time, and in the latter part of his service, he was able to go through very hard labour, being sometimes in the field ploughing and following various agricultural concerns, for a whole day, with no other food than a small pittance of bread and cheese. This was the history he gave of the means by which this extraordinary change was brought

about. He added, his health had never been so good as it then was.

This history shows, that corpulency may be contracted by the mere excess of vegetable food, under certain circumstances. There is a remarkable contrast to this case, in the person of a French prisoner of war, who was extremely lean, though the following was his general consumption for one day.

Raw Cow's Udder. . 4 *lb.*
Raw Beef. . . . . 10 *lb.*
Candles . . . . . 2 *lb.*

Total. . . . 16 *lb.*

Besides Five Bottles of Porter.

Vide Letter from Dr. Johnson to Dr. Blane, Medical and Physical Journal, v. III. p. 211. Such a peculiarity of constitution as this, is not, however, to be considered as a proper subject on which to form any general conclu-

sions. If we may believe Pliny, Milo of Crotona, eat fifty pounds of meat per diem!!

The approach of most chronic diseases is so gradual, that till they are far advanced they rarely become an object of attention. This is particularly the case in corpulency. Many even congratulate themselves on their comely appearance, and consequently do not seek a remedy for what they do not consider an evil.

In the female form the embonpoint is, to a certain degree, universally agreeable: witness the Medicean Venus. But this taste is carried to a disgusting excess in proportion as refinement has made less progress in any society.

The Tunisines have a curious custom of fattening up their young ladies for marriage. A girl, after she is betrothed, is cooped up in a small room. The food used for this custom,

worthy of barbarians, is a seed called *drough*, which is of an extraordinary fattening quality: and Mr. Mungo Park, tells of African mothers, who cram meat down the throats of their daughters, that they may please the princes who range the great desert.

From the account given of Mr. Lambert, it appears, that at the age of twenty-three, he weighed thirty-two stone. At this period it is related that he walked from Woolwich to the Metropolis, with much less apparent fatigue than several middle-sized men who accompanied him. It is clear, therefore, that he was a strong active man, and continued so after the disease had made great progress; and I think it may fairly be inferred, that he would not have fallen a sacrifice so early in life, if he had, encouraged by the success of former cases, had fortitude enough to have met the evil, and to have opposed it with determined perseverance.

The same might be observed of Mr. Bright, and most others, who were healthy and well-formed in their youth.

Dr. Cheyne, who weighed thirty-two stone, reduced himself one-third, and lived afterwards in good health, till he attained the age of seventy-two.

Mr. Armitage, a gentleman who lived in the neighbourhood of Fulham, was a remarkable instance of the alternate changes produced by different modes of living. At one time of most enormous and unwieldy bulk, he would, after much suffering, form the resolution to remove his complaints by abstinence, in which he always succeeded; and when in a state that would hardly admit of his moving, he has frequently, by a few weeks discipline, been able to walk to London and back again.

The late Mr. Timothy Curtis was reduced

many stone, under the care and direction of an eminent surgeon in the city.

A gentleman who about two years ago came from India, in so burthensome a shape as hardly to be able to walk up stairs, is now, by these means, able to take very active exercise with ease to himself. In addition, however, to a regulated diet, he found great advantage from the use of digitalis, which he took under the direction of a medical friend.

In a similar case, the digitalis was taken by an acquaintance of mine, who was a younger subject than the former, and who reduced himself with ease, by temperance and exercise, upwards of six stone in little more than a year and a half: whether these cases would have succeeded as well without digitalis, is at least doubtful.

In private life, I know several persons who are living testimonies of the good effects of an

entire and systematic change in the mode of living; and that it may be accomplished with safety, and compatibly with the enjoyment of good health, at any period of life, we have numerous public examples.

Dr. Benjamin Franklin, in the account of his private life, relates an anecdote of his persuading his master Keimar, to submit to a vegetable diet, which he did during three months. "A woman in the neighbourhood." says the Doctor, "purchased, cooked, and brought us our victuals; I gave her a list of upwards of forty dishes, which she was to prepare for us at different times, and into the composition of which, neither fish nor flesh was admitted. This fantastical mode of life was the more agreeable to me, at this time, because it was extremely cheap, for the expences of our house-keeping did not exceed eighteen-pence a week.

"I have since," continues the Doctor,

" kept *Lent* many times in the same manner, and nearly with the utmost possible strictness, and I have for the most part suddenly substituted this *regimen* to my ordinary food, without experiencing the least inconvenience; this circumstance makes me look upon the advice generally given of accustoming one's self by degrees to change of diet, as a matter of very little importance." It should however be remarked, that Franklin had a strength of constitution which few can boast.

Among others we may enumerate the accomplished and gallant Lord Heathfield, who was perhaps the most abstemious man of the age. He never slept more than four hours at a time, and we are informed by his biographer, that " he so inured himself to habits of hardiness, that those things which are difficult and painful to other men, were to him his daily practice, and rendered pleasant by use."

The philanthropic Howard, we are told by

Dr. Aiken "utterly discarded animal food, as well as all fermented spirituous drinks, from his diet, water and the plainest vegetables sufficing him."

The celebrated John Wesley, in the middle of his life, gave up the use of flesh, lived upon vegetables alone, and attained the age of eighty-eight.

From an accident that endangered the life of the late Duke of Portland, he was, at an early period, led to a necessary abstemiousness, which he continued to his death. By a scrupulous attention to regimen, the excruciating torments of the gout, which he formerly suffered for three months at a time, were greatly alleviated; and he was enabled, in the last few years, to bear, with unexampled patience, the miseries of one of the most afflicting diseases incident to human nature.

To enlarge further on the common advan-

tages of temperance is unnecessary. I am only desirous to shew, by this cursory view, that the diminution of the secretion of fat, when in excess, *may be attempted with safety and has been attended with success.*

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS.

CORPULENCY, as has already been shewn, is not only a disease itself, but the harbinger of others. Hippocrates says, that "those who are uncommonly fat die more quickly than the lean." It is so with all animals. When a sheep becomes very fat, the butcher knows it must be killed, or it will soon decline and die.

Among the grievous incidents attending the corpulent, not mentioned before, is their susceptibility of contagion, and according to some accounts, their danger of combustion.

In Leroux's Journal de Medicine, is an account of a very fat woman, twenty-eight years of age, who was found on fire in her

chamber, where nothing else was burning. The neighbours heard a noise of something like frying, and when the body was removed it left a layer of black grease. The doctor conceives that the combustion began in the internal parts, and that the clothes were burnt secondarily. I am told that the French have lately taken to study our immortal bard. Did Leroux form his conjecture from Falstaff, who, speaking of himself, says he is "as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw?"

Independently of the diseases and dangers attendant on this state of body, it becomes an object to an intellectual being, on account of its enfeebling the mental energy. The *Pinguis Minerva* of the ancients shews us their opinion, that if the Goddess of Wisdom were to grow fat, even she would become stupid; and the celebrated Burke, in his remarks on the French revolution, considers fat, stupidity, irreligion and avarice, as arising from one

common source. Fat and stupidity, says the accomplished Lord Chesterfield, are looked upon as such inseparable companions, that they are used as synonimous terms.

There are indeed nations, among whom, obesity is encouraged on principles of taste. Tunisene young ladies are fatted for marriage. How different from the Romans in their refined period at which Terence flourished,* when the mothers starved their daughters to make them as slender as rushes. We learn from Erasmus that the Gordii carried their admiration so far, as to advance *him* to the throne who was the fattest and most corpulent. And Bernier informs us, that the Emperor of Mogul is annually weighed upon his birth-day; when, if it appears that since his former weighing, he has made any considerable acquisition of flesh, it is matter of public rejoicings throughout his whole dominions.

