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THE

MOTHER'S MONITOR,

OR

NURSERY ERRORS.

BY

JAMES QUILTER RUMBALL,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS,

&c. &c. &c.

"Like as an arrow in the hands of the giant, even so are young children: Happy is the man who hath his quiver full of them."

Psalm cxxvii.

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PREFACE.

In offering the following observations to the public, the Author by no means flatters himself that he has written any thing deserving the notice of his professional brethren. He pretends to have put down nothing but what common sense would dictate, to have opposed no theory which common sense does not also decry.

He remembers a remark to have been made by his old preceptor, Sir Wm. Blizard, which struck him

forcibly at the time, and which may, in part, possibly have stimulated him to the present undertaking—"that no medical man, however few his opportunities, or however humble his talents, could be engaged in practice, without daily witnessing some peculiarities either in the progress or treatment of disease, which if fairly detailed would assist us in our professional enquiries."

The subject he has chosen is certainly an important one, and one too upon which much has been written; but he is not aware of any book that treats it exactly in the way which it appears useful to him to

view it, or which conveys in so small a compass, the observations and facts necessary, in his opinion, to be well understood by a good mother.

Daily experience has taught him, how improper are many of the opinions and practices employed in nursery legislation; and if he has, in some instances, ventured beyond that holy precinct, and attacked some of the grown-up absurdities; if in treating of diet, he has laughed at the nicety with which some men pretend to measure the stomach; and if in considering the employment of mercury, he has not looked upon it as a remedy for all evils,

however opposite in their origin or result; in short, if he does not admit the correctness of an old physician's practice, who, to save trouble, had a prescription printed, and gave it as a remedy for all complaints: He hopes, nevertheless, to escape the charge of presumption, for he but echos the opinions of men, whose names and high standing in the profession, if mentioned, would shield him from worse attacks than are likely to be made upon him.

He does not apologize for the very sketchy nature of his work, because he has all along intended it to form an introduction to the general history

and treatment of infantile diseases, compiled from the best authorities, and corrected to the present time. Whether or no he will ever finish the design, must depend upon circumstances over which he has no controul, and about which therefore he will not prognosticate. But as it may chance that this will be his first and last appearance in public, in his own name, he has endeavoured to make his defence of vaccination as conclusive as his materials would warrant, in the hopes of rescuing one fair face, or one loved life from loss or defilement.

London, 1829.

MORTALITY OF CHILDREN.

When Madame de Stael asked Napoleon, whom he thought the first woman in France, he answered, "She who has given the state most children."

If this be true, must it not be considered a lamentable fact, that half the human race die in infancy.

In a work upon the mortality of children by Mr. John Robertson, this truth is clearly demonstrated by means of tables, one of which I insert; it shews

the average number of deaths under ten years of age, for a period of thirty-five years, in London.

For the sake of exhibiting this more clearly, he divides the whole term into five periods of seven years each, indicated by the first column: the second shews the total number of deaths in the registers during each period: the third column exhibits the per centage of deaths under two years of age in each period: the fourth in like manner the per centage of deaths between the ages of two and five years: the fifth the per centage between five and ten: and the sixth and last column shews the total per centage of deaths in each period.

TABLE.

Periods of 7 years each.	Total No. of Deaths in the Registers.	Under the Age of 2 Years.	Between 2 and 5.	Between 5 and 10.	Total per centage of Deaths under 10 Years.
1	137,260	32.68	9.99	3.91	46.58
2	134,760	31.77	11.05	4.02	46.84
3	133,864	28.73	11.37	4.28	44.35
4	127,521	29.99	11.05	4.00	45.04
5	137,908	26.84	9.65	4. 30	40.79

Thus upon an average in London, 30 out of every 100 die under two years, and about 45 per cent. under ten. At Glasgow the average deaths under ten, according to Dr. Watts, is 55 per cent.; in Liverpool 49; whilst in Ackworth, a country parish in Yorkshire, the average is as low as 28. Thus indicating the

great difference between the value of human life in large towns, and in the country.

How are we to account for this apparent contravention of God's will. It cannot for a moment be supposed that he creates any thing in vain, much less that he sends man into the world, predestined in a majority of instances to quit it on the very threshold of existence; this would be indeed a mockery and a falling off from wisdom, savoring more of the rash aimless deeds of the creature, than the immutable purposes of the Creator.

Setting aside the folly of such a dispensation, analogy will at once satisfy us that it was never meant.

Upon a cursory survey of animals,

we find that the number of their progeny is always proportionate to the mischances to which they are exposed. Those among either insects, fishes, birds, or beasts, which serve as food to others, give birth to myriads of their kind, that their race may not be utterly destroyed. Thus the rabbit, partridges, pheasants, &c. whose young are preyed upon by foxes, polecats and birds, have a very numerous offspring; whilst the lion, tiger, horse, cow, eagle, whale, and indeed all who are able to provide for and protect their young, are restricted to one or two at a birth, and this at long intervals.

That there are many other reasons for this general law, I am well aware; such as the mode of nourishment,

duration of life, &c. But it is sufficient to advert to the fact, to prove that nature invariably adapts the means to the end, that she everywhere regulates the supply by the demand, and where, (as in our own race,) we do not observe any means for repairing the enormous waste of infantile life which is proved to occur, it is a fair inference that her views are thwarted by some gross mismanagement, or by accidents, against which she has neither calculated nor provided.

The offspring of man is, it is true, the most helpless of all created beings; almost all others can, from birth, fly from danger or repel it, and scarcely any need protection beyond the first few days of existence; but he who has protracted in us the period of utter help-

lessness to months, and even years, has also given to our parents power, more than equivalent to all our wants.

By her superior knowledge, the mother foresees and guards against all the evils to which her child is exposed. She weaves a garment and builds a house to shield it from the weather; she selects and prepares its food, watches its slumbers, and by her cries invokes the strong arm of the father, should unforeseen danger approach, which singly she is unable to resist; whilst in her arms she gives it securely that exercise of which every animal has need, and which every other can take for itself.

The life of a child, then, is in little danger from external accidents,—and I can hardly persuade myself that it brings

into the world with it any internal cause to which we may refer the premature mortality we are considering. Certain it is, that with other animals this is as healthy a period of life as any, and if among our domestic tribes a large proportion die young, it proves that even with them the interference of man is productive of evil; and, if I mistake not, this single fact will lead us to a true solution of the problem, "Why so many children die in infancy."

The nearer to its source, the stronger is life. More than once has a live infant been found clinging to the paps of its frozen mother; and those who watch the progress of disease, cannot but be frequently astonished at seeing a child exist for days and weeks without food,

without rest, in continued pain and suffering, till emaciation has left but little to die; and at last, when even "hope is sick," it springs into health with bounds that none but youth can take.

In the following pages I shall endeavour to point out some of the prevailing errors to which, I think, many children are daily sacrificed; and my trouble will be indeed repaid, if I shall cause only one fond but mistaken mother to stop in time, and not perversely throw away the blessings God has given to her.

My voice should have some weight, if preserving six very delicate children, thus far without loss, be any proof of the correctness of my views: few families are thus fortunate, but I verily believe nearly all might be so.

DANGERS ATTENDING PREGNANCY AND CHILD-BIRTH.

From the very commencement of life, even in the mother's womb, the evils of civilization are inflicted upon us. Luxury, excited sensibility, depressing passions, irregularities in taking rest or exercise, improper diet, and unwholesome employments, are the frequent and fruitful sources of abortion. From calculations that have been made, it is affirmed that, upon an average, women miscarry once in three times; and naturalists agree in ascribing most of the deviations from health and beauty to impressions conveyed to the fœtus in the womb. Lawrence even considers these as the sole cause of the varieties

into which mankind is divided; and Dr. Pritchard, in his Physical History of Man, supposes that the influence of climate, and other local agencies, are more particularly felt by the unborn babe, and, therefore, that peculiar characters, whether of form, colour, or temperament, are for the most part connate, that is, born with the individual; and Spurzheim declares innateness, or the propagation of peculiarities from parents to children, "to be by far the most powerful of all operative causes, whether for good or for evil."

The vulgar notion, then, of marks and moles, of the object by which a mother has been alarmed, or the delicacy for which she may have vainly longed, becoming imprinted on her child, rests

upon experience, and is consonant both to reason and philosophy.

