

Sketches from the case book, to illustrate the influence of the mind on the body, with the treatment of some of the more important brain & nervous disturbances which arise from this influence / by R. Fletcher.

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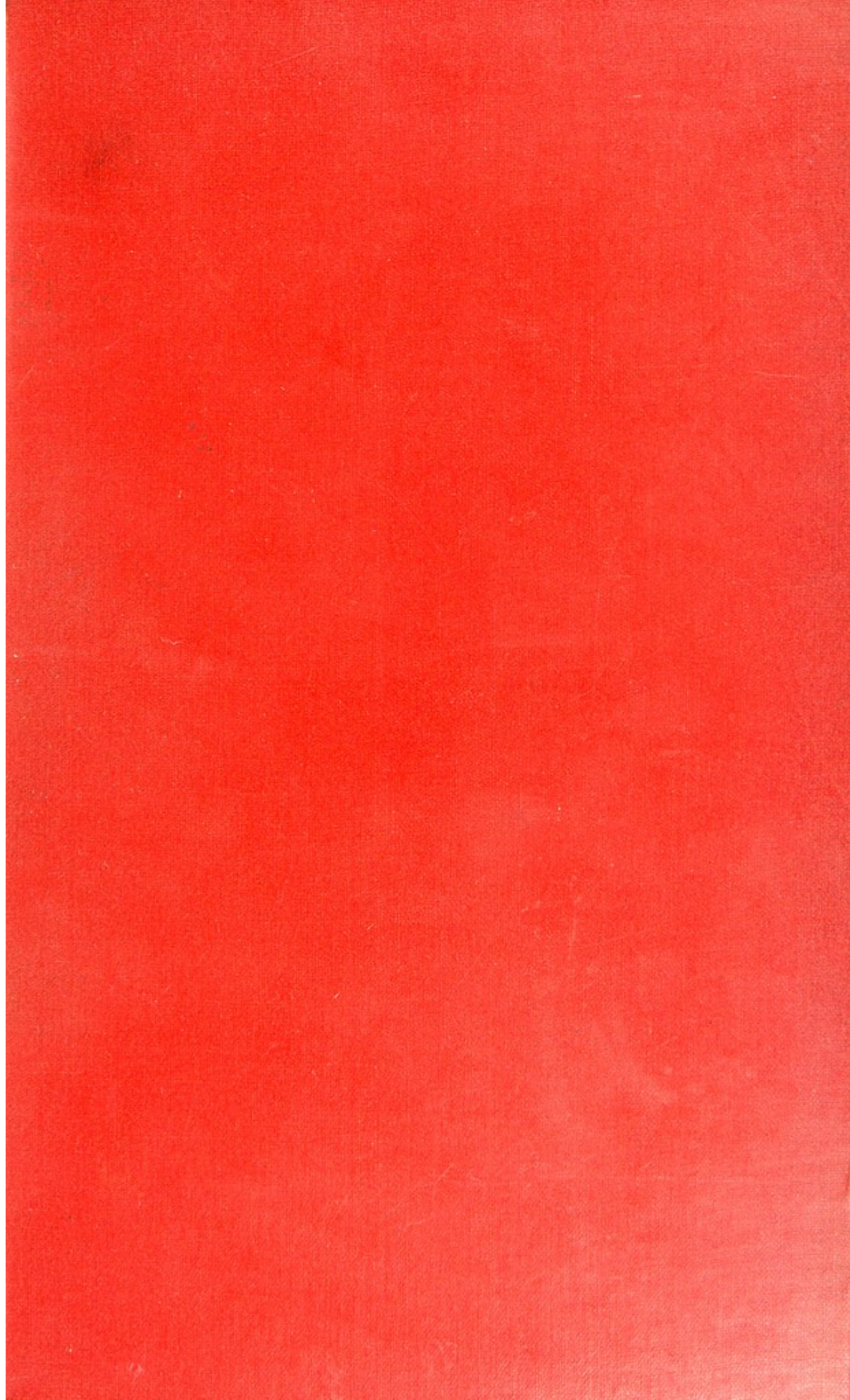
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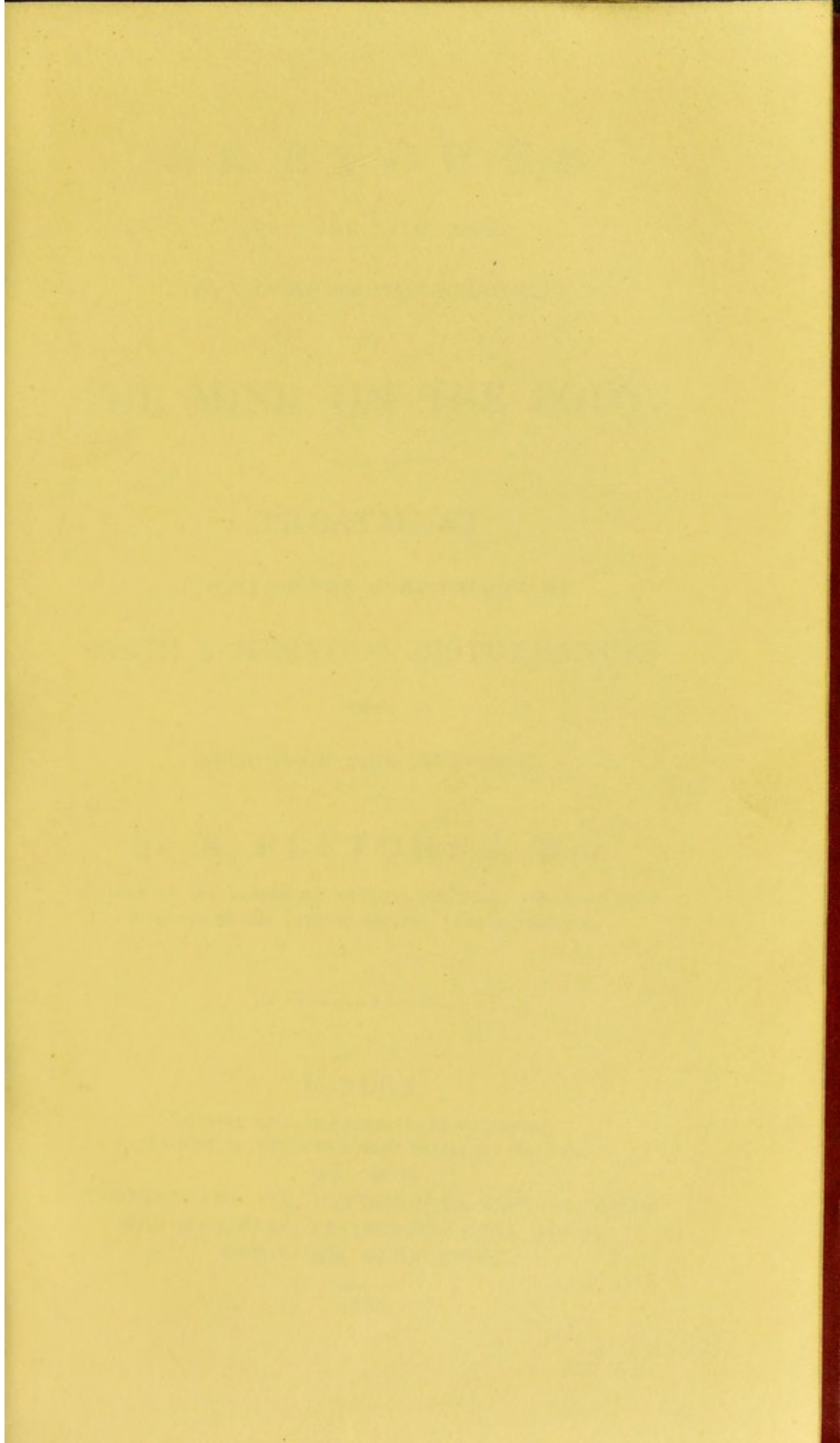
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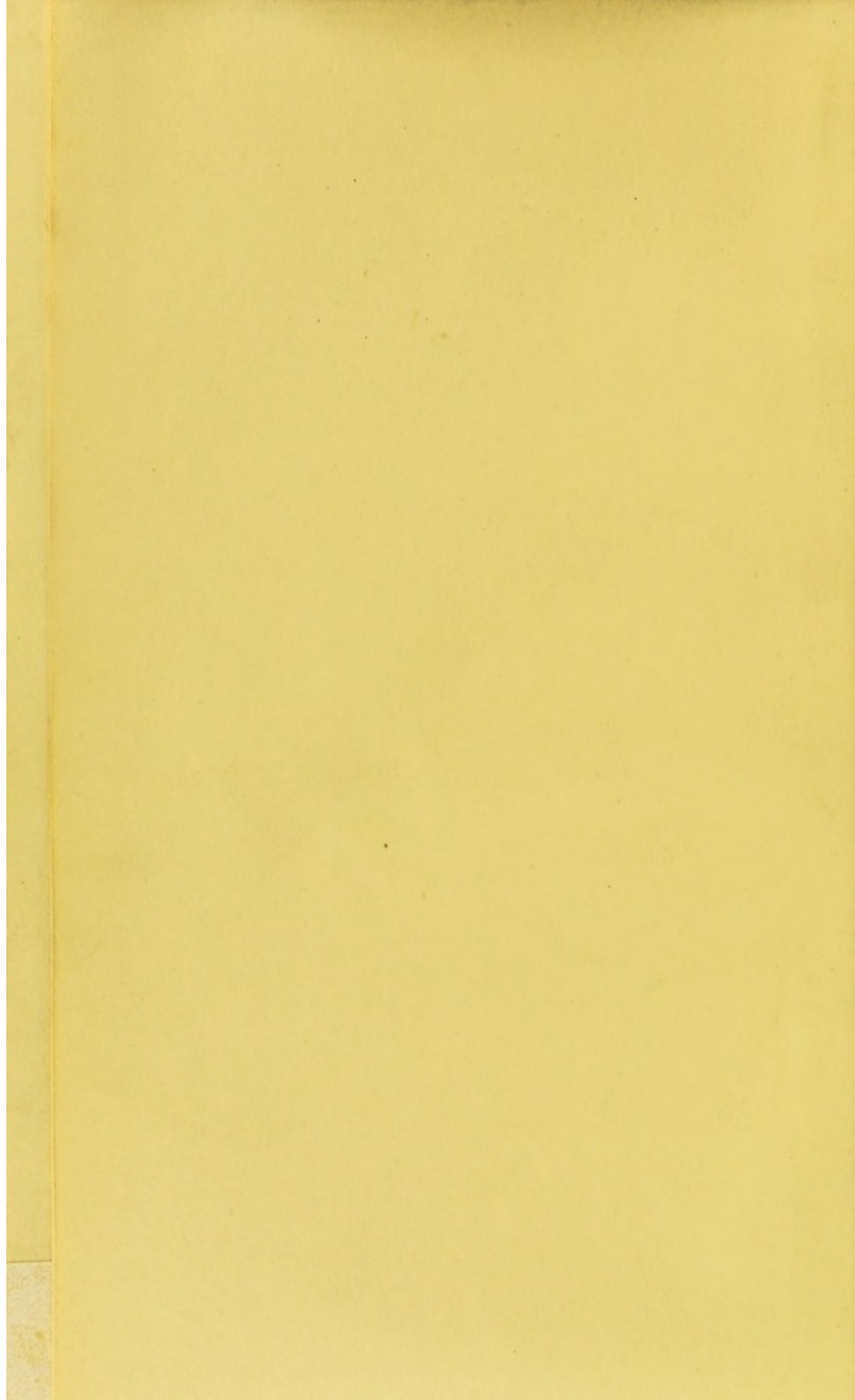
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S K E T C H E S

FROM THE CASE BOOK,

TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCE

OF

THE MIND ON THE BODY,

WITH THE

TREATMENT

OF SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT

BRAIN & NERVOUS DISTURBANCES

WHICH

ARISE FROM THIS INFLUENCE.

By R. FLETCHER, Esq.

SURGEON TO THE GLOUCESTER GENERAL HOSPITAL, AND CONSULTING
SURGEON TO THE LUNATIC ASYLUM, NEAR GLOUCESTER.

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AND GUMM, GLOUCESTER.

1833.

S. KETCHER

FROM THE CASE BOOK

TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCE

OF

THE MIND ON THE BODY,

AND

TREATMENT

OF THE MENTAL DISEASES

BY S. KETCHER, M.D.

AND FROM THE JOURNAL

BY S. KETCHER, M.D.

OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE MIND ON THE BODY, AND THE
EFFECTS OF THE MENTAL DISEASES, WITH
A TREATMENT OF THE MENTAL DISEASES.

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1837.

INTRODUCTION.

No fact is more generally conceded, than the vast—malignant power of the mind over the health of the body; and though most persons suffer, more or less, from its sting, yet little has been done towards diminishing, at least, this prolific source, of the most terrible class of mortal afflictions.

It appears, that we are content to copy each other in admitting the fact, without the necessary enquiry into the rise, progress, and termination, of such an influence. At all events it is notorious, that mankind does not benefit in proportion to the abundant experience it possesses on this important subject.

It is probable, therefore, that we either do not see sufficiently clear the mode by which the mind exercises its fatal dominion, or that our observation is

not attracted sufficiently to the proofs, as to make a lasting or useful impression on the memory.

The Author has considered, that if individual examples were given, of the kind and varieties of misery capable of producing the mischief, the reader might be struck more forcibly and usefully, by a detail of these melancholy particulars, than by a simple belief in the existence of such an evil, which alone can have no practical good effect, or at all prepare us to take our turn in breasting the stormy periods of human life. If our parents, or early instructors, have unprepared us for such events, by a wise education;—the rigid and appropriate discipline of the mind, by which it becomes its own safeguard—we should not delay our own exertions to parry the coming blow.

The following slight preliminary illustrations and examples, of the effects of misery on our own frames, may also more particularly warn afflicted persons against the destructive habit of painful meditation, on their sorrows or misfortunes. Encompassed, as sensitive man is, in his short career, by a host of enemies to his peace, he can scarcely be expected to escape their gripe altogether. He must suffer; but if he dares to dwell long and deeply on his sorrows, he will perish.

The effects of misery depend upon the kind endured, and the peculiar character of the sufferer,—some men feeling one loss or misfortune more than others, and even this more or less intensely, in proportion to their sensibility or organization. Hence, when there is such a difference in the materials for inflicting or bearing suffering, there must be a vast and endless variety in the form of its ravages.

On this account, it would be impossible to give a practical illustration of the comparative evil power of different painful feelings. All that the Author has done, is little more than to record some proofs of a mighty source of premature decay, to indicate the remedial value of mental processes generally, and of the power of one in particular, in assuaging the agonies and relieving the effects, of the more desperate and dangerous examples of moral affliction.

Lastly,—it is believed, that such cases published occasionally, may serve as a caution to the medical practitioner. He will observe in such bodily derangements, from the operations of the mind, often more disturbance of the vital organs, more of pain and suffering, than these important parts yield, when affected by those serious diseases or change of struc-

ture, which, admitting of no remedy, lead to certain death! The judgment may thus be misled, a capital mistake committed, a false practice instituted, and additional injury inflicted on the unfortunate victim to his feelings, by one, whose office and whose duty it is, to bring relief and consolation.

Gloucester, May, 1833.

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PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE

POWER OF MIND ON THE BODY.

CHAPTER I.

INFLUENCE OF THE BRAIN AS THE AGENT OF THE
MIND.

THE object of the following pages, is to show, so far as it can be done from my own practice, the power of the brain in disordering the health.

This power is limited to its functions, and has no reference to any disturbances of health from organic changes in its structure.

The brain, no doubt, transmits the mischief from the mind, which dictates its operations.

I believe, that the brain, or the mind which acts through it, has more power in disordering the health, than it is generally supposed to have, and with this belief, some facts I have collected are here offered to the public.

For the subject is so intimately interwoven with our moral being, that all persons possessed of a love of enquiry, will find this particular one, of the influence of mind on body, of a very interesting character; and, so far as it is connected with moral education, which it is most closely, it is one which demands the attention of that class of readers, whose own minds are destined to the important office of training the youthful character, up to the full level of its particular powers.

For the sake of the general reader, therefore, I shall avoid as much as possible, in these slight sketches, the use of professional or scientific terms, which are often embarrassing, and which abound too much, even in professional writing. Simplicity of diction adds to the clearness, and therefore, to the utility of all works; but especially, in those particular subjects which involve the interests of general society.

We are constantly hearing, among patients, of pains in the head, swimming sensations, or giddiness, singing in the ears,—coupled with the ordinary signs of indigestion in the stomach. There can be no doubt, that disorders of the stomach will produce all these effects, from

causes acting within its own cavity. But granting this, it is my conviction, that these headaches and swimings, more frequently arise from causes acting directly on the head itself, than from causes acting on the stomach. In other words, I believe that the brain influences the stomach, more than the stomach influences the brain.

This, however, is but a small part of our subject, comparatively, and is merely introduced in this place, by way of preparing the mind of the reader, for the line of investigation and inference which will be observed, and result from, the history or experience of the cases here recorded.

Nor are any pretensions made to great originality. Some facts and remarks may be found, which will serve the purpose of drawing the attention of thinking persons, to the effects of the operations of their own minds upon their health, and hence, to deduce a conclusion, that such a vast source for its disturbance, deserves the most rigid and watchful government; and when, unfortunately, the evil has been brought to pass, the most decisive, yet delicate mental treatment.

It was in the year 1830, that I was more

particularly struck with the power of mind over the health, from a trifling circumstance witnessed by myself, and which shall be related, as the most natural way of introducing the little I may have to offer on this interesting subject.

CHAPTER II.

ON MENTAL IRRITATION, OR THE EFFECTS OF MISERY ON THE HEALTH.

A GUEST, in a noble castle, in whose halls reigns magnificence and princely hospitality, was intently observing, on a fine October morning, the various preparations for a happy day. Examples of the best and most generous blood in the kingdom, were keenly engaged in various objects of interest; some in lolling over a magnificent breakfast, and speaking rapturously of no common deeds soon to come. Others, preparing their guns, or strolling about the domain, were gazing at the fine effect of the morning sun, as its rays glistened in summer warmth among the polished ivy, which embraced the

ancient turrets of the castle. These, by their pensive positions, were probably gathering up in memory, the melancholy but precious associations with days that were gone, and drawing painful conclusions on the uncertainty of human life and perishable character of all earthly grandeur. But this almost royal abode is no place for melancholy, or grave reflections.

The eye quitted the ancient pile and its reminiscences, and turned towards a more cheering view;—the glorious luminary of day, with the fresh gale of autumn, slowly dispersing the mist from the bold and proud forms of the oak, and groups of the tall and aged fir, as they were spread in masses of majestic grandeur over the wide bosom of the park. Soon the breeze and the sun together, rolled away the morning fog from another interesting object—the unrivalled, and far-famed kennel in the distance. Taste varies. A stroller, with folded arms, leaning on the parapet, might now be seen turning his ear to this building. He is silently listening to the cheering note of the eager fox-hound, as it is borne on the gale, and soon will he be of that happy number, who in the rear of these gallant dogs, shall give the last brilliant touches of

scarlet to the rich and glowing tones of the autumnal landscape.

The guest crossed the castle court and entered the park. The morning breeze blew kindly in his face, and freshened with temporary vigour a languid and failing frame. Hitherto, even unto him, all was brilliant and full of hope; and happiness, for a day, was apparently within his reach. But what can ensure it for a moment in this world? A single thought stole cruelly into memory, and poisoned the cup already at the lip;—in an instant, pleasure and hope vanished together,—and not a vestige of the boundless beauties around him remained. The double shot “mark,” the last whirr and note of the most beautiful tenant of the English forest, were unheard, or if heard, unnoticed; the cry of the fox-hound was mournful; a dark and gloomy mantle overspread the once bright landscape.

“What is the matter,” said a friend, “are you ill? How changed you look.” The reply was short, for the heart of the sufferer was full. The friend passed on—the guest felt he was ill—that the change was great; and the whole was but a moment’s work of the mind of man.

The thought which worked this mischief, was a frequent visitor to the brain of the individual in question. But of late, unsparing and repeated blows had made it sore and rebellious. Pains in the head succeeded to the last visit narrated above, and it was years before the derangements of the health, the effects of these mental irritations, were even partially removed.

Although the troubles of this life, the disappointment of the tenderest hopes, will fall with overpowering strength upon man; yet, is there also, most fortunately, a power of relief, as well as one to suffer, in the human mind.

It is in the calm of morning, in the first hour of wakefulness, that thought will have its sway; it then, to the sensitive man, becomes either destructive or soothing, yielding happiness or misery. Hence is this hour full of danger to that unhappy one, who has nothing in the past he wishes to remember, and who would willingly close his eyes upon the dreary prospects of the future. Memory, however, must have her victim, and imagination will assist in the work of destruction.

Tossed from one to the other, in intolerable

anguish of mind, filling a body, perhaps, surcharged with its own sufferings, beset by misery on all sides, despair and disgust grow upon him, he feels that his fate is undeserved, and he rushes from his bed, with a natural, though a forlorn hope, of finding a somewhat happier situation. But the miserable man cannot fly from himself! He cannot shake off this fiend of memory, who will be the companion of his journey, even were it as rapid as the eagle's flight.

He who can picture to himself a state of mind like this, will probably be able to imagine how little a person, so suffering, must be fitted to bear the harassing trials of business, of anxiety, the pressure and burthens of a family, the deceit of servants, and above all the coarse feeling of the greater number in that world, in which he must constantly move.

It was not long after the park scene already narrated, that the same individual, who having as usual dwelt upon his sorrows in bed, rushing from it in such a pitiable state of irritability from long suffering, disgust, mental anguish, and bodily pain, that he passed down stairs, sensitively fearing to encounter an unkind eye,

or the sound of an unfriendly foot-fall, exquisitely open to every trifling injury, and yet receiving mental wounds from all quarters. The breakfast room, filled with the most precious remains of art, now no longer seen, to him, had all the sad and gloomy air of a sepulture; the singing of the urn, so cheering to the happy, was the hissing of the snake; the food had the bitterness of gall, and it was certainly a mere casualty whether he employed the knife intended to cut it, in more ways than one. But a soft and gentle voice struck his ear. On turning, he beheld his beloved daughter. "Papa, I have been copying this morning for you, does it please you? offering the fruit of her morning's industry, with a deep tone of tenderness, and look of affection! Man is a strange animal! In an instant the fire burnt brighter, the sun shone with unusual splendour through the ancient stained glass, the tea kettle yielded its cheering song, the appetite returned, and for a time, at least, hope occupied the dwelling place of misery.

Such is the human mind, susceptible of the most cruel injuries, but furnished, by the Creator, with a preservative or rallying power to stop their fatal progress. The mode of raising and

assisting this power should be the work of skill. A powerful parallel might be drawn, were it necessary, between the protecting principles which govern the body and the mind.

CHAPTER III.

THE INJURIES OF THE MIND ARE VIOLENT: VIZ. IN THE SHAPE OF SHOCKS, OR A CONTINUED MENTAL IRRITATION, LONG SUFFERING, OR AN UNHAPPY LIFE.

A MAN receives a concussion of the brain, or an extensive bodily mischief which lays prostrate the powers of life, without quite extinguishing it. The fear here, in the mind of the skilful surgeon, is, that the blow may be too heavy for the constitution to bear, that it will at once sink under the injury without a struggle. He sees and feels, that the danger is in the extreme depression of the nervous system (if you please), and whatever may be the particular nature of the accident, whatever part or parts may be injured, if the signs of this depression

are manifested by coldness of the body, indifference to external objects, an intermitting pulse of the feeblest kind, he wilfully looks not to the particular or minor injuries, but he turns all his attentions to the commanding one,—the sinking and yielding vital powers, compared with which the injury, however great at present, is as nothing, and without the relief of which, life must soon cease. The most powerful stimulating agents are given, and if the mischief be not directly of a fatal kind, the injured man revives, his pulse rises, he becomes warm, and answers your questions which before were unheeded;—and having accomplished this grand object of your efforts, you now proceed to investigate how far the lesser or particular injuries are capable of reparation.

Just so is it with the human mind. The blows it is destined to sustain, in this life, though more bitter and difficult to bear than those of the body, are of various degrees of force, proportioned exactly to the kind of injury, and to the strong or feeble power of feeling, which may exist in the mind of the sufferer. When this power of feeling is very strong, delicate, and acute, it may be called sensibility, and the shades and degrees of it

are as various as the degrees of light and shade.

But feeling differs in quality and its sources, though, when wounded, the effects of the injury may be equally destructive of happiness.

Thus, when a small loss sustained by a rich miser has been known to destroy him, the effect is precisely the same as when it arises from the more pitiable and refined losses endured only by noble and elevated minds.

The word sensibility is used chiefly to indicate the kind of feeling annexed to the latter character, or moral constitution. The word feeling is used in a more general sense.

Whatever power it may be, however, or whatever name may be affixed to it, it is beyond all dispute, to this quality of mind, sensibility, or feeling, that the vast multitudes of its affections or injuries are to be ascribed. To revert, therefore, to the manner in which the mind is wounded, is to remember this quality of it, and especially the peculiar character of the patient; and afterwards seek out, what are the blows most capable of inflicting mischief upon this particular mind; and for practical purposes, what the signs of their existence evinced on the body; and finally,

the malady and its effects once discerned, what are the remedies to be applied, or, in other words, how far is the mischief capable of reparation.

Grief, in a truly sensitive mind, for the loss suddenly sustained, of a once beloved object, who has not merely died, but is lost to you for ever, disappointed you in a kind of moral death, is a thousand times more dreadful to memory, than the mere extinction of mortal life, and is therefore, perhaps, the most acute, refined, and noble of all mental wretchedness.

Grief is sometimes of a less elevated character. Thus one of the severest examples of ill health, from affliction, I ever saw, arose from a sudden and entire loss of fortune, the misdeed of a friend. But it happened to a young man of fine feelings, who had just married, with no expectation of such a misfortune, and who suffered from having brought a beloved wife into all the horrors of certain poverty.

The nature of the case was the wide range of symptoms called indigestion, which is probably nothing more, quite enough, than a general disturbance of the nervous system, beginning, when from affliction, in the brain

or organ of the mind. This case lasted three years. But the nervous system is even now constantly and wakefully disposed, and anxieties easily disturb it to a certain extent.

Acute, or stunning grief, the heaviest blow the mind can endure, will, by its shock, like the stroke of a cannon ball upon the body, sometimes destroy life suddenly, and no reaction succeeding to the fatal stroke, the unhappy being is withered by its violence, and silently, and without reproach, drops into eternity. The blow is also upon the brain, and is a species of concussion, or nervous apoplexy.

But, in general, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," and a reaction takes place; the sufferer dies not this time, but should he receive additional strokes of affliction, he goes on to live, or rather to bear life;—with a broken spirit and a ruined body, and without vigorous skill and timely decision, a wreck only is left, of what, perhaps, was once in form beautiful, noble in sentiment, and admirable and commanding in genius.

It is, therefore, after the first shock of grief has been overcome, if the intellect remains sound, that the memory of its causes, and perhaps their continuation, begin to show

themselves in a train of evils, of a sure, but gradual destructive working upon the frame of man, and this in proportion to its indulgence, its nature, and intensity.

The first injurious effect of an injured mind is upon the nervous system, with which it is more immediately connected.

It is with reference to this branch of the subject of the influence of the mind on the body, the evils which the latter endures at the almost irresistible will of its master spirit, that these slight notes are penned. They will contain some illustrations of the character of the immediate and remote causes of such lamentable effects, of the principles of the human mind, through which they act, and the mode through these principles, in which our means should be directed, for the relief of that mental misery and its consequences, which are as yet capable of relief, before the mischief arrives at its last extreme moral effect—madness.

It has been said, that the mind acts upon the body through the agency of the brain and nerves. Whatever may be the relation which these organs bear to the mind, their intimate union is unquestionable; each possesses a remarkable control over the other. This is

evinced beyond all controversy, on the one hand, by the diseases of the brain, or its worn out character, affecting, in a corresponding degree, the functions of the mind, or its utter extinction; whilst the disturbances of the latter, in the shape of painful thought or misery, will, on the other hand, be equally striking upon the brain or nervous system, producing a long and almost countless series of bodily ailments and disordered feelings. I write with practical and not metaphysical views. Accordingly, it is partly with the intention of demonstrating the influence of the mind as an irritant on the nervous system, or mind of the body, and partly to show the exact qualities or states of mind, through which the mischief is done on the body, and the mode of correcting such immense evils, as far as they are capable of relief.

The most common rout, or channel, by which the mind through the brain affects the body, is in the direction of the stomach, where a peculiar and wide spreading malady is implanted. This may be called indigestion, or dyspepsia, but I believe it to be, strictly, a nervous affection of the stomach, the nerves of which being generally the first affected;—though irrita-

tions from other quarters may be the means of exciting the phænomena of the disease, without the gastric nerves being affected, in any other than a secondary way, or as part of that system.

When these gastric nerves are affected so as to produce the phænomena of indigestion, from an impression given by the mind, I would give the term mental indigestion to the disease. The term indigestion, however, is inadequate to express the exact nature of the affection, as frequently indigestion does not accompany the malady at all,—the appetite being often healthy and good, and the digestion complete, though when these nerves are affected, it is more slowly performed.

If we were to speak of the horrors of the nervous system, instead of the horrors of indigestion, our language would be more correct.

For the present purpose of shortly illustrating the effect of mind on matter, in producing these nervous symptoms, it may suffice to remind the reader, if he possesses the quality of mind called feeling, of some notorious examples of its influence upon his stomach, in particular, under peculiar or trying circumstances, which may have occurred in his journey through life.

He must have been a fortunate man indeed, who never experienced acute grief; his memory must have the unusual combination of being kind as well as treacherous, should it be insufficient to remind him of the fact, that, upon that occasion, all appetite forsook him.

Again, he might have been happy, swimming along in the full tide of enjoyment, and had taken a good dinner, which agreed with him exceedingly well, that is to say, no signs of indigestion followed the agreeable act of eating, and, cheered with a glass of wine, he goes out refreshed by the meal, to look for his evening letters. He gets one, and it is found to contain a returned bill of £5000, he himself being unable to find *one*.

Now the effect of this blow upon the mind of a sensitive man, and thence on the stomach, may not be known to every body from such a cause, and it may be fairly supposed, that nobody wishes to have any experience on the subject. Nevertheless, events of this kind happen.

Such an occurrence, in persons of feeling, would, in sporting language, be called a *stomacher*. And really it is so. Digestion would be instantly suspended,—the stomach

would suddenly be disordered,—the most ordinary signs of indigestion follow,—and this organ, which before the mischievous intelligence, yielded no disagreeable sensation at all, would now feel loaded, or probably be disposed to yield up its contents altogether, upon the very spot where it received the injury.

There is another example, still more striking than the former, because it may be brought home to every sensitive mind, which is careful to observe its own operations. During the short periods of happiness which such persons enjoy in life, they can take food and drink in greater abundance, than when affliction sits heavy on their feelings. It is not here merely meant that the appetite is greater, though it most commonly is, in happiness; but, that if the unhappy indulge this appetite (which they will frequently acquire by the exertions of the body), the stomach does not digest its food, and the whole train of dyspeptic symptoms are produced; commencing with a sensation of weight and oppression at that organ, which is now too feeble to bear its burthen.

Again: I know a legal gentleman, who enjoys perfect health, except on occasions of professional anxiety. Upon these occurrences,

it invariably happens, that soon after this feeling occupies the mind, his tongue, which was previously clean, becomes dark, or excessively brown; appetite gone, and if he should happen to take food, it irritates, and severe pain is often felt in the stomach, which never occurs at other times.

This gentleman attends our assizes, and it often happens, as a matter of course, that powerfully interesting cases occur, in which he is engaged, that disturbs his health in the way described. But no sooner are the assizes concluded, his anxiety removed, (that is to say, within two hours afterwards,) than his tongue becomes perfectly clean, and his appetite, a distinguished one, returns with such uncontrollable force and effect, that this limb of the law stops at a half-way house on his return home, where the limb of an animal, less dangerous than himself, satisfies in some measure, the capricious humour of his otherwise most respectable, and certainly very capacious, stomach.

It is, however, not always through the stomach that the mind irritates the nervous system, or rules the body. A variety of examples might be given, but a few shall

suffice for the present purpose. The influence of the mind in hysteric affections, and in exasperating convulsive asthma, is unequivocal.

The young girls, who for years pass from one hospital to another, to seek relief for the wide range of symptoms of a nervous kind, which may be the subject of a few of these pages, will, when they get a little better, and having nothing else to do, gossip outright, and sometimes, of course, quarrel outright, and be disposed to pull caps, if they could but get at each other, which their ailments have at least one advantage in preventing, by having disabled their more harmless lower limbs.

The disturbed mind, the excitement, or passion in such cases, will frequently and instantly produce a fit.

A dark-eyed daughter of Eve, gave way to anger, from some trifling provocation of her neighbour on the opposite side of the ward, and accordingly fell into a fit; and as if it was out of courtesy, her antagonist instantly copied her example, and there were these two amiable beings, employing all the disposable female strength of the ward, and a reinforcement of

male assistants from other wards, to keep their bodies safe from the violent motions of the fits.

Again: there was to be a famous hunt ball, at a more famous watering-place, but a young lady's father was indiscreet enough to be firm, by signifying his wishes that his daughter should not go to the ball.

The effects upon a mind, prepared by some misconception, for its attractions, and fully expecting an enjoyment of them, was the production of a fit, which lasted for hours, requiring, of course, medical attendance; and the effects upon the nervous system, of which this fit took the lead, were not removed for months. The lady was in perfect health before this accident, and her mind could not be therefore predisposed to produce this effect, from the state of the stomach or otherwise, and it must be, therefore, considered a purely mental one, acting on the nervous system, though not of the most respectable, or pitiable character.

More respectable,—though from the same agency,—was the mental feeling, that gave uncontrollable agitation to the stump of Nelson, when it shook fearfully and ominously, on the quarter-deck of the Victory, in the face of the enemies of his country.

But to such slight and trivial effects of mind, in disturbing the body, these few pages are not devoted, except by way of illustration. It is to the sad, more serious, interesting, and melancholy ravages, which an unhappy life, deep or acute disappointments, will produce on humanity, through the all-spreading power of the nervous system.