* Nostræ virgines—si bono habitur sunt, matres pugiles esse aiunt et cibum deducunt. Ter. Eunuchus.

The Hottentots, also, are admirers of fat women. Barrow, in his travels, giving an example of the fat behind, says, "The great curvature of the spine inwards, and extended posteriors, are characteristic of the whole Hottentot race; but in some of the small Bosjesmans they are carried to a most extravagant degree. The projection of the posterior part of the body, in one subject, measured five inches and a half from a line touching the spine. This protuberance consisted of fat, and when the woman walked, had the most ridiculous appearance imaginable, every step being accompanied with a quivering and tremulous motion, as if two masses of jelly were attached to it." We have lately had a specimen in the Venus Sartjie, whose pretensions to beauty in this particular, are by no means equal to many of her tribe, now to be seen at the Cape.

This is very different from our notions of taste, for though we abound in persons qua-

lified for the regal honors of the Gordii, yet the man who retained his influence the longest in our days, was proverbially lean.

Still, however, corpulency beyond a certain point, has been considered a disease: for which we have the authority of Galen, in his account of Nichomachus of Smyrna. "Nicomacho autem Smyrnæo ad tantum molem corpus increvit, ut loco moveri non possit, sed hunc aiunt ab Æsculapio curatum." p. 15.

Hippocrates speaks of certain inhabitants of the banks of the river Phasis, whose bodies were so corpulent that the joints of their limbs were not visible. The antiquity of these cases would confirm the doubts of some, as to the existence of any new disease. Probably, the modern improvements in the fattening of cattle, as well as the culinary art, may have rendered it more common in these days.

The late facetious Boswell defined man a

"cooking animal;" a definition according to the old adage "quot galli, totidem coqui," peculiarly adapted to our neighbours; but among ourselves we find many learned doctors qualified to treat "de re culinaria," looking at the "kitchen as the handmaid to physic," and "a good cook as in the nature of a good physician." Many were the good and savoury things formerly contrived by Sir Theodore Mayorne; and Sir John Hill, under the cloak of "Mrs. Glasse," might have directed our stew-pans to this hour, but for the more scientific instructions of the renowned Mrs. Rundall.

I am very well aware that the Art of Cooking is as old as king Cadmus, and that the greatest heroes of antiquity were skilled in it. Patroclus, the favourite companion of Achilles, was famous for broiling beef-steaks, and for making a good olla podrida. We read of a Roman general, who received the Samnite ambassadors in the room where he was

boiling turnips for his dinner. This kind of cookery might be innocent enough, but if the stomach and intestinal canal have any connection with the membrana adiposa, the pretended "Mrs. Glasse," and other doctors, must be considered as accessaries to the universality of corpulency in modern times.

That the stomach and alimentary canal are chargeable with this disease, remains no longer a doubt. Rabelais calls the stomach, (a delicate term for the whole canal), the inventor of arts; and if he had lived among the philosophers of this day, he might have called it the manufacturer of fat.

Secretion, like every other operation in the animal œconomy, must for ever be involved in obscurity. How from the same animal fluid, bile should be secreted by one organ, tears by another, muscular fibre by a third, and osseous substance by a fourth, has excited surprize, and the secretion, as it was hitherto

supposed of fat, not less than the rest. This last mystery has at length been solved. A Vice President of the Royal Society assures us, that fat has nothing in common with the secretions, and that he has found the whole manufactory and depôt in the intestines. This is proved by a variety of illustrations, which the reader of taste will find in the Transactions of that learned body.—Vol. ciii. page 146.

The author of the Pursuits of Literature, remarks, that philosophy is a very pleasant thing, and has various uses; one (by no means the least important) is that it makes us laugh, a well known recipe for making us fat. It is probably, on this account, that most of the scientific bodies in Europe have been attentive to exciting an action, which is said to be peculiar to the human race, and the effect of which we have seen has exalted individuals above the rest of the species. The Royal Society of London, after neglecting

this laughter-making property of philosophy for some years, seems, in this instance, inclined to revive it.

Lest it should be suspected that I have misrepresented the important paper above alluded to, and its accompanying specimen, I shall offer a slight analysis of the first; the latter has been analyzed by a chemist, not less celebrated for his accuracy than his modesty, of whom it need only be said that he is the very able successor of Davy at the Royal Institution.

Sir Everard Home, in examining the *cæca* of different animals, was struck with a thought, which had escaped Mr. Hunter in his investigations on the digestive organs; namely, that fat is formed by a process in the lower intestines, where a "secondary kind of nourishment is extracted from the food." He afterwards tells us, from facts entirely within his own knowledge, (but not

different from what was known twenty years before), how adipocere may be formed from animal matter, placed as he describes it on the banks of a sewer. Of this he has specimens in his own possession. Ambergris, he continues, is found only in diseased whales, and in the human intestines *scybalæ* are sometimes found, in "all respects similar to ambergris."

Dr. Babington, with great composure, assures Sir Everard, that a lady who swallowed olive oil, passed some of it, in a state "to bear being cut by a knife."

Another case follows from the same physician; but as it is only a private communication without Dr. Babington's signature, the young lady's name shall not be mentioned here; though it is inserted in the Transactions, where we read, subject to occasional gripings,—"At uncertain intervals she voids an oily substance, sometimes mixed with

fæces; *a specimen of which, procured under circumstances which precluded all possibility of deception, is laid on the table of the Royal Society.*"

It would be tedious to detain the reader with the experiment on the poor duck, or the contents of his cæcum, after his rectum, as it appears, was tied up for a week. But it is impossible to pass over the following instance of dexterity, or to do justice to the author without transcribing his words. A gouty old gentleman had been six days confined to his bed without any evacuation from the bowels. "I did not let slip," says Sir Everard, "the opportunity of his having a very costive stool, deeply tinged with bile, to make the experiment." To detail the result might neither be agreeable nor interesting; the film which appeared at the top of the water, after long maceration, required not the experiments of my friend Mr. Brande, to convince us that such a film was oily. After several similar

illustrations, Sir Everard concludes,—"On the present occasion, I hope I have collected a sufficient body of evidence to prove that fat is formed in the intestines, and from thence received into the circulation, and deposited in almost every part of the body."

Notwithstanding this body of evidence, however, some may say, if fat is received into the circulation, it must be mixed and assimilated with the blood, and, to be afterwards deposited in various parts, it must be again *separated.* Now separation is only another word for *secretion.* This would lead us to believe, that fat *has much in common with the secretions;* and we might even suspect, that there could be no necessity for this previous manufactory and deposition, were it not for a sentence in the exordium of the paper. "The more I canvassed this new opinion," says Sir Everard, "the greater number of circumstances in favor of it occurred to me; one of the strongest of which

is, that there is no other mode I (Sir Everard) am acquainted with, by which animal fat can be formed."

However highly we may prize the above Essay, yet its claim to originality may be disputed. Boerhaave has a paper, "de utilitate explorandorum excrementum in ægris, &c." and it is well known by those who have perused the Introduction to his edition of Aloisuis Lusitanus, how important he conceived the fat, and how necessary it was to dissolve every part of it, even in the cancellous part of the bones. It does not indeed appear that he offered any *specimena excrementitia* to his hearers, or that he was aware of the value of a gouty old gentleman in the illustration of his Thesis.

I cannot conclude this account, without fearing my readers may suspect a hoax. Some of them may recollect the celebrated dissertation on a broomstick, and associating the taste of its

learned writer with this paper, may consider it the production of Swift. I must acknowledge that when it was first shewn me, as connected with my enquiries, the facetious Dean, and Sir John Hill, instantly occurred to me; a reference to dates, however, will settle the doubts of the most incredulous.