Some diseases, as gout, insanity, asthma, consumption, and a host of others, are clearly hereditary: that is, a father or mother in whom a disease of this kind exists, will entail upon the child a peculiarity of constitution which renders it more susceptible of the complaint of its parent than of any other. The disease itself does not descend, but only a tendency to it, and upon exposure to cold, the child of a consumptive mother will, in all probability, exhibit an affection of the chest; whilst if apoplexy has killed the father, it will, if not guarded against, too frequently endanger the life of the son; but that the disease itself does not descend, is proved

by the simple fact, that of a large family, the irregularities of one only, perhaps, will bring down upon himself the curse of his parents; and insanity, in particular, often passes over the next, to seize upon the third or fourth generation.

If this be true of well marked diseases, there can be little doubt that it holds good also with regard to peculiar idiosyncrasies, or those deviations from a healthy tone of mind or body, which constitute in this world the mass of unbearable, because of unpitied and unappreciated misery: a misery unknown but to its possessor, and taken into account only by God, in estimating men's motives or judging their conduct.

These derangements, whether we call them nervous or hypochondriacal—or, indeed, by any other name sufficiently indefinite to conceal our ignorance,—more readily descend than stronger diseases, inasmuch as they constitute a smaller deviation from health, and arise from an incalculable number of causes, one or other of which besets us from the beginning of life to the end of it.

If before birth man's offspring be liable to so many casualties; if hundreds die in the womb, how many fall at the very threshold of their own separate existence ?

Multitudes are yearly sacrificed upon the shrine of ignorance and prejudice, who, but for the officious and uncalled

for interference of some meddling midwife, (male or female,) would have come into the world in safety and in health. In this process, the more haste is invariably the less speed; he who hurries labour may deem himself fortunate if he protract not delivery, and if he hath much practice he had need of a small conscience.

Teachers are too apt to pass lightly over the common forms of labour, but to detail minutely every difficulty which is occasionally to be met with. The exception becomes thus to be considered as the rule, and the minds of students are led to dwell upon unnatural labours, and the means of relieving and safely conducting them; and it is rare indeed to meet a young man fresh

from the hospitals, who does not expect to find a cross presentation, or distorted pelvis, in every case he is called to. If all be right, he still fancies that every pain should have a perceptible effect, and if he does not find it so, instead of waiting patiently for the slow but sure effect of nature's own method, every groan from the mother, and every whisper of the attendants, are construed into reproaches for his inactivity, and too frequently urge him on to assist, as he thinks, but really to injure both parent and child.

Other and older practitioners, from the more unworthy motive of getting quit of a wearisome attendance, give help where it can only do harm; and I have known some who have used instru-

ments even, when they ought only to have employed patience.

The remedy for all this is in the mother's own hands. Let her trust more to God and less to her accoucheur. Let him turn out of the room any officious fool who attempts, by her unasked opinions, to confuse him and alarm his patient; and above all, let no instrumental force be used, till more than himself shall have declared it necessary. The most successful practitioners I have known, have meddled the least; and I do most sincerely believe, that if child-birth were left entirely to the unassisted powers of nature, the number of deaths would be materially less than now occur from injudicious interference.

The following table, shewing the number of deaths in the British Lying-in Hospital, affords a gratifying proof of the great improvement which has taken place in the practice of midwifery during the last century; but I much fear that the records of private practice, would not exhibit so satisfactory a result.

It may be permitted me to state, however, that neither my father, my uncle, nor myself, in a collective practice of more than sixty years, ever lost a woman in child-bed.

Proportion of Deaths in the British Lying-In Hospital.

Years.	of Women.	of Children.
From Nov. 1749 to Dec. 1758	1 in 42	1 in 15
„ „ 1759 „ „ 1768	1 in 50	1 in 20
„ „ 1769 „ „ 1778	1 in 53	1 in 42
„ „ 1779 „ „ 1788	1 in 60	1 in 44
„ „ 1789 „ „ 1798	1 in 288	1 in 77
In „ 1799 and „ 1800	1 in 913	1 in 115

Vide Willan on Diseases of London.

Thus, seven times as many women, and five times as many children, out of a given number, died in ten years ending 1758, as in ten years ending 1798. This fact speaks for itself; and as we know that women in hospitals are not nursed, and doctored, in quite so officious a manner, as are those who can

better afford to pay for it: it almost follows that women do well in proportion as they are let alone. Be that as it may, it was well said by Buonaparte to the accoucheur who attended Marie Louise, "Remember, Sir, you are about to attend a woman, not a queen;" and it would have been well for England, perhaps, had Sir Richard Croft been so spoken to.

MANAGEMENT OF THE MONTH.

The moment a child is deposited in the hands of the nurse, a new set of dangers await it. Prejudices of every description now come into full play. The old woman's stomach is well acquainted with the warmth derived from a dram, and she thinks to comfort the

child by the same means. But she forgets that the outside of the head is not the inside of the stomach; and she does not know, but she may know if she choose to try, that brandy is the coldest application, next to æther, which can be applied to the skin, that it is equal to ice in reducing inflammation, and used for that purpose by medical men very extensively.*

* I am well aware that the "Good Nurse," a book very much in circulation, recommends, among the many absurdities it contains, that "If in the absence of fever the feet become cold, and a general chilliness prevails, let them be well rubbed, and the hands and arms the same, with eau de cologne, or brandy." Here she only shews ignorance in common with the multitude; but when she desires the "having in the closet some useful medicines, *particularly laudanum*, as it is very useful to be taken

This practice is a fruitful source of the snuffles and affections of the eyes, which so frequently affect new-born babes. Not content with this ridiculous custom, a bandage is next bound tightly round the body, whereby respiration and circulation are impeded, and from this cause alone do many, many die. Animals require no swathing: nor will we so calumniate nature, as to suppose, that she sends her masterpiece into the world "scarce half made up, and that

during labour." She gives as dangerous advice, as when she recommends that "each side of the infant's head should be daily stroked upwards with both hands, so as to assist in closing the sutures."

Indeed, the book is so filled with conceit and folly, that I hope never to find the "Good Nurse" with any patient of mine.

so lamely and unfashionably," that we must needs bind her workmanship together, lest it fall in pieces and shame its maker.

The next step in the progress of absurdity, consists in giving some opening medicine. This is not a matter of much moment perhaps, but to those who know that the mother's milk is for the first four or five days of a decidedly aperient quality, it will appear at least unnecessary, if it be not hurtful.

With a view to recover from the effects of labour, women in general, and ladies in particular, lie in bed so long that complete debility ensues. Heat is accumulated, perspiration encouraged, and fresh air excluded, till the patient's skin becomes as sodden as wash-leather;

digestion is impaired, the bowels rendered torpid, the milk impoverished and fevered, and the susceptibility of the skin so much increased, that cold is taken upon the slightest exposure, and the child becomes as delicate as its too careful mother.

No female ought after a natural labour to lie more than three or four days constantly in bed. After that period, let her be carried to a sofa whilst the bed is making, and if she can make herself easy there two or three hours so much the better: the bed will stand a surer chance of being well aired. After five or six, certainly not later than ten days, she has no business in bed at all; and ninety-nine women out of a hundred would get over their confinements much

better than they now do, if they made a point (weather permitting,) of breathing the fresh air out of doors on the fifteenth day at latest. The necessity for lying in bed the second fortnight has arisen, in almost every case that has come within my experience, from a mistaken indulgence in that habit during the first.

If the month hath been safely passed, and frequently sooner, upon the slightest irregularity in the appearance of the infant's evacuations, calomel, either with or without the advice of a medical man, is given, and thus commences a practice to which more lives have been sacrificed than to the sword; but as this subject will be more fully examined further on, I only notice it now that I may pro-

test against it. Infants, if born healthy, are not in the first few weeks of existence subject to any disorders but those which arise from improper diet, or incautious exposure to sudden changes of temperature. In the first case the mother's milk is in fault, and to her should remedies be given. In the latter, we must correct the management, not physic the child. But as the causes which deteriorate her milk are often of too permanent a nature, or too frequent recurrence, to admit of cure, let us ascertain if there exist not some means of preventing, or counteracting the effects of unwholesome nourishment.

The most frequent and most fatal consequences to infants of improper diet, are convulsions; not being pro-

perly digested it irritates the intestines, a spasmodic affection of the whole frame ensues, and a decided convulsive fit too commonly terminates the scene.

It has been found that the food in these cases has acquired an acid character, and this acidity being justly looked upon as the proximate cause of the complaint, those medicines which neutralize acids have been given as remedies with great success. Pain is the most prominent symptom, and congestion of blood in the brain and venous system, the immediate consequence. If this be not relieved, a cold sweat breaks out upon the body, respiration becomes difficult, and death soon seizes upon its victim; so soon indeed that he has frequently carried off his prize before

the doctor can have been informed of the danger.