The effect of blows given by grief, from some great moral loss, by affection, or in fortune, may be removed by the natural elasticity and usually rallying power of the mind, in ordinary individuals, when this power is properly superintended;—for the recovery will be slow, or more rapid, in proportion to the excellence of this mental management. But the task is a very different one, where a mind of high expectations and exquisite sensitiveness is concerned, in which memory will cherish even its sorrows, and feed with daily fuel the never dying fire of slow destruction. Soon do the corresponding bodily symptoms follow; for the silent smothered flame of the injured mind will surely reach its frail habitation;—the composite constitution of man is dislocated, in all its parts and functions; and the ruin is general.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased—
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow—
Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart ?

Yes, if the weight of crime be not added to the weight of misfortune. Time, with good moral and medical management, it is cheering to know, will do wonders, if the patient will submit to a removal far away from the immediate causes of his decay, and to the mental treatment for closing the sources of memory. But he too often lingers in the midst of the mischief, in the hope that matters may mend, and occasionally they may do so; but in general a long and worrying scene, of anxiety and slow worldly misery, is ensured, which is more difficult for the bodily health to endure, than the more violent primary shock.

It is like a protracted and dreadful operation, where a dull knife, in an unskilful hand, is long and busily employed; but, uncertain of its work, it lacerates and bruises more than it cuts, which it yet does ten times more than is necessary, and the patient rises, if he rises at all, worn out and harassed by long punishment;—a mere remnant of what he once was,

fitted to endure life, rather than ever more to enjoy it.

Deep feeling, therefore, is, beyond all doubt, the great predisposing cause to mental, or nervous maladies, of the highest and most aggravated character. One of the various faults in our system of education, is a want of philosophical attention to indications of character, the neglect of which is evinced, in classing children of all varieties of moral tendencies, under the same governing principles, and exposed to the corrupting effects of a congregation of every kind of irregular character:—the coarse are mingled with the refined, the vicious with the child of deep sensibility, who feels every thing, and needs only to be properly incited, to become all that human nature is capable of producing, in the shape of a noble being.

But often is he sent to a large school, abounding in the seeds and fruits of vice, where this beautiful and dangerous quality is first wounded and disgusted by vice, then habituated to observe its hourly practice, and ultimately and gradually this susceptible character of feeling leads its possessor to the extremes of all that is bad, the stains of which are never altogether effaced in after life. He still re-

tains his sensibility that is natural to him, but it now fits him chiefly for misery, or at least a chequered life; in which a mass of wretchedness is mingled with a few drops of exquisite enjoyment. With the finest perceptions of right and wrong, he is always sinning and repenting, and expecting largely of perfection from those he loves, which he never receives.

The result is disappointment, of the most trying and severe description. It is constantly repeated in the journey through life; and this originally fine mind, ruined by a bad education, is gradually soured and lost in some of the various, melancholy shapes of mental or nervous malady.

That it is to this undisciplined and beautiful quality of character, that the deepest and most acute forms of mental suffering owe their origin, is distinctly evident from the fact, that amongst females, mental or nervous maladies (very much the same) prevail in the greatest extent, and infinitely more than they are supposed to do.

The source is their refined and abundant nervous power, excited into wild romantic expectations, by a false course of education, which yields equally false views of the objects

of existence, and produces a childish love of personal attraction and finery,—and by novel reading, which always extends the quantity of sensibility, whilst it weakens its beauty and quality, and enervates the only power that can control it, that is to say, the understanding.

Led wrong too often, nay daily, by this forced unchastened sensitiveness, into a thousand errors of the heart, and without a highly cultivated reason, which only could make them stop in time, they yield without a struggle to the cherished weakness,—and thus are led to conceal, too often, the slow poison that is at work within them, till a train of nervous diseases make their appearance, to puzzle the doctor, and, for years, to distress the patient.

These causes are mentioned here, chiefly, because in the relief which can be afforded, it is necessary to remember them; for in spite of all medical aid, their effects will continue, should the practitioner be unaware of the principles of the human mind, in which they are seated,—and which will keep up the malady for years, by a power unknown to himself, and very often equally unknown to the patient.

CHAPTER IV.

ON SOME OF THE FORMS OF MENTAL SUFFERING
AS THEY ARE SHOWN ON THE BODY.

SECTION I.

*Mental Indigestion, or Indigestion produced by
the Sufferings of the Mind.*

THE first and leading form, itself the parent of a thousand children, of monstrous shape, and frightful character, is the affection which is here called mental, or nervous indigestion, in opposition to that which arises from physical irritation, from the stomach, liver, or other sources. I believe, however, that all are affections of the nervous system, with the difference only, of being produced by different irritations.

It has been said, that a fit of deep anxiety, or misery, will suspend the powers of the stomach; or, if the appetite be indulged at such periods, signs of stomach irritation are manifested, and will continue till the mental cause be withdrawn.

Mental indigestion, appears to be merely a more permanent effect than the former, from a continued or more constant state of misery.

There may, or there may not be, a predisposition to the affection, from a previous weak stomach.

This predisposition, when it exists, may be a cause for the continuance of some of the stomach symptoms, of a slight character, even when the original mental affliction has been withdrawn, along with the more general disturbance of the nervous system of which it was the cause. But it is more probable, that in the greater number of cases, where all the symptoms do not depart, on the minds regaining composure, that the gastric nerves have received so serious an injury, in the shape of weakness or irritability, from the mind's distress, that it requires time to remove it, and which is not done till long after the original cause has been removed.

It is not necessary, here, to enumerate all the common signs of indigestion, so called, though I have taken the liberty of adding to their number here, and under the head of physical irritation in another place. Enough, perhaps, has been probably written on this branch

of the subject, and it is not the object of these notes, to add to the abundant stock of elementary knowledge already in existence. The object is, to add my mite, to what is already known (certainly too little) of the power of the mind over the body, and to show, in some degree, that medical men would often be more usefully employed, in tracing out the wretched wanderings of a distracted mind to their source, and in furnishing the appropriate relief, which an intellectual physician should be able to do, than in prescribing physic and enemas only. No essential or permanent relief is ever obtained from medicine, and in no other way than by relieving the mind itself; excepting after the disease has been long standing and the mind relieved, when the chain of functional disturbance confirmed into habits, appear to require additional aid. The cases of mental indigestion are also more severe, and of longer duration, and more fluctuating than the common or physical ones, as the causes operate in various shades of distressed feeling, and with different degrees of force at different times.

It may, however, here be necessary to state shortly, that the symptoms of mental indigestion, as seen in the body, are nearly the same

as those which arise from mere stomach irritability, or an unsound condition of the lining of the stomach and intestines, or from any other physical irritant acting within the body, particularly upon the nervous system, of which the stomach may be said to form a part, and would, therefore, probably share in its general disturbance.

The principal distinguishing character, appears to be in the mind of the patient, which is more widely and acutely disturbed than in the latter affection; and there is a singular and remarkable correspondence between the degree of the bodily symptoms, and the condition of the mind. The mental and bodily symptoms also depart together, and return together, as cause and effect; and the latter symptoms are never developed without previous mental suffering.

As this mental indigestion occurs most commonly in persons possessing the nervous or sensitive temperament, I have not added to the following catalogue of the symptoms, the irregularity of bowels, alternate costiveness and purging, and discoloured evacuations, which some authors, particularly Dr. Philip, have enumerated among the common signs of in-

digestion, because, in such temperament, or constitution, I have rarely seen them exist. The worst cases of mental indigestion I ever saw, lasted for years, with great, though weak, regularity of bowels, and not a discoloured stool, the whole period, that could not be accounted for from the operation of substances taken into the stomach.

The truth appears to be, that the foregoing bilious symptoms, which are omitted in the catalogue, belong more particularly to the history of indigestion in bilious habits, than to that species which is annexed to nervous ones, whether this last arises from existing causes applied to the mind, or from physical irritation.

It is not meant that persons of bilious habits are not sensitive, or capable of feeling the evils of moral affliction, but that it is in the nervous temperament, that these evils most prevail, and that the signs of them are somewhat different to those observed in the bilious temperament.

SECTION II.

General Symptoms of Mental Indigestion.

THEY are all of a nervous character, confusion, giddiness, and pain in the head, palpitation, and various uneasy feelings about the heart, the left side and left breast, and side of the neck, as if the parts were tied together, sometimes leaving a soreness of this breast. Pains oftentimes of a burning, evanescent nature on the broad parts of the back, more fixed between the shoulders,—on sundry parts of the body, along the inside of the left arm, and left leg, with some pain and oppression about the breast, flatulence, foul tongue, load at the stomach, a langour after food ;—and remarkable fluctuation of the symptoms, (especially immediately after mental suffering,) from strength to weakness, and from one symptom to another, the patient being comparatively well one day, and ill another. These fluctuations, from health to suffering, singularly and accurately succeeding to a fit of mental anguish, altering the patient's countenance from an expression of comparative health and cheerfulness, to that of extreme ill-

ness, and melancholy despair, and accompanied by excessive coldness of the body. These fluctuations worry by constant and perpetual delusions of a recovery that comes not, and help to originate a strange and peculiar kind of irritability, difficult to bear, the result of an exquisite morbid sensibility, that feels with indisable anguish, all painful subjects ;—usually increased after mental anguish and irritability. Finally a melancholy gloom follows ; and which, if the patient be not soothed by gentle and refined usage, will sometimes carry him far beyond the bounds of reason.

In truth, his sufferings at this period, have in a measure destroyed his reason, a little more added to the burthen of them, and he is in danger of cutting his throat.

There are modes, there must be means, by which the Creator reminds man of the truth, of how little he is, when he thinks too highly of himself, stops him in his headlong career of worldly prosperity and enjoyment, makes him think that these things cannot last for ever, and that it is time to make provision for a more permanent condition, by commencing in earnest the work of improvement. If there are such means, such silent workings of the Deity, ner-

vous indigestion, or what is the same thing, the effect of misery upon the stomach, and on the nervous system, is an all-powerful agent to execute this wisdom of the Creator.

That the nature of this terrible affection is nervous, is clear from its origin, the mind;—and the mind, it is well known, can only act on the body, through the medium of the nervous system. But, should any one doubt this single origin of nervous or mental indigestion, let him closely analyze, and study the various symptoms of the affection, and he will, beyond all doubt, be satisfied of the truth of the position.

In the first place, although the same order of parts will be affected as in that less terrifying form of indigestion, from physical irritations only, of the stomach; yet, the patient's mind will not be concerned so much in the latter affection, as in this in question, that is mixed up so closely with the daily symptoms, their departure and return, as the powerful source of their deceitful or Proteian character.

Despondency, there is in both, but the despondency of the common dyspeptic, though still a mental effect, is that of disgust, and weariness from long suffering, and despair of recovery. The despondency of the mental

dyspeptic is of higher rank, and refinement does not at first regard his bodily health, though this has its share, (for the palpitations of the heart, and the giddiness of the head will alarm him occasionally,) so much as a deep conviction that some internal sorrow is, or has been, the root of all his sufferings, and by it, that his early hopes are for ever blighted, and his mind and happiness for ever ruined.

This conviction, however, of the true origin of his malady, can strike only an intelligent and observing patient, and hence it commonly happens, that numbers suffer, who are unaware of the terrible enemy working at their vitals;—the dregs of that poisonous spring, of which they have, at times, drunk so deeply.

Experience, however, of the source of his bodily malady, the mental dyspeptic will frequently acquire, if he be a person of observation, by watching the progress of his mind, and the corresponding effects induced upon his complaints, by its operations. No man, however dull he be, can fail to observe facts so interesting to him, as those regarding his health, and though untaught by professional habits, the mental dyspeptic, from the length of his sufferings, has abundant opportunities of watch-

ing, as they rise up daily and hourly, the causes associated with the effects, the aggravation of all his symptoms, by painful retrospection, and the entire reproduction of them by the same means, when they had totally departed; by a wise withdrawing from the scene, that originally produced them. I have known this perfect illustration of the nature and cause of the malady, by the removal of the patient from the original field of his suffering, or from objects, which, by association, would recall it to memory,—occur, repeatedly, in several cases under my own observation. Entire change of scene and society, would expel from memory the poison which infested it,—the patient would be happy and digest large quantities of food, and drink wine in proportion, with impunity. But business, or affection, or ambition, would lure him back again among the fatal sources of his early wrongs, and the effect would be strikingly demonstrative of the folly of his conduct, and the real cause of his strange and dreadful disease. He becomes as bad as ever; painful objects and their associations are at work again; and it is observed, that one-half the food and wine cannot be borne by his stomach, now that his mental wounds scarcely

closed, were again torn open to bleed afresh with all their former violence. The effect of food upon the brain, where the mischief of painful thought is going on, is to reproduce the morning gloom and irritability, which but a short time before, but in happier and distant scenes, he thought were for ever gone. Again would the patient seek once more the stranger and the foreign shore, to obtain comfort which home could not yield;—again would he return to experience a relapse;—and then, at last convinced, he makes a stern and final determination.

Sometimes the symptoms do not totally depart, by a removal from the scenes or causes of their origin. If the victim will still remain among them from a sense of duty, or an all-powerful affection for his family, he will madly run the risk of bringing on the worst effects of such a daring and romantic sacrifice, mental hypochondriasis or insanity. That they do not always instantly depart, is not surprising; for it is not to be supposed, that a train of morbid actions once established, can be always and instantly suspended, by a removal of their cause.

The offspring may, for a time, exist inde-

pendent of its parent, and effects confirmed by habit, continue long after their causes have been withdrawn.

Of the truth of this position, there is no need to adduce any evidence: the appended cases will confirm, and our profession abounds with it. Hence it is, that in these cases of mental indigestion, the nervous system, and that important part of it the gastric nerves, will receive an impression from which they will take long to recover, and be constantly disposed to a relapse, even when the mind of the patient has acquired rest and composure.

Errors in temperance, or diet, will reproduce many of the mental phænomena of indigestion to a certain extent; but most of all will they be re-produced by the peculiar disturbances or state of mind out of which they originally sprung. The patient will have been well for weeks together, when he is overtaken by his old enemy—some mental chord is struck; association and memory, in the shape of a letter, even in the land of the more friendly stranger, are awoke by the writer; and the whole chain of disordered feelings of indigestion, primary and secondary, as uneasiness of stomach, palpita-

tion, pains and confusion in the head, morbid sensibility and irritability, and a despondency that health and happiness will never be regained, will follow. This relapse, is evidently the effect of a predisposition which the nervous system had received from previous injury; but from the fact of the patient being surrounded by circumstances of an attractive nature, it will be of short duration, as the power of memory and imagination will be superseded. Some patients, know so well the injurious effect of indiscreet letters, that they will get another person to examine them, and should there be any very disagreeable circumstance detailed, to break its force cautiously, so that less mischief would be the result;—others will allow their letters to remain unopened for days and weeks, till the fear of more additional mental injury has passed away, and then, with an effort, they break the seal with trembling hands.

Although it has been admitted that physical stomach irritations may develop the phenomena seen in mental indigestion, and among the rest, to a certain extent, that part of them which is more strictly mental, nervous irritability and sensibility; yet, if the admission be justly founded, it can only be allowed by

such irritations predisposing the brain, more strongly to be acted upon by mental irritants applied to it.

And yet so purely mental are the whole of the phænomena, that even this limited power of the stomach is scarcely warranted upon all occasions, from the following fact, which I have frequently beheld. On the 12th of March, I saw one of these remarkable examples at C——. A mental sufferer, who had great nervous irritability, and frequent sources or exciting causes for developing it, took for dinner an unusual quantity of fat boiled pork. In the night she was sick, and felt uneasiness in the bowels, and fully expected from what I had said to her, that she should have on the morrow an increased quantity of sensitiveness and irritability. But although she had about the same quantity of mental sources for uneasiness surrounding her, yet, her nervous system remained free as before; the mental symptoms or mind, were not increased by this unequivocal stomach irritation. Still have I frequently seen in this same young person, the most wide and tremendous display of irritability, and pain in the head, from the occurrence of some acute

pang, when, the day before, the mildest and most moderate diet was observed.

It is however, probable, that the brain, or mind, which acts through it, may sometimes have gained strength, and be better enabled to bear the shock of stomach irritations, at some periods, than at others. For though the power of the mind, in all such affections, is broad, distinct, and all-powerful, yet will stomach irritations certainly add to the mischief. But they merely add to, and do not originate the malady.

On this morbid sensibility to painful impressions, and on irritability, I would wish, therefore, to make a few remarks here, because a valuable writer has, in my estimation, given to them a wrong source; and as this mistake may lead to erroneous practice, (for these notes are practical,) it is proper it should be corrected. He attributes those qualities of mind in indigestion to a physical source—stomach irritation; and positively avers, that diet, or physical remedies, will vastly mitigate, or wholly cure it. The very title-page, of his otherwise excellent book, affirms this position. Of the cure by such means, more hereafter; and as well, some remarks on the importance of these symptoms.

Those who have seen much of physical indigestion will allow, that in many cases, though these symptoms to a certain degree exist, yet they do not constitute a prominent or leading part of the malady. On the contrary, a keen metaphysical enquirer, will infallibly discover, that in cases where morbid irritability, excessive sensibility, and the horrors of the worst species of despondency prevail, the extremity of the disease;—that the patient possessed a mind originally of a high and refined degree of sensibility, capable at once of enjoying pleasure to excess, or of suffering far beyond the mental pains of more ordinary mortals, and that he has suffered, and is still suffering, some hidden grief or anxiety to prey upon his memory.

Now if it be granted, that in cases of excessive morbid sensibility, irritability, and despondency, whether they are found in mental or physical indigestion, that the patient originally possessed this quality of refined feeling, it follows, that, if he was difficult to please in health, from the peculiar constitution of his mind, his delicacy, or from expecting too much from those of inferior minds, who surround him,—that long suffering, or perpetual disappointment,—or suffering at all,—will make him still

more sensitive, and if this is the case, which nobody can dispute, the irritability itself so terrible to bear, or the effects of disappointment, will follow the sensibility, in an exact ratio, as cause preceding effect. These phenomena of the malady in question are, therefore, mental.

The truth is, that in indigestion, these, the very worst symptoms to bear, (after the alarms in the head, and the heart have subsided,) in the disease,—excessive sensibility and irritability,—cause and effect, are but highly heightened and sharpened qualities of the same mind, which the patient possessed originally, before the date of his malady. Persons most subject to the disease, are exactly those whose powerful feelings usually govern or influence all their actions, and whose education, perhaps imperfect in itself, has failed to teach them the value of self command. Difficult as it was in health to check the torrent of their feelings, it becomes still more, when they have grown into a morbid and monstrous strength, from the irritating influence of misery on the gastric nerves, the re-action of which upon the brain, probably sharpens still further, the natural refined feeling of the mental dyspeptic, and the

result is, the production of these phænomena, exquisite sensibility and nervous irritability, which are never instantly or decidedly relieved, but through the channel of the mind, though attentions to the stomach may more slowly and feebly assist in their removal.

But still further, to shew at least their mental character, these symptoms of morbid sensibility and irritability, are often found in affections of the nervous system, when no stomach ailment can be detected, either by disordered feelings in the organ itself, in those which sympathize with, or by the remedial effects of any treatment applied for its relief.

They are, therefore, qualities of mind, and what is remarkable, they are sharpened to feel misery only; pleasure is almost unknown to the mental dyspeptic, for where the nervous system is greatly disturbed, the tendency to gloom is generally constant, and the keenest feelings of the mind are susceptible only of pain. If the mind concerned has been cast in the finest mould, sensitive, intellectual, high, and of generous nature, sanguine, expecting much from all it loves, and itself experiencing disappointment of the keenest kind from all

sides ;—its morbid sensibility in the disease in question, will be of a very different quality to that which would have tormented the governor of Barataria, had he (which he richly deserved) been attacked by this malady of mental indigestion. If he had been so attacked, his morbid sensibility would have been most grievously lacerated, by discovering, after a careful search, that Camacho's flesh pots were quite empty, the contents all gone. But his wounded sensibility would have been healed, his irritability soothed to peace, on suddenly discovering a nice fat goose, dropt by accident, in a comfortable, out of the way, quiet little corner.

It appears then, that morbid sensibility and irritability in the mental dyspeptic, which often lead the sufferer beyond the confines of reason, vary just as natural sensibility or irritability or shades of character do, and therefore, the exact nature and extent of this dreadful portion of mental malady in the affection in question, can only be measured, or understood, by a previous and deep insight into the character of the unfortunate subject of the disease. If it thus partakes of his mental character, it must, itself be mental.

To attempt to cure such deep, wide, and va-

rious causes of misery, in the still wider range and variety of shades of character which produce and accompany it, and which make sure and woeful inroads in the mind,—by a cup of water gruel, would be expecting too much from such a remedy. There is no doubt, however, that although absence from the exciting causes and discipline of the mind, directed by a skilful hand can only cure such a mental malady, yet, from the connection of the brain, with the stomach, and the condition of its nerves in all such cases, the utmost care must be taken in the choice of the diet. An overloaded stomach, with a bottle of wine taken at such a season (and the patient is too apt to fly to this resource of temporary oblivion) of this extremity of human suffering in a man of naturally most exquisite feelings, would, probably, from this connection of brain and stomach, some time on the following day, be followed by a pistol shot through his head, or the application of a razor to his throat: and I have no doubt that such has been the exact cause, and fate of many of the most ornamented of our race, whose names, the present generation remember, with a mingled feeling of admiration and mourning.

Finally, the exact depending relation which the stomach bears to this overwhelming malady, may be gathered from the following description of an attack of mental indigestion, for it often takes the shape of a fit, from the mind being struck at one time more forcibly than at another, by the strength, intensity, and depth of its miseries. The patient, always upon his guard, and knowing that an ill-treated stomach will make matters worse, shall have taken a little rice pudding only, with a glass of wine and water, for dinner, the evening before the attack, and he shall go out in a fine fresh morning, with a light breakfast of thin chocolate, water, and milk, and he may perchance, too, be in agreeable company. With all these favourable circumstances to secure one day's repose, a little event shall occur of no great moment in itself, but precisely, however, of that kind or character which is capable of inflaming the long train of painful associations, so often and long the subject of anterior grief, and which would now have slept on in peace, but for the occurrence of this slight event. But the match has been applied,—the mischief is done.

He now thinks most destructively, deeply,

and imaginatively, he grows worse and worse, his head, from the excess of painful feeling in the mind, begins to ache slightly in various parts, and to be confused. Soon he feels his stomach, which before the attack yielded no sensation, begin to share in the effects of the mental suffering. The light breakfast now lies heavy in it, and gives the feeling of an aching pain, load, and oppression. Now it is that the symptoms are all aggravated with astonishing rapidity; the patient becomes decidedly giddy from this state of the stomach, which throws back in its turn, upon the head, the evils it has thence derived,—often so giddy, that he is in fear of falling down,—every pain which he may long have lost, returns,—the irritability becomes uncontrollable, especially if new irritations from business or family cares are added, and masters, with a tyrannical energy, the whole mind and character of the sufferer. He can see nobody; he will not see any body; the jar of a door is like an electric shock through his frame:—he shuts out, as far as he can, the whole external world from his observation, and wishes most fervently to be released by sleep, oblivion, and even by death itself.

The violence of this fit will subside into a

calm, but deep depression of spirits, which will last, more or less, according to the treatment of the patient, and the particular circumstances that may surround him. A cheerful morning, agreeable intelligence upon an interesting subject, a kind word from a beloved object, a passing thought that those whose errors may have produced all this misery, are changed for the better, and repentant, will be like a stream of sunshine over the dreary waste; the gloomy halo that surrounds the patient will be dissipated, and he himself will soon be surprised at the greatness and comfort of the change.

It is in the subsequent langour of these depressions and derangements of the nervous system, that a new train of nervous effects are sometimes observed in the patient's body. In the dead of the night, when he tosses in search of that rest from his woes, which is denied to him, he is assailed by a singular and awful noise from the middle of his body, and the bellows sound of the arteries will yield its mournful music, as if in spiteful and cruel mockery of his countless miseries.

Mental indigestion is sometimes combined with, and frequently merges in, mental hypochondriasis, as in fact both affections proceed

from the same causes, with the difference only in effects; and that the stomach, in the latter affection, may either not be affected at all, or very slightly. The sufferings of the mental dyspeptic exceed all others, even those serious ailments of the nervous system, arising like itself from misery, but in which the brain or the mind is more purely concerned, and which will hereafter be described.

If original or physical stomach complaints can increase the natural sensibility of ordinary minds, as they are said to do, to a degree of despondency and exquisite misery which make life burdensome; what is to be conceived of that deplorable case, where a creature, endowed with the most delicate and very finest perceptions of right and wrong, and born with a stomach predisposed to indigestion, becomes subject to the disease from constant disappointment of affections, warm, deep, and intense, misfortunes and afflictions, which are irreparable? The sufferings of such an unfortunate being are so unusual, bitter, and gloomy, that thought cannot be borne, and his time is often engaged, as in the case of the mental hypochondriac, in the strange and miserable employment of seeking for some less acute mental

suffering, which may supersede for a while, the more dreadful one which haunts his footsteps, his pillow, and his broken and imperfect slumbers. Madness, to such a wretch, may be rationally desirable, for in its vacant depths, the broken heart will find, at least, forgetfulness. Nobody, however, wishes for such a remedy, which is viewed as an evil of the worst and most terrible character. But surely, that can scarcely be an evil, of which, when it has arrived, the sufferer is entirely unconscious. What must be the state of him, who wishes for such a remedy, and it comes not? Whichever way he turns, a mournful and dreary prospect meets the eye, and he shivers despairingly in the biting and cruel blast of his destiny,—in the wild waste by which he is surrounded.

It is evident, that the mental dyspeptic has to endure, not only the terrible stings of a wounded mind, which scarcely ever remit their attacks, but the multitude of varying and peculiarly distressing bodily symptoms, the character of which alone, is particularly fitted to wear out and exhaust the mind by their poignancy and horrible remissions, which perpetually promise recovery, only to deceive by fresh

and merciless attacks. The heart is sickened by hope long deferred.

If the unhappy being's wearied feelings are steeped in sleep, (he cannot be said to enjoy it,) or rather lulled and rested under its dominion, it is only to enable him to bear fresh punishment; he is awoke by palpitation, often so severe and durable, that the idea of a diseased heart is pouring its weight and apprehension of instant death into the scales. This the patient would not perhaps regard, but that the delusive belief of progressive recovery, founded upon a few hours of previous amendment, had unprepared him for the event, and from the conviction, that no sooner shall the bodily apprehension subside, than his mental miseries, and memory will seize upon him with bitter eagerness.

In the day it is equally bad with him; if harassed by business, or by additional mental irritations, his head becomes affected in a variety of frightful feelings, and apoplexy and palsy stare him in the face, so that the mental dyspeptic has no certain place of repose or refuge, for a moment, from his sufferings; but the enemy is constantly at him, for years, slowly slaughtering within and without, and yet not finishing the work of entire destruction,

as if he rejoiced over the mutilated living remnant of the miserable being, as something left with which to feed his murderous appetite for unparalleled punishment.

CHAPTER V.

FORMS OF DISTURBED NERVOUS SYSTEM FROM MENTAL SUFFERING, WHERE THE STOMACH IS SCARCELY CONCERNED, EVEN SECONDARILY, THE SYMPTOMS BEING UNMITIGATED BY ATTENTIONS TO IT, AND DECIDED RELIEF COMING ONLY THROUGH THE MIND ITSELF.

I do not profess to give a systematic account of all the sources, physical and mental, which disturb the nervous system. This might be done, although there would be a difficulty in its being well done, inasmuch as the experience of no one man would be adequate to furnish the necessary materials. There would, under such circumstances, be the necessity of copying much from others. To answer for such facts, would be impossible; therefore, the safest way for the advancement of knowledge must be, to

give the result of individual and personal experience. I profess to give only, in this place, such examples of a disturbed brain and nervous system, as occur from mental suffering only, and which I have myself seen, with any opinion that has been deduced from this personal observation.

In the heading of this note, I have reverted to nervous disorders, from operations of the mind, where no material signs, direct or indirect, of stomach malady, could be detected, the organ doing its functions in a perfect manner, whether the evidence of its being so done was collected from the absence of all uneasy sensations in itself, or from diet not relieving the distant symptoms; indicating that there existed morbid irritability in the gastric nerves, which was not shown in the organ itself, but presumed to be shown in the diseases in question; that is, on the brain and nervous system.

Without stopping to investigate the validity of the facts on which such opinion is founded, that the stomach can produce, in distant parts, diseased actions, without evincing any sign of disorder in itself, I will remark, merely, that I do not consider the distinction here made between nervous affections arising from mental

misery, producing stomach ailments as in mental indigestion, and those in which none of the phænomena of indigestion can be detected, as of much consequence, because, believing the stomach, in such circumstances, to be a part of the nervous system, its disturbances, if any existed, would be taken into the account, by the observing and sound practitioner, and, in a practical point of view, nothing would be lost in his calculations.

Yet it is, in a practical point of view only, that the distinction has been made. If the stomach ever escapes in such disturbances of the brain and nervous system, it is a further illustration of the power of a disturbed mind over the body, without any assistance from the stomach, in producing this effect, and how constantly we should be on our guard, in tracing causes into the recesses of a diseased mind.

If we, as it is the fashion to do, attribute mental disorders too exclusively to derangements of the stomach, there will be danger of neglecting those causes, which unquestionably exist in the mind itself.

SECTION I.

Mental Hypochondriasis.

ONE of the most calamitous forms of a disturbed nervous system which I have seen, without any proof existing that the stomach was deranged in its functions, either in the primary or secondary forms of indigestion, or so slight, that scarcely a person at forty years of age has not experienced, and, therefore, could not have had any share in its origin, or in protracting its existence, is a higher or more exalted kind, or example of hypochondriasis, than in the common affection which, in practice, passes under that name. The term hypochondriac is, however, not generally proper: it is both incorrect and degrading to the miserable though elevated being, who is most commonly the subject of the malady. His sufferings are always founded upon real causes of grief, or mixed up with, and emanating from, a constant state of misery—of the mind. It is in the midst of his despair of ever seeing happier days, and the agony of his present sufferings, that he com-

plains so bitterly, and often so eloquently, of his manifold woes, and from which practice I have improperly enough fixed upon him an appellation which he does not deserve, as it is more a term of reproach, than one of deep sympathy, pity, and respect. For brevity sake, and for want of a better, it shall be retained.

Nearer to the true character of hypochondriasis is where this mental malady has arisen from some great shock of uneasiness, which has, perhaps long since, passed away, leaving the nervous system, or the mind which is blended with it, in a disturbed state, a prey to the wanderings and refinements of a morbid and fervent imagination. Here the affection is not of so dignified and impressive a character, as when proceeding from the pressure of real affliction; but yet, as a mental suffering of indescribable anguish, it deserves all our skill and profound commiseration.

The patient afflicted with mental hypochondriasis, does not go about from one medical man to another, and through the whole circle of his friends, complaining of a variety of bodily ailments, of symptoms, all of which, and each in its turn, he described to be of a fatal character, and of which he is either satisfied,

or appears to be so; but when the mental hypochondriac speaks at all of his complaint, it is with considerable reserve, for he is aware of the opinion of mankind, as it regards nervous disorders, and he disdains the appellation of being an hypochondriac;—because he is conscious that he deserves more pity and respectful compassion, than he who only regards his perishable body, and fears to die.

The mental hypochondriac will often, then, not condescend to utter a word on the nature of his sad and wretched complaints, unless it is as a matter of courtesy in reply to a question. Proud, though in desolation, he may expect the smile of incredulity, too often of derision, and he will meet it, with a bitter curl of ready contempt on his lip. The ignorant and unfeeling persons, who are silly and cruel enough to treat him as they would do (and even then it is with folly and ignorance) the inferior, less respectable companion in misery, the common hypochondriac,—he will avoid in his walks, because they disgust and weary him. He is well aware that his dire malady arises, generally, out of a redundancy of the noblest though undisciplined feelings of human nature, and that his companions in the same misfor-

tune were some of the most celebrated of men for worth and talent.

The humblest, therefore, of the entire class of mental hypochondriacs, which cannot be a large one, is too elevated to submit to derision and scorn, even (as they must always do,) when these proceed from gross and unfeeling ignorance. He talks not, therefore, to the multitude. There is a delicacy and a dignity about him, and he speaks only of his grief to the select few, from whom he is sure to obtain sympathy. But mark, although to them he speaks freely, yet it is of the distresses of his mind only. And here is the distinction, between the mental sufferer whose real evils are increased by the magnifying powers of his imagination, and the ordinary hypochondriac.

The mental hypochondriac, or the unhappy man, fears not death. He too often wishes for its approach, and not unfrequently will he, especially if he is unrestrained by religious scruples, accomplish the deed with his own hands. The common hypochondriac does no such thing, but to avoid, to him, the greatest of all evils, he will take oceans of physic, and medical opinions, as long as he can find a fee to pay for them. To obtain these fees, he will im-

poverish himself and his family, and be clothed in rags.

The mental hypochondriac will take no physic, consult no physician, or at least is indifferent to the remedial power of medicine, for experience will teach him its inutility; but he will sometimes be seen to make immense sacrifices in business, fortune, or ambition, to relieve his lacerated and jaded feelings. Of the dreadful nature and punishment of these sad ravages of misery, on the mind of man, something here may be gathered from his being seen to yield up every thing, all that mankind has ever prized, or riches can bestow, to obtain a respite from sufferings,—to remove himself, for ever, from the scenes and objects which he knows to be the source of his broken and desolate mind.

If he be an observant person, recovery he will feel to be impossible, as long as his mind, and the long train of its associations, are constantly irritated and awoke into ceaseless activity, by a renewal of the causes, or even their shadows, which originally implanted the seeds of his terrific malady.

It has been said, that this mental disease, or disturbed nervous system from misery, is not

accompanied by the train of symptoms which distinguish mental indigestion, either in the primary or secondary form of the latter affection. It is, however, mingled frequently with some of these symptoms, and occasionally, with all; and this is by no means a matter of surprise, inasmuch as it is the same causes in the mind which will produce both affections. But, as the present purer example of mental malady, does exist without any of the phenomena of indigestion, or with no more indication of this last affection, than may happen in persons of general good health, and few persons are altogether exempt from them, it is sufficiently clear that this is a distinct malady, even from mental indigestion, although the cause is unquestionably the same in both.

The circumstance is merely noticed to draw the attention still more closely to the fact, that it is of a mental origin exclusively, and not proceeding from any bodily irritation, or morbid sensibility of the gastric nerves, no treatment of which will cure the affection.