The value of this discovery (if it be one) is of the utmost consequence, in a practical point of view, in the cure of corpulency; for while it explains the difficulty usually met with of purging fat people, it enforces the necessity of clearing the bowels of stagnant adipocere, which, when physic fails, may revive the use of Dr. Ramesay's stomach brush, to a part of the alimentary canal, he has never once mentioned.

An ingenious theorist might say, that it clears another difficulty about the formation of fatty tumors. Let us only suppose, what has been agreed to happen in other diseases—a

metastasis of matter—apply this to adipocere, and the origin of them is accounted for at once. The writings of the ancients abound in histories of local diseases arising from the Abdominal Viscera.

Every one in the habit of seeing surgical diseases, must know that a local deposit of fat, forming a moveable tumor, is very common. Mr. Abernethy, who imputes so much to the digestive organs, and has done more than any other surgeon of the present day, in enforcing the constitutional dependencies of local diseases, has treated of this tumor, under the title of *Adipose Sarcoma,* which in some instances have been known to acquire an enormous magnitude. Mr. Cline removed one which weighed between fourteen and fifteen pounds; yet, neither Mr. Abernethy, nor Mr. Cline, who was in possession of so fine a specimen, seem to have the least notion of the discovery.

Some have supposed, that these and other tumors were originally coagulable lymph in the adipose membrane, rendered vascular, their growth and character depending on the peculiar action of the vessels of the part. Dr. Adams seems disposed to give them a separate life, like the common hydatid.—Non nostrum inter vos, &c. Leaving, therefore, knotty points to be settled by others, I shall refer to those well known facts, on which local accumulation of fat has proved a source of disease.

It sometimes happens that the accumulation of fat about the heart and internal parts, becomes so great as to occasion sudden death, without any remarkable external appearance of corpulency. A case occurred in a gentleman, about forty years of age, whom I was desired to open, in order to ascertain the cause of his death. He was supposed to die from some disease in the head, but as nothing ap-

peared there, that could reasonably account for death, the investigation was continued to the abdomen and thorax. There unexpectedly an enormous quantity of fat presented itself. On raising the sternum, the part where the thymus gland is situated in children, and the space between the lamina of the mediastinum were loaded with fat; and the heart itself enveloped in a mass of fat. In the abdomen the quantity was immense. The omentum was a thick lump of fat weighing nearly nine pounds. The mesentery was likewise a shapeless mass, apparently without organization or glands.

The case of Mr. C. J. formerly in the house of Messrs. Branscomb, who died at an early age, might be given as presenting similar appearances, and the late matron of the poor house at Hampstead, with several others whom I have had occasion to inspect after death. In truth, I apprehend this to be a more frequent cause of death, than is generally supposed; and before I proceed to the enumeration o.

additional cases of corpulency, I shall confirm this opinion by the evidence of former writers.

Dr. Hunter in his lectures used to relate a case of a very corpulent young lady, who upon any quick motion had such a difficulty of respiration, as almost to put an end to her life. This came on very often by fits, in one of which she died. Mr. Middleton opened her body, and found a great quantity of fat in the mediastinum and surrounding the heart. The fat in the abdomen had passed the diaphragm up, so as to push the heart and lungs into the upper part of the chest; and by thus impeding the circulation, was the cause of her death. Similar to this was the case of Henry Herbert Earl of Pembroke, in 1750, who died after hastily stooping to stir the fire. On examination, afterwards, his death was imputed to internal accumulation of fat.

The case of the Marquis of St. Aubin,

so accurately described by Boerhaave, is one of the most extraordinary instances, of the fatal effects of a local, and internal deposit of a fatty substance. The substance here alluded to, was found in the left cavity of the thorax. It was of a white complexion, and when rubbed between the fingers, melted like oil. The quantity by weight was six pounds and three quarters.

Of his regimen and mode of life, it is remarked that he drank very moderately, and ate indifferently of every thing; but preferred fat meats and butter.

In the memoirs of the Medical Society, a writer stating the case of a corpulent gentleman who died suddenly, observes, "that the bulk of the heart was increased by an unusual quantity of fat:" such also seemed to be the cause of the sudden death of Mr. B.

Kerkring relates, that in the body of an

exceedingly fat child, the heart appeared entirely wanting, so great was the quantity of fat in which it was enveloped. The child died suffocated.

Morgagni letter 3. art. 20. says, that an aged man, who died of an apoplexy, had his heart so covered with fat, that nothing could be seen but a fatty mass.

Bonnet, on opening the body of a very fat man, who died suddenly, found the pericardium and heart buried in an enormous quantity of fat.

In Bonetus, Lib. ii. De Morte Repentina, are similar cases. Obs. xvii. Mors subita a nimia pinguedine. And Obs. xlvi. Mors repentina a pancreate sphacelato, pinguidinis copia in partibus internis. In another case he says, " omentum erat mera pinguedo scirrhosa."

Dr. Huxham speaks of an omentum that weighed sixteen pounds and a half avoirdu-

poise; and Dr. Leake of another, which was replete with fat; the mesentary weighing twelve pounds.

Mr. Cross in his Sketch of the Medical Schools of Paris, says of an Epiploon "surchargé de graisse;" that a part being left after an operation, has distilled oily globules, till the patient has died from the continuance of the oily discharge.

It sometimes happens that persons not previously disposed to be corpulent, become so, after some violent excitement of the constitution, as after fever, and severe mercurial courses.

My own father is an instance of a thin man becoming fat after fever. Till the age of twenty-five he was tall and thin; but in six months after a very dangerous fever, he became so fat that none of his clothes would fit him.

Mr. Burdett, one of the last survivors of those confined in the black-hole at Calcutta, was known to have attributed his obesity to that distressing event.

From the frequency with which corpulency ensues after the use of mercury, it might almost be recommended as a modus pinquefaciendi.

In some persons the plump appearance after a mercurial course may be accounted for, by the removal of a previously diseased state of the digestive powers: but I shall mention a case where this cause could not be assigned. Mr. B. aged thirty, weighing ten stone, with little variation, from the period of his twenty-second year, of a remarkably active disposition, and what might be considered a firm fibre, whose appetite and digestive powers never failed, and who in every respect was a healthy man; had occasion to undergo a course of mercury for a local complaint, which not yielding according to the expectations of his

medical friend, was continued with unabated zeal for seven weeks, when he was completely salivated. As he recovered he began to grow fat; and in the course of twelve months, increased four stone and a half, without any particular alteration in his habits of life.

Sydenham has said, that chronic diseases proceed from ourselves, or errors in diet; and although corpulency may be ranked amongst the diseases arising from original imperfection in the functions of some of the organs, yet it must be admitted also, to be most intimately connected with our habits of life. For which reason, the inconveniencies arising from it, are to be removed by dietetic remedies.

In a surgical point of view, the importance of diet has been universally admitted from the days of Hippocrates, down to Mr. Abernethy. The former we find saying, " Whoever gives these things no consideration, and is ignorant of them, how can he understand the

diseases of men?" And the latter thinks it (diet) may afford hope, "where medicine is known to be unavailing, and surgery affords no more than temporary relief." In truth, it is impossible to reflect on the reciprocal operation of constitutional derangement on local diseases, without agreeing with Mr. A. that the connection between them is either not sufficiently understood, or not duly regarded by the generality of practitioners.

Mr. Abernethy's reasons for enforcing a particular diet, under certain conditions, are singularly applicable here.