All that can be done in this case, and all that the doctor could do, is to ease the pain, correct the acidity, and restore the circulation. The first he effects by opium and warm stimulants, the second by an absorbent or an alkali, and the third by a warm bath, frictions, and in some instances bleeding; and all these but the last, the parent can do as well as he.

The instant a child becomes convulsed, let a warm bath be prepared, adjust its temperature by your own naked foot, if not too hot for that, it will be proper for the child. Immerse the patient up to its neck in the bath, and give it one or two tea-spoonfuls of

Dalby's carminative in a little water; I know of no medicine more efficacious, or better calculated to fulfill the two first indications. In the meantime, a good fire should be made, and after five minutes the patient may be removed from the water, placed on a blanket, and rubbed all over *with dry flannel,* until another bath is ready. *No spirit* is to be applied to the skin, unless your object be to destroy the child at once. By the employment of these means, I have over and over again seen children who had been black, and apparently dead for many minutes, restored smiling to the arms of their distracted parents.

The convulsions arising from teething, form but one among so many diseases

incident to that process, that I shall treat of them hereafter.

I may here notice the thrush, which also arises from indigestion, and is cured by a little magnesia, and the old nurses' remedy of borax and honey.

ON DIET.

Vomiting the food, is a preventative of evil, requiring no remedy, and as it takes place when the stomach is too full, we need not be fearful of overloading it. A child will only suck when it is hungry, and, if allowed, will hang to the breast till it falls asleep; animals do the same, and are healthy in proportion as they are fat. I am yet to learn that a child is not obedient to

precisely the same laws, which govern the animal economy of a calf or a kitten. In every case that I have seen, it has been the quality and not the quantity of food which has disagreed. Although in asserting this, I would wish to be understood as speaking more particularly of mother's milk; nevertheless whilst we know that almost all animal and vegetable productions, from whale oil to the bark of trees, afford wholesome food to different races of men; whilst we know that even in our own country, the diet of children varies as much as the circumstances of their parents, and this too without any marked difference in their state of health; we will pause ere we allow, that any food whatever, may not perfectly agree with a sound sto-

mach, which however does at length, from pursuing one uniform system, acquire a habit that may not safely be contravened. At the same time, particularly in childhood, that it daily gains fresh power to digest its accustomed aliment, it also accumulates a sensitive indisposition to admit any other, till at last it becomes so completely unable to vary either quality or quantity, that disorder follows the attempt.

Thus we are told of a celebrated Italian, who, to cure a weak stomach, was in the habit of taking only twelve ounces of food in the twenty-four hours, having endangered his life by increasing, in his old age, his allowance to fourteen ounces !!!

The truth is, that a great deal of nonsense has been written and said upon diet. The stomach, like every other part of the body, acquires strength by exercise; it is, I admit, also susceptible of fatigue, and may be overworked, but he who teaches that strength is to be gained by inactivity, runs counter to common sense, and deserves to be laughed at for his pains. I put it to any man, if he deem it "a consummation devoutly to be wished," that he shall arrive at such a "well regulated mode of living, that an increase of two ounces of food per diem shall endanger his existence;" and yet this is the very "*beau ideal*" of Mr. Abernethy's system. In Cornaro's case, I verily believe that he would have lived quite as long

as he did, without reducing himself to the exactness of a grain. He belonged to a long-lived family, had all the marks of longevity in his own person, (unless I mistake, he had not an unsound tooth at his death,) and it is much more rational to attribute his recovery to his leaving off the debauching causes of his ill health, than to a plan of starvation, which, according to his own account, entirely unfitted him for either bodily or mental exertion. It is evident from the whole tenor of his book, that he lived his allotted time, because he had sense enough to quit practices which were fast killing him; and the life he afterwards led, might suit very well a man who had no earthly thing to do, but would ill supply the wear and tear of every day existence.

It has been thought by some,* "that the different varieties of food require very different exertions of the stomach for their digestion, and that it is highly expedient, therefore, particularly for those with weak stomachs, to eat but one species of food, so that it may be all digested and expelled at nearly the same period of time;" which is neither more nor less than a very pretty, but very nonsensical theory. *A quantity of food cannot pass from a large bag through a small aperture at once.* Whether the contents of the stomach consist of one sort of food, or of many, the gastric juice acts upon the circumference, which as it becomes digested drains away into

* Vide Dr. Paris on Diet, p. 248.

the intestines; and where the mass contains a variety of ingredients, the solvent eats into it where most soluble, thus making as it were a honey-comb, and the food which is most difficult, will also be the last to digest; but if these do not protract the operation beyond a proper time, it will not matter one straw whether the mass is dissolved regularly or by piece-meal, and so far from its being desirable to confine an invalid to one article of diet, it is positively injurious; no harm can possibly ensue, so long as care is taken, *not to eat in the compound, any one thing which would disagree if taken by itself,* and this is the only rule that healthy, or sick, need observe.

Had Doctor Paris been a farmer, he

would have known, that even the earth will not bear a constant succession of the same crops, that it will hardly tolerate a continuance of corn, however differing in reality, the straw of which is of one colour. Thus, if he were to sow one year wheat, the next barley, the third oats, and so on, his produce would gradually diminish, till he would scarcely re-obtain his seed. And that nothing is more common than for land to become, what is termed, sick of red clover, but to yield a large crop of white, which seems to renew its power for growing the other.

The same change that is requisite in the vegetable, is also necessary to the animal existence, each illustrates the other, and the instances are not few in

which the physician may take a lesson from the farmer.

When the digestive organs are disordered, many things will disagree which during health were perfectly innoxious; but excepting some evidently indigestible viands, it is difficult to say before hand, what shall or shall not agree. Potatoes will commonly very seriously affect the bowels of some children and dyspeptics, and carrots are to many a perfect poison; yet, would I hesitate ere I pronounced either to be generally unwholesome. Pies and puddings do not commonly agree with grown people, and I for one cannot digest an orange. Nevertheless children, whose stomachs and bowels are confessedly extremely delicate and

susceptible, eat pastry and fruit with perfect impunity.

There is in fact a great deal of quackery attached to this, as to all medical questions; few articles of food are so hurtful, but that habit will reconcile them; and when we read of the immense quantities of food which are recorded to have been from time to time devoured by apparently healthy people, we must acknowledge that the powers of the stomach are by some a *little* underrated, and that a good dinner is occasionally not an irreparable misfortune. As a general rule it may be laid down, that food is difficult of digestion in proportion to the nourishment it contains. Thus fat, which contains about five times more convertible

nutriment than is afforded by the same weight of lean, requires a proportionally strong stomach to digest it; and for this reason pie crust is unwholesome, biscuit not so, and arrow root a fit article for sick diet, because however thick and rich it may appear, it consists in fact of only one table spoonful of vegetable food in a pint of water.

But I question whether the system advocated and adopted by Montaigne, (epicure as he was) be not, with all its faults, less injurious than the starvation plan so much in vogue at the present time. "I should take no pleasure, said he, to be fed with three or four pitiful and stinted repasts a day, after a physical manner. Who will assure me that if I have a good appetite in the

morning, I shall have the same at supper? but especially let us old fellows take the first opportune time of eating, and leave to almanack makers the hopes and the prognostics. I avoid constancy in these laws of fasting; who will that one form shall serve him, let him evade the continuing of it. We harden ourselves in it, our forces are then stupified and laid asleep; six months after you shall find your stomach so inured unto it, that all you have got is only the loss of your liberty of doing otherwise but to your prejudice."

"The conclusions are evident with respect to diet," says Dr. Rowley,* "for every individual, from some pecu-

* Rational Practice of Physic, p. 445.

liarity in his habit, may require some peculiarity in his diet or drink; therefore every narrow system in diet, must be futile and inapplicable to the variety observable in nature."

Dr. Paris, in his treatise on diet, also agrees, page 345, "that it is impossible to frame any general rule that shall be applicable to every case."

The present mode of feeding children is perfectly unobjectionable. If care be taken NOT to let them eat little and often, but to satisfy themselves when they do eat, and whether that be twice or thrice in twenty-four hours is a matter of no importance, provided "The digestion of one meal is completed before fresh labour is imposed upon the stomach:" provided also, *that* food is

denied, which evidently disagrees; and that more attention is paid to experience, than to any dogma, however dictatorial or fashionable.