The mental hypochondriac, when he complains of physical suffering, usually complains of his head. He has a white tongue after paroxysms of mental suffering, and upon these

occasions, he feels suddenly weak as in mental indigestion, under the same afflicting circumstances. But in this more purely mental affection, the great variety of bodily symptoms do not exist, as in mental indigestion.

Like all other affections of the body which arise from the painful wanderings of the mind, the symptoms are more remarkable in the morning, because the distressed feelings are more successful in their devastating power at that period. The patient, in the present case, like the mental dyspeptic, wakes, often refreshed by a good night, falls into a train of painful recollections, which, if severe and long continued, will give acute pain and confusion of the head. But, in general, he does not suffer so much by lying awake to think, as the mental dyspeptic does, because he has not the various pains and bodily symptoms, nor the palpitation of the heart of the latter, an always frightful feeling—but which are not added to the mental irritations of the mental hypochondriac.

He gets up, then, with some advantage over the dyspeptic, but soon loses it, as the morning advances, especially if he be a man of business, or likely to be exposed to harassing circumstances, for the nervous irritability, common to

both affections, will be quickly developed, and place their sufferings upon an equal footing.

This remark, however, deserves a qualification. Should the mind of the patient, from some exciting occurrence, derived, no matter where, be led to think deeply on the original cause of all its sufferings, the full development of human wretchedness will soon be apparent, and will require no dyspeptic bodily irritations to give it force or effect. This is the acme of his anguish.

One might imagine, that an unhappy man would, by the strength of his understanding, avoid meditating on woes, which admit of no relief, by such an act, but which, on the contrary, increases them with a multiplying rapidity, and keenness of intensity, unknown to those who possess not a highly imaginative character. But no; he lies in bed, seems to revel in the luxury of anguish, and he clings to it almost affectionately, as if it were a friend instead of a foe.

His worst moments are these. Bitter memory fills his mind with painful and real retrospections; they roll about it, until like moss, they acquire greater magnitude by motion, for now the powers of the imagination are let

loose, in a highly sensitive mind, in full activity. This new auxiliary, in the work of destruction, is not content with the past, but it threatens for the future. And this is one of the most characteristic signs of mental hypochondrism. Bottomed in misery enough, an hitherto unhappy life, a fruitful and refining imagination, sees only in the remainder of it a dismal prospect of additional anguish. A cool thinking, and mischievous despair, begins to occupy the mind of the sufferer. "There is yet then more in store for him" of those very horrors so appalling, terrific, and unrelenting in punishment, which have filled his mind with a gloomy sternness, and led him more than once to look with complacency at the edge of his razor. What then? Why he is now in imminent danger,—for he begins to calculate, philosophically, upon the choice of evils. His present one is so intolerable, that he wishes to get rid of it on any terms. He resumes the razor. A little pain only can be felt, nothing comparatively, and the deed may be done which will bring him full and complete relief! The rash man is now lost, unless his thoughts turn fondly to some loved object to be left desolate, or to things beyond the grave. A moment will

suffice,—human affection—the hopes and promises of a cheering religion and of a happier future, if he will have patience, stops the daring hand, and he rushes into the open air to seek for further consolation among the sublime works of his Maker.

The mind of the mental hypochondriac is attuned to misery, and I believe habit has a powerful share in protracting the malady. It occurs in paroxysms or seasons, which is natural, and in strict accordance with its varying causes. These causes, painful impressions, or feelings of acute agony, are not always present, or what is the same thing, do not act always with the same degree of force; so that fortunately the unhappy patient has some remission of his sufferings. I say fortunately, because but for these remissions, every mental hypochondriac would assuredly go mad, no brain could stand the shock of such violent and constant wretchedness.

Here then is an example in these remissions, of the wisdom of the Creator; they are indeed but drops, but still they are drops of beneficence, mingled in the vast flood of wretchedness, with which it has pleased him to overwhelm mankind.

The character of the fit, such as it is, may be seen on the haggard countenance of the sufferer. It has an unexpressibly sad and melancholy expression, painful to view; giving, at a first glance, a notion that the soul of the unhappy being is steeped in bitter anguish. And such is the fact. He has been at his old work, with his constant associates, Memory, and Imagination. Mental irritation has filled his mind to the brim, with a thousand painful recollections, and he is now busy in selecting or picking out of the mass, such of feebler character, less venomous in their bite, on which to place his mind's eye.

For what? That he may, ingeniously enough, displace a recollection of more intense agony, which haunts and follows him with unremitting torture and intolerable perseverance, with one of gentler kind, though even the last is sufficiently grievous. Nothing is more common than this practice of the mental hypochondriac. During his fit, he can see nothing, hear nothing, believe nothing can give pleasure; his chief relief is found in the arraying one painful feeling of more tolerable intensity against another; bringing the less acute skilfully into the field to manœuvre against and displace the

greater. Again, and again, is his memory ingeniously ransacked for these minor miseries; and there is no doubt of the practice being frequently successful in furnishing relief. Were it not so indeed, the gloomy halo which surrounds him, would soon stifle his understanding, without waiting for one of those extraordinary changes, by which nature brings relief, suddenly, spontaneously, and unexpectedly, when all hope had departed from the mind of the unhappy patient.

These remarkable fluctuations, which characterize nervous disorders that proceed from mental afflictions, are frequently seen in indigestion, and from the great length of time which this disease is known to exist, going and returning for years, it is more than probable, that it is to the operations of the mind, constantly changing themselves in all the varieties of uneasy feeling, that such a phænomenon is to be attributed; and making it probable, that the mind of man is more concerned in the production and continuance of his bodily ailments, than is suspected, and that it always acts through the medium of the nervous system.

The subject for attack, in mental hypochondriasis, is of the same character of those who

are the victims of mind, in the shape of mental indigestion; that is to say, persons of deep and delicate feelings, whose expectations from human nature are too exalted, and who are thus doomed to disappointment in the wide and most interesting fields of affection, glory, and ambition: the most important objects of a man in this world. Some great scheme, on which the mind has long and fondly dwelt, has failed for ever; some tender affection has been blighted to return no more; the beautiful halo of tenderness and of hope, which once surrounded the cradle of a beloved child, and cherished for years, has been for ever dissipated.

The importance of distinguishing the more rare and refined species of mental wretchedness, here called mental hypochondriasis, from the more common or corporeal kind, is evident. There is little fear of the latter committing suicide, for he is too anxious to preserve life, to think of such a remedy for his evils;—whilst, in the former, its heavy burthen makes a danger of a recurrence to such a step very considerable, although the sufferer is not insane, and therefore cannot be classed among the varieties of melancholy madness, in which the discrepancies between the facul-

ties of the mind, perception, and judgment, are always sufficiently present to constitute the last calamity which can befall the human mind.

The tendency to melancholy, however, is strong and to be feared, more especially if insanity has prevailed in the patient's family. Hence the moral and intellectual management of the patient should be at once active, kind, unremitting, highly refined, and in accordance with his character, and directed by a skilful and profound knowledge of the human heart, to break the dark chain of misery by which the unhappy man is bound.

If the patient be, which is sometimes the case, high-minded as well as sensitive, his elevated spirit will give more energy to his exertions for relief. Bereaved of some fond affection, or deeply stricken by ingratitude, his will becomes stern and commanding, especially towards the authors of his calamity, but the proud practice of it is favourable to his recovery; he is roused, and the great danger of a settled, gloomy, and desponding melancholy and suicide, are diminished.

Stomach irritations, in all mental or nervous maladies, doubtless exasperate the mischief.

But hitherto I have not met with a specimen of the foregoing mental disease, which could not be traced to moral affliction only, nor in which could be detected any morbid secretions of liver, or stomach irritations, by the removal of which, amendment was ever produced. This was effected constantly through the channel of the mind.

SECTION II.

The Irritable Brain another Effect of Mental Suffering.

WE have descriptions of the irritable breast, the irritable womb, and the irritable testis; to which may certainly be added, the irritable joint, and the irritable brain; the latter is an affection, more common (in different degrees of force) than either of the former examples of irritable organs: though the analogy cannot be very exact, from the difference in the character of the organs concerned.

The irritable brain, to a certain degree, is often an effect or symptom of common indiges-

tion, more frequently of mental indigestion, and is also occasionally found to accompany mental hypochondriasis. In all these cases, however, it assumes a milder character than when it stands alone, or uncombined; though the sufferings it yields, under the terms morbid sensibility, and nervous irritability, in these affections, are enormous, and requires the most particular attention for their removal.

But the irritable brain will exist, when little or nothing originally ails the stomach, as measured by the symptoms which denote its affections, or by the failure of remedies prescribed for their removal. Whenever the stomach is affected, it will be of a secondary or sympathetic character. I have never seen the pure and highest form of the irritable brain, except in persons who were not remarkable for mental suffering: though, to a certain extent, it may arise from other physical or stomach irritation. The form of suffering, most capable of producing this effect of irritable brain, is that of a violent shock, supervening on a more low-toned, but still severe and lengthened form of milder mental irritation.

Irritable brain attacks, when the result of moral afflictions, occur in persons of refined

sensibility, of quick and strong feelings, in whose education, sufficient pains have not generally been taken to counteract the evils arising out of these powerful principles of action, when they are brought in contact with the troubled and trying scenes of human life. I have, however, seen the affection in persons not remarkable for exquisite or delicate feeling. In these, the nervous system had, from mental causes, been severely shook, and the irritability bore a more vulgar and feeble character. They occurred chiefly from the panic in the money market some years ago, but differed from the mere common irritability of ill-tempered persons, in having the peculiar whirr, confusion and pain of the brain, and exquisite apprehension, which the latter character does not possess.

After some deep, acute, and sudden shock in the person, whose nervous irritability is prone to receive its entire impression, or after a long slowly lacerating, though less acute course of mental irritation, or deep anxiety,—the patient will have (in bad cases) severe shooting pains about the head, accompanied with confusion and giddiness, some intolerance of light, a feeling of soreness over the brain,

or such excessive irritability of it, that a heavy footstep in the room, a jar of the door, or even a loud voice, gives great additional anguish. There is, generally, no delirium, the pulse is small and quick; the patient is not thirsty,—he has none of the symptoms called fever: his face and eyes, though sometimes possessing a wild expression, are not red or flushed, but he cannot sleep well generally, as the slightest circumstance alarms and excites him.

So far for the bodily symptoms which have periods of remission, and which are varied in force or number in different patients, probably an effect of the more or less intense mental suffering in different characters, and which suffering is the source of the phænomena. The condition of the mind is still more remarkable; its functions are unnaturally disturbed, or in morbid excess; but not generally to the extent of insanity, though often bordering upon it.

There is an extraordinary quickness of perception in the patient, an excess of sensibility and irritability, to be affected by slight mental causes, as well as by the physical ones already described.

But this mental, sensitive irritability, is vastly the most distressing, and is most intense

and destructive when excited by the associations or recollections of the moral evil which originally produced the mischief.

When these retrospections act in full force, (which usually happens, if the patient has been indiscreetly left alone, with the mind unoccupied,) he will sometimes suddenly start up in mental agony, holding his head with both hands, and begging to be bled, or blistered, to relieve the dartings through his brain. The exquisite sensibility, to suffer from mental causes,—especially from those peculiar ones that produced the malady,—is carried to so great an extent, that not a word must be said, that could yield the most remote associations with these causes.

For the same reason, letters will not be read, nor even the sight of one endured, for they may, and of course sometimes do, contain the seeds for these associations, if not the fruits themselves. Nor is this all. Whoever has helped to produce the evil, and even those who without any intention, or from amiable weakness, have deceived the patient, the presence of such persons will not be endured without danger of effecting an exasperation of all the symptoms. These examples of irri-

table brain, possess the kind of nervous irritability, which is observed so strongly in mental indigestion. The patient likes not a knock at the door, or a heavy foot-fall. He cannot endure the idea of meeting with persons who may directly, or indirectly, from a want of refinement, excite painful feelings,—and to avoid them, he will spare no pains. Should he unfortunately encounter these luckless individuals, who unaware of the extraordinary sensitiveness of the patient, gives the pain so much dreaded by him,—the result will be, dislike to the person;—and often, will a long period elapse, before reason can master a feeling which almost amounts to hate and abhorrence.

This dislike is carried to a pitch of uncontrollable disgust towards those, who have blasted the patient's happiness;—stolen the cub from the lair, and mangled his early beauties. For it has been already remarked, that the most acute agony is that induced by the tenderest and most elevated disappointments, rather than by worldly losses.

The dislike, also, to particular persons, is not whimsical, which it has been incorrectly termed by authors, because, what is reasonable cannot be whimsical; and surely it is reason-

able to dislike and to avoid the society of those who, by their conversation or conduct, be this what it may, give the most exquisite of all mental pains.

The term is, therefore, highly improper, as it necessarily leads to a continuation of highly culpable conduct, and careless indifference towards the unfortunate individuals, who possess this calamitous excess of human feeling. Under the false and ignorant view of being odd and whimsical, they are often consigned to the coarsest ridicule, by those whose feelings are of less delicate, or more vulgar character, and who, if they cannot be refined, should at least learn to be humane, and treat with respect what they will never understand.

This very exquisite sensibility to pain, occurs in the irritable brain, to that class of persons only, who possess naturally great power of feeling, as was remarked to be the case in mental indigestion, and in mental hypochondriasis.

Finally,—The brain is susceptible in this extraordinary degree, to disagreeable irritants only, whether they pass through the mind, or act through the body. Its sufferings will, however, sometimes be soothed, and relief obtained, by agreeable intelligence and pleasing sounds,

such as a favourite air from the soft tones of music; whilst other less melodious noises would grate upon the exquisite sensitiveness, and carry the patient into a very phrenzy of irritability, but still distinct from, and short of, delirium.

The same may be said of the less important irritations from the mind. Dull conversation, harassing questions, or questioning on business the heavy or stupid, will excite all the symptoms to a certain degree,—pain in the head, confusion or worry, and some vertigo,—till the patient looks ill with continued suffering, and is obliged to retire and close his eyes and doors from all further communication with the external world. The truth is, that the irritable brain is probably the cause of the symptom called nervous irritability, and may be the same affection to excess, or with a difference in degree only, which forms a part of the pathological history of indigestion, or any great and general nervous disturbance in which the brain takes the lead.

But as it sometimes exists in cases where no other affection can be detected, or if detected, of a slight and undoubted secondary or sympathetic character—it is deserving a rank of its own, as an affection of the brain.

Besides the higher forms of the irritable brain already described, there are milder degrees of it daily seen, the immediate effects of mental emotions, or acute anxiety,—in the shape of headaches, or local, spotty, cerebral pains, with or without confusion and giddiness, which invariably follow the mental irritation, with a rapidity, that to a cursory observer, would make the cause and effect nearly synchronous.

These pains are analogous in character to those seated in particular nerves in different parts of the body, called *tic douloureux*, or *neuralgia*; but which are probably more neurotic and sympathetic, than neuralgic and original, and which are often suddenly developed by mental emotions. In many of these cases of headach, from operations of the mind, the patient will complain of a feeling of indigestion at the stomach, coming on sooner or later after the pains in the head, and marking the influence of the brain in producing this stomach weakness, probably, by depriving the digestive organ of a portion of its nervous energy.

A well known celebrated pathologist would doubtless describe the foregoing state of the brain, as inflammatory, for he says, that all affections of this organ, all pain in it consists

either in the state of inflammation, or in a tendency to become inflamed, and therefore the practice of treating such affections, he says, is very simple,—consisting in bleeding, and the usual anti-inflammatory process. And truly, it would be simple enough, if this be the sole treatment which all the affections of brain require for their removal. The irritable brain, however,—whether seen in conjunction with indigestion common or mental, or hypochondrism, or any great disturbance of the nervous system; or whether it stands alone, without the other signs of these affections, or as a sad residuum or remnant of their former existence, which it will sometimes do;—has not the symptoms of inflammation, if there be any truth discovered by long observation in our profession: nor is it, therefore, relieved by inflammatory remedies. The brain is painful, but it is by paroxysms, or chiefly at such times when the patient is wild and irritated; but it is the wildness traceable to a distressed mind, and not the unbroken delirium of organic disease, and will subside gradually on withdrawing the exciting cause;—the pulse is small and quick, sometimes intermitting or wavering, but it is never hard or very rapid. There is

no flushing of the face, or general febrile heat. The symptoms generally decline upon relieving the distracted mind, or when some agreeable circumstance, of high interest, has been introduced, to supersede its painful wanderings. Would it accomplish this effect, if the brain were inflamed? Moreover, this condition of the brain is generally relieved by moderate tonics; may exist for weeks, months, and occasionally for years, which in inflammation would be impossible.

And this is the case of fifty obstinate headaches out of sixty. They are an effect upon an irritable or disturbed brain, without inflammation, or a tendency to it, because they are relieved by removing the causes of that disturbance, whether this may be the result of a local cause from the stomach, or mental misery, and by agents which would assuredly exasperate them, did they proceed from inflammation, or even a tendency to it.

But this cannot be the character of all pains in the head. The brain must have its diseases and its inflammation, the symptoms of which, however, are not those of this irritable state of it. Inflammatory pains in the head are, probably, very rare, comparatively, with these

nervous pains, which are constantly fluctuating in strength, duration, and situation, which is never the case with inflammatory pains.

Nervous pains of the head, however, are sometimes fixed to a particular spot, without any inflammation being annexed to them. But it is not uncommon to see such pains last for years—be of daily severe occurrence—receive little or no benefit from medicine, and yet, end in no disease of the organ, for the symptoms will gradually and sometimes suddenly disappear, in a very unaccountable manner.

It is well known to some, certainly to myself, that the pains about the head which occur in the morning during the irritable fit of the dyspeptic, common or mental (the last is the strongest example), diminish after dinner, and that the patient generally remains well, and singularly so, all the evening; that is to say, the headachs, confusion, horrid irritability, and despondency, all of the same family, diminish, and frequently depart altogether to return no more for that night.

Now, a little observation and reflection, may probably account for this phenomenon. It has been said, that mental wretchedness, from a variety of causes which act so insidiously

and injuriously on the brain, is the true source of the great majority of disturbances of the nervous system; and it may also be said, that morning, the season for thought, is especially dangerous to the mental sufferer on this account, and on this account it must also have a powerful exasperating influence on one of its effects, namely, the irritable brain. It is this organ which is always the first to suffer from misery, and it will often be affected from this cause, almost simultaneously with its application. Home, in the morning, and painful thoughts, will almost instantly, with a rapidity truly astonishing, produce pains in the head. This I know to be true. Now, in the evening (especially in agreeable company), dinner, and a glass of wine, will, by the action of these stimuli upon the brain from the stomach, always give a pleasurable feeling to a certain extent; will do more, perhaps give a tone and vigour to the gastric nerves, and then to the brain. By this train of sympathy, the patient's painful thoughts are superseded, or their invasion repelled; and let it be remembered, that as soon as this pleasurable or more cheerful feeling in the mind is produced, the irritability and the headach generally and instantly disappear.

If this be not evidence of an irritable low condition of brain, and contrary to that of inflammation (though there may be congestion from weakness of the vessels), such a state certainly cannot exist. I believe that this irritable state of brain consists in debility of the organ, worn and harassed by wretched feeling. This state, long continued, may possibly lead in time to organic disease, or occasionally terminate in inflammation, but more especially in insanity and paralytic affections. Some cases of both maladies will be given, which followed a long course of irritable brain.

The irritable brain, when highly marked, has so strong a tendency to insanity in weak heads, or where a family predisposition exists, that the most powerful intellectual interference, or moral management of the patient, becomes necessary to prevent such a calamity. I have not seen an exception of the affection, where the patient did not, originally, possess a quick and irritable state of temper, coupled with the power of feelings already mentioned. The sufferings which these patients undergo, give the intuitive and very natural fear of insanity, or of inflammation of the brain, which they invariably possess. The exasperation of all the

symptoms, by yielding to fits of irritability, to which the patient is led by his exquisite sensitiveness, requires his utmost and imperative exertion of self-control, and is a moral lesson to weak, indulgent parents which cannot be read too often.

For it is generally in the early period of life, and a false education, that the sources and frequent causes of this irritable state of the brain are to be traced; and parents who have children of irritable tempers, and strong sensibility, should remember, that they are committing a moral suicide, or laying at least the foundation of a wretched life,—in their offspring, by that ruinous indulgence of every wish, which soon leaves the child, and then the man, with none to gratify.

Here let us stop. It is not the intention of these sketches, to give more of them than can be filled up by examples from my case book, of mental suffering afflicting the body through the agency of the nervous system.

To measure the depth, quantity, and variety of affliction, with which the Creator has visited the heart of man, would exceed all mortal means and calculations.

The corresponding catalogue of the diseases of the mind and body, which are the effect of this misery, is copious also to such an extent, that examined in detail, it is almost too frightful for human eyes. Yet the whole link, or rather chain, will never be known. Still it must be useful to know its extent as far as we can, to obtain rules of practice. There is, at present, proof enough to show, that uncontrolled grief, or wild emotions of the mind, redundant sensibility, should be checked in their bud, by an early good education, a main principle of which should be the habit of self-command, or the discipline of the mind. If this invaluable habit be not acquired early in life, the seeds of mischief are implanted in the bosom of the most captivating of the human race, the children of sentiment; the most powerful feelings are left unrestrained—become in time boundless, destructive, and tyrannical in power, especially under the varied misfortunes of life, and terminate in lasting misery: the ruin is general, for the moral mischief intermingles with, and exasperates all existing maladies, and originates an immense mass of morbid mental feelings and derangements of health of the human body, peculiar to itself, palsy, apoplexy, indi-

gestion, mental hypochondriasis, convulsions, frequent madness, and sudden death. Nor is this all. More is felt than ever meets the eye. No tongue, however silvery in tone, or eloquent in words, can express,—no understanding, however profound and penetrating, can fathom,—no imagination, however vast, vivid, or redundant, can conceive,—the immeasurable quantity or collective mass of miserable feeling, endured by the human race.

The more common effects upon the body, are in general those we have described;—paralytic affections, and insanity; the last, perhaps, exceeding all others in frequency, as it does in infinite diversity, and in shades of character.

Other forms or effects of mental affliction on the body will be given, and another (often indigestion in a very aggravated form) is not unfrequently that great disturbance of the nervous system seen in young and sensitive women.

There are some examples also of nervous disturbance, or mental effects producing anomalous sounds, the nature of which sounds, their indications, and even their existence, appear to be almost unknown to the medical public of this country. Nobody, however, can

doubt their existence, who will choose to pay the necessary attention to the subject.

In making his investigation, however, the enquirer should remember, that some of these sounds, of a nervous origin, are momentary; in strength of tone, often faint; and to be heard only at certain seasons.

Our neighbours, the French and Italians, seem to have, and to deserve the most credit, for their knowledge of this branch of nervous pathology. I am only adverting to sounds from this source of the nerves.

Almost all very severe and extensive forms of derangement of the nervous power, will affect the arteries occasionally, in a very peculiar way, which is explained in another place. This is the bellows sound. I know not who it was that first described this spasmodic affection of the arterial tubes, for spasmodic it certainly is, but Laennec has sufficiently well described it, in his book on the Diseases of the Chest. But yet, even in the metropolis of the world, this sound was not, a year ago, at all known, or at least, certainly not generally understood, by the most distinguished of the profession. Two of the most celebrated, admitted that they knew nothing of sounds or

signs of disease or disordered actions. Some others of my esteemed friends, never heard the name of bellows sound as indicative of disordered arterial action; and did me the honour of saying I was nervous; I had no sound in my body: but it might be in my imagination. But it certainly was in my body, and I am sorry to say, it is there still. It was admitted that they heard something; "borborigmus," "bruise-ment," were the words uttered, and respectfully listened to, to explain their meaning. The bellows sound is curiously evanescent, like an ignis fatuus; or rather, its floating melody pervading the body, often reminds me of the far distant, though more charming music, heard in the woods at midnight, near the Chateau Le Blanc, so beautifully described by Anne Radcliffe; which could be distinguished in the pauses of the storm, or in a calm night, and sometimes was so wayward and capricious, as to make it doubtful whether it was heard or not.

It is probable that the origin of the bellows sound of the arteries is a defect of the nervous power, which admits a spasmodic stricture of the tube, and the noise is effected by the rush of the column of blood through the narrow aperture. Look at the same effect of mind

upon the heart's action. We all know, and see daily examples of nervous affections of the heart; and how strikingly curious are the effects produced upon this organ, by emotions of the mind, and in certain states of a disordered nervous system, from irritations of the gastric nerves, for even physical causes will have, though more feebly, the same effect. Now it must be admitted, under both circumstances, that the brain is the agent in all these interesting phenomena, which from the impulse of a slight feeling of the mind, or irritation in the stomach, is capable, with the rapidity of a flash of lightning, to change and suspend the natural action of the heart.

I have never known this peculiar fugitive sound, which is also a spasm of the same kind, when a nervous effect, to exist in any other character of person than in those which are marked by exquisitely sensitive feelings, or in other words, where the nervous system is readily excited, as in the examples of mental indigestion, and mental hypochondrism. This reference to the brain and nervous system, as a source of it, is made out with the utmost exactitude, by its being called forth suddenly by peculiarly agitating painful circumstances,

as sudden intense anxiety, or especially keen expectation of the momentary occurrence of some strikingly interesting event.

The sound will then issue from the body loud and distinct, clothed by novelty, and a certain degree of awe, to those who are conscious that it is an affection of those vessels which circulate blood and life. But it is not an agitated mind only that can call forth these sounds; the body suddenly agitated, will produce the same effect, though certainly in an inferior degree; for the noises under such circumstances, will be more feeble, and require the quietude and stillness of morning in bed, to be distinctly heard. A sudden turn in the bed, in persons who are accustomed to the affection, will yield the bellows sound, and be sure to awaken its awful and varied notes; but they will soon cease if the trunk of the body is permitted to remain at rest.

Holding the breath as it is called, will bring out this sound, in one case, as far as can be judged, first from the arch of the aorta, whence it will proceed, with an inconceivable rapidity, to both subclavians, and often it descends into the abdominal aorta, so that the chest and abdomen appear to be occupied by a band or

barrel of musical pipes. The pipes do not indeed play exactly, "Oh, dear, what can the matter be," but they have a certain musical melody, apart from the awful consideration of their cause, resembling chimes; but more especially do they often most exactly resemble the *Æolian* harp, with all its gentle cadences and intonations.

The bellows sound is sometimes the effect of a neighbouring disease in the blood vessel system. To this cause, the present observation has no reference, it having for consideration only the power of the mind, that is, the brain in its temporary production. The bellows sound, from disease, or change of structure, is constant, and has not the fugitive character of the one in question.

Besides the foregoing effects of a troubled mind on the body, there is a great variety of other physical evils in our frame, of which, little if any notice will be taken in this place, from the same cause; idiotcy, raving madness, convulsions, hysteric fits, and sudden deaths from fright and burst of anger, will be among the other more anomalous remains of the power of the mind over our organization.

The occurrence of sudden death from unre-

strained passion is comparatively rare, but more frequent than it is supposed to be; yet, even when it does happen, the awful occurrence is but little regarded, either as a warning to ourselves, or as a valuable lesson for our children's benefit, in the interesting period of their education. I have seen four examples.

The series of the passions or feelings, that produced disturbances of the nervous system, or ill health, with my own practice or observation, occurred as follows: *jealousy,—domestic miseries,—wounded pride before the public, in a mind highly susceptible of it,—long continued and painful anxiety,—disappointments of the heart,—an awakened conscience, which induced serious and alarming religious reflections,—worldly misfortunes,—ruinous losses in trade,—fear,—and remorse.*

Some of the cases, where delicacy will admit of it, will be shortly recorded.

In all chronic affections of the nervous function, whether arising from affliction originally, or other irritations, the mind, in the shape of despondency created by long suffering, serves to sustain and protract them, and especially in those persons where its early discipline and the acquirement of fortitude had been neglected.

Or if these valuable lessons had ever been taught, they were not sufficient to arrest the feelings which they ought to have governed, and which far outstripped them in power over the individual. And this is by no means uncommon. We often encounter men of powerful and cultivated understanding, who are wholly subdued, and made the creatures of their feelings and imaginations, which are thus still stronger than their understanding. These are attractive, but highly dangerous persons.

On the whole, however, it may be said, that in general, the predisposing causes of the extremity of human wretchedness and its consequences, are, powerful and refined feelings,—vivid imaginations,—corresponding high expectations,—and an inadequate education, to set bounds to these highly captivating but wild and hazardous qualities.

The exciting causes are, the misfortunes and disappointments of life acting upon the sensibility, which varies in quality and kind in different individuals.

When these press hard upon the human mind, then it is that the same qualities which probably led on to the evil (feeling and imagination,) serve to perpetuate and exasperate

them, by their excursive and boundless character, which never content with the present, roams with dangerous and licentious liberty to the past, and from the past to the future.

CHAPTER VI.

ON MEMORY AND IMAGINATION, THE FACULTIES OF MIND, MORE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED IN DISTURBING THE HEALTH THROUGH THE AGENCY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

INDEPENDENT of a direct effect of present mental affliction upon the brain, and thence on the functions of the body, these powers of mind have an immense weight in the same direction; so that it is more than probable, that in all protracted cases of ill health from mental sources, they have the greatest share in the continuance of the evil.

The power by which the understanding retains knowledge or ideas, and revives them, after circumstances may have laid such ideas aside, is called Memory. It is, at one and the

same time, the storehouse of thought, of pleasure, and of pain. It is in reference to the last quality that it is here considered. For it is this power or faculty of mind, that is mainly instrumental in the creation of its diseases, because it contains, within itself, the elements, materials, or knowledge of former afflictions, which, in conjunction with those acting at the moment, have, by incessant contemplation, an effect on the brain, which disturbs its function and those of the whole nervous system, and misery and bad health are the result.

Thus it is, that a long unhappy existence gradually fills this magazine of wretchedness, to be afterwards yielded up, for the melancholy purpose of embittering the last days of sensitive man, in some of those saddened shapes of mental suffering, with which he is too often seen to close his miseries and his life. But there is another faculty of the mind, which, in some persons, greatly assist memory in destroying the health, through the agency of the brain.

This is the Imagination. Whenever this last faculty exists in great abundance, for most assuredly it is not possessed largely by all persons indiscriminately, and its possessor is

placed in painful circumstances of life, it is sure to exercise a most baneful effect upon his happiness.

For the same reason, if the same person be placed under desirable circumstances, in the midst of enjoyment, a well governed imagination is the fruitful source of immeasurable additional enjoyments.

The operations or employments of the imagination are very extensive. It assists in the reproduction of notions or facts, and in combining thoughts as well as sensible impressions made on our physical organs; supplies the materials for, and makes the most of those offered to it; and is the bond of association for the intellectual processes which are constantly going on in the human mind.

If the materials then, for pain, are offered to this mighty power, its faculty of combining and associating, but particularly its habit of boundless refinement, must be productive of exquisite misery.

And this is the fact. Collocated with memory, the quantity of human misery and corresponding ill health, produced by their joint powers, is too vast for comprehension,—even if assisted

by the most copious, exquisite, and vivid imagination that ever existed.

Even in cases where memory has no necessity to be concerned in the production of misery (which is scarcely to be conceived,) because there is enough of affliction already surrounding the moral being to accomplish this effect; yet will the imagination seize upon its stores, and by an associating and almost demoniac power, bring together all the painful events of years that are gone, with the thousand nameless griefs and misfortunes that each successive one had yielded, and portray in glowing and eloquent colours the whole scenery of a life of misery. It will yet do more.

If there be no real misery present at the moment—the slightest event—the indiscreet commission of a moral error—by those that surround the sensitive and imaginative being in question, likely to wound the peculiar feelings of the patient where he is most sore,—will touch a chord that traverses his mind, and the vibration will bring into life things long since dead, but which will have, on his feelings and his health, all the sad effects of the fearful

reality of an existing source of wretchedness. This is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact, that when the mental sufferer first awakes, he rarely goes to sleep again; all its balmy and soothing influence being completely banished from his bed of sorrow by deep meditation. He sometimes awakes better, and is surprised, for a considerable time, that he could but yesterday have been so wretched a being. He feels too so well, that he is assured he shall soon, very soon be cured: once more will the enjoyments of life return to him, the objects which formerly yielded him so much pleasure, again enter his imagination, and he revels in the contemplation of his books,—the delights of his portfolio,—and the beauties of landscape scenery once so loved; but all of which no longer ago than yesterday, were to him as nothing, no longer prized, and then considered as joys that once existed. Eager to renew his intercourse with his long lost and beloved companions, he springs with unwonted vigour from his bed, and commences the preparations for a return to his library and to society,—with a feeling of comparative happiness long unknown. Unfortunately for the unhappy man, this delusion,—this foretaste of happiness,—is

soon to be over. A servant enters with a message, or a note is brought! One or the other touches a chord in memory, which (as already observed) thrills through his whole soul. Some solitary fact of a painful nature is presented to his imagination. At first he believes, nay is confident, his understanding will be able to expel the sting from his memory. For a moment he succeeds, and proceeds with his toilet. It is in vain—the painful circumstance recurs,—is again banished,—but it will still return in spite of all his efforts, and soon gains such absolute dominion, that the fearful array of all the causes of his misery through life are spread before him, and he lays down his razor, or puts it entirely away, for more reasons than one. He now is at the full mercy of a memory charged with bitter knowledge, and an imagination, which, in the prospective, makes still more of those real miseries,—bad as they may be,—than belongs to them. His head becomes painful and worried by his recollections, almost to madness, (in which malady it may end;) a fit of irritation follows, which allows of no consolation from any thing of human kind. Every little matter now is too much;—business,—friends, or relations, cannot be borne.—Should

he succeed by lying down on that very bed from which half an hour before he sprung with feelings so entirely different, or what is better, by rushing into the open air, away from the haunts of man, in diverting, by the beauties of nature, his imagination into a fresher and happier channel, it will be well for him, but the same sad scene will, probably, be acted again on the following morning.

In proportion to the intensity of these paroxysms, the conjoint produce of memory and imagination, of a mind full to the brim of miserable recollections, will the patient be more or less liable to another form of attack still more dreadful. Hitherto it has been a fit only of despair for the future, of intolerable anguish at the recollection of the past. But now succeeds another kind of fit, of more steady and unrelenting punishment than words can convey to those who never felt it. It is one of constant depression, of a character so gloomy, terrible, and hopeless, that even the cheering and matchless brilliance of the sun itself, fails to attract the attention of the miserable being, on whose head it vainly sheds its warmth and lustre!