"1st. Because I know some persons who, whilst confined to this diet, have enjoyed very good health; and I have further known several persons who did try the effects of such a regimen, declare, that it was productive of considerable benefit. They were not indeed affected with cancer, but they were induced to adopt a change of diet, to allay a state of nervous irritation, and correct disorders of the

digestive organs, upon which medicine had but little influence."

"2dly. Because it appears certain, that in general the body can be perfectly nourished by vegetables."

"3dly. It seems sufficiently ascertained, that diseases have in some persons been excited by water, and therefore it is desirable, that whatever is used should be made as pure as possible."

4thly. Because all great changes of constitution are more likely to be effected, by alterations of diet and modes of life, than by medicine."

"5thly. Because it holds out a source of hope and consolation to the patient, in a disease where medicine is known to be unavailing, and surgery affords no more than a temporary relief."

In the course of the last five years many letters have been addressed to me, expressive of miseries indured from excessive corpulency. Some have inquired for a specific, or medical remedy; others, after stating their case, their weight, usual habits, &c. have asked the probability of succeeding by diet, and the best plan for their particular case. The question relative to vegetable and animal food, has never been omitted.

A consideration of the frequency and importance attached to this question, induces me to say a few words in answer to it. Of the efficacy of animal or vegetable food in the reduction of corpulency, there can be no just preference given to either, *quantity*, and not *quality*, being the only point to be attended to.

Man is distinguished beyond all other animals, by the power of deriving his sustenance from vegetable or animal food. As he can be strong and healthy from either,

so he may be fat from either. The majority of the cases, and those of greatest bulk, that have come under my notice, have been persons indulging in fat animal food: but I have known others who would be lean on this diet, thrive on vegetables. This is particularly exemplified by a man now living in Leadenhall Street, who for some years kept a ham and beef shop, during which time he was of an ordinary size; afterwards becoming a publican, and a good customer to his own ale, he soon grew corpulent, and is now immoderately fat.

Galen observes, that the persons who are set over the vineyards, and who live for a couple of months on nothing but figs and grapes, become fat. The Chinese slaves in the sugar season, get fat without any other sustenence than the ripe sugar cane. The same is remarked in the West Indies. A friend of mine has a negro on his estate, who at a particular season becomes too fat for work in a few weeks, and requires medical aid to restore

his health, and render him useful. Another friend of mine, an hospital physician, relates an instance of a farmer's boy, who became fat by eating oil cake with the cattle he superintended. The case of the brewer's servant—(page 41,) is another proof.

Many instances occur among the rich and opulent in Italy, whose chief food consists of vegetable production—Signior B. of Ferrara, and Signior N. of Bolognia, might be mentioned as equal, in weight to any of the cases enumerated.

Among the Asiatics, there is a sect of Bramins, who pride themselves on their extreme corpulency. Their diet consists of farinaceous vegetables, milk, sugar, sweetmeats, and ghee. They look upon corpulency as a proof of opulence, and many arrive at a great degree of obesity, without tasting any thing that has ever lived.

Butchers are a class of men who may be

cited, as a proof that excess of animal food is productive of great corpulency. Their good looks have by some been attributed to the effluvia of the meat; that they are a healthy race we know, and it is stated that during the epidemic at Gibraltar, they alone were exempt from it. But when it is recollected that the " butchers steak" is proverbially the best, we may conclude that their condition arises, from more substantial causes than vapours. In Italy, the Lardaroli, who are dealers in sausages, pork, &c. are notoriously comely and corpulent.

Barrow in his travels, remarks, that Dutch boors who gorge themselves with animal food floating in fat, are remarkable for their sluggish habits and extreme corpulency.

It would be easy to multiply proofs:—but it is not necessary.—I will only mention Dr. Stark, who by some experiments to which he fell a sacrifice, proved, that excess in sweets, and excess in fat meats, produced a greater

shock to the constitution, than all other articles of food.

Having shown how much this disease is connected with excess in nutrition, I shall now give a short abstract of cases, illustrative of the means of remedying it. Abstemiousness palliates all surgical complaints, and even cures many;—we may say with Celsus, "Solaque abstinentia sine ullo periculo mediatur."

CASES.

A gentleman, of great respectability in the mercantile world, who weighed thirty-two stone nine pounds, put himself upon a strict diet of *four ounces of animal food, six ounces* of bread, and *two pounds of liquid,* in twenty-four hours. In one week he lost thirty pounds weight, and in six months he was diminished the astonishing quantity of one hundred and thirty-four pounds. His health and spirits were much improved, and considering his re-

maining size of twenty-three stone, he was very active.

Benjamin Kettle, of Dullington, Cambridgeshire, before he began to reduce himself weighed nearly twenty-eight stone. His plan is to eat only once a day, and to purge with salts three times a week, by which in a short space, he has lost two stone weight. He is now in the workhouse till he is qualified for useful occupation.

T. B. Esq. when nineteen years of age, weighed twenty-three stone, and continued to increase till he was thirty years of age, when he weighed twenty-seven stone. He began to reduce himself at this period; and at the end of twelve months, had lessened his weight four stone. He is now thirty-five years of age, active, healthy, cheerful, and weighs twenty stone. His opinion is, that without a rigid adherence to rules, in exercise and diet, he would have attained the size of Lambert.

T. S. Esq. of the Inner Temple, much inclined to corpulency, instituted a course of experiments somewhat similar to those of Dr. Stark, solely to remedy the inconvenience of his extreme bulk, and to ascertain what food most contributed to his general health. He did not however pursue his plans with the same constancy, though he succeeded in reducing himself three stone weight, in fourteen days. The only fact from his journal, important to the present inquiry, is, that three pounds of milk, added to his daily allowance, of meat or vegetables, increased his weight two ounces per diem. This happened with the same quantity of ale.

The Rev. — C. of the University of Cambridge, who at thirty years of age was enormously fat, reduced himself nearly five stone, by a regulated diet, which he continued for some years, till he perfectly regained his health and symmetry.

W. T. Esq. of the Middle Temple, twenty-

six years of age—reduced himself by great exercise, and abstinence, three stone in a month. After which, by moderate eating, and avoiding fluids as much as possible, he had not at the end of a year and half, altered in weight more than four pounds.

Mr. W. W. of Whitehaven, at about thirty years of age weighed twenty-three stone, eat and drank with great freedom, and in great abundance. He became at length so lethargic, that he frequently fell asleep in the act of eating, even in company.

Much inconvenienced as well as alarmed at these symptoms, he went to Edinburgh to consult Dr. Gregory. In pursuance of his advice, he took a great deal of exercise, lived sparingly, and slept little. The quantum of the former depended on the season, and on the power of the patient to bear fatigue. The prescribed diet consisted principally of brown bread and tea; the bread having a considerable quantity of bran; but as it was necessary

to *fill* the stomach, the patient eat a great quantity of apples, and to enable him to take the necessary exercise, he found a pint of port or sherry per diem indispensible. He retired to rest about eleven, and rose at between four and five in the morning. His only medicine was three brisk purges a week. By this system he reduced himself to fifteen stone. He is now thirty-eight years of age, and has been well the last three or four years.

Mr. R. Pugh had a corpulent patient, who increased four stone in three years, which made him desirous of taking means to reduce himself. He began by lessening the quantity of animal food, and wine, and by degrees left off the latter entirely. He also took a dose of squills every day, sufficient to produce nausea, and increase the quantity of urine. By this plan he lost sixteen pounds weight in three months; but shortly after becoming feeble, he discontinued the plan.

Mr. A. Cooper, in a similar case, ordered

the patient to use much exercise, and to live on biscuits and tea.