If the mother's milk curdle on the child's stomach, don't fancy it has a liver complaint, and dose it with calomel, but change its food for a day or two, or give it a little magnesia, or chalk, as they do to calves, to correct acidity. In short, watch and reason, and there is little fear of any error being committed.

With respect to diet generally, nature is in this, as in all other instances, our best monitor. She has located in the various regions of the earth, different races of animals, which will scarcely bear transplantation without fatal, or at all events, deteriorating consequences.

She has also confined within well marked limits, the different kinds of food suited to the climate.

In the tropics, where the thermometer rises to above 100 degrees in the shade, where the extraordinary temperature to which the body is exposed, can only be relieved by profuse perspiration, she has covered the soil with acescent and cooling vegetables. And when Brahma forbade the use of meat, he veiled a wise regard for the body, under an apparent anxiety for the soul. Vegetables are therefore the proper food for hot climates: and consequently, in summer, as we approximate in temperature, so should we in diet.

In very cold climates, almost the only vegetable to be found is a species of

moss. But oil, whether of fish or beast, is plentiful. Except, therefore, the deer, the hare, and some few others, the animals to be met with are carnivorous, as the bear, wolf, foxes, dogs, rats, &c.

Man in a state of nature, follows pretty closely the habits of animals. In the tropics he feeds on rice and fruits; in the frozen regions, on blubber, milk, and animal food; in more temperate climes, where the two extremes blend into each other, and where the productions of both are to be found; there also is a proper mixture of animal and vegetable food most wholesome, as it is the most delicious.

He, then, who recommends an entire limitation to vegetable diet in a tempe-

rate clime, contradicts nature's express ordinances, and abuses her best intentions. On the other hand, he who would found an argument for the use of animal food by man at the equator, upon the fact, that carnivorous animals abound there, forgets that they do not perspire—the dog even only foams; that they rest in shady jungles during the day, and prowl by night when the air is cool; and, therefore, as they have no great waste of fluids, so have they no great need of extraordinary supply. The whole system then of forcing early vegetables, of importing fruits, and eating in one country or season, what is indigenous to another, is an expensive and troublesome method of destroying our digestive powers. And he who

gives a guinea for a cucumber in March, will be lucky if he escape paying still dearer for it, by subsequent disorder or disease.

In illness too, the dictates of nature are never thwarted with impunity. Even at the present day, fluids are by some noodles forbidden in a burning fever, when the patient's unceasing cry is 'water, water.' Shall we refuse to allay the raging thirst, in compliance with some absurd theory? Shall we say, that we know better than she what is fit for her purposes, nay, rather where nature and we differ, let us be modest enough to think it possible that she may be right, and we wrong. Let us give water when it is demanded, and withhold food when it is loathed; in the

full knowledge, that one will be sought, and the other avoided, when a fit time arrives for the change.

ON TEETHING.

I scarcely know how to approach this subject. So important, so frequently fatal in its present or future consequences, have I ever found it, that if I am called to a child between three months and three years of age, whatever may be its apparent ailment, my little finger almost instinctively finds its way into its mouth, in the sure certainty of there finding the cause. Inflammation of the chest, water in the head, convulsions, diarrhœas, suppression of urine, fevers, emaciation, and

death, all, all flow from this Pandora's box.

This is frightful enough, but thank God, we possess a simple and powerful remedy. Before, however, we talk of treatment, I shall enter more at large into the history of this natural operation.

In the fœtus, the tooth is a pulp of jelly, enclosed in a fine membrane in the centre of the gum. Gradually a deposit of bony matter into this substance takes place; the tooth grows, and having bone behind and only flesh before, it proceeds to the surface of course, and at last cuts through the gums, at some period in the first few months of existence.

When this operation proceeds properly, the gum is progressively absorbed,

or taken away, as the tooth advances; it is not cut as by a knife, but removed by means of vessels adapted to that purpose. In this case there will be no pain, and the tooth itself will generally be its own and only herald. But thanks to good nursing and fine theories, matters do not often go on thus. More or less inflammation from the first arises. It, indeed, varies much in intensity and in effect. It may only be sufficiently strong to produce a thickening and hardening of the gums; or it may bring on serous effusion into the capsule of the tooth; or it may terminate in abscess, or ulceration. In all these cases, the general health will suffer. In all these cases, the general health has suffered, or they would not occur; and nothing

is more common than for a medical man to be called in to a child labouring under some of the before mentioned diseases, without either himself or the parent being aware of the cause of them. Thus, when respiration is difficult, the pulse quick, breath and body hot and feverish; the poor child's chest is tortured with blisters, its bowels with purges, and its stomach with vomits; when a good stroke of the gum lancet would act like a charm—I always carry one in my pocket, and I do believe, that I have, thereby, saved more lives, than could have been done by any other treatment, however judicious.

When does hydrocephalus appear? between the ages of one and six years;

and if it come on later, the seeds have been sown in that period.

What is there then which operates only, during that part of our respective lives? Need I answer? Need I say more to connect teething, and water in the brain, as cause and effect?

In any, and every case of difficult teething, whether the action going on in the part be too strong, or too feeble; whether the nervous or vascular system be in fault: although medicine may do much, and care more; there is, nevertheless, but one specific; but one remedy applicable to all cases, and injurious in none; and that one is the gum lancet. Every thing else is subordinate. Other means are almost needless with it, and useless without it.

Fears of its use are entertained by many, but they are groundless fears.

Some have thought the teeth might be injured; but I believe they would find it difficult to point out an instance of such injury.

Some have thought, that the union of the incision would render the gums harder, this is not true; all new made flesh is less firm and strong than the old. Wounds are the first to ulcerate in old age or debility, and cicatrices of twenty years standing, frequently separate after long and enfeebling diseases.

The loss of blood in the operation relieves the inflammation, division of the part removes pressure and nervous irritation; the child gets rest, and sleep, and respite; and if, after some time,

the symptoms return, the remedy is the same.

I am not here attempting to lay down the precise treatment applicable to all the consequences of teething. But, as cases always produce more impression than arguments, I shall relate two, out of many I could produce, sufficiently illustrative of the propriety of the practice I recommend.

Case 1.

I happened to call in accidentally upon a friend, whose child (about twenty months old) had been ill for some weeks. The medical attendant had blistered and vomited it secundem artem, with so little success, that it was considered, when I saw it, to be dying.

Every thing in fact was prepared for laying it out; and as it was thought utterly impossible that it should outlast the night, the mother was sitting up to receive its last sigh, which appeared to be fast approaching. The apothecary had taken his leave, and said, he should call in a day or two, to '*ask after the family.*' Under these circumstances I offered advice, which was accepted. A warm bath was immediately procured; five drops of laudanum were given in a little brandy and water, and I made free incisions into the gums. The child slept some hours after this, a comfort it had not known for many nights; and in a very short time indeed, entirely recovered.

Case II.

My own little boy, aged one year and seven months, was seized on a Friday with purging of a light colour and most offensive smell. It continued during Saturday. He looked very pale and ill. I examined his mouth, and although he had sixteen teeth (which, by the bye, Dr. Underwood erroneously calls the usual number), I observed a slight prominence in the bottom gum. He did not appear to be in pain then, nor was there any increase in the quantity of saliva. However, I lanced the part.

On Sunday he was feverish, and a few red spots appeared about the navel.

On Monday when he arose, his head and face were much swollen, and large

wheals, some three or four inches across; others resembling nettle rash, appeared in different parts of the body, surrounded by a considerable degree of erysipelatous inflammation. I had given a dose of calomel and antimony, on Saturday. I now gave one of senna.

On Tuesday the swelling had increased to an alarming extent. He could not see. The inflammation and elevation of the skin would suddenly appear in one part of the body accompanied by distressing pain and itching; and as suddenly, almost in a moment, disappear, and shew itself in another part—at one time on the thighs, then on the back; sometimes in the head; in others, in several places at once. The lower part of the body became large

and œdematous; and nothing we could apply, would keep the feet warm. He was at times delirious, and so much disfigured, that I can truly say, I did not know my own child.

A medical friend who saw him, professed never to have seen such a case, and held out but very faint hopes of his recovery. A sudorific and sedative powder was given to him, but he continued to grow worse; his feet now became very hot, and appeared to be mortifying; the pain he suffered was excruciating, and his moans were unceasing. I was exceedingly alarmed, but I reflected that as I had in lancing found two teeth in the lower, there must of necessity be two opposing them in the upper jaw, although nothing

indicated their presence; I therefore lanced the upper gum, and found two teeth within a quarter of an inch of the surface. He went to sleep in half an hour, slept the whole afternoon, was playful next day, his face and body evidently smaller, and his feet still large, but of a better colour and temperature. I gave him quinine by day, and James's powder at bed time, and in one week he had perfectly recovered.