These, then, are some of the grand sources

of misery to the unhappy man, which pour their tide of wretchedness into his bosom on all sides, and which require more than physical remedies to arrest the devastating progress of the torrent.

CHAPTER VII.

EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY AND IRRITABILITY.

IT is to the foregoing faculties of mind, memory and the imagination, that we must mainly attribute that exquisite sensibility to painful impressions, and its venomous offspring, nervous irritability, which are the periodical tormentors of the highly refined man of imagination, when he is laid low by misfortune, and the unspeakable bitterness of ungratified and disappointed affection. They are both, perhaps, the children of one common parent, Feeling, and yet does sensibility seem the natural source of irritability. They are both, too, only highly wrought and excessive natural qualities of mind, of the highest stamp, inasmuch as these

qualities are founded chiefly in the disappointment of too exquisite a taste for right and wrong.

Morbid or exquisite sensibility opens a thousand channels of uneasiness to the unhappy mind, which in better days it never had or did not recognize, and therefore could not feel. Those who in health know what it is to feel pain, when sensibility is wounded and in diminished quantities, will be better able to judge of the agony it can inflict, when it is redundant, fretted, and sore, by long suffering, and its fangs, dipped in the cup of bitter misery, have been sharpened by the keen activity of a morbid imagination.

The unhappy beings who suffer most in this way are those who can best and deepest feel affection, or the pressure of worldly calamity. If they too, which is almost always the case from their excessive refinement, can love only what is admirable in sentiment and virtue, rare qualities when seen at the best season for their appreciation, that is, when sensibility is in natural quantity and of healthy character;—if these qualities interest and pain so deeply *then*, from the occasional variations from worth, which is natural to human imperfection, what ad-

ditional pain must be given to the disappointed feelings of the deeply affectionate unhappy man of imagination, whose power of sensitive discrimination is increased beyond computation by his mental malady!!

Nor is this all. He does not merely feel more pain than painful circumstances would have yielded when he was happy and in health; but he will curiously and fatally seek or see more to feel, than at that time, for this creature of exquisite sensibility has been wounded so often, that he is always naturally looking about him suspiciously, for the approach of new assaults, which practice necessarily creates a twofold misery, the anticipation, and the evil itself. One would think all this was enough of misery. But it is not yet his share. When once the nervous system, or its omnipotent master the mind, has arrived in this state, it has no capacity for pleasure; it is not like the healthy mind, where the same power of feeling pain acutely, makes a sort of balance, by yielding occasionally exquisite pleasure. But it is not so with the creature of morbid sensibility. His powers of feeling to him are now, alas! adapted to feel misery only: and he has no rest, except in those rare, strange, and fitful remissions of

his sufferings, which it has pleased the Creator occasionally to bestow, and even then, the power of receiving pleasure never carries him to the same elevation of enjoyment, as it once did.

One would imagine that the sources for this perpetual punishment were now sufficiently abundant. Still there is another, which is frequently flowing upon him, in a full stream. Persons, even his best friends, are constantly tearing open afresh this morbid and irritable wound, by indiscreet allusions, which is a want both of sense and refinement. Without meaning so to do, they are thus for ever rubbing the most tender and irritable spot of an exquisitely formed mind, rendered more sensitive by disease and disappointment. Their only apology, for the intense anguish they bestow, is ignorance. And yet there are some who, it would seem, are but slow to learn, and in whom it is a crime, as well as a disgrace, under such circumstances, to be ignorant.

Finally,—Let us witness this sensitive being, broken down by affliction, moving about to perform his allotted duties! Behold him at every turn in the street look with eagerness if any person approaches whom levity may induce to

say, what will give additional anguish ! The post-man ! What may he not have in store for him ? Whichsoever way he turns he must receive a new wound, but the most piercing wound of all which he can endure, in this hour of appalling and frightful suffering, is the want of refinement and delicate attention from those on whom he has poured the full phial of intense affection. The very slightest or doubtful expression of countenance, in this particular and favoured being, will excite acute pain and apprehension, till its cause be explained ; whilst an unexpected knock at the door, announcing the possibility of an unpleasant visitor, gives pain of an inferior character.

From this melancholy picture of a highly imaginative mind, in a state of bitterest woe and concomitant bodily suffering, we must still descend to a further detail of his dismal history, when a little relief may be obtained by an enquiry how far his miseries are capable of relief.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXCESSIVE, OR NERVOUS IRRITABILITY.

THE exquisite or redundant sensibility is a chief source of this, its usual companion, in the power of inflicting such transcendent wretchedness.

The sensibility seems to be generally the jackal which supplies the nervous irritability with nourishment. What painful objects or notions the sensibility discovers, *irritates* the mind in a peculiar way, and hence in its excess arise some of the most strange and paradoxical phænomena of morbid mind, which has not yet undergone any alienation. On the contrary, these afflicted persons; though suffering so much agony, are capable occasionally of considerable intellectual labours, and are often remarkable for unusual quickness and penetration.

The exquisite sensibility then furnishes a stock of excitement to rouse the irritability; this awakens the memory, which supplies a fresh store; the feeling goes on to increase, arrives at a maximum, and receives a last and a finishing combining touch, from a vivid, highly,

and excited imagination, whose power now is tremendous.

This feeling of excited and enormous irritability, unknown to the irritability of health and happiness, (which is different to it in degree, and very much in its nature, because there are novel additions to it,) can scarcely be described, because it must vary considerably in different minds or characters. It may, however, be described when far advanced, as an extraordinary painfully excited feeling, compounded of bitter recollections of the past, and consciousness of present lacerating afflictions, of a certain portion of self-condemnation, from a conviction more reason should be exerted, though it might be unavailing; a growing impatience of suffering, mixed with disgust and indignation, from a belief in its unmerited hardship and punishment, and a desperate resolution to avoid, at any cost, a return of the intolerable suffering now experienced. When excessive, this state of the patient's mind borders on phrensy, without going so far as to deprive him of his understanding, he gnashes his teeth and strikes his head with his hands, as though he would, by the blows, stop or crush at once the cruel work going on within it!!

The excitement is usually concluded by the patient's flying suddenly into solitude for relief, far away from all external troubles at least, and even noises, with a feeling of great exhaustion, common but greatly exasperated irritability, and a worried, confused, and sometimes painful and jaded feel of the brain.

I have never known this extraordinary series of effects produced by any but mental irritation of some kind, to which it has been invariably and unequivocally traced. No kind of diet or stomach treatment will prevent its occurrence, on the application of the painful mental irritant necessary to its production, though improper diet or stomach irritation may predispose the brain to feel more severely the power of the mental irritant.

This symptom (as well as that of morbid sensibility) will depart, by removing the patient from those scenes, circumstances, or associations, which originally produced it, and will assuredly return, should he be led too soon to revisit the sources of mental irritation. To so great a degree is this irritability mental, that in addition to this proof (of its departure on removing the patient from its sources), it may be observed, that diet and wine may be

taken more freely, on these occasions of absence from the scene of suffering, or from painful thought, without having the usual effect of exasperating it.

The painful impression made on the mind, by the passing irritant, whatever it might be, (it is usually of the most powerful kind, when it touches a certain chord in the mind of the patient,) will, after a time, fade, and the vast irritability will pass off in the way already described, but usually leaving the patient, for hours and days, in a state of great and gloomy depression of spirits, reduced personal strength, discontented with himself, and with all mankind.

This extraordinary irritability is very remarkable in very severe cases of mental indigestion. Now, where the nerves of the voice, and those of the chest, which give sundry pains about the left side and the broad parts of the back, are involved in the general disturbance of the nervous system, which is the case in this affection, there will be some other phenomena connected with this irritability worthy of notice.

It has been said, that it occurs in violent fits or paroxysms, which may last for some days,

and then sink into depression. But in mental indigestion it may, in a milder degree, be always present, or have a tendency to be brought out by exciting mental causes, especially and generally applied in the morning.

This is evinced by bringing the patient into contact with very dull persons, harassing or unpleasant business. His voice, which was before firm and loud, will sink into a whisper, and yield a feeling of pain or uneasiness about the throat or breast; the pains about the left side, down the back, and between the shoulders, will return; the countenance will instantly change, from a look of comparative health and spirits, to one of extreme agony and exhaustion; and the patient would certainly retire from these causes (however slight) of his suffering, were he not restrained by an extraordinary exertion of self-command.

These last more regular and less intense attacks of this tormentor of the mental sufferer, —nervous irritability,—are sometimes quickly dispersed in a curious, striking, and novel manner, and which too often leads the vulgar observer to attach less importance to their character, as a source of misery and its effects on the brain, than it really deserves.

If the irritability be developed on the patient in moderate strength, not otherwise, it will gradually fade, and retire before any very agreeable circumstance, person, or striking event, and leave not a trace of its venom behind, in the mind of the patient.

This undeniable fact of relief through the influence of the mind, is an unanswerable proof that the origin of the irritability is also in the mind, and not in the stomach, though irritation within this cavity will aggravate it, and also increase the exquisite sensitiveness.

Finally, and in further corroboration of their general mental character, these symptoms of morbid sensibility and excessive irritability often exist, without any signs of digestive disturbances,—either of a primary or secondary character,—and are probably sustained by the habit of association, dwelling in the same rooms, living under the same circumstances, and seeing the same faces, as accompanied the existence of the original mental misery.

Accordingly, thus are those morbid qualities often seen to remain in mental indigestion, when the other symptoms have vanished, and the most simple diet observed; showing, most clearly, their origin to be in the brain, but

which had not yet recovered the stunning effect of a first shock, or a long and continued mental irritation.

In truth, these symptoms are now, both the sign and result of the true irritable brain; weakened, harassed, and worn into this state, by long suffering. In general disturbances of the nervous system, from physical irritation only, as in common indigestion, &c. &c., we often see these sensitive and irritable symptoms; but in such cases, there is not the extent, force, or keen mental anguish, which distinguish the irritability from moral afflictions.

Why this irritability should be greater during the morning than in the evening, (although in the latter period it can always be developed by mental causes of sufficient strength, though not so easily,) I am not certain. It is probably the traces of the painful early morning thought, so remarkable in these affections, held together by the bonds of association,—a habit which the mind, from long practice, has formed at this particular time of the day. It cannot always be from the irritation of food taken at dinner the day before, thus assisting the mental irritation, because, I have seen it excessive when little food only, and that not irritating, had

been taken; and repeatedly I have seen this frightful irritability after abundance of improper food, taken at dinner the day before, altogether superseded, by the patient commencing active intellectual labour the moment he awoke.

When the irritability spoken of above is excessive, in persons not originally of strong mind or brain, there is certainly a danger of the former giving way, the ballast being not enough to enable the distracted vessel to bear the blast.

I consider the treatment of this mental or nervous irritability to be of great importance. The utmost vigilance,—of the most refined and active description, should be constantly on guard, to prevent it from taking fire. When once this event occurs, let all have been ever so quiet and previously well with the patient, then the conflagration becomes general. It is, however, to be understood, that the most powerful mental irritant, which possesses this fiend-like quality, is the particular one, that had the strongest share in accomplishing the original ruin of the patient's happiness and health, although other irritations may, by distant associations with this grand cause, reach the same object.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE GENERAL TREATMENT OF THE ILL HEALTH,
OR A DISTURBED NERVOUS SYSTEM, FROM MENTAL
AFFLICTION, AN HARASSED LIFE, OR LONG AND
DEEP ANXIETY.

A MAIN purpose in these sketches has been, to show the necessity of attending more to the *mental treatment* of chronic affections of the nervous system, always interwoven with the mind, than is usually done.

Of the unspeakable consolations that may be derived from Religion, under the afflictions of this life, there can be no doubt. But the degrees of faith vary so much in mankind, from the difference in their views of this most important of all considerations, that its power of consolation, and the relief of the suffering mind, must also vary.

Religion, therefore, often requires the aid of reason, without diminishing in the least its own immeasurable value, as a source of hope and comfort in this vale of tears.

“Whoever,” says Paley, “expects to find in the Scriptures a specific direction for every moral doubt that arises, looks for more than he will meet with.”

Just so would be the disappointment arising out of an application of religion only, as a remedial power for misery in minds ill fitted to receive it.

It was never intended to supply all our wants;—something must be left to that reason, the exercise of which is no doubt a part of the divine government, inasmuch as the growth of intellectual power is probably one of the objects of the creation. The influence of religion—however great as a consolation—cannot always be exercised to the necessary extent of correcting the wanderings of an afflicted mind. But there must be no remission in such cases of a remedial power of some sort, because the wounded spirit often requires prompt and rapid relief, to prevent its utter extinction, in the dismal depths of insanity.

If it can receive this relief entirely from religion, happy is he whose character has been prepared to imbibe the full tide of its promises. But even the administration of this beautiful

and sublime remedy, the last and firmest hope of the weary, requires caution.

To the broken down creature of sensibility, it should be given with that gentleness, charity, and forbearance, which is the true and cheering spirit of Christianity, and which will bruise no more the broken reed;—but never, to make converts to a particular faith,—with the frightful denunciations of creeds, founded on its discrepancies, or on sectarian views;—an unpardonable and cruel practice, which has irreparably crushed the weakened mind of many a refined child of suffering, and sent it to glimmer out its last rays within the gloomy boundaries of a Lunatic Asylum. To these victims of misfortune, hope is ever necessary; but alarm, too often, a moral death. The sweet prospect of a future and lasting happiness should be opened feelingly with the most earnest and winning eloquence. On them should be breathed only the pure and kind spirit, the point of our religion in which we all agree;—but the painful collision of those in which we do not agree, would be more honestly and humanely left to hardier moments of intellectual strength. Never, surely, could human charity and knowledge be

better or more usefully exercised, than in raising the drooping spirit, and directing its saddened earthly views to far different and happier scenes beyond the grave. To soothe, and not distract, is the object. And yet the judicious pastor may sometimes do more. Deep affliction will humble the proudest;—and, in the softened meekness of its humiliation, the heart of man may be reached and turned from the error of its ways. Even the lonely atheist must feel his utter helplessness and desolation in the dark hour of affliction, and involuntarily look upwards to a superior Being for aid, when all other is denied to him! In such awful moments it is, that man becomes more united to his Maker; the child with the parent; and the foundation laid of a solid faith and consolation, in the wisdom, benevolence, and boundless power of the great Author of the universe.

After the removal of these existing causes of affliction or anxiety, which may operate directly on the case, as far as such removal can be accomplished, it is sufficiently clear, from what has been already said, that the immediate treatment must be founded mainly on the principle of closing the sources, and

thence stopping the vast current of mischief, which is perpetually flowing from the memory and the imagination.

If the original causes of the malady be incapable of removal, it becomes necessary to remove the patient from the scene of their immediate operations, especially if he possesses an imaginative character; because, not only will there be a direct evil effect from their incessant application to the mind, which they have already disturbed, but this disturbance will, by association with those that did the mischief, be sustained and increased by a variety of objects, that will have all the ruinous consequences of strengthening the dreadful reality itself.

There can be no question of the soundness of this practice of removing the patient, and the sooner it is carried into effect the better, before mental hypochondriacal habits are formed. It is, however, not always successful, for memory will accompany the patient, and on this account, as well as on the account of the utter impossibility of removing all such sufferers from their homes, or of furnishing the means for travelling;—that it becomes necessary to re-

lieve the mind, by other means, from the pressure of moral afflictions; and thence also, the disturbed functions of the body which are their result.

The mind of man is restless, and must be employed, or filled with a constant circulation of thoughts, notions, or ideas. In the case of bodily sufferings from its afflictions, whether these last proceed from the refined and more elevated disappointments of the heart,—the deadly sting of ingratitude from those we have loved, or from the less dignified losses in ambition and property, or even the workings of the darker and less generous passions, “the thunder and lightning of the mind,” it matters not, the effect is the same;—the mind is occupied in the baneful practice of repeating by meditation its original injuries, until a habit of mental wretchedness, and permanent bad health, are in the end induced.

The curative process must be, to break those habits which weigh so heavily on the mind, and tear it piecemeal. This is best done by superseding them, by engaging the mind in such exercises and objects on which it can seize, or rather by which it is seized

and retained by a superior and engrossing power.

The soundness of this principle must have been recognized by most thinking persons, but there is often a difficulty in applying it, and from this very difficulty, the great good which it is capable of effecting, is too often left undone.

What is the difficulty, how does it arise? How often is it said to the unhappy, "Don't give way, I'll send you an entertaining book to amuse your mind?" or, "I'll give you a ride in my carriage to such a place, it will divert your thoughts?" But it might so happen, that the taste of the sufferer is not in this way; or rather, that the mischief in the man's mind has a strength and tenacity not to be dislodged by such trifling new comers.

This remark will lead us to the enquiry, What is the man's mind? The answer to this question, will furnish the foundation on which to develop that treatment of the particular mind which only can arrest its evil course, and re-establish the general health of the individual.

Supposing, therefore, that you are consulted by a miserable looking being, who has confu-

sion and pain in the head, palpitation of the heart, and an irritable, sensitive, and melancholy bearing;—that he asks you to relieve these alarming symptoms,—the effect of a disturbed brain or nervous system.

You prescribe, but he amends not. He calls again and again, and he swallows loads of medicine unavailingly, or with some little amendment occasionally, probably from change of air, scene, or exercise; or there may be some striking fluctuations of the symptoms, or in their degree, from occasional relief of the mind, both of which would be ascribed to the remedial power of medicine. He fancies, perhaps, he is dying, for his nervous feelings are indeed almost insupportable, and takes the medicine to save life. But he may not suspect the real secret, the original magic touch which impelled him into the strange whirlwind of symptoms by which he is surrounded. Some suspicion of the real cause,—a latent grief—latent, because in a measure it has faded away from his recollection—may indeed have passed through his mind, but then, except occasionally, he has not of late felt its force so keenly, and in this way, he himself frequently has no

notion that a mental cause is at the bottom of his malady. He does not know, that after this strange nervous system has been once thoroughly aroused out of its healthy and wholesome condition—and even when it has been apparently soothed and cured—how slight a matter of the original offence will awaken it to a terrific display of its capricious and frightful phenomena. Hence his successive amendments, and fallings off, are ascribed to the obstinacy of the disease, or the want of skill of the physician, and he passes from one to another, with the same want of success; that is to say, unrelieved, but not always uninjured; for rough, routine, or indiscriminate practice, will assuredly not suit his case. At last, his own observation informs him, that there is a strange collocation between the state of his feelings and his health, that they correspond in a singular and striking manner. In other words, he discovers that his mind suffers more severely at some times than at others, and then his bodily symptoms are developed (and often then only and instantly) in a corresponding degree, especially in the head, which before the suffering, was perhaps free of all complaint.

The secret is thus told to himself, or discovered by a keen-minded physician.

Supposing then, at last, that this keen observer has detected the poisonous spring, the original source of his patient's bodily sufferings, to be in the mind; he has now—if he is to be successful in the treatment—to discover his exact character; its moral, intellectual, and imaginative bearings; that is, his taste and style of thinking, and general feeling. His confidence must then be acquired. This could only be done by being convinced that you understand something of that strange compound, at once the dignified, contemptible, and wayward wonder, called the human mind, and the principles by which it is governed in health and disease. And above all, that you do not possess the common intolerable and gross ignorance, which would lead you to think lightly of the detail of his wretched feelings, because they were “nervous.” On the contrary, he must be convinced, that such affections are considered by you as of the very highest importance, because he feels them so,—distressing even to the last degree of earthly suffering;—threatening madness,—and requiring in their treatment, at one and the same moment, the

most profound knowledge of the composite structure of man, and the most delicate, refined, and gentle management.

If the patient's confidence be obtained, he will throw aside all reserve that his pride might have formed, as a defence against the ignorant scoffer; his high-mindedness, his haughty and distant manners, will slowly vanish, and he will recount his inmost feelings with tears of sadness, and the woes or the remembrance of them which his life may have furnished.

There will be found a period when misfortune struck a heavy blow on his brain, or irritated it by a slower course of laceration or deep-felt anxiety. The injury has never been forgotten by that parent of good and evil,—of children the most capricious and rebellious;—and so bitterly resentful of injury, that when once awoke from their peaceful slumber, they scarcely ever regain steady composure, but fitfully, and as it were revengefully, upon every little occasion of vexation, inundate the whole system of man with successive streams of misery and desolation. Under the shelter of confidence, the entire moral being of your unfortunate patient will now be unfolded.

The healthy or morbid mind, and disturbed

nervous system are before you; the quality of understanding the extent of its powers will soon be developed with the former and present habits of the patient;—his taste, sentiments, and even secret failings will all be poured out for your judgment. And if this judgment be sound and well exercised, it will, with the assistance of these materials, acquire a power of saving from earthly perdition and a mad-house, many a valuable member of society; for upon these materials, or points of character, the skilful mental physician will bring to bear the agents which are best suited to remove present ills, stop the memory of the past, and close the avenue to all anticipations of the future.

Is the malady slight which will (independent of his own sufferings,) deprive society of a valuable member? Or is that knowledge of small import, which restores happiness and health to a refined child of misfortune, and to society a useful associate? “But it was mere nervousness, and the doctor gave little or no physic to cure him!!” So that the world, led or misled by this word nervous, are induced to consider such mental evils as included under this popular, ill understood, and mischievous

term, as of no consequence, and the treatment of them of no consequence, although it is an affection very apt to seize minds of the highest quality, and in a little while to leave them without the marks of mind at all.

Now, supposing that a medical man is consulted for ill health, which he has traced to moral afflictions; the nervous system disturbed,—that he has discovered his patient to possess quick, powerful, and sensitive feelings, which are perpetually harassed by unpleasant circumstances that may happen to surround him. He wisely removes him far from the reach of these circumstances, perhaps into some sequestered spot; but the patient does not mend. The question would then be; Do these circumstances still operate through memory? Is he left alone, so that this quality of mind, together with the imagination, may still be making free with the materials for misery, which have been scattered through life, or pressed too heavily in a congregated mass, upon a sensitive bosom? The confidence bestowed by the patient enables the physician to discover the truth, and the workings of the mind, now in a wrong direction, must be corrected,—and a new path struck out. An important point has already been gained, in getting rid of the

immediate pressure of real evils; their very shadows must now be concealed, by a skilful interposition of new objects, and of such a kind or character as will strike the patient's peculiar taste and imagination.

Already in the country, if he be a sportsman, he should be as much in the field as his strength will allow of; and if a shooter, he should be placed where the game abounds, so that no time be left for thought, from the rapid succession of shots.

The patient should never be left by himself, especially in the morning, unless under some particular circumstance of being engaged in other employments, to be presently described. If, unfortunately (and which is probable), this should happen, and where he has no means at hand of writing, or otherwise engaging the mind, and his memory should be assailed or furnish painful recollections, which daunt and harass him,—he should be taught that he has no other alternative, under such circumstances, than that of fixing his attention upon some other striking thought, sentiment, or subject, whether quite agreeable or not, it matters not much, and thus wean or force his mind back from the more dangerous and original contem-

plation, which it thus rather eludes than overcomes.

He should make it a positive rule, which his friends should see enforced if necessary, to rise as soon as he awakes. If in the winter, a fire must always be in the bed-room; for should he awake in the night, or rise early, he must resolutely, and without hesitation, write his letters, or make memorandums. If in the summer, he should commence a long walk before breakfast, or if walking be too much, a ride—the riding should be as rapid as possible, for the very necessary act of managing a horse in quick motion, employs the mind, and snaps the chain of gloomy associations by which it is embraced. Even a trip, or a start, formerly painful, now becomes pleasing and valuable.

The morning exercises should always be accompanied by a pleasant companion if possible, who will talk agreeably in the necessary pauses of the exercises; for in mental or nervous indigestion, it will sometimes happen, that the patient's voice is so much reduced in power, or so painful when excited, that to him, talking is out of the question. This is an effect produced upon the nerves of voice, in the same way as the impression was made upon those of the

stomach, and the affection—probably a branch of the latter—is of the same weak and irritable character.

The ride, or walk, should be continued till some weariness begins to develop itself, and until some sense of hunger is felt, when breakfast should be taken, but not until the patient has entirely recovered the feeling of fatigue.

The patient, after his breakfast, must rest awhile, except from mental employment, which should be unremitting. It behoves his friends to take heed, during this period of the day, that no stray or indiscreet letter assails him; and now that he is far away from the irritations of business, pains must be taken that no subject of discourse be started that is likely to irritate, and if, unfortunately, this want of refinement and good sense be practised, the subject must be skilfully changed.

The same positive and most determined attention should be paid to this particular point, of avoiding all sources that may develop one of the most prolific agents of mischief,—the peculiar irritability of a disturbed nervous system in a sensitive patient. This itself is capable, by its frequent repetition, of prolonging the malady—whether it be nervous or mental

indigestion, mental hypochondrism, or irritable brain, all of the same sensitive family—to an indefinite period of time.

Improper food (as hinted in another place) will, by its action on the gastric nerves, predispose the brain to develop the extraordinary irritability. Though so much more is it a mental, rather than a physical effect, that I have repeatedly seen, in the very worst cases, where the patient has been purposely indiscreet in food the day before, the whole family of mental mischief, this irritability, exquisite sensibility, and gloom, wholly prevented or superseded, by the patient rising from bed the next morning, the moment he awoke, and instantly setting his mind to work in full action, in the practice of composition. And yet, there was full proof, in the shape of increased foulness of the tongue, burnings on the back, and palpitation, that the stomach irritation had its full effect.

It is certain, however, but for this mental remedy, or stratagem, that this peculiar irritability, with all its consequences, would have been more powerful or exasperated by the stomach irritation, the effects of which were thus kept down by the superior power of an highly employed mind.

In its unemployed state, or lying in bed to think, (which in the unhappy is always a painful subject) this improper food would have rapidly assisted in the approaching mischief, by predisposing the brain to receive the full impression of the painful thoughts.

No coarse person—who, no doubt, does so with good intentions—should be admitted to the patient, who will talk in a way likely to injure his feelings, or violate his well-known sentiments; or who would be foolish enough to hint at such momentous subjects that had the chief share in the production of the patient's malady; or finally, (which would be worse than all) who would employ ridicule to laugh him out of his maladies, because they happen to be nervous!!

He knows them to be no laughing matter, and rarely does he at heart forgive the scoffers, whose ignorance, and want of refinement, equally disgust and irritate him.

This last effect of irritation is so ruinous, that the patient himself is fully aware of its horrible character, and sedulously and energetically avoids, with the most scrupulous care, all, and every thing, whose aspect is of a suspicious character, as likely to furnish the neces-

sary and peculiar excitement which can produce this feeling of irritation.

Its power, in continuing the nervous disturbance and mental wretchedness, of which it is both a symptom and a cause, cannot be better illustrated, than by the facts, that if the patient can be kept peacefully, dwelling among agreeable circumstances which will not awaken painful associations within the mind, and also from the operation of real irritations of the external world, he will go on for weeks in perfect health, and with simple and moderate diet, and the proper attention to the functional derangements of the several organs,—and abundance of cold ablution to the principal one,—the brain, which received the first injury; he will gradually become strong, and arrive, in a reasonable length of time, to a more happy state of mind and perfect health. Let one of these patients, by vigilant observation, or self-examination, mark the immense power of these fits of irritability, in suddenly reviving all the symptoms after a long period of mental peace, now also let him mark the rapidity of recovery during their absence;—showing clearly the mental character of the whole affection in both instances.

If this irritability be developed in the morn-

ing by a mental cause, it will pass off the sooner, provided no other irritation be added to it, either by the worrying painful symptoms of the body, or from the mind. For example,—some disappointment or painful recollections awaken it, which you at first can supersede by the interposition of other objects, provided no fresh irritations, from other quarters, arrive in the mean time to give the original irritation uncontrollable strength.

But should this happen, the irritability may become so strong, that no evasion of its attack, no parrying by the acts of superseding, will avail, and it goes on, often in spite of reason, to produce all its baneful effects—awakening the memory and imagination, and lighting up the whole train of mental and corporeal symptoms. For it must be again repeated, that reason has too little power over those serious disturbances of the nervous system, especially when they arise in their worst form from moral afflictions, though it should be exerted with all the power of the patient's mind, to stop the rapid encroachment of its morbid irritability. To this exertion of self-command, he must, however, be incited most cautiously, and in conformity with his character, or otherwise you will add to, instead

of diminishing, the stock of irritation. A successful exertion of self-control not only suspends the suffering, but yields a soothing feeling of self-approbation, which encourages the patient, and is mainly conducive to his recovery.

The first dawn of sound recovery from these disturbances of the nervous system, the effect of an afflicted mind, will, therefore, be found in a consciousness of the patient, that his reason begins to have some power in checking the growth of these fits of extraordinary irritability.

The language, however, usually held, "Why do you let such trifles affect you?" indicating that the patient's self-command is capable, and should instantly check the feeling of irritability, is that of gross ignorance of the malady. How often do the ignorant say to these unhappy persons, "Why, you have every thing that can be wished for, how can you be unhappy?" They have, it is true, oftentimes all the world apparently can give, and yet paradoxical as it may seem, they have nothing, for there is a something wanting, absolutely essential to their peace, which they have not, and which prevents all other enjoyment, overspreads the mind with constant disquietude

and gloomy anticipation. It is often the mind broken asunder by the continued shocks which the heart and the affections, or ambition, have received; irritable mental wounds, often festered and kept open by trifles, which time itself, that wonder-worker, will scarcely ever and entirely heal.

The majority of mankind, who are truly the *canaille* in refinement, laugh at the necessity of such delicate provision for happiness and health, and are well content with the more substantial good things of this life,—happily for them, these are in abundance to those who will seek them, as copper (like these seekers themselves) abounds more than gold.

The mind, in a disordered state, has little power over its own actions, especially when this state is involved in long physical derangements of the nervous system, as when the stomach is much affected, whose reflective power on the brain, in exaggerating the natural character of the patient, is very remarkable.

The control or the direction of the mind's movements, often requires the aid of another, whose precision, coolness, and knowledge, may be equal to the important task. But it is both a difficult and delicate undertaking. The exercise of reason, unseasonably recommended to

the patient, is often but the exercise of folly on the part of the adviser, for it is dangerous ground to occupy in the presence of the highly cultivated mental sufferer. You forget that he possesses as much reason as yourself, and has tried on its aids without success. Nor is it indeed reasonable to suppose, that you can drive away with argument, the most heartfelt disappointments, and long built up miseries of the sensitive man. As soon, therefore, as you begin to utter the string of common-place truisms, usual upon these occasions, "consider your duties, &c. &c. &c.," it may be expected that the patient's confidence, in your understanding, is rapidly passing away. Quickly discovering your ignorance of human nature, the eye, which beamed with pleasure on your arrival, lowers and retires within its socket, as you proceed in your learned discourse. The ancient bitter curl of contempt resumes its position on the lip, and the sufferer will, as he refines upon every thing, especially in argument, first floor, in a flash of temporary intellectual vigour, all you have hung together, and then retire to his gloomy solitude, leaving you with no pleasant feelings of self-mortification, at the ridiculous figure you have been exhibit-

ing in doing mischief, and with a conviction, that even reason, like other valuable things, requires skill and caution in its employment.

The next time you make your visit, you will probably be welcomed with the pleasing expression of "not at home." This failure of your attempt to cure the highest form of mental wretchedness, is the result of ignorance of character. The reason so much vaunted and omnipotent, would have come in its proper place, and with effect, when, by intellectual processes and time, the memory of misfortune had somewhat faded. But even then, argument with the intellectual and irritable mental sufferer, should be conducted so as to lead, rather than to vanquish.

Such clumsy reasoning attempts, however, usually proceed from the friends of the patient, who, it may at once be said, are rarely fitted to be near him. A thousand to one, if any among them has any correct notion of his excessive refinement and sensibility, either from a knowledge of his malady, or from a similarity of original character; and hence they are constantly tearing and bruising his exquisite feelings. The latter, too, always expects—naturally enough—more from his friends than from

strangers, and is irritated if their conduct does not always meet his wishes, which it rarely does. But from strangers, he expects no such refinement or delicacy, and he thus escapes this source of irritation. Moreover, generally, the usual habits of courtesy and distance observed among strangers, prevent those liberties which amongst relations might appear warrantable, and which are often highly mischievous. Living with friends, therefore, is as undesirable for the patient as living among the irritations of business, for they are both irritations. Moreover, one of the relations of the patient might have been connected with the original cause of the malady itself. For the patient to live near such a source for association and irritation, would be an act of insanity in those who permitted it. The constant or occasional view of the cause of all his sufferings, would surely not diminish, but serve to rivet them into an incurable habit of gloomy despair and melancholy forebodings.

It is dreadful to conceive the utter woe of that mind which is employed with all its energies, ingeniously to shut out from memory all traces of those whose misdeeds have thus pained and broken the heart.

The footsteps of this unfortunate enemy to its peace often linger in the fancy,—in the ear,—now, on a nearer and certain approach, agony, mixed with disgust, anger, and suspicion, dart from the eye, and is seen in every agitated motion. In the next moment, the sufferer will all at once close his eyes, his ears with his fingers, and with a vigorous movement of his foot against the door, he bars, to the foe, all entrance there. Or, to prevent ever the chance of a sudden visit, he creeps on tiptoe about the house, listening for the fatal footstep, and gently closes all the doors, and bolts and bars his own ;—and plugs the keyhole, that the sound of this dreadful source of his association shall not reach his straining and anguished ear. This is neither madness nor whimsicality, as it may be called, or has been called, by those who know but little of the occasional power of human feelings, and the anomalies of the human mind, for such conduct is in truth an energetic and wise exertion of the patient's reason, to prevent that very calamity overtaking him, of which he is already accused of being the victim. All associations of this important kind must, therefore, be excluded, by removing their causes, and the acute medical superintendent of the

harassed mind, verging to insanity, should be actively on the watch, so that no such powerful destructive irritations should ever reach it.

After two hours rest of body, succeeding breakfast, but in which the mind has been fully occupied, the skill of the physician, founded always upon his knowledge of the character of his patient, should be directed towards the best methods of filling his mind, by agreeable objects, till the dinner hour or evening approaches; when the dangers of the day and brunt of the battle will be over, for all such patients, as these under consideration, invariably get better, and in general, become very different beings when evening has spread her mantle over the earth.

Both the excessive irritability and sensibility I have noticed, diminish after dinner, and it is probable that the brain is strengthened by the food and wine from the stomach, so as to enable it better to bear mental irritations, should any rise up during the evening. This fact further shows, that these intolerable symptoms in the mental sufferers, must arise from a weakened, irritable brain, or sensorium.