Mr. A. P. of St. Paul's Church-yard, of a corpulent habit, and with great difficulty of breathing, by advice of a medical friend, resolutely persevered in abstinence, till by that alone he reduced his size, and relieved his breathing.

Mr. B. a very corpulent man, at the age of sixty, became the subject of a cataract, and previous to his undergoing an operation, was put on a diet without animal food, malt liquor, or wine, and took six grains of calomel, with a purge of jalap, twice a week. He began this plan on the 8th of March, 1811, and continued it to the 26th of April, when he underwent the operation; much inflammation followed, which required large bleeding, and perseverance in low diet; and the frequent recurrence of inflammation rendered it necessary to follow the same plan till July 1812, since which, he has returned to his usual diet, and his health

has been perfectly good. His weight at different periods stands thus :

			stone.	lbs.
1811	March	8	18	6
	——	30	17	8
	April	26	17	3½
	June	29	15	6
	Dec.	10	15	4½
1812	July	1	14	12

A gentleman who weighed twenty-seven stone, after three months training, reports, that he is two stone lighter; by strictly confining himself to spare diet, and exercise. He has taken no medicine whatever, and the chief of his food has been biscuit and tea ; he writes in good spirits, and means to persevere till, to use his own expression, he becomes a "genteel figure." The mode of exercising himself is by working a pump, which he does twice a day, walking occasionally, besides using friction with coarse towels.

I know several corpulent Catholic gentlemen, who are invariably improved in health

and shape, at the end of Lent. Dodart, physician to Louis XIV. generally lost ten pounds weight during Lent, having made the experiment for thirty years: always weighing himself the first and last day.

I shall conclude these cases with an anecdote, related by Sir N. Wraxall, of our venerable Monarch.

"He, (George III.) seemed to have a tendency to become corpulent, if he had not suppressed it by systematic and unremitting temperance. On this subject I shall relate a fact, which was communicated to me by a friend, Sir John Macpherson, who received it from the great Earl of Mansfield, to whom the King himself mentioned it; forcibly demonstrating that strength of mind, renunciation of all excess, and dominion over his appetite, which have characterized George III. at every period of his life. Conversing with William Duke of Cumberland, his uncle, not long before that prince's death in 1764, His

Majesty observed that it was with concern he remarked the duke's augmenting corpulency. 'I lament it not less, Sir,' replied he, "but it is constitutional; and I am much mistaken if your Majesty will not become as large as myself, before you attain to my age.' 'It arises from your not using sufficient exercise," answered the King. 'I use, nevertheless,' said the Duke, 'constant and severe exercise of every kind.—But there is another effort requisite, in order to repress this tendency, which is much more difficult to practise; and without which, no exercise, however violent, will suffice. I mean great renunciation and temperance. Nothing else can prevent your Majesty from growing to my size.' The King made no reply; but the duke's words sunk deep, and produced a lasting impression on his mind. From that day he formed the resolution, as he assured Lord Mansfield, of checking his constitutional inclination to corpulency, by unremitting restraint upon his appetite:—a determination which he carried into complete effect, in defiance of every temptation."

The three principal points then in the removal of obesity are, diet, exercise, and sleep. The former of these has already been amply discussed, and illustrated in the foregoing cases, of the latter, it may be remarked that, sleep implies inaction, a state favourable to the deposition of fat. Of this effect of sleep, those in the habit of fattening cattle are so well aware, that whenever an animal becomes restless, and will not sleep, it is invariably turned loose, as unprofitable. The physicians who attended Dionysius, the son of Clearchus, who lived in continual fear of suffocation from fat, adopted a very curious mode of keeping him awake: they appointed a person to prick his sides with very long and sharp needles, whenever he fell into a profound sleep, which was not interrupted by the operation, till the needle having passed through the fat, arrived at the sensible parts beneath.

The Medicina Gymnastica, is as ancient as the days of Hippocrates, we learn from Zenophon how much it was cultivated in the Persian schools; and its importance is

acknowledged in most surgical complaints, up to this hour. Mr. Abernethy enforces it throughout his writings, from a belief, as he says, that it is not sufficiently employed as a medical agent. The value of exercise in this instance consists, apparently, in the increase of the natural discharges, particularly cutaneous perspiration. Sanctorius has shewn how much the weight of the body is regulated by this discharge, and informs us, that exercise from the seventh to the eleventh hour after eating, wastes more insensibly in one hour, than in three at any other time. Dean Swift, who in the early part of his life was attacked with giddiness, was recommended to use violent exercise, which he daily practised, by running up a hill, near the house, and back again, every two hours, the distance of about half a mile, which he used to perform in about six minutes.

Friction ought not to be omitted. It formed a regular system in the ordinary habits of the Romans, and was prescribed to a great extent

by their physicians. We find a celebrated modern physiologist entertaining the same opinion. "There are few remedies," says Whytt, "of greater service in obstructions of the indolent kind, than gentle frictions. It not only promotes the circulation through the small vessels, but tends to attenuate and increase the absorption of the matter stagnating in the follicles, or extravasated in the spaces of the cellular membrane of the obstructed part." The Hindoos have a mode of applying friction, called champuing, which, independent of medical intention, is considered a great luxury. There is a *champuer* now at Brighton, who performs in the Indian style. This operation has been practised on two patients of mine. Friction about the body is particularly efficacious in exciting the action of the absorbents.

By the use of vinegar the Spanish General Vitellis, made his skin hang about him like a pelisse, but of the wonderful dilatibility of the skin, no instance equals the Spaniard who

shewed himself to Van-Horn, Silvius, Piso, and other learned men at Amsterdam. Taking up with his left hand the skin of his right shoulder, he would bring the same up to his mouth: again he would draw the skin of his chin down to his breast like a beard, and presently put it upwards to the top of his head, hiding both his eyes therewith; after which, the same would return orderly and equally to its proper place.

The ancients were not only well acquainted with the medicinal virtues of vinegar in many diseases, but with its efficacy in preventing them. It was the common drink of the Roman soldiers: every one was obliged to carry with him a bottle of it, which was occasionally mixed with water, and by Celsus called Poscha. In corpulency it has frequently been resorted to, and proved injurious by the mode of its administration. "In all things," says a learned writer, "which our art contains, there is nothing that does good but may also do harm." From what has fallen within my experi-

ence, I should apply the observation to vinegar. But all danger may be avoided by its external application, if we believe the following eulogistic account of an old author.

De Acidulorum Usu Externo. " Hæc ex longo ipsarum usu vires calefaciendi, refrigerandi, exiccandi, adstringendi, consolidandi, resolvendi, attenuandi, apperiandi, digerendi, abstergendi, mundificandi, emolliendi, coquendi, discutiendi, imbibendi, absorbendi, temperandi, putredini resistendi, tonum roborandi, motum partibus quibusdam singularum perversum corrigendi, tardum promovendi, nimium sistendi, laxa membra densandi, debilis partis firmandi, alvum movendi, calculum ac urinas pellendi, per urinam, sudorem ac insensibilem transpirationem humores cum salibus, sulphuribus, aliisque heterogeneis educendi, nam per omnia emunctoria acidulæ totum evacuant corpus."

When pharmaceutical and dietetical remedies fail, surgical operations have been proposed for the cure of corpulency. Wideman says, "Videndum an chirurgia quoque aliqua nobis queat suppeditare hunc in finem utilia:" then after discussing lancets and knives, proceeds to the virtues of cauteries. And Zacutus, in his observations, "De Obesitate Nimia," says, "Prodigiosa corporis crassities, scarificatione, hirudinum suctu, curatur."

APPENDIX

CONTAINING A FEW

HISTORIES of PRETERNATURAL OBESITY.