ON NURSING.

I have now to consider the effect of some of the mistaken notions and practices, which universally obtain in the "general nursing" of children, and so numerous are the evils which spring

from this source, that I shall stand a fair chance of tiring my own, and my reader's patience, if I enumerate but half of them.

And here again, we must look to the state of the animal kingdom generally, if we wish to discover what nature intended should be done. In the savage state, every living thing brings up its young in the open air, and if it retire to a cave or nest, during the night, or the storm, it yet takes the first possible opportunity of leading forth its offspring to search the means, and to enjoy the end of its existence.

In uncivilized nations, the same holds good with respect to man; but it will be answered, that his offspring passes through many months of utter helpless-

ness, that the enterprise of the parent leads him into climates highly detrimental to life; and that in proportion as he wanders from the spot in which he was originally placed, so must he employ the powers God has given him, to obviate the dangers and difficulties to which he will become exposed.

Nothing can be more true than this, and nothing can be more true also, that instead of merely guarding against the evils of climate, modern refinement is not contented with any thing less than an entirely artificial mode, apparently of sheltering, but really of endangering the health, and strength, and lives of all who are subjected to its dictates.

I have before stated, that a child can bear a greater degree of cold than its

mother, but who that has occasion to enter our modern nurseries, would believe me. Let us examine a little: In the morning a large fire is made, warm water got ready, and the nurse places her chair within one yard of the fender, or nearer, to commence the operation of dressing; the child is laid in her lap, almost invariably with its head exposed to the full influence of the scorching blaze. By this practice have I seen inflammations of the brain, and fevers, and every kind of distress so frequently produced, that I do not think I should exaggerate if I pronounced, one child in three, of all who die, to be killed by over-heating in some shape or other. When fever is present, when the skin is hot and parched, and perspiration pre-

vented by a distended state of the extreme blood-vessels, which effectually close the pores by pressing down the valves that cover them; then does the mother or nurse, from a mistaken idea that heat is essential to perspiration, wrap the sufferer in flannel or in bed, and thus most effectually prolong the paroxysm, and reduce the chances of recovery, when sponging the body with cold water, or at all events exposing it to cool air, would be followed with the most blessed effects.

Among the higher classes, where a good fortune can procure the best advice, and where a good education teaches its value, these errors are not so commonly fallen into; but even then some ignorant nurse, whose whole knowledge

consists in remembering prejudices, and whose fixed principle it is to practice them, thwarts in every possible way the plans of the physician, and the wishes of the parent; whilst among the lower classes, who are more accustomed to feel than to think, children when ill, are heated and fed, and given wine, solely because these things are luxuries to the mothers, and are, in consequence, considered beneficial to them.

Consult the child's feelings and you will never err, then will you find that sleeping under any clothes whatever is to many a severe penance, curtains an abomination, and sitting still in the day time a purgatory; then will you learn to contemn all those artificial systems, which would render the skin susceptible

of every change of weather, by shielding it from all, and find out that colds and coughs, and delicate bodies and feeble minds, are the result of too much care, and that the hot-house plant will shrink from the same breeze that infuses health and beauty into that one whose bed has been the cold earth, and canopy the unshaded heavens.

Stage coachmen do not catch cold, nor do our peasantry, nor does a naked plunge into the clear stream produce catarrh; and if we reflect for one moment, we shall find that this is because the whole body is exposed to the same temperature. But colds are caught in carriages, and in drawing-rooms and bed-rooms, nay even in bed; and why is this? simply because whilst one part

of the body is heated, another is cooled, the blood is determined somewhere, generally to the head or chest, and if it continue long, inflammation and all its consequences result.

Why do colds almost invariably arise from getting wet in the feet, and never from getting wet in the hands? Is it, or is it not because our feet are covered with leather, which keeps open the pores of the skin, and the slightest exposure, checks the perspiration thus artificially and constantly kept up? Who ever knew a beggar in the street, catch cold from wading through the puddles with his naked feet?

The Tyrolese Minstrels have often told me, that they cannot sing if their necks are wrapped up in our abominable

cravats; they expose the throat completely, and this explains why even here we have so many more good female singers than male. Upon this principle, hare-skin to the chest, and wash leather to the feet, are the surest means of producing that delicacy of constitution they have been invented to repair, and flannel is only admissible where disease has rendered it comfortable.

The clothing of a child then, whether up or in bed, and the room in which it is should be cool, as is consistent with its own comfort; draughts of air should be avoided; but on no account should more than a half-tester be employed, that the air may be constantly renewed, and not shut in till it become unwholesome, as that in a pest

house. And when up, the child should run about as much as it pleases, that it may lay up a fund of strength to draw upon in after life.

ON THE ABUSE OF MEDICINE.

There are certain substances, which if taken into the stomach, produce a sensible action upon some part of the body; many of these contain a considerable portion of nourishment, as manna, sugar, honey, &c. and are, therefore, to a limited extent, fit articles of food: others are followed by effects so violent, as to render them injurious, and nature generally attempts to get rid of them; these are called medicines, drugs, &c.; all aperients

and emetics are of this kind, whether obtained from the vegetable or mineral kingdom, and the effect which follows, is only an attempt to eject a noxious body; fruit is often thus carried off, and a fermentation and acidity prevented. Here the purging is salutary, but only salutary in as much as it removes an enemy; the fruit was not salutary, and this is true of all medicine.

In a state of health, any thing which acts strongly upon the body does proportionate harm, and every dose of medicine, if it have any effect at all, can only have an injurious one. The diarrhœa brought on by salts, and the stupor following the use of laudanum, are just as much diseases, as diarrhœa or stupor arising from any other cause

of the same strength and duration. The only difference is, that we can controul the one and not the other; and the diseases arising from the judicious employment of medicines, may be put an end to whenever it is judged necessary, by discontinuing the medicine which has caused it; but diseases, properly so termed, mostly derive their origin and continuance from causes with which we are little acquainted, and over the proximate ones, we have but little controul: fevers, asthma, consumption, and a vast variety of mortal ills, depend upon a state of the body, as yet very ill understood, and with difficulty remedied. A fever indeed may be readily prolonged, but many of our first physicians have doubted if it be possible to shorten it;

our best means going only so far as to alleviate and moderate.

It is a general rule in the animal economy, that two diseases will not long exist together, but that after a short conflict the weaker yields; it is upon this principle that we employ medicines for the removal of complaints. In internal inflammations we blister, thus creating a new disease upon the skin, which if it exceed in intensity or duration, the other gives way; upon the same principle, cathartics not only do good by removing fœtid accumulations, or unloading the vessels, but also by exciting a degree of irritation through the whole canal, which from the extent of its surface draws to itself the action that had been going on elsewhere, in the liver, head, or lungs.

Other medicines act upon the nervous system, and deaden its sensibility, thus rendering the impressions of disease less painful, and inducing thereby repose; others stimulate, but the effect of all is to derange the existing state of things, in a state of disease to induce a tractable for an intractable injury, and in a state of health to effect unqualified mischief. But there is one medicine of all others, so potent in its effects, whether for good or evil, and unfortunately so frequently employed, that it has become like a firebrand in the hands of a fool, flinging the seeds of destruction indiscriminately around. I allude to mercury, particularly in the shape of calomel.

There are diseases which will yield to

this remedy and no other, but in the majority of instances where it is given, it is selected because it comprises a concentrated power in a small space. Children can with difficulty be made to swallow doses of senna tea, or castor oil, or rhubarb, but a little calomel placed upon the tongue, or concealed in the food, acts at once; let it however never be forgotten, that no expediency can justify its use when milder remedies will answer the purpose. It frequently produces so much permanent mischief, that the evil it was intended to remedy is a trifle in comparison.

In children it is almost always followed by an inflammation of the coats of the intestines, evidenced by the evacuation of quantities of jelly, and if

continued, or the first dose even, in very irritable habits, will produce a genuine dysentery.

Inflammation of the nerves themselves is a common consequence, and that to a very distressing extent, whilst many cases of swelled glands, and scrophulous disorders, owe, if not their origin, at least their active excitement to this baneful drug; not however to deal in mere assertions, I shall give two or three, as I think, most instructive cases.