The knowledge of character referred to, will enable the adviser to point out the objects that

will suit it during the morning, which he must see in an active course of operation, because the patient will never do this for himself. There is a fatal lethargy about this unfortunate class of persons, arising, no doubt, from the unearthly gloom and despondency by which they are surrounded, which stops all their energy, or rather prevents them from seeing any objects in this world that are worthy of any exertion to obtain; a despair of success is always present, and an inclination to solitude, which is dangerous, and must never be permitted.

If solitude succeed to grief,
Release from pain is slight relief;
The vacant bosom's wilderness,
Might thank the pang that made it less.

If he will not exert himself willingly, it becomes the business of those who superintend his recovery, to lay before him those viands of which this sickly mental appetite will allow him to partake, and to relish; and which are generally those to which, in happier days, he was known to be attached.

But even this mode of administering to the wants of the injured and unhealthy mind, must often be done with delicacy, the patient should

be led, imperceptibly, or introduced with caution to those very objects, which, if you could get him among, would divert his sorrows, and allow their wounds to heal. The pride or the delicacy of many of those patients who are remarkable for their refinements, would be hurt, and your intention be frustrated by adopting a coarser method.

For example,—a patient of this description would be disgusted, and receive no benefit from that advice which would say, “My dear Sir, you are nervous, go into company and pay some visits, and it will drive away these fits of hypochondrism.” He would not take your advice, because he would find the matter of it unjust, and be disgusted with the manner in which it was given. But had you delicately sympathized with him, he would willingly have followed you to the friendly scenes of amendment, and you would have accomplished all your wishes in employing their remedial power to a certain degree of success. The patient’s mind must not be idle one moment.

The amusing and learned Burton, notwithstanding he knew much from his own experience, knew not enough to prevent his committing suicide to relieve his mental sufferings.

“Idleness of mind,” he says, “is the badge of gentry, the bane of body and mind, the nurse of naughtiness, the step-mother of discipline, the chief author of all mischief, one of the seven deadly sins, the cushion upon which the devil reposes, and a great cause of melancholy.” It is, indeed, most dangerous in the critical state of mind under consideration.

Unhappy patients of this class cannot have too much air, but it should be had, if possible, in agreeable company—who will engage the mind actively in conversation—that of a beloved object is best. The difficulty is finding such company as will suit their growing increase of sensibility, which makes them sharply alive to every imperfection of character, and creates, to an unbounded extent, the power of feeling disgust at moral imperfection which, in better days, would have been borne without pain, if not with complacency.

The companions, whoever they may be, however, should be those possessed of good sense and feeling, which is certainly a rare combination. If they possess not the former, they may frequently be starting objects of discourse which, directly or indirectly, bear upon the unhappy causes of the patient's malady; and if they

have not the latter, matters will be still worse, for they will treat with levity or coarseness, the subjects indiscreetly developed, which can only be safely touched upon by one possessed of a profound knowledge of the heart; by the acute skill and penetration of the metaphysician, who can measure, with undeviating precision, the effect of the words he is about to utter, on the mind of the patient.

The difficulties in the way of bringing the lacerated mind back to its healthy state, are not few, nor of course easily surmounted. The agents for the use of the skilful physician are expensive, and not always, even in opulence, to be procured. Even travelling will not invariably succeed, for memory will too often travel with the patient, and is at the best, but “the tomb of joys long dead, and the cradle of miseries which seem never to die.” This method of travelling, however, of diverting the mind from its ruinous trains of thought, is generally highly valuable, if the circumstances of the patient will allow of its prescription. The prescription unfortunately, from the very nature of things, cannot always be followed; and certainly, in no proportion to the number of cases requiring its aid, when this alone is to be de-

pended upon. There must, however, be a daily exercise of two or three hours before dinner, either riding or walking. The author has seen the most beneficial results from riding on the outside of a stage coach, which, from its rapidity through the air, invigorates the body, and the constantly varying objects amuse the mind. But the patient must return home!

Some plan, therefore, is still wanting, which will require no select companions of rare power of mind and feeling, to soothe his unhappy hours; no foreign scenes, or constant change of place and society,—perhaps to be had sparingly, and at times only—something yet is wanting to supply, occasionally, the absence of these remedies, and their power in employing, amending, and consoling the wounded spirit.

Reading, beyond all question, (soothing as it is, to minds but slightly affected with mental disquietude,) gives no relief to the severer trials, the acute and more exalted forms of the woes of man. The miserable tenant of the mind will not quit or be ejected by so weak a power, but maintains its position and its freehold with obstinacy and success, against an adversary which scarcely attracts attention. Persons in affliction, with an agitated nervous

system, cannot read, except, indeed, at very rare seasons of amendment, when advantage should be immediately taken, which this opening may afford, and the works of Cooper especially, Scott, and Washington Irvine, should be thrown into it, that their busy operation and spirit stirring scenery, may assist in breaking up and scattering the sad habits of mischievous association which the mind had formed.

The patient's own observation will often assist in discovering, what circumstances, enquiry, company, or pursuit, suit him best, although his existing energies may be of so feeble a character, as scarcely to allow him to take advantage of the occasion. Still he has as yet reason enough left to know, that a sufficient quantity of self-command may be acquired by all who will exert themselves, to a trifling degree only, to obtain so desirable an object as immediate relief. In whatever form, or from whatever source, this relief may come,—particular book, person, or pursuit,—it should be freely used, as a remedy of the most precious and invaluable character. The most powerful means of superseding miserable feelings, of which I have any knowledge, is the practice of composition.

The mental sufferer has personal dislikes; but it is in vain to state this,—no good will be derived from the fact, unless the cause is sought for, which will be found in the exquisite sensitiveness of the patient, either to certain painful subjects, which have been treated too lightly, or to a coarse and vulgar estimation of the unspeakable bitterness of his feelings, by certain individuals, who not knowing their intensity, but ignorantly governed by the term nervous, treat as nothing, as of no consideration, feelings of such transcendent wretchedness, that suicide often becomes the only refuge of the unfortunate victim. Friends and relations, who practise this absurd line of conduct, should be on their guard, if the affection of the sufferer is necessary to their own happiness. Never more in life will he forget, though he may forgive, this rash and cruel conduct, which is equally mischievous in exasperating the malady, as in destroying his affection. On the contrary, no language can depict the extent of remedial power, possessed over this malady, which can be poured in a full stream of comfort upon the sufferer, by the deep sympathy and active intelligence of an affectionate friend, who enters into all the refinements of the ele-

vated mind, sunk in misery, and directs, with keen and friendly vigilance, its wild and melancholy movements, already drawn nigh to the confines of annihilation.

The ill effects of rough and indelicate conduct, in nervous affections generally, may be estimated even in the less refined and exalted, though still serious ailments of those unfortunate young girls, who, under the name of hysteria, spinal irritation, &c., crowd our hospitals. A cross word from a coarse nurse will, from a state of long comparative health, develop suddenly a fit, and a long train of harassing symptoms, which will take days and weeks to dissipate. "How can you be such a fool as to suffer such trifles to affect you?" It is a greater fool who asks the question.

If mental irritants, or unkind treatment, have such a powerful evil effect upon the nervous functions, how greatly should friends and nurses be upon their guard, for the disease will be sustained by periodical unkindness,—perpetuated to an indefinite period, by a severe rebuke, or even an angry demeanour, exhibited towards these sensitive, delicate, and unfortunate beings.

In no class of malady is the most winning kindness and profound knowledge of the heart

more absolutely necessary, than in diseases of the nervous function; because the mind is so blended or interwoven with them, that they require, at least, as much of mental treatment as of physical remedies.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE PRACTICE OF COMPOSITION, AS A REMEDY FOR RELIEVING MENTAL SUFFERING.

I HAVE known some who must have terminated their woes in a mad house, had not this invaluable remedy for the troubled mind been actively used.

There is something so prompt, decided, and even astonishing in its results, that one who has felt its beneficent influence, would be ungrateful to his Creator, forgetful of his fellow beings, and utterly wanting in human charity, were he not to make known its extraordinary power. To conceal the vast and benignant control, which composition possesses over human suffering;—the balm with which this

remedy can soothe, if not heal entirely, a wound that seemed so deep, that time itself could never heal, would be criminal. It will succeed when all other methods of amusing the mind, or abstracting it from painful contemplation, have altogether failed.

To show its singular dominion over human feelings, it should be employed with energy and decision upon the most urgent occasions: for example, when the moral being, the soul of the patient, is torn by the most agonizing feelings. In one hour, nay often in one quarter, the whole mind is occupied. The practice stealing slowly upon the enemy drives him out, and the patient is soon steeped in the depths of a soothing and delicious forgetfulness of past miseries.

The practice of the opium eater is childish to it in power, and ruinous in its result. Composition leaves no langour nor horrible unnatural remnants of a forced or excited imagination, that dislocates the mind of the opium eater, which it mangles without healing, and wrecks without restoration.

But this practice of composition directly relieves the worn and exhausted moral part of man, and not only leaves that in order and

peace which it found in confusion and miserable, but gives a strength and renewed vigour to it, that both gratifies and astonishes the once despairing patient. It so wholly engrosses the powers of the understanding, as to leave no inlet or opening for the admission of painful thoughts.—The mental revolution is therefore complete, the reform, radical.

There is a difficulty in sitting down to it;—and this is the only one to overcome, or that stands in the way of its employment and its invaluable utility. Thus, patients will aver that they cannot sit down to commence writing; but they never fail on the other hand to admit, that whenever they do so, success is sure to crown the momentary exertion of the necessary energy to begin this remedy. The better way, on the approach of the uneasy thoughts, is to sit down resolutely, and make a beginning without hesitation, or even do so in walking or riding, should ideas spontaneously spring up in the mind. For this purpose, the necessary materials should always be kept in a condition for immediate use; a pocket book and pencils in the pocket, and in every living room, and in the patient's bed-room, pens and ink.

Those who have once felt the influence of

this mental cordial, would forgive almost any other error in servants than the one, of removing the writing materials out of the way, which only could furnish it.

An objection may be made to this remedy, that it cannot be generally applicable, inasmuch as all patients could not be qualified, or capable of exercising it.

To this objection it may be fairly replied, that as these derangements of the nervous system, or of the health, from a wounded mind, take place chiefly in persons of great original sensibility, of refined imagination, and considerable intellectual power, it is clear that its use may be of greater extent, than would at first sight be supposed; because, it is particularly adapted to those cases or characters, which, in reality, more especially require its application.

Moreover, when these sad cases occur, which is the fact, though more rarely, in the middle or lower classes, (who often possess much of real feeling, the ground work of the calamity, though it grows not into a state of such great refinement as in highly cultivated society,) they are not so difficult of cure.

The range of causes is more confined in its operations on such minds, the points of which

have not been sharpened by the imagination, and identified with an habitual and refined train of thought. There is always, of course, less refinement upon feeling in this class, though the feeling itself may exist,—the imagination is seldom exerted to the extent of confirming painful feelings, into habits of association and deep thought. Their coarser life and more homely feelings, their society and intellectual pursuits, generally, are not of a kind likely to increase by meditation, the power of this dangerous quality, called sensibility.

Withdrawn, as much as possible, from the immediate cause of their sufferings, and employed busily with their companions in trade, or otherwise, if possible, in the open air,—which has an almost singular power in relieving and refreshing the weakened nervous system,—this class of persons, will, in general, and with temperate habits, soon recover from mental shocks, or irritations of a slower operation, which have disturbed the nervous system.

Another and a more reasonable objection to composition, as a remedy for mental afflictions, consists in the fact, that, admitting patients are from these intellectual endowments capable of its employment, few would be tempted to its

practice, by the wish of becoming authors, and hence the motive for its employment would be deprived of much of its force, and its intensity and perseverance greatly circumscribed.

There would be no overcoming this objection altogether, without the aid of reason, for certainly, all unhappy persons, of sufficient acquirement, would not feel disposed to be authors. But surely, for so great an object as instant release from the envenomed fangs of a morbid mind, there is not a patient existing, who would not willingly submit to commence a process of certain remedial power.

Where authorship is out of the question, picking out portions of prose or poetry from a favourite author, and then arranging the same ideas or sentiments in the patient's own language, is a valuable substitute for regular composition.

This exercise should be shown to the physician, or a competent friend of the patient, who will give his judgment upon it, and by his comments, conversation, or sentiments on the subject, or on the new mode of phraseology employed to express it,—so manage as to encourage the patient, and stimulate him to fresh exertions.

Again, advantage should be taken of the necessary occasions to write letters, for although the sort of composition in them be of a kind as not wholly to engross the mind of the patient, yet, as he must, as a man of business, or of the world, be under the necessity of writing letters sometimes, the diction should now be careful, and even elegant as possible, copious to the filling of the paper,—and the mind will thus become gradually engaged with the subject, and the object obtained of withdrawing it from painful contemplation. In letter writing, or particularly in writing for the press, it certainly cannot be expected that the language or manner of treating the subject of publication, should be so perfect, as when executed by persons whose intellects are unclouded by misery. With these unfortunates, the morning, the period for this practice is, alas! not the clear noonday of the mind! It is constantly overcast, and though the cerebral atmosphere clears somewhat before the genial influence of this particular remedy, yet the intellectual day, never becomes so fine as in happier times. The more important considerations, the prolongation of life, sanity of body and understanding, with their annexed comforts, must supersede the desire of fame.

This peculiar mode of saving the health, by employing the mind to obliterate the traces of painful recollections, is, in addition, likely to work favourable changes in character,—give it an energy and perseverance in studies and investigations, which must necessarily lead to useful and valuable results.

The most wonderful man I know for talent, extent of information, for taste, eloquence, and uncommon power of fascination,—was a very unhappy person, in his middle age. His health suffered in consequence, in the shape called stomach complaints.

Experience taught him the necessity of using his mind for a moment's relief from mental anguish, and the obloquy of an ill judging and an ill natured world.

At forty years of age, this gentleman, who previously had been but an idler—to say no worse of him (as most rich men are at that period of life), incurred the heavy misfortune of encountering one of the most dreadful shocks which any mind can endure. He was for some time in a state bordering on insanity; medicine did him no good, travelling did more, but most of all composition. Thus, the practice of this remedy led him gradually into literary enquiries,

and in a few years he became a star or constellation of unusual brightness in the intellectual world.

The unpleasant circumstance alluded to, however, changed the man from weakness to strength, from coarseness to boundless elegance and refinement. He now reads, writes, and composes well in Spanish, Italian, French, and English,—is possessed of an immense knowledge of ancient and modern literature; an excellent botanist; draws beautifully; and of works of art is a profound judge; but most of all, with this full mind, he finds no difficulty in pouring its stores upon the fortunate few who may happen to hear him, with a sweetness of language and manner, and general force and effect, which is as astonishing as it is captivating.

Moreover, to him did the habits which produced these great results prove beneficial, for they completely cured an unhappy mind and disordered health which arose from it. Their regular and constant practice, since continued, have ensured his health and happiness steady and unbroken.

This gentleman makes notes on all he reads, and his reading is immense. He rises early,

rides three miles, and walks back in all weathers; reads and writes, or walks his picture and book gallery till two,—when he directs his domestic affairs; rides and walks again, with pencils and books in pocket for drawing or notes, till five o'clock; dines temperately then, and usually drinks three glasses of hock at his dinner, nothing afterwards; again reads, writes, and arranges his flowers, drinks two small cups of coffee, and retires at ten o'clock to sleep sound till six. Thus, not a moment is lost, the cup of enjoyment always full, the drinker always thirsty, and what is most remarkable and to our purpose of showing the value of intellectual industry, and its power of conferring what happiness this world can bestow, is the fact, that he draws none of his abundant pleasures from society, with which he is disgusted, and avoids with the utmost caution. He is on the wrong side of seventy, as fresh and vigorous as spring itself, and likely to live, barring accidents, at least thirty years longer.

When the head is very much affected by pain and confusion, as occasionally happens in severe indigestion, there will be a difficulty in carrying on original composition for the press, the brain will feel the task too serious

for it, and be somewhat irritated. In this case, the patient should not suddenly and on slight grounds relinquish the practice altogether as improper, for he will be astonished at the gradual dissipation of his mental disquietude, if he resolutely perseveres. To relieve the head, under such circumstances, it should be well sponged with cold water and rubbed dry, and half an hour's exercise in the open air, by sharp walking, had recourse to; when, upon the pain and confusion subsiding, he should return to his practice. The nervous irritability, the exquisite sensibility, the busy and endless worryings of the memory and imagination, will fade, retire, insensibly, at the approach of their powerful antagonist, and ultimately and wholly abandon the field, without leaving a trace behind, of having recently occupied it in such formidable array.

There can be no question, that the stronger the interest found in composition, the more successful will be the result of its practice. The strongest interest, the most successful kind, will be that of writing for the press. The energies of the patient will be rallied, his mind gradually roused into action, by the necessary calls made upon it. To undertake

this as a labour or a task, patients of this class could by no means at first be brought to consider as possible, and they would probably be disgusted with any such proposition as writing for the public. But let them,—by reason and gentle perseverance, though with bold and justifiable confidence as to the result,—be gradually led to try their skill in a magazine or a newspaper, anonymously, and the mind will become gradually engaged or absorbed in the selection of words, or their collocation in sentences; and the imagination, now healthily employed, will furnish occasionally a few figures or ornaments of composition. The result will be, intellectual pleasure,—a secret consciousness of growing skill,—and above all, and what was the object of the practice,—a conviction, that at last, the patient has discovered a certain relief for his wearied and anguished mind.

Now, also, he will have vanquished his reluctance, perhaps disgust, to sit down to write;—for experience will have proved to him its healing or consoling power. No longer will he require the stimulations from his adviser. He has tasted of the innocent cordial and benefited by it. And when he relapses into the destructive train of ruinous retrospection, or

from the operation of existing harassing circumstances, he will fly, no obstacle will stop him, to its friendly shelter, to partake of the sweet cup of entire oblivion. In this precious intellectual draught, will be found the true elixir vitæ, or philosopher's stone. Relief from saddened memory comes most certainly, and moreover, it comes not alone. The patient drinks and forgets, but suddenly he feels refreshed also; and happier scenes of intellectual pleasures, before unknown—the sweetest and most permanent of all—are gradually and beautifully opened to his view.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE MEDICAL TREATMENT AND DIET OF PERSONS IN ILL HEALTH FROM MENTAL AFFLICTIONS.

SECTION I.

Medical Treatment.

ALTHOUGH the right method of cure, is to remove the causes of ill health, which are seated in the mind, that the morbid phenomena of the disordered nerves may cease; yet, after these causes

have existed some time, their effects will not altogether and suddenly cease on such removal, but be continued, in some degree, from the great impression made originally on the brain. This impression will sometimes take a long period of good mental and general management to efface, and often of great and minute attention to an injured stomach, the reflective power of which back on the brain, whence it derives so many of its own evils, is tremendous.

Moreover, besides these original effects of the malady upon the nervous system, constituting a train of habitual disorders of it, which, in time, are capable of continuing their own existence independently of their causes; it is not always possible to remove the patient from these causes, for memory and association will occasionally infest his mind, when he is far away, and continue its derangements. These repeated, or occasional applications of the causes, will, in proportion to the force of the mental irritant, induce a return of all the violence of the symptoms, and especially those upon the stomach, when they had in a great degree faded. This organ, therefore, will require the most delicate management; and though no kind of treatment directed to it only,

however good, will cure the patient, whilst the mental cause continues, yet it will, undoubtedly, diminish his sufferings.

The state of ill health, called moral indigestion, requires very little medicine; and those who would treat this species of stomach malady, as they would indigestion from physical causes, and in bilious habits, would be greatly mistaken in their calculations,—and fortunate would it be for the patient, who escaped from a doctor, who had not learned to make the necessary distinction. The treatment of the bowels, in both cases, demands the most delicate observation and experience. There can be no doubt that calomel and purges generally, are beneficial occasionally, in physical indigestion, though, even in such cases, not to the extent to which they are frequently carried; for the nervous system gets involved in all examples of severe indigestion, and will not bear such rough handling, upon so important a division of it, as the gastro-intestinal nerves. When the stools are dark, unnatural, and offensive, and in massive quantities, there can be no doubt of the benefit of gentle purging, until they assume a better expression, and this, notwithstanding the probability that these discoloured evacuations,

(probably, and in general, bile secretions) may be the effect of an original nervous irritation in the mucous lining of the stomach.

For I am of opinion, that even in bilious indigestion, or in indigestion affecting the liver chiefly, that the first impulse was given by causes applied to the sensitive mucous lining of the stomach, and thence propagated to the liver, which, by this influence, furnishes the dark, and oftentimes the most copious and astonishing secretions.

But in mental indigestion, which is seen more remarkably in persons who possess the nervous temperament of fine and delicate susceptibility, it is a most uncommon event to see a solitary discoloured, or unhealthy evacuation. In few examples have I even seen such an occurrence, without its being accounted for by the colouring properties of some of the substances taken into the stomach as nourishment. No liver treatment then, in general, is required in such cases. Occasionally, however, the secretions may, and do become discoloured, in mental indigestion, from the liver sympathizing with the stomach itself, influenced by the brain, therefore it is right to watch and if necessary to correct them.

But the practitioner who would purge such patients severely and perseveringly, under a preconceived notion, that the liver must always be the cause, or be concerned in indigestion,—that there is some foul secretion from it to come away, &c., and therefore, it is necessary to purge, and look daily for its beneficial wonders,—would, in mental indigestion, mental hypochondrism, or the irritable brain, be looking in vain, or for what he would never find, and if he did, occasionally, the solitary circumstance would only serve to beguile him into a false practice, if he rested it upon such casual grounds.

But the practice would not be in vain, upon that system which is mainly concerned in these cases. No amendment under it would take place; the nervous power would still further suffer, and sink under the continued rough treatment it would thus endure, and the practitioner would be taught to stop, by the growing delapidation of his patients,—the increase of both mental and bodily symptoms.

It seems, however, in mental indigestion especially, that the bowels should be carefully unloaded, although they should never be purged. For the affection of the brain weak-

ens the nerves of the stomach and intestines; for we know, by the experiments made on the eighth pair of nerves, digestion to be a nervous power, and, therefore, that the want of this power probably deprives the peristaltic motion of a portion of its energy, and hence is required artificial aid as a substitute for it.

The most gentle substance should be employed for the purpose of stimulating the languid nerves, as the compound rhubarb pill. If purgatives could be superseded by the influence of exercise and diet, it would be still better, but the former cannot always be had in a sufficient degree. Saline purgatives never succeed, nor generally any substance which may irritate and weaken, still further, the morbidly sensitive condition of the first passages.

An example or two of the evils arising from purging, where the gastro-intestinal nerves are irritable, will be given. I believe the indiscriminate practice of purging, so much the fashion in affections, supposed inflammatory affections of the mucous membrane of the bowels, has of late years done more mischief to that really important membrane, than all the other causes of its maladies put together.

Nor can it excite wonder in those who are

accustomed to behold its extraordinary sensibility, remarkable in a healthy state to certain obnoxious substances of the smallest volume, that when irritable or unhealthy, this sensitiveness is increased to a boundless and almost incredible degree.

We physic too much,—we eat and drink too much, and the extremity of art or skill will one day, sooner or later, be found to consist in temperance,—in the cautious employment of both food and physic.

I have known every symptom which could be developed by the irritated gastric nerves, in mental indigestion, follow a drastic purge in a most exasperated degree; burning pains in the back between the shoulders, in the left breast, palpitation, and the more distant pains in the left leg or side, with a feeling of rawness pervading the stomach and abdominal canal; but finally, and especially, would this practice of purging be followed by an increase of weakness, especially of stomach weakness, marked by the food taken giving an increased sense of weight and hardness, and its digestion being carried on more slowly, accompanied by flatulent eructations and swelling of the belly.

The mild and innocent practice of using

morning injections to unload the bowels, cannot be too much extolled in all such cases of ill health, from a deranged and enfeebled nervous power. Injections neither irritate nor weaken, if properly and simply prepared. They disturb not the process of digestion—always slow in such cases, nor carry off the food before it has been made the most of, nor wear out the most important part of the nutrient canal, already worn too much, because they are never applied to this part, which they only slightly affect, by its sympathy with the lower and inferior portion of the canal to which they are really applied. Injections may be used regularly at a certain hour after breakfast, and their gentle sympathetic power will be extended along the canal of the intestines, whose contents will be mildly solicited to descend, and not driven out pell-mell with violence, as in the case with drastic purgatives, used by the route of the stomach, lacerating the weakened nerves as they pursue their biting and ruinous course. No weakening medical process will suit these mental cases, inasmuch as the immediate condition of them is that of nervous or brain debility, with its usual concomitant irritability.

The whole series of effects possess this cha-

racter; the nervous energy has been undermined and subdued, and the remnant left is not enough to govern with vigour the actions of the machine.

I. The patient is prone to coldness, especially in mental indigestion; has the other signs of a languid circulation, a feeble and often an intermitting pulse, all which cannot be accounted for in any other way, than from a deficiency of nervous power.

His symptoms are all increased by lowering agents, as purging, bleeding, the depressing passions, and by speaking on harassing unpleasant subjects, which exhaust, in a peculiar and striking manner,—whilst he can speak well, and often loudly as ever, if excited by an agreeable subject, which thus answers to a tonic mental power.

II. The symptoms are invariably relieved by tonic agents. He improves in the open air,—when he changes it,—and under the stimulus of new scenery. He is always better after his meals and wine, if care be taken that the quantity and quality do not oppress and irritate the weakened nerves of the stomach. So remarkably is this the fact, regarding the tonic salutary power of food, that after dinner, the

patient will often appear, and really feel to be, quite well. The tongue, foul in the morning, clears as the day advances, under the various combined tonics that are in operation,—air, exercise, and food. But it never clears by weakening processes, as purging,—unless occasionally, when it has been demonstrable that the patient had fouled his tongue, by taking a large mass of food, perhaps too of an improper kind. This clearing of the tongue, by tonic or strengthening powers during the day, is particularly remarkable, if the patient passes a happy day, for here the tonic of the mind, the best of all, has been applied.

It is not here meant to be asserted, that bleeding or purging, and lowering means, are never necessary in nervous disturbances. We know that inflammatory actions will occasionally take place in the feeblest constitution, but then they are rare, and require the greatest skill and caution in their treatment, which can never safely be so bold as when employed in a different kind of constitution.

When the mind has been relieved, I am, therefore, decidedly of opinion, that the means to be adopted in the treatment of nervous disorders, which may remain as corporeal effects

from mental causes, should have a constant reference to their weakening origin, and should, therefore, be of an unequivocal tonic description.

The rule of beginning tonics, therefore, when the tongue becomes clean, as recommended by authors in the treatment of indigestion generally, must often be broken, or rather tonics would scarcely ever be commenced, were this rule of previously cleaning of the tongue to be always obeyed.

SECTION II.

State of the Tongue in Mental Indigestion.

THERE can be no question that indiscretions in the quantity and quality of food, will increase the morning foulness of the tongue, in mental stomach cases; and where this additional increase of foulness could be traced to such a physical source, it ought to be removed; but in general, the medical man would be disappointed, who would begin cleaning the tongue of the mental dyspeptic, mental hypochondriac, or case of irritable brain, in the usual way, by physic or purging. Oftentimes these patients possess a cleaner tongue early in the morning,

than at any other time of the day, which is contrary to its condition, in common or physical indigestion. The patient often awakes, refreshed by sleep, with a tongue comparatively clean, and it is not until painful thoughts have long agitated his feelings, that this organ becomes decidedly foul.

To attempt, in every case, the *cleaning* of the tongue, as it is called, by scouring the stomach and bowels in the ordinary way, with purgations, would be a more mischievous absurdity, than waiting for this *cleaning* to take place, before tonics are employed, except in some cases, where a foul tongue existed before the mental attack, or on some particular occasions where serious errors in diet have been committed. Both these circumstances should be strictly investigated. The power of stomach irritations, of various kinds in various persons, in discolouring this organ, would be a study of itself, and might fill a volume. But of the immediate remote causes of the foul tongue, in general, I can have nothing to say in this place.

In the disturbed stomach, from moral affliction, it undoubtedly must arise immediately out of a direct nervous communication, from

the brain itself; for oftentimes, the rapidity with which this effect is produced, by painful meditations, is as astonishing as it is true, for it happens, when no other cause can, by possibility, have had even a share in the business.

Unloading the bowels, with delicacy, gentleness, and judgment, when sharp exercise of three hours in the day,—supposing the patient is able to take this quantity,—and soft diet, will not keep them open, and the use of tonics,—are all that appears to be necessary, in the *medical* treatment of these cases of mental indigestion, where the stomach and intestinal nerves have been weakened, by mental impressions from the brain. But it is understood, of course, that the exhibition of any remedial medical power is only admissible, (or at most but palliative) when the mental causes have been withdrawn, and the stomach merely suffering from their previous existence;—with the exception of the employment of the mildest agents for unloading the bowels, from which all irritations must be removed, or the original evil will be increased.

A most excellent writer (Dr. Johnston) on indigestion, has recommended quinine as a tonic, and apparently on account of its con-

venient form; but, in my own practice, I have thought it too stimulating. Where tonics, or medicines, in these cases of ill health, from mental causes, have been of service at all, I believe the carbonate of iron will answer best, in giving tone to the stomach, and thence to the nervous system generally. This last expression may give a true notion of the principles of practice to be kept in view. The nerves of the stomach, so necessary to be in perfect health and vigour, for the purposes of digestion, are weakened and irritable, and occasionally chronically inflamed; which, however, should make no great difference in the practice. This must consist, in gently assisting the peristaltic motions to unload the bowels, by a mode the least expensive to the strength of the parts. For the same purpose of sustaining the nervous energy, the stomach and bowels should have as little work to do as possible, which would exhaust it in the shape of full and improper meals, and still further, by the necessity of adopting artificial aids, to assist the oppressed organs. A holiday for the mind, and a holiday for its auxiliary and wayward offspring, the brain and stomach, are together required, until both have recovered the debilitating strokes of mis-

fortune, and though both would require food, it should be of the most light and agreeable description.

It sometimes happens, that chronic neuralgia of the stomach, marked by tenderness to the touch and severer pain than usual after eating, merges into acute gastritis, the signs of which terrible disease are so uncertain, but which, as yet, I have never seen occur in mental indigestion. Were such an unfortunate termination to occur, which must be very rarely, the foregoing treatment, of course, would be reversed.

In the irritable brain, where the affection has advanced far beyond that moderate degree of irritability of it, when a symptom of indigestion, when the pains through the head are considerable, and the patient's mind greatly disturbed, so that sleep is banished from his wretched pillow, I have seen opium and sedatives generally of great benefit. But a large dose is required, and then sleep has been procured; the chain of painful feeling broken; and the patient has awoke, for a time at least, free from his sufferings.

The attention to the stomach and bowels, should be equal to that required in mental in-

digestion; but I have never seen bleeding of any service in the irritable brain, although there is, occasionally, signs of congestion of blood accompanying the other phænomena of the affection, if congestion be understood to be giddiness and pain, especially brought on by stooping, laying the head low, or turning it quickly, in shaking it, and when the pains and giddiness are increased, by holding the breath or in blowing a horn. These symptoms do not, however, always accompany the irritable brain. From their constant occurrence in affections of the head, from indigestion, which seldom fails to produce them, and from the rarity of apoplexy in such cases, and more especially from these symptoms, seldom being relieved by bleeding; there may be some doubt, whether they may always mean that condition of the vessels of the brain, which is generally understood by the word congestion. If it be congestion, it is of that sluggish kind, or filling of the vessels, which depends upon their debility, or incapacity, to assist in circulating their contents, and much of the same kind, which affects the vessels of the conjunctiva, in ophthalmia of scrophulous children. It is not accom-

panied or distinguished by that more active and dangerous filling, where the blood is in great quantities, in highly plethoric constitutions, with a full pulse, flushed face, and coma, and beating of the carotids, and which, by its powerful straining or distension, then can produce a lesion of the sides of the vessel, and apoplexy ensues.

Now a contrary state to this, is the probable condition of the brain, when it is disturbed by the mind. The patient is usually free of blood, often severely cold, weak, and irritable, with a pale countenance and quiet carotids;—his pulse has the same character of languor, and yet he may have, and certainly do have, the signs of congestion of the brain, as far as this character may be considered to be marked by the symptoms before described, which may be considered as sufficient to indicate brain debility. The patient's brain, in mental indigestion, is exhausted by miserable meditations, and the corresponding weakness of its vessels, allows the blood to linger about the harassed organ. Indeed, there is scarcely a case of severe indigestion affecting the head, without these symptoms of weak congestion existing, and every day, a medical man of experience

must see examples of it, and also of the general innocence of its character.

I believe general bleeding, in which form it is necessary to abstract a considerable quantity of blood, is frequently injurious, in this passive congestion, and the giddiness and confusion are increased, by still further weakening the circulating power. Local bleeding, certainly, sometimes relieves this feeble congestion, much in the same way that cutting the turgid and weakened vessels of the conjunctiva, will relieve chronic inflammation and congestion of that membrane. Further, this state of chronic congestion and its treatment, is further exemplified, by the application of stimulating dressings, which promote the vigour of the circulation, in this weakened condition of the vessels of the exterior coat of the eye, to such an extent, that their congestive and low, or asthenic inflammatory character rapidly passes away.

Could we get at the vessels of the brain, to cut, unload, or stimulate them, it is probable that their weak congestion, and its symptoms of giddiness, on holding down the head, &c. &c. in indigestion, would be as easily removed as that of the conjunctiva.

The good effects of tonics or stimuli, applied to the stomach, in these congestive headaches, from indigestion, is further illustrative of their character, and because they are removed rather by strengthening or invigorating measures, which promote an equality of circulation, than by depletion. Dr. Philip seems to think, there is danger of apoplexy when these symptoms exist in the advanced stages of indigestion, and advises local, and sometimes general bleeding; but surely the danger must be very slight, when we know, which it is in our power to do, that out of a hundred cases of old stomach cases, there is not one without these symptoms of vertigo, confusion, pain in the head, and all increased by stooping, sneezing, or laying the head low—but notwithstanding, we never hear of apoplexy in such cases. Whenever it does occur as the effect of mental suffering, or in persons almost devoid of blood and feeble circulation, from long suffering, it must be of the kind called nervous, in which bleeding would be madness, where the blow has knocked up the energies of the brain, whose functions suddenly cease, with that life which it governs. I saw one of these rare cases of nervous apoplexy last year, in a lady who had long suffered

from severe physical indigestion, and who perished in a few hours after the attack, but who would probably not survived one, if the gentleman who attempted to bleed her had succeeded in this imprudent measure.