To make a just comparison between what may be termed fat and lean, we must consider each in the degree of excess or defect, from that happy medium which denotes health. By way of example, of extremes—" which depart from perfect sanity" let us take—Philotus, the poet, who was so lean, that lead was fastened to his shoes to prevent his being blown away; and Dionysius, of Heraclea, who, after dying choaked with fat, could scarcely be moved to his grave.

It has been before remarked, that for one fat person in France or Spain there are an hundred in England. It is true we read of the corpulent emperor Vitellius;—Sancho the Fat, king of Leon;—Sactius Crassus, king of Spain;—and Louis le Gras, king of France; but I believe the history of all Europe would not furnish such a list as might be made out from the annals of our own country. The following cases may serve as a specimen.

Mr. Lambert, of Leicester, weighed fifty-two stone eleven pounds (fourteen pounds to the stone).*

* The following little curiosity may be opposed as a contrast to the man, who in "corporeal greatness had no competitor."

March 19th, 1754, died, in Glamorganshire, of mere old age and a gradual decay of nature, at seventeen years and two months, Hopkins Hopkins, the little Welchman lately shewn in London. He never weighed more than seventeen pounds, but for three years past no more than twelve. The parents have still six children left, all of whom no way differ from other children, except one girl of twelve years of age, who weighs only eighteen pounds,

Died, at Stainton, on the 2d of January, 1816, aged fifty-two, Samuel Sugars, gent. He was thought to be the largest man in England, and weighed with a single wood coffin fifty stone.

Mr. Bright, of Malden, was forty-two stone and a half the last time he weighed; but it is supposed at his death that his weight was forty-four stone, or six hundred and sixteen pounds. Dr. Coe, in his account of him in the Philosophical Transactions, expresses his astonishment, and declares that he never heard or read, of a man who equalled, or even came near to him in weight; yet he has been exceeded ten stone by Mr. Lambert.

October 13th, 1754, died, Mr. Jacob Powell, of Stebbing in Essex, who weighed almost as much as Mr. Bright of Malden,

and bears upon her most of the marks of old age, and in all respects resembles her brother when at that age.

Gentleman's Magazine, vol. XXIV. p. 191.

being near forty stone, or five hundred and sixty pounds. His body was above five yards in circumference, and his limbs in proportion. He had sixteen men to carry him to his grave.

Gentleman's Magazine, vol. XXIV. p. 483.

Mr. Baker, of Worcester, supposed to be larger than Mr. Bright. His coffin measured seven feet over, was bigger than an ordinary hearse, and part of the wall was obliged to be taken down for its passage.

March 19th, 1797, died in his fifty-eighth year, Philip Hayes, professor of musick. He was supposed to be the largest man in England, at that time, and nearly equal in weight to Mr. Bright.

May 1775, died Mr. Spooner, an eminent farmer at Skillington, near Tamworth, Warwickshire, aged fifty-seven. He weighed, four or five weeks before his death, forty stone nine pounds, and measured four feet three inches across the shoulders.

Mr. Stoneclift, of Hallifax in Yorkshire, thirty-five stone.

Mr. Stoneclift, brother of the above, thirty-four stone.

Philosophical Transactions, Vol. xliv. p. 100.

Dec. 1763, died at Holt, near Winbourn, Dorsetshire, the great Mr. Benjamin Bower, so called from his enormous size; he weighed thirty-four stone four pounds. Part of the wall of the room where he died was obliged to be taken down to get the corpse out, and no hearse being wide enough to admit the coffin, it was placed on the carriage.

Keysler, in his travels, speaks of a corpulent Englishman, who in passing through Savoy, was obliged to make use of twelve chairmen. He is said to have weighed five hundred and fifty pounds, or thirty-nine stone four pounds.

He mentions also, a young Englishman of Lincoln, who ate eighteen pounds of beef daily, and died, 1724, in the twenty-eighth year of his age. He weighed five hundred and thirty pounds or thirty-seven stone twelve pounds.

Mr. Wharton, aged thirty-four, thirty-four stone. His coffin measured six feet across the shoulders, and the side of the house was taken down to let him to the grave. When eighteen years old he weighed eighteen stone, and increased a stone each year.

Vide Times, November 28, 1810; there is also a similar Case in the Courier, October 6, 1809.

James Kemp, of the parish of Chailey in Sussex, schoolmaster, died 1809, aged fifty. He weighed thirty-four stone, and could not walk without great difficulty.

My friend, Dr. Watson, of Tonbridge, attended a baker in Pye Corner, neighbourhood

of Smithfield, who was an enormous size, and could not move out of his chair for many years. He was of a costive habit, and it required four times the strength of an ordinary purgative to operate upon him. He weighed upwards of thirty-four stone, would frequently eat a small shoulder of mutton from his own oven, of about five pounds, and proportionally of other things, with a gallon of good beer. He, however, with great resolution, persisted for one year to live on water-gruel and brown bread, by which he lost nearly 200lbs. of his bulk.

There is now living in the same neighbourhood, another baker, who, for a short man, is one of the fattest in England. His family, on the mother's side, are all fat. His father was an ordinary sized man. He is a great eater, and delights in greasy food, particularly fat bacon, a piece of which, entirely devoid of lean, he expatiated on to me as the most delicious meat he knew. His weight is uncer-

tain; as he wishes to persuade himself that his size is not immoderate, and he mentioned with great satisfaction, that he was not so large as he had been, appealing to my friend, Mr. Beveridge, of Hatton Garden, who introduced me to him, for the truth of the assertion.

1815. Died at Trenaw, in Cornwall, a person known by the appellation of Giant Chillcott. He measured at the breast six feet nine inches, and weighed four hundred and sixty pounds. One of his stockings held six gallons of wheat.

Dr. Cheyne of London, thirty-two stone.

In 1789, died at Box, near Bath, Mr. Morgan Davis, aged 64. He weighed thirty-two stone.

Adam Fitch, who died about ten years ago, at Linton, in Cambridgeshire, weighed upwards of thirty stone; and

John Fitch, of Ropsley, Lincolnshire nearly as much.

Mr. S.... died at Kensington, 18.., aged thirty-eight. Weighed thirty stone.

He was not remarkably corpulent till after twenty years of age, when a relation leaving him a large fortune, he indulged in a luxurious and indolent life, till he became too unwieldy to move. His greatest excess, as well as luxury, was in drinking strong ale.

Mr. Pride, of the parish of St. James's, weighed twenty-eight stone. During an illness, that terminated fatally, he lost between eight and nine stone.

Among those said to have died of fat, is the celebrated Counsellor Fitzgerald.

The late Mr. Middleton, of ——, weighed twenty-eight stone.

There is at Cambridge now living a member of the university, who is a prodigy of corpulency, vulgarly called "Fat ———." He cannot go out in the day time without exciting the astonishment of the common people; the fat on his legs overhanging his shoes, after the manner of Lambert and Bright.

And in the neighbourhood of the university, a few months ago, died of fat, Mr. Jerman, a miller, whose weight was nearly twenty-eight stone.

Captain — K. of the Jamaica trade, weighs nearly twenty-eight stone. He is a great eater, and in the course of the night, always drinks from three to four quarts of water. His size may be judged by the observation of a negro, who described him as "great big man! —man, big as tub! massa."

Died, December 10th, 1741, Mr. Henry Wanyford, Steward to the Earl of Essex.

He was of so large a size that it was necessary to unroof the hearse, before the coffin could be admitted; and so heavy as to be moved along the church-yard on rollers.