In a letter from Dr. R. Harrison to Dr. Paris, inserted in the sixth edition of his Pharmacologia, he says, "During my residence at Naples, I spent some time in the island of Ischia, so celebrated all over the continent for its baths. Many of the patients who were

there trying their efficacy, had been attacked by paralysis, apoplexy, and almost every degree of loss of mental and muscular power; and among them I certainly witnessed, what with propriety may be denominated a genuine case of nervous apoplexy. *These complaints I was generally able to trace to the abuse of mercury.*"

I gave four grains of calomel to a nervous lady, whose liver I thought in fault, and for more than a week afterwards, she suffered so much from genuine dysentery, fever, prostration of strength and mind, that she nearly induced in me the serious fears she herself entertained for the result.

I have a cousin too who suffered, as he himself expressed it, years of in-

credible torment, from exposure to cold, whilst under a very mild course of mercurial medicine. He was a living barometer, not a breath could stir but he answered it by some new feeling of distress: at one time a sudden blindness would seize him, at another the most horrible imaginings, in short, life was a burden to him, and often have I feared that he would be tempted to lay it down. He is not so ill now, but he is not, nor ever will be, at ease or in health.

For myself, I am indebted to a physician, now no more, for a state of existence of six years duration, so horrible that were it not for a gradual improvement, which I have latterly experienced——but no, were I to write

what I have felt, I should fill volumes with one unvarying history of misery without end—almost without hope.

ON EDUCATION.

It is very much the fashion of the present day, to hurry on to the end, with a most inconsiderate indifference as to the means and accompaniments.

Our stage coaches are driven by a chronometer, and one minute's delay is more deprecated, than ten horses' lives; steam boats dash on till they burst; men run along the streets to the inevitable endangering of each other's shins and noses; and, in short, all around is bustle, bustle; whilst the moralist

will probably see in it, "more haste than good speed."

It is even thus with education, precocity of talent is admired, and deserves to be admired, although it most commonly leads its possessor to an early grave. But as each mamma thinks her child "equal to all, surpassed by none," she is determined that he only wants teaching to play the violin at four years of age, as well as Master B.; to write as good a theme at six as Master C.; and, in short, to exhibit in his own person, a compendium of all youthful accomplishment. Or if this extravagance be not always cherished, every one at least thinks it right to "teach the young idea how to shoot;" to train up the child "in the way he should go;"

in short, to make a scholar, at the risk of his being also a cripple.

I am far from condemning an early attention to the intellectual powers exhibited by children; but I do contend that a child wants the bridle, not the spur. In the first few years of existence all the faculties are active, and he who urges them on, flogs the willing steed, and bends "the o'er-drawn bow." Inquisitiveness is almost the sum total of a young mind. At first, what is that? and then, why is it? are the means whereby it learns, and a proper reply to such questions will teach more in a month, than a set lesson will in a twelvemonth.

He indeed commits a great error, who thinks to push on the mind at the

expence of the body. As this is healthy or diseased, so will that be, and whatever may be our opinion as regards the immateriality of mind; we know that it will be strong or weak, dull or quick, as is the material agent which manifests it. If the frame be feeble, the mind will be irritable, and more susceptible of impressions; it will therefore learn fast, but will it hold firm? "Soon come, soon go," is a proverb no less applicable to morals than money.

Who then that watches the perpetual action in which a child indulges, who sees its perfect inability to remain quiet, would, if he thought twice about the matter, condemn an infant of three or four years of age, to sit the greater part of the day upon a school

form, and demand for hours that steady mental attention, which the body refuses to pay even for five minutes together.

And here I cannot too much condemn the practice which has sprung up among our modern schoolmistresses, of keeping their pupils sitting from nine till three; instead of the good old fashion plan of dividing the day into two equal parts, and giving the children some little relief and fresh air between them. It may be, and I dare say is, extremely convenient to have the whole afternoon to one's self; but those who are cruel enough to keep a child "cribbed, cabined and confined" for six hours, to suite their own convenience, either know so little, or care so little, what

conduces to health or disease, that evidences to my mind, a total unfitness for the charge they undertake.

No. Let the child gain strength by exercise, let him gain knowledge by satisfying his curiosity, and bring about habits of attention gradually, when you find he can bear it. No child under six years of age ought to sit still longer than one hour at a time, and that, perhaps, twice a day; after that, two hours at a sitting will, I am satisfied, give a better education, than is now obtained by an early and entire sacrifice of all liberty: a drilling, and an imprisonment, which renders the acquisition of learning a toilsome, disgusting task, and the sight of a book so hateful, that the boy who has been thus brought up, general-

ly leaves school with a fixed determination never to look into one more.

The system of corporal chastisement is, thank God, very much upon the decline; and wherever it still remains a part of school discipline it is *pro tanto*, an evidence of the incapacity or want of temper of the teacher.

I have known one life lost, and many a head muddled by this shameful practice; and I am, at this moment, acquainted with a young gentleman of the highest promise, and of the most refined feeling, who has been reduced to a state bordering upon fatuity, from, I do verily believe, no other cause than the repeated thrashings he got upon his head, from a brutal pedagogue.

But, it will be said, that I am forget-

ing the purpose of my work, and omitting altogether "nursery education."

In very truth, this is somewhat a delicate subject. I have already said, that if a child can spell words of two syllables at six years of age, I consider that he can spell one too many, and that if he only know the alphabet, he is quite as clever as I wish any of my own to be.

Yet do I feel that a great deal is to be learnt in the nursery, but not by the child, there is no fear of him, he *will* learn; you cannot stifle his curiosity, however you may misdirect it. No. It is the mothers, the nurses, aye, and the fathers too, who, in my mind, require teaching; and in some instances, I am not sure, but that the birch might be

well transferred from the child to its elders, in the hopes of whipping out some of the inveterate habits and prejudices, and ignorances, that interfere so palpably with its well doing.

"There Tommy, you little wretch, cries some one who ought to know better, you have broken that glass"—slap, slap, goes the hand—"I will teach you, I will, to be more careful in future:" "Indeed, mamma, I could not help it, I only got in the chair to look out of the window, and did not know the glass was there"—Never mind, slap again; and prove to him that you value a tumbler at a greater price than his respect or affection. What right have you to beat him at all? a child will not do wrong wilfully, unless you make him; and the

next time he breaks a glass, if your back is turned, he will tell you some one else did it; then beat him for being a liar, do, and he will hate you most cordially, as you deserve.

Well, but must he not be beaten when he is obstinate, and will not do as he is bid, or will do what is forbidden? No. He will do what he is bidden, unless by continued false indulgence, and yielding to his whims, you have taught him to despise your commands, and to feel that he may obey or not, as he chooses. And, in that case, is it not the height of tyranny to beat a child for now doing, what long impunity has habituated him to? How often do I hear a nurse or mother exclaim, "Oh, Sir, my little girl will not take medicine, she will

scream the house down!" Well! whose fault is that? I will answer for it she takes it from me, and so she will, if all those leave the room, whose interference she calculates upon to prevent it, if she cry well and lustily. Besides, what do you purpose by beating? To make him do from fear what he will not do from love; do you wish this to be his ruling passion, that hereafter he should become a coward, and a hypocrite, and a fawning slave, because he fears to be otherwise. Let me not be told that this is not a necessary consequence. It is beyond doubt, that any faculty of the mind may be increased and invigorated by exercise, or moderated by controul; and our whole nursery education goes to cherish a dastardly feeling.

I have a child who, at three years of age, would go by night over and to any part of a large old fashioned house alone, and in the dark; but since he has been old enough to hear of robbers and ghosts, and thunder and lightning, at the age of eight, forsooth, he cannot go to sleep without a candle in the room.

To conclude, I never yet saw a child beaten, except for a fault which had taken root and growth from the negligence of the parent, or, because the said parent happened to be in an ill humour, and vented it upon the child.

ON VACCINATION.

It will not be denied that the present subject is one upon which a good deal

of error exists somewhere, for whilst every medical man of name or standing retains, up to the present time, entire faith in its virtue; whilst the testimony of those, whose lives are spent in the daily application of the remedy, and observation of its effects, remains unaltered, and invariably supported by the surest test that men can give of their sincerity, the subjecting their own offspring to its influence; there are others, who not only dispute the perfection of its power, but deny it any merit whatever, and this with a pertinacity, which would lead us to suspect some rational grounds for the opposition, did we not well know that obstinacy and ignorance—I will not finish the proverb. But I am happy to have it in

my power to write down the distrust of vaccination, among my list of "Nursery Errors," and to prove that all which has ever been claimed for it by its most sanguine admirers, is still claimed for it by those who have had the most frequent opportunities of ascertaining the truth.