Cold affusion to the head. There can be no question of the benefits of this practice, when the head is affected, either by sundry pains of a nervous character, without the symptoms of low congestion, or when these last symptoms do prevail. This mode of relief, in the latter case, is probably by the temporary action of the cold, promoting the vigour of the circulation through the brain. But its mode of application should be considered. For it has various effects, from the various modes of its application. The proper period too for the operation of the cold must be well calculated, for in cases in which the circulation through the brain is very feeble, and the low congestion present, were the cold too long applied, or from too great a distance from the part,—more harm than good would result from this practice of cold affusion, which would depress the vigour of the circulation through the brain, rather than increase it. The shower bath is always a troublesome method, especially where the ap-

plication must be made two or three times a day, and from this circumstance, in the cases we are treating of, it could scarcely be used sufficiently often. Moreover, in nervous or mental indigestion and the irritable brain, this process is often too violent for the feelings of the patient. Sponging the head, or dipping it, is better; but there is a serious objection to this last method, in the undoubted fact, that where congestion is present in the brain, the act of stooping and bending the neck, will frequently produce staggering giddiness to an alarming degree, even to those who may full well understand the common innocence of this symptom. But on account of its creating alarm, this practice, and all others which are capable of exciting it in the distressed mind of a nervous patient, who is already anticipating the approach of evil on all sides,—should be avoided.

I have known the act of stooping produce giddiness and alarm, which by association would then recall the wretched and bitter sources of the commanding and original evil to the mind of the patient; the consequence would be, a fit of nervous irritability and the whole train of peculiar nervous symptoms, which it would ignite

The better method of using the cold affusion is, by the patient sitting and holding his head at an angle over a foot pan, placed upon a stool in front of him. This position of the head will prevent all giddiness from stooping. The servant should then pour a pint of water, from the common large mouthed water ewer of the bed-chamber, over the patient's head—and close to it—beginning at the back part of the upper portion of it, and the water will then run off the chin. The head then should be sufficiently long and well rubbed by the servant, for the patient may not be equal to the task, until warmth ensues. Ladies must consent to have their long hair removed. If this weak congestion of the brain be very considerable,—staggering,—giddiness,—confusion and wandering pains,—a weak intermitting pulse,—coldness of surface, especially of the extremities,—it would be more prudent to use the sponge, as a milder mode of employing the cold, which in this mode may be repeated two or three times a day.

The shock of affusion, however, should not be repeated more than twice a day, and its effects should be well noted, for if the countenance of the patient remains pale and contracted, after the necessary frictions to promote

reaction have failed to induce warmth, this useful remedy, properly employed, will be more mischievous than beneficial.

Walking. But of all methods of equalizing the circulation and relieving the head from feeble congestion, this exercise is perhaps the most decisive. Well might the late Mr. Abernethy recommend three hours of it daily, although he did so, believing that it could only benefit, or rather, act through the stomach, which he blamed as the original cause of every evil which can assail our perishable frames. The advice was good, although he certainly too often saw things in a corner only, to suit his own peculiar views, and overlooked the vast variety which were scattered over the open field. His *coup d'œil* was not, therefore, that of Napoleon, whose eye could detect an atom out of place, whilst he lost not sight of the whole mass of atoms and their comparative value, as they were arranged, either by boundless nature, or by the skilful and complex formations of science.

Mr. Abernethy, to whom our profession is much indebted, and the world more, for the exertions he has made to promote the value of temperance, saw nothing wrong any where,

except it began in the digestive organs; he was obstinately and totally blind to all the influences, sympathies, and combinations, with which these important organs are subjected, by their union with the brain and nervous system, and in the derangements of which, they so frequently play a secondary or subordinate character.

His blue pill and black draughts, in affections of the nervous system of which we are treating, stomach or otherwise, from mental causes, would be directly injurious;—but he had no other remedy, and was thus a Sangrado after his own very odd, and it is to be hoped very rare, fashion.

The exercise of walking, which he recommended, promotes the equality of circulation in a manner which no other exercise can effect. The mental or nervous dyspeptic, is apt to have his extremities, especially the hands, exceedingly cold, along with the symptoms which I have called feeble or languid congestion of the brain.

Now let him commence his morning walk as sharply as his strength will admit, and soon, that is in half an hour, he will discover that his hands will become warm (which no other

contrivance could effect), and his head gradually become clearer, that is of blood, and its oppression, pain, confusion, and weight, as the circulation goes on more briskly, are all relieved or wholly dissipated;—that is to say, if the patient's mind be in a tolerable state of composure. But neither the exercise, the beauty of the morning, nor the fresh gales from heaven, will remove these symptoms about the head, if the mind of the man be suddenly invaded by one of those subduing attacks of acute mental anguish, which formed the whole or the part of those sad causes which first disturbed his health. He will be blind to all beauties, and proof against their charms. Nay, such is the absolute dominion of the mind in all such cases of which we treat, that should the patient go out with perfectly healthy feelings and a clear tongue, and be attacked by one of these fatal reminiscences,—the enemy will surely succeed in developing all the symptoms—first confusion, then giddiness, and ultimately pain of the head, irritability—and the other nervous symptoms in succession, as palpitation of the heart, pains in the left breast, burnings in the back, &c., and a foul tongue. Moreover, therefore, and once for all, be it

now said, that while the mind is thus suffering acute anguish, no minor or physical remedies will do any good; and if, in the middle of his walk, the patient is so attacked, he must instantly return to his composition,—which happily will certainly be successful in relieving all his feelings, frequently in one short hour. Then, and then only, may he return to his walk, these beauties of the morning, or his minor remedies.

I look upon it to be a rainy day indeed for the patient under consideration, when the weather debars him from going out to walk or ride twice a day, which he should do if his strength will permit it (and *his feelings* must not be the judge of this circumstance), for one hour and a half before breakfast, and the same before dinner. Should the weather be bad, the exercise of walking must be done in a room with the windows open. But this or some other exercise must be done,—to keep the stomach in order, and check its evil reflective power upon the brain, more especially if this latter organ be occasionally exposed to the unhappy causes which originally produced the malady. This walking exercise it is understood, of course, cannot be commenced

before the patient's strength has overcome the primary severe shock of the nervous system: until this period has arrived, he should either sail, or ride in an open carriage, or especially on the driving box of his carriage, or on the top of a stage coach. It is astonishing how his bodily powers will return under the practice of walking, when it is carried on with decision, perseverance, and energy. The patient will feel tired in his first attempts, complain of languor, and be somewhat disgusted with his task; but as he goes on cautiously, though steadily with it, so as to form a habit, he will at once acknowledge his error and his amendment.

The exercise, however, should not be carried to the extent of great fatigue. The nervous system would be slow in recovering this shock, and especially that part of it concerned in indigestion. Already weakened to the excess of inducing all the phænomena of this affection, the nerves of the stomach would recover still more slowly under excessive fatigue, and the immediate and more local symptoms of indigestion would be instantly re-excited or exasperated. Should the patient have been unaccustomed to go out before breakfast, he must be broke gra-

dually to the new practice, which may be done by taking a little thin chocolate before he commences it, and afterwards breakfasting more substantially at a later hour than usual.

The length of time to be occupied in this exercise, is here marked somewhat below the period for persons in tolerable strength. Young persons should have four hours exercise daily, at different times, and persons from fifty up to sixty years of age, three;—for even at this time of life, the feelings have not always acquired that cold and subdued character, which renders man insusceptible of grief or refined suffering, the common causes of the nervous cases under consideration.

Riding on horseback. This exercise is sometimes unfriendly to the feelings, where the nervous system is much disordered and readily disturbed. But the patient should be urged to persevere, and have it explained to him, that the palpitation of the heart, so often excited by this species of exercise, is nervous, and will subside on the exercise being cautiously and regularly continued; the stomach power will also be progressively and certainly improved. There is no man who attends closely to the effect of riding on horseback, but will

grant to it a peculiar, decided, and remedial influence over the weak stomach. Dyspeptics from any cause are all flatulent. The shaking of the body in rapid trotting, rouses the languid power, and extricates the air from this organ, in a manner so as to excite the attention of the patient, and sometimes that of other persons, and the gentle concussion of the digestive organs, generally promotes the vigour of their circulation, and rallies without exhausting the nervous power. The rate of riding—as soon as the palpitations of the heart will permit the patient to do more than walk his horse—should be a quick trot or a hard gallop. Hunting would be a capital mode, to those who love the amusement, because the mind would be amused, and the stomach relieved from its pressure more easily strengthened. Persons, however, to benefit from this exercise, must, of course, be considerably advanced in the recovery of their strength and nervous energy.

The exercise of riding and walking should be alternate, if it be possible or convenient, that is, it should be riding one day, and walking the next; or what is better, walking out and riding home; the viscera within and the

muscles without the body are then all exercised, and their circulation invigorated and rendered steady.

Sparring and shuttlecock. In bad weather, when they cannot walk or ride out of doors, and do not like walking in, gentlemen may spar; but the play should be light and practised with professors, who will be more precise and careful than raw or half learned performers. It is an admirable exercise, if the melancholy and refined mind can be brought to bear the thoughts of sport, of levity, and of an enjoyment, that once might have been practised. This one, however, is most fitted to patients who are somewhat advanced in recovery, and who can bear an hour's brisk walking, without the nervous affection of the heart being increased by it. Ladies and tender gentlemen may play at battledoor and shuttlecock, which is a most effective in-door exercise, to control the evil reflective power of the stomach over the brain, by adding tone or strength, and thence diminishing its irritability. The game should last an hour, actively pursued, or until a sense of some fatigue follows. The sparring should be continued for three quarters of an hour, twice a day, when this exercise

is preferred to walking within doors. Sufficient time between the rounds should be allowed for the complete recovery of the respiration, as the heart must not, in its nervous state, be distressed by the rapid action of the lungs.

Diet. There is much of wisdom, and no small quantity of folly, in what has been said on this important subject, and because I do not wish to add to the latter, and cannot contribute greatly to the former, I shall exercise a brief forbearance regarding it.

Eat what experience teaches you agrees best with your stomach, contains more useful advice than rules, or an account of a long list of substances, said to be of the most easy digestion, can furnish.

For though there are certainly some articles of food generally more easy of digestion than others, yet there are always stomachs sufficiently obstinate, capricious, and unaccommodating, as to be ready to give the lie to the dyspeptic doctor's recommendation, and to the utility of all rules.

One will obstinately digest half a pound of filberts, without difficulty or uneasiness, and reject or bear, with a thousand agonies, two tea-spoonfuls of white wine. So curious,

strange, and omnipotent are the qualities of the nerves of the stomach, that, in one case, no sooner does the smallest quantity imaginable of any acid reach its cavity, than the bald head of the individual instantly—there is really no perceptible time to be marked between the cause and effect—breaks out into a profuse perspiration, which is diffused generally over the scalp.

The weakest stomach, I know, digests salt beef better than any thing else; and water gruel, so justly celebrated, it vomits back again with the most peevish ill nature and want of respectful consideration to modern discoveries. But the patient is not to infer from this example, that such food is easy of digestion generally, which is contrary to fact; but he is to infer, that there is more practical knowledge to be obtained in his own case, by watching or ascertaining the peculiarities of his stomach, than in scrupulously following the customary rules for the selection of diet.

Different stomachs, like different human beings, possess different characters, probably from the peculiarities in their nervous constitution, which itself is something very like a branch of the peculiar mind of the indi-

vidual, or, at least, very much modified by it.

The folly of legislating for the stomach creates changes in practice, which are any thing but respectable. If the mind rules the nerves of the stomach, and hence digestion, what set of rules for diet could meet its varied wanderings, unless the effect of its workings was a simple weakening of the nervous power. This, however, does not appear to be the case. Sensitive persons will act most wisely, by studying the particular constitution of their digestive organs, and carefully watch the different effects of different substances used as diet at different seasons, on conditions of the mind. The absurdities of rules are hourly evinced in practice. I know many patients in whom vegetables, so generally obnoxious, will suit the stomach better than other kinds of food; and where a cubic inch of lean meat, so much recommended, would instantly create uneasiness, followed by a sense of load, oppression, and swelling of the abdomen. Again, fat, pure fat, and melted butter, according to books the greatest enemy a weak stomach can encounter, will sometimes, most disrespectfully and spitefully to the learned authors of the said

books, sit scornfully triumphant in the legitimate habitation of water gruel!! Some of our profession, however, are not so unfriendly to some kinds of fat as formerly. Mutton chops, so famous in the treatment of the dyspeptic stomach, must now hide their stale insignificance in the presence of sliced fat bacon, which, with conscious pride of its own superiority, is found upon every breakfast table, proudly curled up in bold and impudent convexity, and ready for a start over the now neglected form and fallen fortune of the mutton chop! This last is in general, however, never so tender, and therefore never so proper for the feeble stomach, as the middle of the neck of mutton boiled.

“It will not be difficult,” says Dr. Paris, “to show, why a certain texture and coherence of the aliment should confer upon it digestibility, or otherwise. Its conversion into chyme is effected by the solvent power of the gastric juice, aided by the *churning* which it undergoes by the motions of the stomach; and unless the substance introduced possesses a suitable degree of firmness, it will not yield to such motions: this is the case with soups or other liquid aliments, in such cases, therefore, nature

removes the watery part, before digestion can be carried forward." The *therefore*, is not so clear;—nor is there any proof that solid food is always more easy of digestion than soft, without being a fluid food. Nature has, fortunately, given to the stomach a sensibility, which announces the presence of an obnoxious body; and how often, hourly, do we see in practice, the weak stomach bear with pain and impatience very solid food of the smallest size? These facts are of more value than conclusions drawn from physiological assumptions, and furnish safer guides in practice. Soft food of any kind, and made still more so by minute mastication, if possible, seems best for weak stomachs, from whatever cause their weakness be derived. Stronger stomachs would admit of, perhaps, more solid food, and that in proportion to their degree of strength. By soft food is not meant fluid food, which is objectionable, if taken in large quantities, as it distends the stomach, and promotes flatulency.

Good thick water gruel, however, is in general an admirable food for the mental dyspeptic; for the general use of which, in

that malady, we are indebted to Dr. Johnson, as also, with some exception, for the best book extant on general indigestion.

Boiled meats are preferable to roast, but those most so, which are slowly stewed till they are tender, as in the French dishes, called *bouillé*; but the gravy should be more simple. Boiling meat thus, till it is tender, saves the stomach a great deal of labour, when it has none to spare, best shown by the comparative ease with which such well made dishes sit in its cavity.

In mental indigestion, affecting the liver or the bilious temperament, fat cannot be taken. Arrow-root, rice pudding, macaroni, and game, are among the best articles of diet for the weakened stomach of the unhappy man, which will have attentions of this sort, or it will make terrible returns on the brain, from which it derived its injuries.

During a fit of wretchedness or mental suffering, and for some days after, the stomach of the mental dyspeptic will bear no kind of food well, or, in other words, it lies long in the stomach undigested—a heavy, indolent, and oppressive mass. Of course then, during the season of anguish, the slightest food in the smallest quantity is desirable, for it is evident

that, in its additional weakened state, produced by the mind subduing its nervous energy, it would be more likely to digest trifles than a full meal.

The common error, in a general way, is in eating too much. The uneasy feelings of an oppressed stomach will soon announce the fact, and such an error as this ought never to be repeated, for it is not quickly corrected, and the sufferings of the patient are increased in body and mind.

On this account, the mental dyspeptic, or persons with irritable brains, should never dine out, until their complete recovery, for they are usually sensitive, obeying their inclinations more than the dictates of prudence. It is quite astonishing how mischievous is the small quantity taken beyond that precise quantity which the stomach power will bear. This has been remarked by a valuable writer; but as he has not pointed out by what immediate signs the patient can ascertain the almost incredible fact, a knowledge of this kind will be valuable, because it will readily prove it to him.

In some persons, pain, swelling, and weight, immediately after food, will announce the fact in broad terms, to those who have been daring

enough to eat a good dinner. In others, who have sinned more timidly, and perhaps for two or three days in succession, the symptoms will be of a less striking character and requiring observation, making allowance for peculiarities of the nervous power of the stomach in different individuals, which it must be granted yields oftentimes strange variations in symptoms.

After dining out for a day or two, where he has not exceeded his three glasses of wine, but on which occasions he partook of two or three dishes, the patient becomes worse, his tongue unusually foul, and he cannot account for the change: his stomach feels more uneasy than usual. Close observation, however, will point out a more constant feeling of distress there, for after some pain and fulness succeeding the meal, there will be a bagginess or weak fulness, as if the organ could not contract, and a slight soreness, as if it had been bruised or strained: there will also be a more constant and long continued eructation of air, showing the difficulty and slowness of digestion. This will go on even for eight or ten hours after the meal, or according to the remaining power of the patient's stomach; a feeling of irritation in the bowels, as though they were about to act,

which they may do slightly, repeatedly, though ineffectually. There will be less inclination to eat at the regular hours, though, if the patient begins, he will probably eat as much as usual. And here lies the danger,—and the necessity of watching for the foregoing symptoms which rise forth, often too insidiously, from this wayward, delicate, and extraordinary organ; though they denote, clearly enough, the injury it is receiving from too much food. Now, indeed, it must have a long holiday, or at most, a little gruel or arrow-root should be allowed, nor even this till the patient feels some hunger, which will be a sign of the returning vigour of the weakened stomach. I believe, moreover, that the mental dyspeptic should never eat till he has this feeling in some degree, or until the signs of the digestion of the previous meal have arrived.

When the irritation of an inclination to visit the water-closet predominates, with the other foregoing symptoms of too much or improper food, it should not be disregarded, but the gentlest means employed to remove the oppressive mass; viz. by an injection;—for it is quite clear, that the organs concerned are sufficiently weak already, and do not require scouring purges to increase the evil ultimately,

which is the common but most ruinous practice.

Persons who feel it difficult to overcome the practice of over-eating, should order for dinner food of which they are not particularly fond, though it still must be of a proper kind which will not disgust, or what best suits the peculiar stomach of the patient; one dish only can be safely allowed.

Tea and coffee, especially the former, are rank poisons to those sad mental cases, which in the shape of nervous maladies disorder the health.

Thin chocolate and milk, a little fat bacon slightly broiled, or an egg, with dry toast, are the best breakfast articles.

Wine after dinner appears to be necessary to these mental cases, where the nervous power is always at a low ebb; but it should never exceed three glasses, or it will stimulate the brain too much, and increase that irritability which is constantly annexed to the disorders of it induced by misery. Old port is certainly the best, if the stomach of the patient be not prone to form acid. In this case, sherry, old hock, or weak brandy and water, should be preferred. It should never be forgotten by

the mental sufferer, that strong drink, taken to affect the head, will ultimately inflame all his maladies to an intolerable degree, and his irritability even beyond the evil power of improper diet, excesses in which appear to have the most power in fouling the tongue. By him also, (though it must be admitted, that the extraordinary and dreadful sensibility and irritability have a mental origin, partaking of his own peculiar mental character, and decidedly never radically relieved, but through the channel of the mind,) it should never be forgotten, that this improper diet, and especially a heavy meal, will add to the torments of that destiny to which he has been doomed. These patients should never eat till they are hungry, and therefore, as their digestion is always very slow, a greater interval for its perfect completion should be allowed between the meals.

Hence the commonly received rule for regular meal times is often improper, as one meal may follow another too quickly, and thus distress additionally the injured stomach, unless indeed, the hours being fixed, the patient takes the necessary exercise to prepare his stomach up for the occasion, by inducing the feeling of some hunger. Neither

should the mental sufferer eat so much when beneath the influence of a fit of misery, as at other and happier times. As the stomach is always and immediately made more feeble than ever by the increased degree of wretchedness,—the usual quantity of food will long lie heavier in it, and all the symptoms will be increased by the new irritation of the oppressed and offended organ.

No fluid should be drank at dinner if possible, especially beer, as it helps to distend, and therefore weaken the stomach, by inducing flatulency. Nor will this forbearance from fluid be deemed a sacrifice by the patient, after the first struggle to acquire the necessary self-command in obedience to this rule. Moreover, in this case of mental or nervous indigestion, it will be submitted to the more readily, for it is not often accompanied by thirst, as is more commonly the case in bilious indigestion.

On sleep. I would advise the mental sufferer to attend to no rules on this subject, which forbid day sleep. He must be aware how much he is relieved by sleep, by the comparatively composed and healthy state of his mind when he awakes in the morning; until he slides into those furrows of long and painful

thought, where reason gets bewildered, and sometimes is for ever lost.

He has been advised to rouse himself, or be roused, out of those fatal wilds (where not one smiling and healthy flower is ever known to live), or adopt any means that will succeed in breaking, superseding, or directing, into less dangerous tracks—the current of dangerous meditation.

Sleep is a valuable auxiliary in carrying this principle into effect, and if it comes not naturally by dint of strong exercise, it should be insured by artificial means, which appears to be more particularly necessary in highly marked cases of the irritable brain.

The same principle is good during the day. If harassed, worn, and broken down, by a crowd of uneasy feelings, he will, occasionally, when his head will not admit of composition, find it to his advantage to forbid all interruption, and to endeavour to go to sleep, even in the day. In its forgetfulness of which will be sunk the misery;—and exhausted nature, recruiting, will awake refreshed, and entirely free from mental agony. One half hour's sleep will often be sufficient to answer this valuable purpose,

but the practice should not be allowed on any other than this important occasion during the day, as unnecessary sleep weakens the brain and nervous system. The energy of the patient, or rather of his friends, should, on his awaking, provide against relapses into the same sad habit of ruinous retrospection, barren in every thing but danger and wretchedness,—he must away to his horse, or his composition, or to the most agreeable companion whom good fortune may have provided for his consolation.

I have known the practice of occasional day sleep, of the greatest advantage to the mind distressed and overthrown, and I strongly recommend it under the circumstances already mentioned.

That patient would be more likely to enjoy this real and daily relief, who has wisdom and energy enough to take two hours of sharp exercise, or what his strength will admit of, before breakfast. This fatigue, ensured by the exercise, gives an inclination to this sleep, often when it is most required, towards the middle of the day. And the same will happen after dinner, if the exercise before this meal has been sufficiently strong for the purpose. As patients of this class are always better in the

evening, they may make a long one by light and agreeable reading, which the gloomy morning mind will never allow them to enjoy in that early part of the day, and which should always be occupied in exercise in the open air; composition and sleep being the most powerful agents for breaking the baleful habitual practices of the miserable mind, and of soothing and invigorating the injured and misused nervous system.

The morning air, and conclusion. Were a single remedy to be selected,—midway between a physical agent and a mental one, partaking of both in quality, but especially in its effects, I should say, give me the early morning air and scenery, for the use of the unfortunate sufferer, whose health or nervous system have been broken down by misery. Who has not heard this class of solitary wanderers say, “My head is bad, but if I can go out in the air it will be better;” this is true,—but it is equally true that the air of early morn has a refreshing and soothing effect, which this pure genial breath of heaven does not possess at any other time of the day.

It should, however, be frequently changed, and the localities of this morning exercise

varied. Although no fact is more clear, than the great value of this practice of changing the air, in the nervous stomach cases in question, yet it is probable, that the consequent change of scenery, by abstracting the mind from its miseries, has a powerful share in working the benefit.

There are none who have journeyed through this vale of tears, in dejection and wretchedness, whose heads have borne successive strokes of affliction, from the heavy hand of an evil destiny, but will confess the benefits they have received from this beautiful, invigorating, and effective dispensation, from the hand of their Creator,—the early morning air and change of scene.

If at one and the same time it softens the asperity of irritability, soothes the pains of sensibility, invigorates the body, and changes the feelings often from gloom to cheerfulness, and from despair to hope.

Reader, if thou art one of those numerous children of misfortune, a part of that dark mass of misery, which overshadows, and attires in mourning the fair face of the earth, rise early; for bed, in thy waking hour, will be the cradle of thy woe, and not the place for thy repose.

The fangs of memory and imagination will fasten on thy brain, and if this escapes mad-

ness, it will at any rate direct its tormentors on thy stomach. They would not act against a more valuable ally, or with a more powerful and vindictive enemy, to the peace and comfort of mankind.

It will throw back with interest and terrific energy, the blow it has received from its omnipotent master, and the tremendous conflict between mind and body goes on, each hostile party employing a host of nervous auxiliaries, which soon succeed in aiding their principals to destroy the health and happiness, if not the life of the sufferer.

It has, however, been seen, what may be done to arrest the ravages of such powerful enemies to man, and the very process by which this is accomplished, is precisely that by which he may abstract good out of evil, and another proof of the various and admirable modes by which the Creator works his noblest purposes. The three species of nervo-moral ailments arising from misery, already discussed, are all to be relieved by the same intellectual and corporeal processes, making allowance for differences in the physical and moral characters of different patients.

Reader, should sad necessity drive thee early

from thy pillow, remember, that grievous and lamentable as may be the cause, still the remedial practice, which would be the result, must be beneficial, because it creates or confirms a habit of early rising, the value of which is immeasurable.

If thou darest not be idle, or indulge in the dangerous wanderings of the imagination, because memory and its associations will take the field against thee, and prey upon thy vitals;—remember, that thy mind, driven by this necessity to incessant activity, will become full of knowledge, and acquire an energy and a commanding power it never before possessed.

If fortune has been unkind—thy children ungrateful—thy friends faithless—thy wife the victim of evil passions—thou wilt show, by intellectual vigour and industry, that the Creator has given thee the means of living, if not of enjoying and of preserving thy intellects, amidst the general wreck of thy early hopes and withered affections,—until it shall please Him to call thee hence, into other and happier scenes, where thou wilt be rewarded for thy misfortunes—thy sufferings—and thy virtues.

There may, indeed, come periods, when the memory of thy misfortunes, or thy broken and

blighted affections, of their lost and once precious endearments, will find thee out,—probably on thy pillow. Reader, lose no time, if thou valuest health, and above all, thy reason; rise instantly, and to work, or take thy sketch and note books, and seek, at day break, that cheering light, which awakens hope, soothes to peace, and heals, at least for a while, the broken heart. It is in the calm and silent grandeur of the morning, that afflicted man is deeply impressed with the power of his Creator, and feels the sweet balm of his works, and their promises, poured into his lacerated bosom.

He feels it in the fresh breeze, that wafts comfort and strength from heaven itself on his grief worn head;—he hears it in the gentle sound of the sheep bell, in the murmur of the brook, and in the sweet song of that innocent bird, which rises aloft to proclaim the beauties of the full blown morn. But he may feel it still stronger.

Go, seek some elevated spot, endeared by loved and early recollections, now indeed fading away, and there await the glory which is coming, and with it a certain consolation for thy bitterest moments;—*there* thy frame, though withered by the blasts of a life of misery, shall be refreshed,

and thy soul reanimated with hope, long since a stranger to thy bosom. Turn thine eye eastward, and watch the first approach of the beautiful morning light, as it breaks over thy native hills, and trembles on their tops; observe the light clouds as they skim along the grey vault of heaven, and feel then the sublime and beautiful notions thus yielded, of immense distance, of worlds beyond, and of a mighty power!

These light and feathery messengers borne by the gentle and almost noiseless breeze, scarce trembling among the trees, precede and announce the silent, immediate, and magnificent approach of the orb of day. Nearest the dawn, heavy masses of grey clouds are seen to blush deep red, and soon the whole firmament glows with a rich golden light, which touching with brilliant lustre the mountain's brow, leaves its sides and the valley as yet clothed in deep and misty shadow. Observe, now, the morning breeze, and these splendid rays, roll away the wreathy vapours from the tall elms, touch with diamond brightness the delicious green of their elegant tops, reeking with dewy freshness. See, in another direction, the increasing heat and breeze sweep away the fog, and then slowly reveal the calm unpretending beauties of the

distant landscape, the bleating lamb, or lowing cattle, marking the green banks of a clear stream winding through the plain, and bearing on its quiet bosom a little bark! Reader, its flitting sail, sometimes here, sometimes there, and now lost for ever, is an emblem of life; and should remind thee of the approaching and, perhaps, sudden termination of thy earthly woes.

Finally, whatever misery man has endured, however much he may have been shocked at the immense quantity and endless variety of it which abounds in the world, and difficult as he may find it to reconcile such an overwhelming existence with that of a particular providence, yet let him pass sceptical, if it happens so,—there is no crime in doubting,—let him pass with a troubled, nay agonized, though not a guilty mind, into those matchless scenes which nature can unfold to his view, and her own still voice, magnificently eloquent in her morning silence, shall soon clear away his doubts and soothe his sorrows.

In viewing these transcendent works of his Creator, a flood of light will be poured suddenly upon the unhappy one,—something more sublimely-affectionately impressive, more convinc-

ing than words or reason, will surely whisper, that the last act of the strange drama of human life is performed not here,—that there is a redeeming and parental power which works its vast scenery, and which has provided a place of refuge and of comfort for the wearied sojourner, chastened by the chequered scenes of an earthly existence.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE MIND, AS INFLUENCING THE FATE OF GREAT OPERATIONS.

It is now many years ago since I first noticed the immense power which the mind possesses, occasionally, over the fate of operations; but, unfortunately, the notes I possess on this subject are not so numerous as they might be, and as they ought to have been, on a highly interesting practical point.

The mind will act favourably upon the result of a capital operation, when it is calm and undisturbed by the approach of the danger, and

willingly accepted as a means of cure of some desperate disease.

It will act unfavourably, if in a state of great or unnatural excitement, independent of any diseased action set up in the brain. There is a wild expression in the eye, a gay and restless deportment, a quickening of all the mental faculties; the comparatively silent man often becomes loquacious, even witty and eloquent: but the careful professional observer should see, in all these mental phænomena, an excited brain, dangerous to the patient, if the irritation of a violent operation be added to the account. But more frequently will the mind act unfavourably, when fear depresses the nervous system, when the patient is cold and apprehensive on the approach of the terrible moment, or submits to the ordeal of his courage unwillingly, perhaps from feelings of pride, or acquiescence in the wishes of others, or a sense of duty, whilst his mind does not, in reality, go fully and fairly along with him into the field.

There are operations which will pull down or shake the stoutest and best prepared mind. But if the intrepid be thus overwhelmed, what, under the same circumstances, will become of the sensitive and delicate being, who shivers

whilst contemplating the storm, as yet in the distance?

It is true, that few persons go very willingly into the operation room, and fewer still in whom the nervous system is stern enough to meet the coming stroke, without a trembling frame or a pallid countenance. But still, though safety may be found in mild degrees of this depression of the nervous power, yet, when it is deeply affected or subdued, and the mind influenced by a presentiment of a fatal termination, there is not only risk, but considerable danger in the result; especially if the operation to follow, is itself a severe and prolonged one. When a cannon-ball or machinery have hopelessly crushed a thigh high up, there is general coldness or collapse for some time; and the rule, and an excellent one it is, to wait for some degree of warmth or reaction in the patient, before amputation can be safely performed. But there are other means of bringing on certain degrees of this torpid or reduced condition of the system, or depressed nervous power, than by great accidents, and which condition, in practice, is too often overlooked, and the patient dies from encountering a great violence in an improper state of his nervous system.

A very great degree of fear, as already stated, no matter how derived, from a presentiment or not, will lay prostrate this system, without whose energy the heart and arteries are as nothing.

In very sensitive minds it is remarkable, that some particular circumstances will greatly affect them previous to an operation, and add to the other causes of depression; and it ought to be the especial business of the operating surgeon, to measure well what these circumstances are, and remove them far away from the patient's meditation or observation, on the approach of the critical moment. Some persons are often deeply and injuriously impressed with the subduing feeling of fear, on seeing the instruments on the table, the butcher-like operating dress, perhaps already bloody from a previous operation. I have seen a patient turn pale and shudder at the sight of a straggling bloody knife!

In hospitals, sufficient pains are not generally taken to remove such powerfully depressing causes out of the way, in minds previously disposed to receive their full and evil impression. Other sensitive or nervous patients, suffer their imagination long to dwell on the dreadful nature

of the operation and the probability of success, and in these imaginative characters a favourable conclusion is rarely drawn. Indiscreet visitors, with their gloomy forebodings, often do mischief, and their gossipings make a deep impression on a roving imagination. Such should have the activity of their imaginations superseded, by the constant presence of some agreeable and clever friend, until they are led into the operation room, and they require the most earnest and eloquent exertions on the part of the surgeon, to calm the deep felt anxiety, raise the spirits, and excite the confidence. Not to see every patient on the eve of a great operation, and carefully examine the condition of his nervous power, his circulation or temperature, and to know the kind of spirit which animates him, would be a culpable neglect on the part of the surgeon, and I fear it is one that is not very uncommon.

I have known the pulse sufficiently feeble, the body sufficiently cold, and the spirits of the patient of so gloomy a cast, as to require wine before the operation, and a long strain of argument and cheering industrious loquacity, called eloquence, before he was fitted to confront the operator on the table, where his fate

was to be decided. And I have seen patients so torpid with this fear and apprehension, or an irresistible presentiment of fatality, that I have refused to operate at all under such circumstances, and especially to discontinue the violent operation of reducing old luxations, when a fluttering and feeble pulse, cold body, perspiring, pale countenance, and agonizing and powerful appeals to your compassion, indicate a dangerous and despairing fear. If this fear be combined with the subduing power of emetic tartar, large bleedings, or tobacco glyster, in certain nervous persons, the danger will still be more eminent, should the violence of the operation be continued, when the patient's nervous system is already reduced by this fear to so low an ebb.

For it must be remembered, that it is not merely the injurious effect of fear, in depriving the nervous system of its protecting energy, which a surgeon should take into his calculation, of the chance of success from the intended operation; but he has to calculate the probabilities of its being a severe, or a very terrible operation; a circumstance, which will greatly add to the unfavourable impression

already made by a deeply rooted apprehension, or by a deep presentiment of fatality, established in the patient's mind.

The operation of lithotomy is sometimes a long continued and severe one; and if to this be added, a low and despairing condition of the mind, a sunken nervous system, marked by coldness and languor after the operation or before it,—the patient, I should say, is in eminent danger from these concurring causes. Little children will perish after this operation, blighted by its stroke without any inflammation supervening, and there is a probability that the feeling of fear, so natural in them, adds to the mischief from the violence, and helps to destroy those who suffer. But, in grown persons, perhaps, the depressing passions have a still wider range of influence, from the activity of a copious full grown and vivid imagination, in a refining, sensitive, and nervous character, though the danger itself, in them, is not so great, from their comparative superior strength of the vital principle.