Lately died at Hare-Street, Herts, J. L., a farmer, whose weight exceeded twenty-six stone, and whose death was attributed to suffocation from fat. He was a great eater of fat meats, and drank large quantities of ale. In the same parish, and under similar circumstances, died T. M. aged 25.

Mr. Collett, late master of the Evesham Academy, who died at Worcester, March 1816; weighed upwards of twenty-six stone. When twelve years old, he was nearly as large as at the time of his death. At two years of age, two nurses were employed to lift him in and out of bed, one of whom, in a fit of anger, but without any extraordinary exertion, he felled to the floor with a blow of his hand.

Mr. John Love, Bookseller, of Weymouth, suffocated by fat in the forty-first year of his age, weighed twenty-six stone, or three hundred and sixty-four pounds.

Mr. Palmer, who kept the Golden Lion at Brompton in Kent, weighed twenty-five stone, or three hundred and fifty pounds. At his death it was found necessary to take out the windows of the tap-room, to make a passage for the coffin.

In the Gentleman's Magazine, March, 1789, is an account of a man who kept his bed three years, being raised up by pullies once in three weeks or a month. Supposed to weigh upwards of twenty-six stone.

The history of the stage furnishes many examples.

John Lowin, who was the original Falstaff, was adapted to the character from his corpu-

lence. Others also have played that character, having hardly any other qualification than their size. Of these may be reckoned, John Hall, of the Theatre, Lincoln's Inn; and Lewis Layfield of Drury Lane.

Harper, the comedian, is spoken of as being "marvellously corpulent," and a fit representative of the fat knight.

Charles Hulet was able to perform the part of Falstaff, without any addition to his dress. His Biographer says, "he was a great benefactor to the malt tax, which was the cause of that mountain of fat he was loaded with."

Mr. Stephen Kemble has personified and performed the character with great ability, in our days.

An anecdote is told by Colley Cibber of a performer, with a very mean salary, who played the apothecary in Romeo and Juliet, so ex-

actly to the satisfaction of the audience, that this little part, independent of the other characters, drew immense houses whenever the play was performed. The manager, in consequence, thought it but justice to advance the actor's salary; on which the poor man (who, like the character he represented, had been half starved before), began to live so comfortably, that he became too plump for the part; and being of no importance in any thing else, the manager of course now wholly discharged him. Thus actually reduced to the want of a piece of bread, in a short time he became a proper figure for the part in which he had attracted so much popular favour.

Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Prichard, becoming latterly very corpulent, were one night performing the characters of Lady Easy and Edging, in the comedy of the Careless Husband. In a part where the former desires the latter to take up a letter which is dropped on the

stage, Mrs. Clive, (who could as well have taken up the monument), cried out, "Not I, indeed! take it up yourself, if you like it." This threw an equal embarrassment on the other, which the audience seeing, began to titter. At last Mrs. Prichard, with great presence of mind, exclaimed: "Well, Mrs. Pert, since you w'ont take up the letter, I must only get one that will;" and accordingly beckoned towards the side scene, when one of the servants of the house came forward and terminated the dispute.

Our church-yards afford melancholy details of the sudden death of fat people.

In the year 1755, died, the great tallow-chandler, whose life and death are thus laconically recorded:

Here lies in earth an honest fellow,
Who died by fat, and lived by tallow.

Another excellent person is thus lamented:

Here lies the body of Thomas Dollman,
A vastly *fat*, though not a very tall man;
Full twenty stone he weighed, yet I am told,
His captain thought him worth his *weight* in gold;
Grim Death, *who ne'er to nobody* shews favor,
Hurried him off, for all his good behaviour;
Regardless of his weight, he bundled him away,
'Fore any one "Jack Robinson" could say.

Mr. Holder's fate is not only lamented, but a moral lesson given with his history.

"But why he grew so fat i' th' waist,
Now mark ye, the true reason;
When other people used to *fast*,
He *feasted* in that season."

"So now alas! hath cruel Death,
Laid him in his Sepulchre."

* * * * * * * *

"Therefore good people, here 'tis seen,
You plainly may see here,
That fat men sooner die than lean,
Witness fat Johnny Holder."

The fair sex are not exempt from this complaint; the instances, if less numerous, are equally remarkable. Among these, if we had her history, the fat woman of Brentford, whose petticoat fitted Falstaff, would no doubt take a conspicuous place. Failing of any account of this great personage, I shall refer to some of a more modern date.

Dr. Short mentions a young lady, who died of corpulency in the twenty-fifth year of her age, who weighed above five hundred pounds; she was a monster in nature for bulk; "and the most corpulent man I ever did see," says the Doctor, "was to her as a man of middle habit is to one exhausted by an atrophy."

Elizabeth Stuart who died at Cambridge on the 28th of March, 1807, aged 44, weighed twenty-three stone. She was inclined to be

corpulent from her infancy ; lived a regular, but inactive and indolent life. A few years before her death she had a severe illness, occasioned by an inflammation in her limbs, of which she afterwards perfectly recovered. She was of a cheerful disposition, but so little inclined to move, that the only mode by which she could be induced to get from bed, was by drawing her and the feather bed on to the floor, and then it required the aid of three strong men to place her in a chair, in which she was wheeled to the fire place. An attempt was three times made to bleed her on account of a drowsiness, but each time it was found impossible to open a vein, from the quantity of fat surrounding it. Her diet was chiefly vegetables and pastry; but she was constantly drinking milk and water, consuming above a gallon in the course of each night, which she voided almost as soon as drank, never sleeping more than three quarters of an hour from this distressing interruption. Her death was sudden. The sleeves

of her gown measured three feet in circumference.

She left four children all inclined to be corpulent.

There is also still living, in Cambridge, a woman of the lower order, who is of short stature, and weighs twenty stone. She is not above thirty years of age, and has been nearly the same size ever since she was two and twenty.

To these may be added two of the cyprian corps, who are very little less than the above.

July 1st, 1764, died, Mrs. Harris, opposite St. Ann's Church, Soho; believed to be the largest woman in England, weighing three hundred and twenty pounds, or twenty-two stone twelve pounds.

March 10th, 1787, died, at her mother's house at Highbury, of a *suffocation of fat*, Mrs. Wilkinson, only daughter of the late Mr. Joseph Garsedd, and wife of Mr. W—, of Gold Street, Wood Street.

Mrs. M——, who died in Piccadilly, was, taken out of the window to be buried.

Mrs. ——, of Ipswich, weighs twenty-three stone.

Lady ——, of Essex, measures more in girth than in height. Near Chipping Ongar in the same county, are two similar cases; and not long since the Hammersmith stage was upset, being ill balanced by a lady of like dimensions.

I shall now enumerate some instances of obesity at an early period of life.

Mr. J. Rogers, jun. of Watford, at eighteen years of age weighed twenty-four stone; which surpasses Mr. Bright, who did not weigh twenty-four stone till he was twenty years of age.

In the neighbourhood of Congleton, in Staffordshire, lately died a boy, who, at seventeen years of age, weighed seventeen stone. He died before he was eighteen.

At the University at Cambridge, a few years ago, there were several young men who might be recorded in this list. There is one student now, twenty years of age, weighing twenty stone.

Mr. J.... of St. John's College, eighteen years of age, weighed eighteen stone, and

now at forty years, weighs upwards of twenty-four stone.

Mr. L.... of Trinity College, of the same age, weighed nearly as much, and

The son of the Bishop of —— who at nineteen, weighed nearly twenty stone.

This latter gentleman was also remarkable for his wit. A fellow collegian, son of a Dean, of a very lean and spare habit, expressing his astonishment at their difference of size, he explained the reason by the following extempore parody of the old song :

There's a difference between
A Bishop and a Dean,
And I'll tell you the reason why:
A Dean cannot dish-up,
A dinner like a Bishop,
To feed such a fat son as I.