In the year 1817, the report which is annually made to government by the "National Vaccine Establishment," which report, is signed by the president and censors of the Royal College of Physicians, and the master and governors of the Royal College of Surgeons; they state "that small pox had not been known at East Dereham for many years. At Kingston, in Surry, and its neighbourhood, it had not made any progress

for eleven years: that in a letter from Slaithwaite, near Huddersfield, they were informed that that neighbourhood had been kept entirely free from small-pox for nine years then past; and they had information from parts of Londonderry of its being rarely heard of in that part of the country."

In 1820, they report that "whenever small-pox inoculation is abandoned, and vaccination exclusively favoured or commanded, the most striking illustrations of the value of the Jennerian discovery were uniformly afforded; for" say they, "in addition to those places mentioned in former reports, in which small-pox is now unknown, the board have received information that no case of that disease has occurred since the

year 1804, at Shottisham, in Norfolk; nor since the year 1817, in the city of Gloucester.

"The boroughs of Clonmell, and Newton Limavady in Ireland, and Mothvey in Carmarthenshire, with the whole country for twenty miles around it, are reported to have completely succeeded in the extirpation of the small-pox; and in the island of Guernsey, only one solitary case of that fatal distemper is known to have occurred during the last year.

"The career of vaccination appears, however, to have been less brilliant in its native country, than in some parts of the continent of Europe, where the practice of it is enforced by legal enactments, and inoculation for small-pox is

prohibited by severe penalties. Under such regulations it is affirmed, that the small pox has ceased to exist in Denmark for the last eight years, and that the knowledge of this fact has now induced his Danish Majesty to proclaim the same decrees in his West India Colonies.

"The Board are also informed, that similar decrees have been published in the Austrian dominions, and that the small-pox is now confined to that portion of the poor, who by concealment contrive to evade the imperial ordinances. And that in the circle of Rezat in Bavaria, containing half a million of people, small-pox has never occurred since the year 1807." "If these facts," say they, "be correctly reported to us,

they would appear to afford convincing proof, that the *extinction of small-pox is entirely within our own power.*" And although the report of 1826 was not so flattering as the above, owing entirely however to accidental circumstances; yet in 1827, they state, "within the last twelve months, only five hundred and three deaths had occurred from small-pox, within the bills of mortality. And when we reflect that before the introduction of vaccination, the average number of deaths from small-pox, within the bills of mortality, was annually about four thousand, no stronger argument can reasonably be demanded in favor of the value of this important discovery."

In the report of March 2, 1829, the

deaths from small-pox, in the bills of mortality, are declared to have been but five hundred and ninety-eight during the last twelvemonth, only about one seventh, be it remembered, of the number which fell victims to this disease in times past, and the fullest confidence is still declared to be due to the protecting power of vaccination.

Now these reports are addressed to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and signed by Sir Henry Halford, Sir Astley Cooper, Sir Anthony Carlisle, Sir Geo. Tuthil, Drs. Latham, Stone, Bree, Munro, Lambe, Paris, Hue, Turner, Tattersall, Mr. Abernethy, and others equally high in the profession; whose names are a guarantee, not only of the sincerity of their asser-

tions, but also of the purity of their motives. Upon any other question, such authority would settle the matter, but I know to whom I am writing, I know that where a case of small-pox after vaccination has made its appearance in any nursery, the united members of both the Colleges, and the Society of Apothecaries to boot, would in vain attempt to convince nurse, that she might possibly be mistaken in her deductions therefrom.

But I would ask the most prejudiced to look around him, and compare the unspotted appearance of the rising generation, with the scarred and pitted faces of twenty years since, and then to tell me whether some power has not been at work steadily, and progressively con-

trouling and rooting out a disease which, within the memory of almost all of us, exerted a blighting and fatal influence over the fairest and loveliest of the human race.

But it is said that vaccination cannot always be depended upon, and that when effectual even, it loses its power in a few years, leaving the individual apparently in security, but liable at some future period to be siezed unawares, and without preparation, by its dreaded rival. There is every reason, both from experience and authority, to deny this most entirely and decidedly.

From the reports above quoted, we learn that in the earlier periods of vaccinating, when our knowledge of it was more limited than at present, only

four failures occurred in 34,369 persons; according to another statement, "one only of the 46,662 cases mentioned in former reports, had been affected with small-pox."

However, as far as I know of the matter, I am ready to declare that vaccination, when properly performed, does entirely and for ever secure the individual against small-pox infection. I know that some of Dr. Jenner's own doing have failed, but I also know that I have seen a letter in his own writing, wherein he states, that in his early practice of the discovery, he was not sufficiently acquainted with all the circumstances necessary to be observed, and that he feared many of his patients were not safe!!

I know also, that I myself have seen a medical man who yearly vaccinates thousands, take forty charges from the only pustule the child had, on the seventh day, and then send the mother away telling her that it was quite safe!! Can he wonder at meeting with failures? But where care is taken that one pustule at least shall proceed to the end unbroken, and when all the appearances necessary to success are observed, then does all I have ever seen, heard, or read, guarantee the safety of the child.

In their last report, the Board state, that "from the records of the last year's experience of the Small-pox Hospital, no patient admitted there under small-pox after vaccination, had

been vaccinated by any officer of this 'the National Vaccine Establishment;'" and in the last paragraph of their last report, which was made March 2, 1829, after all the experience which as a body they have had, up to the present time; after listening to all the old nurses' tales, and investigating the old nurses' cases, they deliberately declare, "that it, (the vaccine matter) does not appear to them to be weakened, or deteriorated, by transmission through any number of subjects, in the course of any number of years"!!

What then, I shall be asked, do I mean to deny all the reported cases of small-pox after vaccination? why the world rings with them, there is hardly a person you meet who cannot at once

name some member of his family, or some one in the circle of his acquaintance, who has experienced in his or her person the inefficacy of vaccination as a protection, and who cannot also name to you a dozen people at least, who are ready to vouch for the same thing.

Do I deny the truth of all this? I answer, not of all, but of by far the greater part. I know that small-pox does occasionally appear after vaccination, even when properly performed; but it happens oddly enough that I have never seen a case, that is, have never seen the small-pox actually upon a person who had had the other disease. All the cases that I have seen have either been chicken-pox, or the patient had not been properly vaccinated. In

two instances particularly, this was well and distinctly proved, and it is my deliberate conviction, that if we could separate the cases of *true* small-pox after *true* vaccination from the numberless suppositious ones upon record, we should be able to produce an equal number of cases of small-pox after small-pox!!

There are many practitioners who have never had brought home to them one single failure in the whole of their practice. A Dr. Fansher of America, states, in a very clever paper published in the Lancet of July 4, 1829, that "during a practice of twenty-seven years he has vaccinated nearly ninety thousand individuals, many hundreds of whom he has tested with the virus

of the variola, and by exposure to the effluvia from the most malignant confluent small-pox, in different stages of the disease, and after death; and not one of his patients thus tested have taken the small-pox!"

All this sufficiently shews the exaggerated state of popular prejudice upon this subject. But hitherto I have advanced nothing in the way of positive proof of the assertion, that many of the cases of supposed small-pox are not that disease, but chicken-pox. I will relate a couple of cases which illustrate this point, and are in themselves pretty fair samples of what occurs most extensively.

In the year 1826 I was requested to see the children of an officer, late in the

East India service, who were declared, by their medical attendant, to be labouring under "a very severe case of small-pox," and as they had all been vaccinated, their parents wished for a second opinion, that they might decide upon sure grounds, how far their opinion of vaccination, which had been hitherto extremely high, was well or ill founded. I appointed to meet their medical man, and having accidentally joined him on the road, I asked him the nature of the children's disease, his reply was "as bad a case of small-pox as he had almost ever seen;" and certainly upon a close inspection even, they presented every symptom well and strongly marked of that distemper.

Three of them had passed the crisis

and were recovering, but in two the eruption had only appeared two days before my visit; they had a considerable degree of fever accompanied with fainting fits, and they were completely covered with pustules, to every appearance, well filled with matter.