Probably the severest operation endured by the human body is, the attempt to reduce an old standing luxation, and sometimes a recent one, of the hip. If an unconcerned spectator

should chance to witness the tragic scenery of this operation, he would gather up very serious and alarming, if not very dreadful, notions of the science of surgery, and the humanity of its professors. For a human being to have his limb pulled with a horse power, for hours together, as though it must burst away from the trunk of his body from pure violence, is no other than the same fate, with a difference only in the degree, of that which overtook Ravailiac, whose limbs were torn asunder by wild horses. But it is very conceivable that if the poor patient be frightened, and well he may be;—if he becomes feeble, with a fluttering pulse, cold, and clammy, soon after the first burst of an operation of this unparalleled severity, which may now have continued an hour breathing hard; that his case is becoming somewhat of a desperate one, especially should the operator prefer his own reputation—the credit of reducing the luxation—to the more humane and high minded conduct of stopping in time, and sacrificing all, save his patient's life.

The effect of these severe trials of the strength and courage of man, is best exemplified by the reluctance and stern, inflexible resistance of the patient, to proposals to secondary

attempts to reduce these great dislocations, when the first attempt has failed.

The operator will observe, moreover, (when the patient does submit to these renewed acts of extraordinary violence, from the persuasion of the pupils,) if he looks for them, abundant proofs of the subduing influence of fear, in the recollection of past endurance, not only in the countenance, but upon the whole frame of the sufferer. The pullies are applied, the terrible struggle commences, as usual, with gentleness, but as it is carried on with caution, the patient, on this occasion, rapidly sinks; his mind is not in the business, his complaints become bitter and outrageous, "he would rather be a cripple for life, he is being killed," and few can bear, on this second occasion, what they did at the previous operation. Never, in any case of these second attempts to reduce such luxations, have I seen the patient so capable of enduring a long continued violence. He sooner becomes agitated with a deadly fear, his eye anticipates the well known punishment, and wandering in an agony of painful expectation, is imploringly and mournfully fixed upon you; his trembling voice sooner asks

you to forbear, to suspend the pulling, and if you do not obey his request, his skin will become clammy cold, the pulse intermitting, and he will die under your hands. In these second attempts also, which the patient in hospitals most unwillingly submits to, and if at all, generally from courtesy, the surgeon will not find it advisable to be so free with his bleeding, emetic tartar, and his tobacco enemas, inasmuch as all these agents will tend, in conjunction with fear, to lower the energy of the nervous power, beyond a safe degree. I am further of opinion, that the use of these powerful agents, at all times, requires the most active vigilance and real caution. They sometimes lower so suddenly, that in conjunction with great and depressing fear and suffering, the powers of life may be quickly extinguished. This sudden and dangerous lowering, is the result of the uncertain effect of these agents, which causes the surgeon to repeat them too quickly, and then their combined powers, with the bleeding, warm bath, and exhaustion from the violence, will act with tremendous and overwhelming and sometimes fatal effect, at the same moment.

When these desperate and often necessary acts of violence are proceeding, the surgeon should, from time to time, carefully and anxiously watch for the signs of a distressed nervous power, especially the pulse and the temperature of the body, for these will be the first to give way, should the patient's mind yield to the agony, and be filled by deep and despairing anticipations. But how can you measure the effects of fear and of intense agony on the nervous system, on the frame of the patient, if you employ tartar emetic, or tobacco, whose effects upon that system are precisely those you are looking for from the operation or other causes, and which, of course, would confound all distinction?

To this I reply, that I never will again use these powerful and subduing agents, excepting with great caution, already recommended, and in primary attempts only, or when the patient's body is robust, and the mind is determined cheerfully to undergo the painful trial for the recovery of his limb. In avoiding their confusion and danger, the surgeon will also be better able to make the necessary distinction of causes, and to come to a right knowledge of the exact condition of the patient's powers,

and know whether he is in a state to bear a continuation of the violence.

Nor are these powerful and hazardous agents ever necessary on such occasions. Bleeding, and the warm bath, will relax and lower sufficiently—with the advantage that such lowering or relaxation is regular and progressive, so that you can measure its effect exactly upon the constitution. But this is not the case with the action of these violent agents, which will frequently act not at all when their action is desirable, but suddenly, and with combined and fatal power, at an unexpected season, probably just at that unfortunate moment, when the patient's fears have been alarmingly raised, and his strength exhausted.

In cases where a first judicious and skilful attempt has failed to reduce these luxations, we should be very cautious in proposing others, and if they are to be made, the process should be conducted with the greatest caution.

We are governed too much by rules and names. Because a justly celebrated surgeon has said, that the luxation on the pubis is not difficult to reduce, I have seen, in this particular case, great and dangerous, nay fatal

violence used, under an expectation that the head of the bone would be sure to regain the acetabulum under another attempt.

But the best directed efforts failed to do so, in cases of the most favourable description.

We do not, however, always know the cause of difficulties in such particular cases, and it is much safer when we are thus in the dark, not to endeavour to overcome them by sheer and desperate violence, but to prefer the patient's safety, to some loss of our own reputation for skill.

I believe, that in no case is more caution and judgment required, than in carrying on these terrible operations, of reducing difficult luxations of the hip, in watching the effects of the progressive violence on the frame, and ascertaining how far the particular constitution, influenced perhaps by an enervated mind in a feeble body, can longer sustain a violent and continued shock.

But in all cases, before and after a severe operation, should the surgeon's visit be purposely made to know the exact condition of the nervous system, so much influenced by the mind. Before the operation, this visit should be

made purposely to raise and cheer the patient, and when the blow is struck, to watch for, and arrest, if possible, that cold and blighting torpor and fatal indifference, in which life will sometimes glide away, without a struggle or scarce a complaint, from the unfortunate sufferer.

CASES,

TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCE OF THE MIND
ON THE HEALTH, WITH THEIR TREATMENT.

CASE I.

MENTAL INDIGESTION FROM WORLDLY
MISFORTUNE.

IN the summer of 1829, Mr. —, aged thirty, consulted me for a disease which, he said, his medical man called nervous, and he could be of no further service to him. He had been an inexpressible sufferer for a year and a half, and on investigation, this turned out to be a case of most severe mental indigestion, in the bilious temperament. The patient, at the commencement of the malady, was afflicted with the common or local signs of stomach ailment or indigestion, great irritability, irregularity of the bowels, and especially frequent purging. Soon the head associated in the mischief, by yielding occasional excruciating pains,

confusion, and giddiness, all increased by stooping. About the same period, palpitation of the heart distressed and alarmed him exceedingly; he had pains under the breast bone, in his sides, and left breast, with soreness of this part, as though the part was bruised, and which he attributed to his bracers,—burning, spotty, and evanescent pains about his back, shooting and more severe pains down the spinous processes of the fourth, fifth, and sixth dorsal vertebræ. Though the symptoms of the head and heart, with their mental association of apoplexy, and organic disease of the latter, filled him with apprehension, yet the most harassing of all his wretched feelings were, an extraordinary proneness to be irritated and exhausted by the slightest disappointments in his household affairs, or in his profession. A rap at the door, announcing a visitor, or business, would awaken this nervous irritability beyond all control. The very act of the succeeding conversation would excite, also, violent palpitation and some shortness of breathing, and a feeling of exhaustion, which drove him to his sofa or his bed; where, after a while, his energies would be recruited.

When I first saw him, a deep and melan-

choly despondency was written in every line of his countenance, and from his proneness to low spirits, great length of time he had suffered, without relief from physical remedies, the fluctuations of the symptoms, and their exasperation by mental emotions, I suspected the whole case to have originated in a disturbed mind. His tongue was foul, he slept badly, was easily awoke when he did slumber, was occasionally thirsty, and now and then vomited. These symptoms varied, some would either fade or disappear for a time altogether, whilst others would predominate, or rise up to take the lead. Nay, sometimes the whole would appear so much better, that he was flattered into a hope of rapid recovery; but a speedy relapse would dissipate the pleasing illusion, and with a conviction of the hopelessness of his case, would be invariably associated an aggravation of all his sufferings.

This gentleman is a highly talented person, of an amiable simplicity of character, which led him indiscreetly into an unfortunate partnership, the effects of which were equally ruinous to his health and prosperity.

The latter calamity dwelt long, constantly and acutely, upon a young and sensitive mind,

just beginning the world, and the first symptoms of its effects, bad health, occurred in the head, then stomach, and the other signs of deranged nervous system followed.

When questioned as to the condition of his mind before the attack, he felt surprised, and had never suspected such an origin of his disease, though now, on clear recollection, he felt satisfied of the fact, from the exact correspondence between the varying degree of his symptoms, and mental feelings.

He had swallowed all kinds of medicines, chiefly purgative, unavailingly, for a long period, until he was disgusted at the sight of a druggist's shop; and had been often cupped to relieve his head, but with no benefit. Fortunately, this gentleman had a very intelligent and affectionate wife, so that his hours of suffering were soothed by her energy of character, which prevented the harass of a family and business, whilst the delicacy of her sympathy had for some time past, to a certain degree, given to him a calmness on the recollection of his losses and nearly fatal indiscretion, and his mind was become more tranquil.

Still the practitioner will see in this case, that although the mental cause of it was with-

drawn to a certain extent, yet the corporeal effects remained in force, though somewhat broken. The long train of nervous symptoms which disturbed his health, and the functions of the principal organs, were not removed till towards the conclusion of the fourth year of his sufferings.

The treatment of this case, which was successful, consisted in thoroughly occupying his mind with agreeable subjects, removing far away, with the most rigorous activity, all sources of mental irritation, which invariably reproduced the whole phænomena of the affection,—frequent changes of air and scenery, and tonics. Drastic purgatives did mischief, though the gentlest aperients, most commonly by injections, were now and then necessary to excite the languid peristaltic motions; and, upon a few occasions, his liver furnished dark and irregular secretions, for which a little mercurial mass, or calomel, was added to his slight or less irritating aperients. The diet was of the most simple and soft description, though not fluid. Tea, increased some of the mental symptoms; and he took chocolate made thin with milk, with powdered sea biscuit, for breakfast. It was long before the nerves of the stomach

recovered from the original mental shock, so as to bear really solid food, which was never allowed till some sense of hunger indicated their want and returning energy, and then the appetite was not allowed to be fully gratified.

CASE II.

DISTURBED NERVOUS SYSTEM, WITH INDIGESTION
FROM DOMESTIC AFFLICTION AND AN AWAKENED
CONSCIENCE.

A GENTLEMAN, aged forty-eight, of an amiable and sensitive turn of mind, had the misfortune to lose suddenly, in the prime of life, an object on whom his affections were deeply fixed.

The shock was dreadful. He was recovering slowly;—but during this progress, and probably induced by the event itself, his mind took a very serious and somewhat of a gloomy and enthusiastic religious direction, and his nervous disorders were reproduced by the irritations of an awakened conscience. The relapse from this new mental irritant was remarkable. He had not done enough for the immortal welfare

of the beloved object now gone to her account ; —he saw, with a heated and indulged imagination, his own errors in life, and now that his soul was softened with grief, and his nervous system disturbed, he saw them through a dis-tempered medium, and religious consolations terminated in religious fears.

Warm and enthusiastic, his brain, amidst the pressure of such varied wretchedness, real or fancied, became somewhat turned ; the loss of comfort, of happiness here below, and the fear of another state, shook the other parts of his nervous system to the foundation, in that form which has been expressed under the term of nervous indigestion.

The brain itself, which was commonly confused and giddy, giving severe shooting pains in different parts of the head, took in a considerable degree the character of the irritable brain, if the patient was left alone, or lay in bed in the morning, or unfortunately awoke in the night. His other symptoms were palpitation and disordered feelings of strange anomalous character about the heart, despondency, together with the more common symptoms of indigestion in the stomach itself, as load, oppression, and flatulence, after eating.

Nervous irritability, though present to a certain degree, was not so remarkable in this case. The patient was originally of a gentle disposition, and this symptom is regulated by the natural character of the patient.

A simple diet, but especially a vigorous unremitting employment of the mind, to destroy the power of memory and the imagination, with the daily consolations of milder religious views, infused by a judicious friend, removed all the symptoms in this case, in about the period of three years.

Cupping did not relieve the head, though large doses of sedatives were of service in insuring some sleep. Purgatives generally increased the dyspeptic symptoms, and in the latter end of the case he used morning injections only.

The mode adopted of employing the mind was composition, and the patient being fond of literature, he went freely to work. The effect was marvellous. He would sit down in agony, and two hours afterwards rise up with happier feelings, bless God for the change, and be content with all around him, which before filled him with disgust.

His bodily exercises were on horseback,

chiefly, and he was requested to ride fast, that his horse might attract his observation, and thus employ his mind, or attention, to a certain extent. He was also desired, and for the same reason, to ride out in company, and never to be alone, unless occupied in composition.

CASE III.

MENTAL INDIGESTION AFFECTING THE BILIOUS TEMPERAMENT.

A LADY consulted me, February 10, 1832, concerning the health of her daughter, aged twenty-two.

She complained of her head;—of weight, pain, and confusion, increased by stooping, her tongue was remarkably foul, her bowels subject to frequent diarrhœa, accompanied by considerable external tenderness, from pressure and pricking pains over the stomach, as though pins were pricking her.

Pain with sickness was almost constantly ex-

cited after taking food, and which very frequently produced purging by its irritation. The evacuations were often of a very dark and offensive character, and the patient's skin was frequently tinged with bile. She was morbidly sensitive and irritable, and slight events induced a degree of palpitation of the heart, and worry and confusion of the head. Catamenia regular. I treated this lady at first as a case of bilious indigestion, from physical irritation: she took gruel and arrow-root, the most simple food for diet.

The medicines were appropriate to this affection, but the case remained stationary. More than once, an air of complete abstraction was detected in this young lady, with a gloomy and saddened expression of countenance, that confirmed me in a belief, that in her mind, naturally sensitive, must be sought the origin of her malady.

The conjecture was correct. An indiscretion, an act of kindness, though of weakness, towards another, had compromised the peace of a whole family. Some of the obstacles to a recovery of her peace of mind, I had the good fortune to remove, and during this comparatively tranquil period, she took some tonics. The stomach, no

longer irritated and weakened by painful meditation, now retained food without pain, and even this was solid, which formerly could not be borne for an instant. Her health rapidly improved,—from a state of emaciation she became plump, the melancholy expression had disappeared, to make way for a most spirited and intelligent countenance. The morbid irritability and sensibility quitted her, and the terrific glooms and wish for death no longer occupied her mind; on the contrary, I had a suspicion that infinitely more agreeable thoughts had commenced to occupy the lady's bosom.

Unfortunately, matters did not long go on so smoothly. Some events occurred of a painful nature, no common disappointments were felt; these recalled associations of others, long since passed away, but which were the identical ones which originally produced the evil. It was curious to see the return of all the symptoms on the return of the mental causes. The first upon the list was the diarrhœa, accompanied by pain after eating, and generally, soreness of the abdomen, and a foul tongue. Then came back the pallid and woe stricken countenance, confusion and pain in the head, an indifference to exertion, to pleasure, and

an inclination to remain in solitude at home, and lie on the sofa, with a sincere and earnest wish to be relieved from the oppressed mind and bodily disorders, even by death itself.

In this way, of alternate amendment and of relapse, did this case continue; but it was observable, that tonics, which were useful when her mind was composed, in diminishing the extraordinary sensibility or irritability of the bowels, were utterly useless when it was distracted, and no other treatment of diet or medicine checked the main bodily symptoms,—of pain after food, followed by irritation and disordered purging of the bowels, which were generally tender over their surface, and sometimes sprinkled over as if with a scattered pain, as though produced by the pricking of points of pins.

The case no doubt was, or rather is, one arising out of a morbid impression, given by the mind to the gastro-intestinal nerves; which, when affected by the mind, in their turn excite the liver, and the bilious purgings succeed. It has already lasted for some years, and is likely, from the occasional, almost constant, continuation of the causes, to last much longer. Mental indigestion, or a widely disturbed nervous

system, from misery, is removed with singular slowness, years pass away, and the patient is still not well, though better, but a reapplication of the causes will frequently induce a severe return of all the symptoms.

In the foregoing case, mercurial purges relieved the bilious symptoms, but these always returned under mental suffering.

CASE IV.

MENTAL INDIGESTION AFFECTING THE NERVOUS TEMPERAMENT.

DURING the early period of amendment, in the preceding case, and which was attributed to my supposed skill, but which, in fact, extended no further than a detection and partial removal of the mental cause,—I was requested to turn my attention to another patient, living in the same house, who was also said to have, and to have long had, a severe stomach complaint.

This lady was older than the preceding one, and for five years had been in bad health, in the shape of severe headaches, confusion, giddiness, languor and oppression at the stomach after eating, the food sometimes giving pain, bowels generally costive, and an indifference to all kinds of exertion.

The tongue was exceedingly foul, and there was a subdued melancholy, and somewhat of a discontented expression of countenance, which induced me to believe, to use a vulgar expression, that they had both been together in the same pickling tub. This was the fact; they had both been concerned in a family transaction which ended in misery: and they both lived a life of great wretchedness, partly from their remorse, and partly from the family discords, which were the consequence of their indiscretion.

This lady with her sister I rigorously dieted, —made walk three hours daily, commonly in the open air, but when mental irritation bore more heavily, all would not do; the stomach derangement exceeded all means of control, which, when the irritations were occasionally removed, had a marked and an unequivocal good effect.

CASE V.

EXTENSIVE NERVOUS DISTURBANCE, OR MENTAL
INDIGESTION FROM FRIGHT.

MARY KENT, aged eighteen, had been subject to slight attacks of indigestion, when she was bitten by a cat, which she believed to be mad. Agitated by constant apprehension of hydrophobia, she could not sleep, and was constantly haunted by perpetual fears of that malady; and for several days and nights so excessive was the fright, that she could not be got out of a condition of great coldness. Soon a train of nervous symptoms developed themselves, resembling those which have been erroneously called spino-cerebral irritation, but not till some time after the accident and the constant mental suffering.

In truth, like the other cases, the severity of the symptoms arose from a new irritation from the mind, reaching perhaps an already predisposed stomach. They were as follows: (note taken December 8, 1830) "Violent pain in her head, with confusion and giddiness, palpi-

tation increased by motion, complains of a pricking pain in her left side just below the breast, which is exquisitely tender to the touch, as if it had been bruised, and when touched pain shoots through her chest to the opposite shoulder. A similar pain extends down the arm and upwards along the left side of the neck. There are wandering pains of a similar leech-bite sort of character, and sometimes burning, about the back, and a severe one of an acute aching in the fifth, sixth, and seventh dorsal vertebræ.

“ Pressure on these vertebræ gives pain in the stomach when made, and on this last mentioned part, pain in the vertebræ is produced.

“ This patient speaks with reluctance, in a whisper, and with pain in her throat and breast.

“ Deglutition painful also, which I have observed to be always the case when the recurrent nerve is affected, in these cases of aggravated indigestion, or wide nervous derangements. This patient has a foul tongue, is excessively irritable, and desponding.

“ The nervous system is affected on the left side chiefly, which is common to these affections. There is, however, some tenderness about the liver, and, she says, her motions are sometimes of a dark colour.

“In all the parts attacked with pain there is generally great tenderness to the touch. The bed-clothes when heavy are disagreeable to her.”

This young woman was at first treated as a liver case, in consequence of the discoloured evacuations, but without any permanent good effect. She took all kinds of medicine to no purpose, but she got well in about three years, under the combined power of consoling mental assurances, constant fresh air and change of scene, mild diet, and tonics. When it is stated that she recovered in three years, it is meant only that her health became comparatively good, that she had left her bed, where she had lain for the greater part of her long illness, and was capable of undertaking a place of service; but, as usual in all such cases, her nervous system is now easily disordered by a mental irritant, or a physical one applied to the stomach.

As usual, any impropriety of diet, or mental irritation, gave pain in her stomach, and generally increased all her symptoms, though the mildest diet would frequently disagree with her gastric nerves, showing, by the rapid transmission of the irritation through the nerves of the chest, their sensitiveness, and perhaps chronic neuralgic condition of the eighth pair.

CASE VI.

DISTRESSED NERVOUS SYSTEM FROM GRIEF.

“HANNAH MICHAEL ROY, aged forty-five, has a low and subdued tone of voice, scarcely above a whisper; she is depressed in her manner and prone to tears; has frequent fluttering about her heart, with a sense of its being loaded. About the region of the organ she has frequent pricking pains, as if the part was bitten, or penetrated by a sharp instrument; very similar pains occupy the back, especially between the shoulders; the left arm and leg are more painful than the right, indeed the symptoms affect the left side chiefly. She has confusion and giddiness of the head, singing in the left ear, diminution of the memory, and the other faculties of the brain; she has also the ordinary signs of indigestion, oppression, and flatulence, after eating, and often a pain in the stomach. She has been ill with remissions for three or four years. She is temperate in her habits, eats very little, and drinks less,—was very unhappy for a considerable time after the death of her husband, to

whom she was greatly attached: and the symptoms of her case soon followed the mental affliction. She has taken a good deal of medicine, chiefly purgative, but with no benefit.

“She is regular, and the secretions of her liver of a good colour.”

This woman was out of place, and I recommended to her instant servitude, or an active employment, if possible, in the open air, and from the secretions being healthy to take little physic, and that carbonate of iron. I saw no more of her until we met casually some twelve months afterwards. She was then comparatively in health, had taken a voyage to Ireland, and thus broken the mental associations which sustained her complaint.

She took no physic after our original interview. In these nervous cases, where the secretions are undisturbed, purgatives are decidedly mischievous.

CASE VII.

CHRONIC NEURALGIA, OR EXCESSIVE IRRITABILITY OF THE GASTRO-INTESTINAL NERVES FROM ANXIETY ORIGINALLY, KEPT UP BY HEBDOMADAL PURGATIVES AND ORDINARY ROUTINE FOOD.

“1831. Mr. L——, from the North of England, had been for the last ten years subject to the following symptoms, more or less. For the last few years they were daily, but of late increased so much in violence, and all medical means proving unsatisfactory, he comes to Gloucester for an opinion.

“After dinner, he feels an aching soreness, commencing in the region of the stomach, which gradually occupied a great space over the abdomen, becoming more acute, amounting to sharper pain, with a creeping or irritating sensation descending through the bowels, in the manner which griping physic may be supposed to operate. These painful symptoms always follow dinner, be it ever so moderate, and Mr. L—— is a very temperate man in his food, and in his drink never, or scarcely ever, exceeds three glasses of wine. These painful

effects from his food were frequently so excessive, as to require lying down, fomentations, and a dose of physic for their removal. Upon close enquiry there does not appear to be any particular food which is obnoxious to his stomach; mutton, beef, &c. all have the same effect. About eight years since he consulted a physician at Liverpool, who gave him a prescription for some pills, which he was ordered to take regularly twice a week, as he found that they relieved for the day, though his complaint, on the whole, seemed to gain ground. I examined this prescription, which was composed chiefly of the bitter apple."

"I explained my view of the case to the gentleman, by saying, that I conceived there was existing in the mucous lining of the bowels an excessive irritability at least, and probably an inflammatory action of a low or feeble kind about the nerves of this part, and that his diet must be wholly changed, and that he must leave off altogether the constant purgative pills, to the biting operation of which I mainly ascribed the painful state of his bowels after eating, and quite as likely to irritate the nerves as improper food itself.

"He was directed to eat arrow-root pudding,

if by experience it appeared to sit light upon his stomach, thick water gruel, and beef tea with very little salt. Thin chocolate for breakfast, with sea biscuit and thin fat bacon; and cold butter and water gruel for supper. After dinner he was allowed one tumbler of weak wine and water, and burnt biscuit in water with his dinner; but he was advised to forbear drinking at all at this meal, if he could avoid it: he had *formerly* drank about a pint of beer with this meal.

“The bowels were to be kept open by a morning injection of warm water; and no physic of any kind was to be employed, unless the severity of the symptoms, from the presence of the new food that might irritate, should require its use for its removal, and then he was to take a dessert-spoonful of castor oil.”

The effect of this entire change of diet and freedom from the irritating purge, was almost instantaneous, and certainly most remarkable.

In one month, he lost all his symptoms,—took a bitter tonic,—and never had the slightest return of them for five months, and then of the slightest character,—on the application of the original cause of his malady; which was indisputably an anxious and deep interest in

some very momentous family transaction, which involved very large sums of money, and the prosperity of a very large family.

This truly momentous affair was, originally, never out of his mind; it was the subject of his dreams, of painful meditation in his first waking hours,—it haunted him wherever he roved, and with whomsoever he sojourned.

The following extract from the letter, six months after I sent him home, when he experienced the slight relapse alluded to, will explain the satisfaction of this gentleman's mind, and the success of his treatment. "I am most anxious to pay you a personal visit of sincere thanks, for my recovery after so many years of bad health." He came a hundred miles for that purpose.

Remark. The reader will see that this disturbance, disease, or whatever it may be called, of the gastro-intestinal nerves, although originating in the mind, remained after the cause was removed, and was kept up by the operation of physical causes, when the mental one was withdrawn.

It is further remarkable for the great length of time the case existed, with no common severity, without inducing any organic changes,

at least of importance, or of acute inflammatory action in the nerves themselves, although their *néurilème* might have been chronically inflamed. The case is also most remarkable, for the instant and complete relief obtained by withdrawing the usual irritants from the gastro-intestinal nerves, and supplying food and aperients of the least irritating class.

CASE VIII.

MENTAL INDIGESTION FROM FEAR.

“MRS. F——, aged fifty-nine, has had a stricture of the rectum for two years, but not of a malignant kind, or one that with good management is scarcely likely to shorten her life. Of this stricture she is always thinking; but from some source or other, she couples stricture with a fatal termination, and living much by herself, the baneful impression on the mind is made deeper, and acquires greater force and intensity. Her waking hours are especially those

when she meditates the most, and she admits that habit appears to make this contemplation necessary to her.

“She was in perfect health when this stricture was discovered, excepting the existence of some slight signs of indigestion, which few persons are exempt from; but for some months past, and since her daily meditations commenced, she has become nervous, in the common acceptation of the word,—agitated by trifles, with palpitation, disliking society, and yet feeling the evils of solitude. But this is not all, her stomach swells after eating, and long after the act yields a sensation of load with aching pain.

“The stricture has probably nothing to do with these symptoms, inasmuch as her bowels are kept open most carefully with injections daily, and her food is of the lightest description. A bougie is passed hebdomadally with ease, and after this visit she is always better, her stomach and nervous symptoms subside, she can take food with impunity, that is, without suffering so much from it, and she can now walk boldly into the city, without the fear or agitations which the meeting of sundry persons would surely excite at other times.

“But this effect is altogether to be ascribed

to the highly gratifying conversation held with her on the score of her complaint, of which she in general entertains the most gloomy apprehensions. She is assured, with truth and confidence, that her complaint is manageable, and will not destroy her; and under this impression or relief of the mind, which may last a day or two, she always mends in the manner described."

In this case, although the brain communicates the evil impression of the mind to the stomach, yet itself is not disturbed by the signs of pain, confusion and giddiness, which are so observable generally in mental indigestion.

This note was taken in June, 1831, and at this period (September, 1832), this lady is in comparative perfect health. The stricture indeed remains, but her mind, being now assured of its innocence, is easy, and the indigestion has passed away with its mental cause.

CASE IX.

IRRITABLE BRAIN FROM PAINFUL MEDITATION.

“THIS is a gentleman of sixty-two years of age, always of great temperance, and healthy bodily habits; but for some years past his mind has been much harassed by very painful and delicate circumstances, which will not admit of being particularized.

“They are of a kind, however, sufficiently acute to keep him awake for hours nightly, and to haunt his memory in his walks and rides, but less in company.

“The effect upon his head has been in the shape of irritable brain, which, on studying his habits, can only be ascribed to the mental suffering, from the circumstances of his having been, through life, exempt from such an affection, until his mind became distressed; and lastly, from these attacks always succeeding to long fits of unusual severity or wretchedness. The attacks possess this character: after the uneasiness of mind, the surface of the scalp and face feels flushed, a pain surrounding the

head as though produced by a circle of iron bound around it, there is considerable giddiness, and if he turn, on such occasions, quickly, the giddiness would be increased to the danger of falling, as it is always by stooping, or laying the head too low in bed. He has an almost constant singing in the left ear, and frequently a ticking is heard in the centre of his head. During the severest mental anguish, the feelings about his head are sometimes intolerable,—and he fancies he shall go mad.

“He has constantly after each of these attacks, immediately, or almost simultaneously with them,—feelings of oppression at the stomach—a furred tongue—diminished appetite—and when food is taken, it produces great flatulence.

“Some of the symptoms of the foregoing case, are evidently those of congestion, but of a feeble character. The patient is not sleepy in the day, nor has he severe pains in the head, and he is thin and spare in his person. But supposing, or allowing, that there is congestion of the brain, it is one evidently produced by the operation of the miserable thoughts upon this organ; which, from its being so prone to be affected by the mental irritant, may be considered as an irritable brain, the

irritation producing the congestion, the signs which however do not always accompany the irritable brain.

“Remedies, as general bleeding, purgatives, and diet, seem to have little effect in this case. I have advised this gentleman to summon his energies, and put an end, which it is in his power to do, to the harassing circumstances which are the true sources of his malady; and this advice was given the more earnestly, inasmuch as at his time of life, brain affections are at least suspicious; and congestion of whatever kind, and however produced, are not free altogether from the danger of apoplexy.”

The foregoing note was written in 1831; at this period, (1832,) the patient who is the subject of it, is better, although he has not had sufficient firmness of mind to lay the axe, with a little sacrifice only, on the root of all his sufferings. He suffers as long as he can, and then he quits his home, to him a circle of baneful associations, bursts through the poisonous halo by which he is surrounded, to seek the watering place, new scenery, or the foreign shore, always with certain and immediate relief. The case has lasted some years, and the cause and effect are thus demonstrable.

CASE X.

IRRITABLE BRAIN, WITH THE BELLOWS SOUND OF
THE ARTERIES.

A LADY, forty-six years of age, and the mother of a large family, consulted me about some strange sounds, which were, she said, distinctly heard in bed. She reported herself to possess great nervous irritability, and to have had nervous complaints for some years; and that the medical gentleman whom she had consulted had constantly made a joke of these sounds, and considered them to reside wholly in whim or imagination.

I suspected the contrary, and upon enquiry this turned out to be a case of disturbed nervous system, in which the coats of the great vessels were involved, producing the most noisy bellows sound I ever heard. It floated sometimes softly like a gentle stream, then in bounds or jets synchronous with the action of the pulse, over the cavities of the trunk, from the abdominal aorta to the arch in the chest and both subclavians; but often on the application of an uncom-

monly severe mental irritant, the stream of blood passed loudly, like a rushing torrent, through the strictured portions of the vessels.

In this case, indeed, the nervous system was extensively disturbed, the brain especially, which was so alarmingly irritable, that those who witnessed its frightful phænomena, were perpetually fearful of insanity.

To this danger, indeed, there is some tendency under unfeeling and rude treatment. By multiplying the number and increasing the intensity of the mental irritants, this dreaded calamity may surely happen. And it is to be lamented that medical men should so easily cast off a patient whom they call nervous, because they really are so, for under this term are included many important mental affections, (mental hypochondrism is one,) which require all the acute metaphysical skill of the most able in our art, founded upon the most profound and widely extended views of our frail, perishable, and composite character.

This lady, so turned adrift because her ailments were misunderstood, was a spoiled child originally, possessed of singular quickness of comprehension and feeling; which, by an indulgent mother, had never been restrained, nor

any attempts ever made, by friend or relation, to teach this (must have been) captivating person the necessity of controlling and disciplining the great gift which nature had bestowed upon her. The evil was felt when she entered a new scene, on quitting the roof of her kind but weak mother. She married; and, as all marriages are not happy, this lady's furnishes a melancholy example of the ruinous effects of a bad education, or one inadequate to the task of checking the wild and dangerous sprouting of quick, romantic, and high expectations. Disappointment fell heavily. Every feeling was certainly not now indulged; perhaps few,—or probably she expected too much. Something, too, might here be said concerning a certain green-eyed monster, and his fatal and malignant sway in married life. True it is, however, that this foul fiend, the ruthless tenant of the mind, when he has obtained full possession of it, has a remarkable and almost singular power, through its agency, of disturbing the health or nervous system.

But what share soever it had in the present case, it is certain that jealousy and misery was its lot, and that of no common kind.

Did any unpleasant altercation take place,

were sources of peculiar disquietude developed, she would clap both hands to her head, and run to hide herself far away from these causes and their associations, and remain shut up in solitude until her wearied brain recovered the shock, the worry, giddiness, confusion, and darting pains which penetrated it. The common irritability, noticed so often in indigestion, she had almost constantly, so that the greater part of the family were continually upon their guard, that no excitement from contradiction, or otherwise, should reach the unfortunate patient. This is an example of a mere irritable brain without any inflammatory action; for the case has already lasted for years, and may for years longer, unless insanity should terminate the mental sufferings of the afflicted.

And it has done so, (1832). The foregoing note was written in the year 1830.

CASE XI.

IRRITABLE BRAIN FROM WOUNDED VANITY.

A LADY, now for ever removed from the scene of her earthly troubles, remarkably quick and sensitive in her feelings, lost her father early in life, and the consequences, under the more feeble government of a fond mother, soon became apparent.

Her education was wretched. The mind, weakened by every indulgence, fell into the practice of novel reading; and, as a matter of course, soon after, headlong into love. The gentleman was rich, but certainly not liberal; for, probably witnessing the wayward failings of his betrothed, he suddenly declined matrimony, after a day had been fixed for the performance of that highly attractive ceremony.