There have been, also, instances of extra-

ordinary bulk in children and infants. In the year 1780, a phenomenon of this kind was publicly exhibited in London, in the person of Thomas Hills Everitt. He was not remarkably large when born, but began, when six weeks old, to increase rapidly, and attained a most extraordinary size before his death, which happened at the age of eighteen months. His dimensions, when eleven months old, were as follow:—Height, three feet nine inches; his girth round the breast, two feet six inches; the loins, three feet one inch; the thigh, one foot ten inches; the leg, one foot two inches; the arm, eleven inches and a half; the wrist, nine inches.

A similar instance is now to be seen in Middle Temple Lane, in a child only six months old.

About twelve years ago, I saw an equally curious case, in a boy named Charles Pitter. He was sixteen years of age, and measured

three feet eleven inches round the body; two feet four inches round the thigh; one foot seven inches round the knee, the same round the calf of the leg, and one foot two inches round the arm. He was very nearly as broad as long, his height being little more than four feet.

Mr. Bright, when twelve years old, weighed one hundred and forty-four pounds, and there was another boy in Malden at the same time, fourteen years of age, who weighed as much.

Tulpius, Obs. Medic. lib. III. cap. 55, tells of a boy who, at five years of age, weighed one hundred and fifty pounds, or ten stone ten pounds.

A child five years, as big as is usual at fifteen, was exhibited to the Academy of Sciences at Lyons, by Mons. Pestalassi, Jan. 7, 1726.

Isaac Butterfield, born at Keightley, near

Leeds, February 20th, 1781, was exhibited at the cane-shop in Spring-gardens. In November, 1782, he measured three feet in height; thirteen inches round his arm; two feet two inches round his thigh; sixteen inches across the shoulders, and weighed near a hundred weight. He died February 1st, 1783.

Thomas Hall, of Willingham, in Cambridgeshire, died September, 1747, aged five years and ten months. A year before his death, he weighed six stone one pound.

Lately at Pudsey Hough, —— Hainsworth, aged ten years and eight months, measured round the chest, thirty-four inches; fifteen round the calf of the leg; nine inches round the ancle, and ten round the upper part of the arm.

In the Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. 50, is an account of a boy who, at seven years old, weighed nine stone. And in the same Vol.

page 566, a similar case is mentioned of a child, the son of Mr. John Collet, of Upper Slaughter in Gloucestershire.

A child of the name of Wybrants was exhibited in London in 1806; who, at four months old, weighed thirty-nine pounds—measured two feet round the body; fifteen inches round the thigh, and eight inches round the arm.

Oct. 1788. Died suddenly, at an inn in the city of York, the surprising Worcestershire girl. This child was only five years old. Her face was beautiful, and she was exceedingly active. She was four feet in height; four feet two inches round the breast; four feet six inches round the hips, and eighteen inches round each leg. She weighed near two hundred weight.

Married, February 1814, Mr. S. Panton, of Nafferton, Yorkshire, to the only daughter

of Mr. Thomas Allanby. When the nuptials took place, the bride was only thirteen years old; and still more remarkable, when she was seven years old, she weighed seven stone; when nine, nine stone; and so on to eleven; but after that time, her age increased more than her weight: but she weighed twelve stone when she married.

1814. Died, aged twelve years, Ann Peteers, daughter of a tailor of Abbey Foregate, in Shrewsbury. This child had been singularly corpulent from her birth; and her obesity increased until she became a remarkable spectacle.

Mary Tate, twelve years old last October, now living at Cambridge, weighs thirteen stone. She is the daughter of a publican in Sidney-street, and was one of twins; the other child died at two years of age. When Mary was born, she was not larger than usual, but began to increase at five years, and when six years old

as exhibted to the public at a shilling each person. Her parents are corpulent. From the rapid accumulation of fat, she bids fair to be one of the most extraordinary cases hitherto known in the fair sex. It should be added that, she was afflicted with the fever which prevailed in Cambridge a few months back, and recovered without any apparent diminution in her size.

There is also now living near Aber-Ogwen in North Wales, John Hughes, aged eight years, who weighs nine stone.

In Paris they show an infant Hercules, who is immensely fat. He is about seven years old, born near Joigny; his complexion like that of a fat cook in a heat; black eyes and prominent eye-brows; about three feet four inches in height, and four feet five inches in circumference; his legs and arms like those of a sturdy washer-woman, and the hands and feet of an ordinary child of his own age; his body

resembling the figure of a corpulent Chinese Mandarine, his weight is two hundred and twenty pounds.

There is a fat girl of the name of West now going about to fairs in England, as a show.

Before I conclude, I shall state a very interesting case of fatal accumulation of fat about the heart, communicated to me by my friend, Mr. White, of the Westminster Hospital.

The subject was no other than the celebrated Dr. Brian Higgins, so well known as one of the early reformers of Chemistry in Great Britain. The immediate symptoms which preceded his death, not more than twelve hours, were an uneasiness about the

præcordia. He prescribed bleeding for himself, and a blister to the sternum; the blood exhibited the buffy surface: he retired to bed about ten at night, still complaining of the oppression at the chest. After having been in bed about an hour, his wife was awoke by the struggles which had arisen, and which were caused by an increased difficulty of respiration; he was perfectly sensible, but had not the power of utterance, and he died in a very few minutes, apparently from oppressed respiration. He had frequently complained to his medical friends of a sense of uneasiness and oppression about the præcordia, and they suggested the probability of water in the chest or pericardium. The symptoms, however, had never been urgent, nor had he been confined through them. He had on the morning of the day on which he died, walked out, and returned home complaining of the increased oppressive sensation of the chest. He was a man who was regarded as rather corpulent, but by no means remarkably so.

The body was opened the day after death, and presented one of the most remarkable instances of fatty accumulation ever beheld. The division of the thoracic and abdominal integuments exhibited at least two inches of fat in thickness, covering the muscles; the latter were small, and had a loose, flabby, and greasy texture, as if soaked in oil. The upper portion of the peritonæum presented an unusual appearance. It had a duplicature, unconnected with the abdomen, forming a porch, which contained a large quantity of soft fat, extending over the epigastric region. The opening of the abdomen presented an enormous omentum, which had much the appearance of a Smithfield prize pig when expanded. Its upper portion was at least three inches in thickness, and when turned back on the sternum, the arch of the colon could only be seen at intervals "meandering through its fatty bed." All the viscera were loaded and thickly coated with fat. With the exception of numerous small cal-

culi in the gall bladder, nothing was found deviating from health. The thorax being opened, discovered the lungs perfectly healthy, but much compressed by a large heart, and this cavity was also much lessened by the abdominal fat pushing up the diaphragm. On opening the pericardium, a huge lump of fat appeared, which was the heart, oppressively loaded with this matter. No portion of the muscular part, until the fat was torn off, was to be seen, and the fibres of this organ appeared from their burthen, to be very inadequate for the purposes of circulation. No morbid alteration was in this cavity visible. No fluid in the pericardium or chest.

Here then I shall close this motley collection, formed from much and varied reading, medical correspondence, and personal observation. The statement of many of the cases is given in the language of the par-

ties. In some, no more is said than is sufficient to identify the fact. In others, where the public journals or private authority warranted it, the history is more explicit.

If the whole should be finished with less gravity than the subject seems to require, my apology must be, in the miscellaneous sources from which it is derived, and the circumstances under which it was commenced, the recording of which brings with it the reminiscence of early associations:—Painful, in this instance, in the recollection of a departed friend, for whom this Essay was originally written, and to whose

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