After examining them, I was requested to give my opinion, which I did, by stating, that I would not at once give a decided one, because, in the first place, some cases of chicken-pox approximated so closely to small-pox, that any man might be deceived in them; and secondly, that although the two diseases presented some few well marked differential characters, they, nevertheless, belonged more to the first and last than to the middle stage of the complaint, in which

they now were; and thirdly, that as their medical man, who had witnessed the whole progress of the attack, and whose ability and experience I had every reason to respect, had pronounced it to be small-pox, and continued to hold that opinion, I would not decide, until I could do so peremptorily, although from the accounts they gave, and from the symptoms I saw, I felt strongly inclined to differ from him, and to call it an aggravated case of chicken-pox.

But I begged them to watch, and note the day in which it turned. If it should so happen that the pustules began to dry on the fourth day from their appearance, that alone would prove it to be chicken-pox; because, in its most

mitigated form, the small-pox never changes till the fifth day.

On the third day, their medical man again visited them, and expressed himself more decidedly than ever; on the fourth day I saw them, and upon asking what was still his opinion, I was told it continued unaltered, and, moreover, he had remarked that " those pustules were full of matter, now chicken-pox never produces matter."

I then replied that that assertion was not always true, although generally the case; that the pustules in chicken-pox did sometimes contain matter; that I had even seen people marked by chicken-pox, and if ever, we might expect to find it here: although other circumstances might prove the correctness of

my opinion. However, as I wished solely to establish the truth, I would in the present instance abide by his own words, but as they had began to turn on that day, which was the fourth, I had no doubt upon the subject; yet if they could discover matter in any one pustule, I would agree that the present were cases of small-pox after vaccination; on the contrary if no matter should be found, that, then my opinion would be established. I, therefore, put it upon that issue.

I then, in the parents' presence, thrust a needle into more than twenty of the worst looking pustules, and the fluid that flowed from each and every puncture was *clear as spring water!!!*

The medical attendant acknowledged

that in this case he had been completely deceived. But the error had spread whither the correction never followed, and these continue to be reported, like many other such, as cases of small-pox after vaccination.

In another instance, the lady of a baronet was attacked with an eruption, about a fortnight before her accouchment, which two physicians, the most conversant perhaps of any in London with the disease, declared to be small-pox. I saw her after her confinement, and she said that doubts had always been entertained, as to whether she had been properly vaccinated. A very short time afterwards, she wrote from the country that she had had her child vaccinated, and that it had taken per-

fectly, and gone completely through its regular course!! thus proving, that both physicians were mistaken, for if the mother had small-pox, her babe must have had it too, and would not, there fore, have received the vaccine infection.

Sufficient has been said, I think, to prove that vaccination, where properly performed, is a sure preventive; sufficient evidence has been offered of its being frequently very improperly performed, and it will also be allowed me, that where the men I have alluded to were deceived, it is not unlikely that the public in general are not competent judges, and, therefore, that very few of the tales we hear are to be believed.

But allowing, for a moment, that vaccination is not in a single instance to

be depended upon as a safeguard, that it never did and never will secure one single individual from the small-pox, even then, I hesitate not to pronounce it the most valuable discovery of modern times. It is, undeniably, the best remedy we can employ to mitigate the violence, and shorten the duration of its rival; all our medicines put together, and all our management, are valueless as preparatives, when compared with this one; and when the small-pox has been caught, when the fever is strong on, and the eruption about to appear, even then does this discovery offer to us a means which will, to a certainty, take from that hitherto fatal distemper all its alarming properties, and carry our patient surely and safely through. Instead

of jalap, and calomel, and milk diet, and all the old complicated management, which, upon an average, lost one out of every three cases of natural small-pox, we need only employ the cow-pox inoculation to secure, almost to a certainty, the well doing of all we may be called to.

I have witnessed one well marked case of this fact myself, others have been from time to time published in various periodicals. But the Dr. Fansher, above quoted, seems to have experienced its remedial powers to an extent which leaves little to wish upon the subject. After mentioning some cases of the fatal termination of small-pox, he says: "This and other fatal cases, led me to think of some scheme

for promoting the action of the vaccine virus, and when persons who had been exposed to the small-pox applied to me, I inserted the vaccine virus liberally in the body and limbs by broad punctures, and found the process uniformly successful, even when the patients had been exposed for a period of six or seven days before I saw them; I also vaccinated in this manner many persons who, fearing the effect of recent exposure to the small-pox, had been inoculated with it a day or two, or perhaps more, before I saw them, and I uniformly met with the same success. In these instances, I was careful to surround the variolous punctures with vaccine virus on every side, and generally had the pleasure to see the latter victorious."

Among many cases which he gives, I shall select one which illustrates and satisfactorily proves, not only the Dr.'s own assertions, but, as I think, completely sanctions all that ever has been advanced in favour of the cow-pox, by its warmest admirers. It is this, "Isaac Williams fell sick of the small-pox, and exposed his whole family; no vaccine virus could be procured, and the burning skin of the sick man afforded no pustule from which to inoculate. Before I arrived, however, the pustules on Mr. Williams had come to such a state, that Mrs. W. and the whole family were inoculated. A few hours after, I vaccinated Mrs. W. by two broad punctures on each arm and charged them well with vaccine virus. No symptom of

small-pox appeared, except a small variolous incision on the hand; but this speedily dried up, after the efflorescence appeared around the vaccine incisions, and Mrs. W. was able to attend upon her husband, who died in a few days."

He gives a great many other cases, equally instructive, and may fairly lay claim, not to the discovery that vaccination will supersede small-pox infection long after it has been received, for this has been known and practised many years in this country, but he may claim the merit of reducing this to a certainty, which he does, by inserting the vaccine virus liberally, in various parts of the body, the arms, neck, breast, thighs, and particularly in and about the small-pox incision, if the patient has been

inoculated. But he declares, that "from the preceding cases, it is apparent that vaccination, *in the usual manner*, (that is making one or two incisions with a spear pointed, instead of a broad pointed lancet) has been inefficient in cases of long exposure to the small-pox, or inoculation for the small-pox, a few hours previous to vaccination. Vaccination liberally applied by numerous punctures is alone efficacious in such cases."

Some years since, a case occurred in my own practice, even more striking than the above. A little boy died of confluent small-pox; his brothers and sisters, as well as some neighbours' children, were in and about his bed, till the day of his death, they were then removed, and the day after I vaccinated

them; the small-pox which they had caught, and the cow-pox which I had given them, both appeared about the same period, and pursued their course together, with this exception, that the vaccine pustule was a perfect one, both in size and appearance, and the small-pox pustules, although perfect also, did not exceed twenty in number on any one child, and there was so little accompanying fever, that not one of them was confined to bed a single day!! The most remarkable part of the story, however, is to come. The mother had had small-pox in her own person nine and twenty years before this, and she now took it again; she was covered with it; her fever ran high; she was delirious, and kept her bed many days; some of

them in a state of great uncertainty as to the result!

To conclude then, it appears that vaccination is a sure preventive when properly performed, but that we have abundant evidence to shew that it is but too commonly very improperly performed; that in addition to its preventive powers, it is almost the only preparative we possess, capable of mitigating the violence of secondary small-pox in those few and peculiar constitutions which are open to a repetition of the same, or a similar eruptive disease.

And that as a remedy it stands unequalled, there being positively no medicine, no treatment which operates so powerfully in destroying all the fearful

concomitants of its rival, or so certainly ensures the safety of the patient.

But vaccination has not in this country had fair play. There is one circumstance which has hitherto prevented the complete success of this blessed discovery, and will, if not put a stop to, present an insurmountable barrier to its progress; it is this—however strenuous a medical man may be in the cause of humanity, there will always exist individuals as active in the advancement of their own interest. It follows, therefore, that when prejudice or ignorance demands the operation, he must inoculate for the small-pox, or consent to see some more accommodating practitioner called in, and thus preserve his principles at the expence of his

practice; and when it is considered how very few can support their opinions at such a price, it will not appear surprising that the profession generally are lukewarm in the cause.

Were this obstacle removed, were the legislature to constitute inoculation for the small-pox, under any circumstances, an illegal, as it has long been a criminal, act, and severely to punish the propagation of an evil which might be so easily removed—it is clear that in a very, very few years, this fatal distemper would entirely disappear from among us.

I am not to be told that this would infringe upon the liberty of the subject; to compel me to vaccinate, would do so; but who will contend that I have a

right to inoculate my child with the plague? Yet the plague counts its victims by hundreds, the small-pox by thousands! and in both instances the principle at least is the same.

Every man who, by inoculation, brings small-pox anew into any village or place, which till then was free from it, introduces a plague of the worst character, and is, in my opinion, answerable for every life that may be lost in consequence.

THE END.

J. Davy, Printer,
Queen Street, Seven Dials.