The shock was tremendous to the sort of character doomed to encounter it. It is true a reasonable young woman might have seen cause to rejoice at such an escape; but this was not a reasonable young woman. She had never been taught to use her reason; but, on the contrary, possessed the usual tribe of absurd

feelings and views, which spring out of the numerous follies of a modern female education. Surrounded by young ladies and their kind enlightened mammas, all the lessons which the drawing-rooms in watering places could teach, were taught to this unfortunate. Balls and dress, to attract lovers and proposals, were the sum total of her daily studies and meditations. Any disappointment in such capital and leading objects, could therefore be no joke, and must, of course, decide a young lady's fate for life. It might be supposed, from the bad effects of such practice, that to reject a lady is little better than to return a horse, both steps being equally fatal to sound reputation. Now, although ladies will very readily be go-betweens, or assist each other into love affairs; yet, it so happens, if one of their number be jilted, that the rest will spare her not. The four in hand and a large establishment had escaped, in this case, from their fair friend, on whose unhappy head the shafts of ridicule now fell thick and fast. It was turned,—after first assuming the purest form of the irritable brain I ever saw.

On my first visit, she complained of acute pains in different parts of the head, with giddiness, confusion, and a whirring sensation in

both ears; the eye did not like a strong light, but was remarkably quick in its function. Her hearing, too, was equally quick, as though she suspected secrets were being uttered. There were none of the symptoms called fever, but a white tongue and some palpitation of the heart. She was rather cold than otherwise; the pulse small and quick, great irritability, and morbidly sensitive. She could not sleep. She answered questions in a plaintive or piteous tone, but with precision and rationality, when they are earnestly put. The symptoms came on in fits, and these exasperations were most remarkable when left to her own meditations. She had been bled and blistered, but amended not. The very able physician who attended her, pronounced that it was a case of inflammation of the brain, and that she would die.

I had the advantage of knowing the patient's moral and physical character, and I, in my turn, took the liberty of stating that the symptoms were not those of inflammation, but of an irritable brain from mental suffering, and that she would recover.

I saw no more of this lady for some time, during which it appears that no mental processes were employed, but physic only was

relied upon. She became slightly insane—recovered her reason, but a series of nervous or brain symptoms succeeded, of the most distressing kind, when I again prescribed for this unfortunate lady. Originally irritable and sensitive, she had become exquisitely and painfully so. The slightest cause for uneasiness was deeply felt,—she would clap her hands to the sides of her head, and run to her bed-room for the quiet of solitude. But this was the case more remarkably when she had been sitting alone, in dishevelled attire, with her fine arms folded across her cold, marble-like, and deserted bosom, in an attitude of deep meditation! Then would she spring up with a wild expression of eye, repeat the application of her hands to her head, and complain bitterly, often with a scream and with an agonized look, of her head,—of her brain, “she was giddy, she must fall, she must go mad, her brain was on fire, it was inflamed, she must be bled.” And now the medical attendant was summoned, who never found bleeding relieve the patient, but *always succeeded* by the mental process of assuring her with a confidence, the result only of conviction, that she would live to be again well, and his reasons for such a belief were faithfully stated,

and as they were good, they always made a great impression. A strong opiate would now insure some sleep, and in the morning she would awake cheerful and comparatively well, and remain so, till the spontaneous workings of the memory and imagination, or the application of a passing mental irritant, should ignite their inflammable power, and bring on a fresh paroxysm. After a time, however, the memory of this patient's original misfortune appeared to fade, and merge into more vulgar hypochondriacal fears of disease and death. And this termination I have often witnessed in cases of mental suffering from affliction, of the highest class. The morbid sensibility and irritability required the most careful management to prevent a relapse into insanity. All known irritations were carefully removed. Letters and relations were alike interdicted, and the last were especially prevented from approaching the patient, because they furnished those irritations in the greatest abundance to the unfortunate sufferer.

During these long and acute afflictions, her only comfort appeared to proceed from a belief, that one was always at hand who never would deceive her;—an involuntary tribute to the value and beauty of truth, in the bitterest

moments of human woe,—by one who practised it not,—for this lady was not remarkable for keeping within its bounds. It might have been a family failing: at all events, the assurances of recovery from relations were never credited, but always irritated,—for the patient's keen observation quickly discovered, that they would modify, at least, but more commonly, entirely fabricate a favourable medical opinion—"to make the poor thing's mind easy"—exactly in that laudable way in which a weak mother soothes to sleep and to ruin, by a string of falsehoods, a fretful and spoiled child! Such weakness of conduct had precisely the contrary effect to that intended; the effect was terrible, an irritation amounting almost to frenzy followed a discovery of the deception, and the relation most dear to the sufferer, and who was most guilty of this folly, was remembered only with a feeling of unmixed disgust, and even the sight of her avoided, as that of the most loathsome and poisonous reptile!

This lady's brain recovered by mental processes and assurances, fairly and honestly carried into practice. No diet or medicines were of material service, with the exception of large doses of sedatives, which, by inducing sleep,

appeared to snap for a while the chain of mental associations. A variety of objects of interest were supplied, to solicit the mind into new tracts, and all others which could furnish food for association, for a powerful, poetic, and glowing imagination, were sedulously removed from observation. Composition would have cured more rapidly. As it was, some years passed away before this patient's health was tolerably re-established; but then, all that was left by misery was a mere, though a splendid outline of her former self:—

“ The withered frame, the ruined mind,
The wrack by passion left behind;
A shrivelled scroll, a scattered leaf
Seared by the autumn blast of grief.”

This once attractive person may be considered as another of the crowd of brilliant victims daily sacrificed, more or less, to a false or feeble system of education, and by its chief result—female vanity,—for in this case, a blighted affection did not most certainly work the evil.

It was rather a dreadful blow inflicted on female pride, on passion for show and admiration, and which for ever extinguished all chance of its gratification, in this world of folly and fashion.

CASE XII.

MENTAL INDIGESTION, OR GENERAL NERVOUS DISTURBANCE, FROM JEALOUSY.

I HAD attended a married female, at different times, for two or three years, with a train of nervous symptoms resembling those which afflict young women, and which have been supposed to arise from spinal, or uterine irritation.

This patient had a melancholy expression of countenance, spoke in a piteous and subdued tone of voice, so as scarcely to be heard, and roundly and somewhat impatiently declared that she should never recover.

There was great confusion with occasionally severe pains about the head, singing in the ears, especially in the left, soreness of the left breast, pain down the arm of that side, and in the spine between the shoulders, some of the ordinary local signs of indigestion, as a sense of weight and uneasiness after food, swelling of the stomach, or flatulence.

There was frequent palpitation of the heart, and a small, irritable, and frequent pulse. Her

sleep was broken, and she frequently rose to walk about the room. The menses had ceased, and the tongue was foul in the morning. She was uncommonly irritable and annoyed, even to tears, by the slightest disagreeable circumstance.

Mild diet and exercise in the open air, appeared somewhat to relieve this person, in conjunction with gentle aperients. Purgings did harm. But still, deep relapses occurred, as though an occasional cause was every now and then in operation,—and, on the whole, she gained no ground. One day, looking more melancholy and absent than usual, it struck me from this circumstance, coupled with the other symptoms, and their obstinate and fluctuating character, that the ailments of the patient had their origin in some silent or concealed affliction. At this moment she was sitting cross legged, and in the act of tossing her foot up and down—a very characteristic and striking employment of the afflicted. The husband was consulted, and my opinion expressed on this point. He did me the honour of taking me for a conjuror, and admitted, at once, that my suspicion was correct. They lived unhappily,—his wife was jealous. “Of

whom is she jealous?" "Oh, my dear sir," with a smile, and a profound bow, "of myself, of course." It was necessary for him to add this last circumstance, as it was one that I should by no means have imagined. In making his profound and elegant adjunct, to satisfy my mind completely of the truth of this important fact, the worthy gentleman had well nigh fallen to the ground. I begged this Adonis of sixty-two, to apply the necessary remedy for his wife's complaint, himself;—that is, to be kind to her, and, if needful, to be less kind to others; to send her out for air, exercise, and change of scene, as much as possible; and never to permit her solitary meditations, but put on her cloak, and encourage her to go out, whenever this practice was observed. "My worthy sir, I would, and do most willingly encourage her to go out, but she will not leave me at home, and I cannot leave my business to accompany her." It was, however, sufficiently clear, when the husband could find time to walk out with his wife, instead of remaining at home to gossip with the maids, that her health invariably improved; so that when I encountered this couple, walk-

ing arm in arm, I could, with sincerity and pleasure, congratulate the patient upon her amendment.

The saddened and discontented expression of countenance had disappeared, and given place to one of smiles and entire satisfaction, rivalled only by the polite and gallant attention from her "dear husband," who had however, as my eye followed them in their walk, a singular trick—I fear an habitual one—of turning his head, apparently to relieve a crick in his neck, whenever there happened to pass a buxom nursery maid.

As happens with most persons who suffer much mental disquietude—this lady's circulation was feeble. When seen with a melancholy countenance, indicating the existence of wretched feeling, she was sure to be cold and near the fire, even in the midst of summer. This effect of a languid nervous power would then extend to the stomach, and the ordinary symptoms of indigestion be aggravated, and digestion itself carried on with remarkable slowness. Food taken according to the rule "a little and often," or at stated periods, was mischievous. If the patient, which sometimes

happened, eat heartily, she was always better by delaying her next meal far beyond the regular hour, even sometimes to a late period of the following day; for then the complete digestion of the full meal had been accomplished, and the stomach was better fitted for the reception of another.

CASE XIII.

IRRITABLE BRAIN FROM MEDITATION ON WORLDLY MISFORTUNE.

A MAIDEN lady of an amiable disposition had a small independency, the whole of which she entrusted in the hands of a friend.

Not a farthing was saved, for this friend became insolvent.

Destitute and feeling, it was scarcely possible that this poor lady should not meditate deeply on her loss, which she did the more, inasmuch as she lived alone.

For weeks she slept not. Her waking thoughts, after her mind had regained sufficient composure to sleep, were terrible; want stared her in the face;—this added to her sufferings. Of a proud spirit, she could not bear living on the bounty of others. By degrees, fretted by such painfully acute irritation, the head assumed these symptoms, which I have denominated the irritable brain. Light and noises were disagreeable to her. She had pains, often acute, in different parts of the head, singing in the ears, with a feeling of inward soreness extending over the brain,—moral or nervous irritability, which carried her somewhat beyond the bounds of reason, with a morbid sensitiveness and suspicion, that made her equally intolerable to herself as to others.

The irritability would be awoken by the slightest mental annoyances, but with more destructive power by meditations on her misfortune,—and then it was that all the morbid phænomena of the head, pain, worry, and confusion, became exasperated, and of course, often in the shape of a paroxysm. At these periods of suffering the body was generally cold.

The slightest noise, a knock at the door, a letter, excited her apprehensions of evil of some

sort, of painful intelligence, or the approach of a coarse or unpleasant visitor.

She would not walk out, for to meet almost any one was intolerable. She either could not, or would not, read, or write a word.

Nothing particular ailed her stomach, although the ordinary signs of indigestion occasionally existed to a certain degree. Limited and select diet was ordered, which, with medicines, did no essential good.

This lady had this irritable brain for years, with remissions. Mental remedies and consolation,—assurances of recovery and of more auspicious days from her medical attendant, who fortunately had her confidence,—the open air and agreeable society—when she could be forced into it—broke the chain of meditation, and afforded the greatest relief. Like all these cases of brain or nervous affections, arising from the operation of painful exercises of the mind, the whole train of symptoms, when not excessive, will fade in the presence of some highly agreeable circumstance, person, or event. The changes then from despair to hope, and from misery to comparative happiness and even hilarity, are very remarkable, and sometimes

mislead ignorant observers to believe that there is not much the matter with the patient, and be content to call her nervous, and to leave her to her fate; which may be, and commonly is, recovery; and may be, and certainly sometimes is, insanity, and even a species of palsy.

CASE XIV.

IRRITABLE BRAIN FROM A GLOOMY PROSPECT OF POVERTY.

“MAY 28, 1831. Mrs. T——, a widow lady, complains of evanescent pains in her head; over the right eye, giddiness and confusion; a peculiar tight feel at the crown of the head; and of exquisite sensibility to sounds, so that a heavy footfall, the shutting of a door, or a loud voice, are unaccountably disagreeable to her. She is morbidly sensitive also to every little source of uneasiness that occurs in her family, and after more serious ones there is always a great depression of spirits, so remarkable, that her friends are alarmed for her senses, more especially, as

it is accompanied by an expression of countenance which is unnaturally wild.

“There is not the slightest trace of any stomach derangement. The tongue is perfectly clean, and her stomach free of all uneasy sensation, but the memory is deeply impaired.

“To-day, when I made my visit, she reported herself to be rather better, and should have been glad to have seen me before, although she was satisfied that no medicine would be of service to her, inasmuch as her mind was the cause of all her sufferings.

“There could be no doubt of the fact. This worthy but sensitive woman is in trade; losses in her family, in bereaved affection, and in business, have weighed heavily on her feelings; and upon enquiry, I find that she frequently lies awake to think of these unpleasant subjects, or rather, she cannot sleep during the whole night. If she slumbers for a while, on her awaking, the same train of painful meditation fills the memory and excites the imagination. This last threatens her with a loss of her little all,—her business.

“A main source of her sufferings is, the momentary expectation of her creditors calling for a discharge of their accounts; and the

approach of a customer is always fearfully associated with the approach of a creditor. The glimpse of a person at the shop door, resembling one of them, instantly brings on the whole of the symptoms, bodily and mental; the pains, confusion and giddiness of the head, followed by a deep depression and gloom, that no effort can shake off.

“ Luckily, this poor woman is surrounded by kind and sympathizing friends, or I should fear for her reason.

“ They are recommended never to allow her to be alone, and the one to whom she is most attached I have advised to sleep with her, and to get her up early in the morning on her awaking, and then to walk out for an hour and a half before breakfast, or as long as this can be done without fatigue.

“ She is to take slight chocolate for breakfast, light food generally, as rice, arrow-root, and gruel. She is a very temperate person,—for some years menstruation has ceased.

“ To induce sleep immediately on going to bed, is a main object; and for this purpose, she is directed to walk in the evening for an hour and a half, put her feet into hot water, and then retire, first taking a large dose of the extract

of lettuce. She is to keep her own accounts and to make out her own bills, the materials for which are to be placed before her. Painful meditation to be broken up. The hair is to be cut close and the head to be sponged with cold water, especially if painful thoughts or irritability supervene. She cannot read, but her favourite friend is desired to read to her, in a gentle tone, one of Cooper's novels. In all these patients the morbid sensitiveness is so great, as not to allow of painful harassing from business. The enquiry for this or that article in the shop, fills her with painful apprehension and indescribable irritation. It is desired that nothing of this sort, or the anxiety of business, generally, should reach her. Finally, I have earnestly and seriously assured her of more prosperous days,—a complete recovery.

“This assurance seems to brighten the gloom in this poor woman's countenance, and I have ever found that soothing, delicate, and gentle treatment, and encouraging prospects, (supposing your character is such that these patients can believe you,) to be of the most beneficial result in all these cases.

“The kindness and delicacy of the persons surrounding this patient, is as remarkable as

it is rare, which is the reason that she is permitted to remain among them. For in general, the friends or relations of such patients are very obnoxious to their recovery, inasmuch that as they believe there is no danger, so there can be no importance in a "nervous" case: they thus make light the patient's complaints and irritable brain, by daily neglect or ridicule; a most ignorant and destructive practice, an insult to the understanding, and which in proportion to the refinement of the patient's mind is capable of inflicting proportionate punishment, and sometimes to produce madness."

November, 1831. Abstracting, by every possible mode, the mind of the patient from despairing thoughts, was of service to this female, but most of all did she derive benefit by the loan of a hundred pounds, from a kind-hearted friend. This cleared her difficulties, soothed the mind, and restored, to a great extent, a shattered nervous system, derived from a weakened, irritated, and exhausted brain.

CASE XV.

IRRITABLE BRAIN CONTINUED BY A PHYSICAL IRRITATION SUPERVENING ON A MENTAL ONE, WHICH WAS ITS ORIGIN.

THIS gentleman, aged sixty, some years ago endured a very peculiar and dreadful loss, which cannot be named, and which brought on those attacks of the head, and mental phenomena, which have been described under the term of irritable brain.

The memory would dwell upon the misfortune, the imagination create fresh ones, and the symptoms would follow.

Time passed, the mental suffering and the symptoms for a time were lost, with the fading memory of his misfortune; but, unfortunately, the patient had acquired the love of the bottle, and the irritable state of brain returned, which was sure to be highly exasperated by these fits of bibocity.

The physical irritation inflicted on the stomach has sustained the affection for years; but the attacks, though similar to those from immediate mental causes, as far as the brain

itself is concerned, as darting pain, confusion, giddiness, tinnitus aurium, are not so deeply associated with the more pitiable and distressing mental phænomena, which accompany nervous affections when arising from acute misery.

There is not the deep toned wretched feeling of woe marked on the countenance of the sufferer,—the melancholy and moping inclination to solitude,—nor the exquisite sensibility and its offspring, nervous irritability, so striking to the observer, or so intolerable to the patient, in purely mental cases. On the contrary, in this case of a stomach effect, the affection is so decidedly and partly physical, that the symptoms will often take a most ludicrous character, which they never do when arising from deep mental anguish or affliction only.

The sudden and remarkable changes, from worse to better, and from better to worse, are common to both species of nervous affections, but less in the mental one. In the present case, a stomach or corporeal irritation would develop the symptoms, the foundation of which was originally laid by the mind. The curious and close affinity on amalgamation of matter and spirit, cannot be better exempli-

fied, than in the entire, though temporary, dissipation of the symptoms of a moderately irritable brain, by the intervention of a mental process, a strikingly agreeable event, a highly captivating companion, or convincing assurances of a certain recovery.

But then, as this mental power over the body fades, by a departure of the novelty, behold a return of the influence of the latter over the former, to claim its own. A stomach irritation or excess, would, as in the present case, recall the whole train of symptoms, by the nervous communication subsisting between the stomach and the brain,—with the exception of an excessive degree of those of a more purely mental character,—the heart stricken melancholy countenance—the deeply affecting and exquisite sensibility,—which distinguish the tribe of nervous affections that arise from misery only.

Latterly, the attacks of this gentleman came on a day or two after a deep potation; and, if to this was added, some disappointment in business,—as a returned bill, this appearance would be accelerated;—but still, come on they would, without the assistance of the mental cause.

“Mrs. ——, my dear good woman, come quickly, and see the last of your poor husband.” Or, if the lady was somewhat slow, it would be, “D—m you, Mrs. Elizabeth,—why dont you come, as an obedient wife and a good christian?” This little fat gentleman, with a rubicund and naturally a roguish countenance, was invariably found in an arm chair, groaning, his head thrown back, supported by both hands, and his eyes directed to heaven, as though to implore its assistance. There can be no doubt of the sincerity of his sufferings. His family would now be assembled around him, rubbing his head—piteous cries and lamentations issuing from all sides—when lo!—a knock is heard at the shop door. “O lord! it is Lady ——, as I am alive,” says his wife, peeping through a middle window, “come to look at the new ——.” “The devil it is; then get out of my way, my dear Mrs. ——.” In an instant, the dying man might be seen, most actively engaged behind the counter, smiling and bowing most graciously and gracefully, and in the most melodious accents—not groans—pointing out the varied and numberless beauties of the new article. If he succeeded in selling it, the irritable brain would be heard of

no more, until another exciting cause was applied.

Here is a proof of the power of the mind, in relieving evils of its own original formation; although, in its turn, the stomach irritant would again disturb that organ, which performs all its varied remedial and intellectual processes. This is a proof of the efficacy, and an argument also, for our employing mental processes, more frequently than we do, to relieve nervous affections, which are so blended or interwoven with the mind itself, that to give to each a separate and distinct existence is utterly impossible.

The remarkable, though not uncommon example just related, of the suspension of a functional brain affection by the intervention of an highly agreeable event,—the prospect of a good customer,—is a superseding mental remedy, similar in kind to that of change of scene, or travelling,—employed for stomach ailments, or nervous disorders connected with them. But there is too much generalizing practised, and even this truly valuable remedy is likely to become hackneyed, by being prescribed alone for all sorts of characters, without any reference to the vast variety which

human beings present, and some of which, most surely, require a mental remedy corresponding to their peculiarities. Hence have I known cases of nervous affections,—of nervous indigestion,—return to England, but little improved by a long excursion. Very refined and sensitive persons often meet with considerable mental irritations in travelling,—enough to sustain, independent of all others, the very malady they went abroad to remove,—although the original mental cause, or affliction, might itself be lost or merged in the successive and varied scenes of a rapid journey. When the original mischief worker has thus sunk in the tide of novelties, still have the nervous derangements floated in full life and strength, from the disgusts, contentions, and annoyances, furnished by the hourly robberies practised upon the continental traveller. When such delicate and refined patients have made up their minds to travel through France, they had better, at once, make up their minds to be robbed also; a prudent step, most certainly, which will prevent much irritation and useless trouble. The cheapest mode of being robbed is through the respectable agency of a courier, without which estimable protector, no sensi-

tive invalid should ever attempt to skim over the continent. He will consider you his own property, and of course occasionally use you; but he will take care that others shall not do the same, at least without his permission. But seriously is the courier, a valuable, though an expensive servant, for he saves the invalid possessed of morbid sensibility, from the pressure of times and circumstances of trouble and vexation.

The blight of the simoon is scarcely more destructive to the nervous man, who is attached to money, than a heavy returned bill. Unless an event of this sort takes place, the subject of the foregoing case remains free from his brain attack, if he remains free from intemperance. If otherwise, the original mental shock having weakened or rendered irritable the organ concerned, exposes it to the complete influence of an ill-used stomach. Cold affusion has been advised for his head, to be used regularly twice a day, as a tonic to the weak or irritable organ, with a simple and somewhat limited diet, and wine and water.

CASE XVI.

IRRITABLE BRAIN SUPERVENING ON STOMACH IRRITATION, FROM THE INFLUENCE OF CONSTANT ANXIETY.

“APRIL 11, 1831. Mrs. —, aged fifty-four, always of quick and irritable feelings, has lived like most persons a chequered life of uneasiness and comfort.

“She has had stomach complaints for many years, which have been probably influenced, or connected with her mental character throughout, though the present irritable condition of her brain appears to be the direct result of deep anxiety lately felt.

“She is married; has the management of a large concern, in which her husband takes no part, unless it be a mischievous one. Of late, losses have occurred in trade, and domestic disquietudes have added to the other irritations of the mind, and the result is, that morbid quickness, and range of symptoms, which I have called the irritable brain.

“She has pains, giddiness, and confusion of

the head; a considerable dislike to noises, more particularly to disagreeable ones.

“ She cannot endure the prospect of more losses, of the approach of other evils, to diminish the little comfort left to her, and when she thinks of these painful subjects, her symptoms, which depart in a great degree when her mind is quiet, burst out with a sudden and overwhelming force.

“ This is more remarkable in the night. She sleeps badly, that is to say, if she awakes out of her first sleep, she sleeps no more;—for the unpleasant matter drops as it were spontaneously into her memory, clings fast to it, and the imagination makes still more of their natural force or power. Soon her distress is excessive: she rises from her bed in wild alarm, pains shoot through her brain, it is dizzy, and she thinks she must go mad.

“ I have advised this patient to cut her hair short, and wash the head with cold water the moment she awakes, and also every night. When the unpleasant thoughts assail her,—to have writing materials ready, to write a letter, or some accounts, or a description of her symptoms to myself. As soon as she experiences relief from the irritable feelings by the writing,

and cold affusion, she is to lie down and endeavour to sleep; but she is certainly not to lie down, until the mental symptoms are altogether dissipated, by the writing or composition. Rice and gruel diet, and weak sherry and water after dinner.

“ I consider this irritable brain to be a compound case,—of stomach irritations affecting and predisposing the brain, to receive deeply the painful mental impressions made upon it, and although directions are given to keep down, by diet, &c., all irritations in that quarter, yet am I assured from experience, that this plan will not alone cure her,—that is, if the stomach be ever so right, the irritability of the brain will continue, unless the mental causes acting upon it are withdrawn, and time and good treatment employed to restore the original strength of the harassed organ.”

“ May 25, 1831. She reports that the low diet does not suit her, and that she is better with a little meat and two glasses of wine daily; but best of all, when she leaves home and its dislikes behind her, and rides about in the open air and among novel circumstances. She has dyspeptic pains in the situation of the spine, between the shoulders, under the breast

bone; is flatulent after food and irregular in her bowels, and is greatly depressed in spirits. These dyspeptic symptoms are all immediately produced by uneasiness of mind. She is desired to walk for an hour before breakfast,—at eight o'clock, to take thin chocolate and milk with dry toast for that meal;—to eat no dinner, till all sense of weight, eructation of air, and fulness of bowels have disappeared, and some sense of hunger is felt, showing that the morning meal has been fully digested;—dinner, mutton, boiled slowly till tender, or rice, weak brandy and water, alternately, with sherry and water; walk or ride two hours before this meal; which, as her digestion is slow, will probably not be before five o'clock. This anti-dinner exercise to be conducted under the most agreeable mental feelings that can be procured from companionship, or change of scenery."

I have known many persons in the country who have followed the usual dyspeptic rule of dining early, get no better by so doing; but go to London, walk about all day, dine at six, and become so well, as to be surprised at the change.

This circumstance is not to be explained altogether by the change in the dinner hour,—or simply to the digestion of the morning meal being completed before dinner was taken. The act of walking about London, is to a countryman usually accompanied by pleasureable feelings, under which favourable mental influence, the eighth pair of nerves become strengthened, and they are enabled, by the increase of energy thus acquired, to carry on with more rapidity and vigour the important function over which they preside. In the country, and under the pressure of domestic distress, they would not receive this benefit of the mind at ease, and which accounts for the great changes, we often witness, upon the occasions in question. For exercise with miserable feelings is next to useless in mental indigestion, but with happier ones, it is a remedy of the most powerful kind.

CASE XVII.

MENTAL INDIGESTION FROM DOMESTIC MISERY.

THIS terrible malady, always the product of feeling, refinement, and the indulgence of a glowing and roving imagination, so circumstanced as to have nothing to dwell upon but misery, is sometimes seen in humble life; for even the rugged minded poor occasionally exhibit deep sensibility to misfortune.

A friend of mine brought a miserable-looking young married woman, whose medical attendant had said was dying of consumption; but the symptoms were surely not those of consumption. She tottered, emaciated, into the room, with a heart stricken countenance,—of despondency and deep gloom. Her heart palpitated, and was subject to a sensation of being constantly loaded. She was not forward in complaining; but, in a voice scarcely raised above a whisper, with a piteous accent, she said, there were pain, giddiness, and confusion of the head increased by stooping; pain in the spine between the shoulders, in the left side

below the breast, which was exquisitely sore when handled,—pain down the arm on that side, and in her stomach after taking food,—which then soon became swollen and flatulent, and when pressed externally, was exquisitely tender. The tongue was white and foul. The mental symptoms were, irritability, despondency, and excessive susceptibility to painful impressions. The bearing indicated despair, and one who came reluctantly for advice, without having any desire to live. When questioned as to her feelings—was she happy,—was she, had she been otherwise,—she burst into tears, and would have fallen, but for help. It soon, on her own confession, appeared, that she lived unhappily with her husband. There was an apprentice who was the subject of daily disputes. The master beat the boy, because, perhaps, the husband was jealous of him. At any rate, the wife was imprudent enough to take the side against her husband; and the result, blows and misery, caused the chain of effects on the nervous system in the delicate being, who now, scarcely, stood before me.

I advised this unfortunate, to leave home altogether for the present, and reside with her parents, and to *forget the apprentice*; and when

she returned to her husband, which she would do, comparatively well, I recommended her also, not to interfere with his will, which she was bound to obey; but rather suffer the boy to be beat, than incur the greater evil of domestic wretchedness, and a return of her complaints. The removal from domestic strife, a mild diet, the open air, and a kind mother, restored this poor thing to health in about four months;—and when, on her return home, she called to return thanks, I again took the liberty, somewhat slyly perhaps, of expressing my hope that *she had forgotten the apprentice*.

Even in common nervous cases from physical indigestion, the mind is concerned. “I certainly am well in London,” said a highly nervous lady, “but then, my case is not mental, my mind is not in trouble.” “Nevertheless, it is concerned, though you do not perceive its mode of action. In the monotony of your life here, you meditate on your complaints; despondency ensues, and this depression of *the mind*, injures your stomach. You go to town; the *mind* is filled by agreeables, the stomach nerves revive, and under this happier influence, digestion is improved, and you are well.” “I believe, Sir, you are right.”

CASE XVIII.

MENTAL HYPOCHONDRIASIS.

A LADY, possessed of exquisite sensibility, a most luxuriant, vivid, and restless imagination, was the subject of this case; which had existed, with some variations, for about two years, before it fell under my observation. The sensibility had increased, then the irritability, and both were developed to an excess by either mental, physical, or external irritations of a slight character.

These painful qualities of an unhealthy mind, made life a burthen to this attractive and unfortunate being. Both these symptoms, however, are common to all great disturbances of the nervous system, united, as this last is, with the mind; but they arrive at excess only, when the former has been disturbed by the distresses or afflictions of the latter; and more especially when the latter has been exquisitely formed, as in the present example. Her bearing, and countenance in general, were strikingly expressive of deep melancholy, and

often of gloomy despair. The irritability, though it led her to start with passionate anxiety from disagreeable persons or things, yet evidently was most disturbed to an excess—that is, little short of insanity—by mental causes only, operating through the memory and imagination:—a fact ascertained when her confidence had been acquired; for a delicate female's mind, cannot promptly expose to every one the sad causes of its afflictions. Enough was admitted to show the *kind* of suffering that had induced the present malady; which she expressed with the most touching eloquence and tone of voice,—with a look of anguish, that discovered at once an excess of feeling, and the biting intensity of her recollections.

“ Her mind was broken by misery,—it was irreparable.” There had been felt a disappointment of no common kind,—an error of no common kind, though not a crime, had been committed. She meditated deeply, but her fine imagination came into ruinous activity, and made still more terrible work of a character which united a noble breadth of understanding, with a boundless range of uncommon-beautiful feeling

The chief feature of the latter was endless refinement. Nature had cast from her mould this almost ethereal being, with an edge so sharp and fine, that it was constantly being chipped, broken, or injured, by a collision with the ordinary world with which she was surrounded. An education of unusual power and superiority was required for such dangerous materials. But she had none, or worse than none;—novel reading and weakening poetry did all, and God knows they did enough. How constantly is female talent and health sunk in a wretched system of education,—and never was a more melancholy example than the present one!

If the understanding had been employed in the acquisition of solid information and self-government, the imagination would have been checked in its restless and incessant roaming, and the nervous system, with its powerful associate, have remained in peace.

The part which required especial culture was altogether neglected, and that which required a sharp bit for reining in (a dreadful though a fascinating power) was permitted to bound with a fierce career into ungoverned, irregular, and generally unprofitable wilds.

The violence of the attacks of mental suffering, were led on always by the exquisite sensibility, and, more especially, by the irritability when the last met with circumstances that would ignite the fatal store of yet sleeping recollections.

The acme was appalling and terrific,—threatening an extinction of the understanding, and certainly it more than once passed the boundaries of sanity.

When sent for on these dreadful occasions, I generally found her with a wild and troubled eye, an uncovered head, her dark locks scattered about her neck and shoulders, as with arms extended towards me, she would in a tone of the bitterest anguish say, “I wish for death, but not for madness, can you prevent my going mad?”—“Most certainly, if you will follow my instructions:” and invariably I left this poor girl in a state of comparative peace. This good result can always be affected for a time at least, where the nervous system is disturbed by afflictions, provided you know the patient’s mental character, and have its entire confidence.

If no successful attempt was made to stop the shock of these attacks—if the medical man

were from home—the fit would last for hours, and then it was sure to be succeeded by a deeply affecting depression. Before giving a few extracts from her manuscripts, which is kindly permitted, and which will throw a stronger light on the character and causes of her mental malady, it may be well to give some further illustrations, which her fine and frank disposition, equal to the most admirable specimens of manly candour and noble confidence, will enable me to do.

She was solitary,—because her expectations of human nature—shaped by romantic reading and a luxuriant imagination—were too exalted, and she met with no example of it, which could ever realize them. She was solitary, because she was wretched, and wished to avoid a world which, while it could not understand the peculiar character of her feelings, never failed, when she came in contact with it, to wound and rend them asunder. Her misfortunes and errors, the effect of deep feeling, had filled her memory with agony to the very brim, and it was not for ordinary minds to soothe the sorrows of one so fastidious, so delicate, and so elevated.

She was solitary, even in her walks, because

she was proud, or high-minded,—a feeling that invariably accompanies examples of refined affliction, which likes not the eye of the vulgar observer. It was daggers to be noticed and called “nervous” by the *canaille* of a watering place, or her melancholy and morbid feeling treated with a regular stare from the gentle and delicate occupants of the *pavé*, who once indulged their taste and humanity with an audible, “Dear me, Mrs. —, what a miserable-looking being is that! who can it be?” A feeling of proud contempt and disgust rose up in the sufferer, and never more was she seen in the street.

In reference to her stomach, which at times was slightly dyspeptic, (but even indigestion is only part of a disturbed nervous system,) I at first treated this case by diet and medicine, to which she faithfully submitted, though different to her own views, which placed all the mischief in the mind. No permanent good, if any, was obtained, though at times she thought that the carbonate of iron relieved the irritability and a feeling of worry about her head. The evil was too great for change of scene, which did no good. The attacks were rather more frequent,

and quite as severe as ever, when the more rigorously mental processes were commenced.

The principle of superseding the attacks by previous occupation of the mind, was preferred generally (though cautiously mixed with it) to reasoning, which in these cases, especially when accompanied with much derangement of the nervous power, is at the worst period of the malady of no avail. As easily might the piteous bleat of the lost house lamb be heard amidst the raving of the wood storm, as the voice of reason in great disturbances of the nervous power, when the effect of long continued and deep rooted affliction !

This patient composed four hours, sometimes more, daily. But still she must be solitary sometimes; and there was no doing away this dangerous period altogether, for there must be rest from intellectual labour. To provide against its mischievous effects, she was taught to dwell constantly, when alone, upon this simple and beautiful truth: That this is a life of discipline; That there is an Universal, Omnipotent, and Benevolent Parent, the Author of all things, who could not permit more suffering to reach his children, than is necessary for their final

restoration to happiness. She regularly prayed for his protection; and thus associating her miseries with his undoubted power to relieve them, she gradually became more observant of his wishes, grew in faith, and acquired comfort in a belief, that sooner or later she should be more happy.

When composition had soothed the irritability, and wholly absorbed painful feeling, then the imagination, so ruinous when employed in refining on real sorrow, was cautiously led to feed upon more wholesome materials, and the most captivating works which suited her taste, and music, were actively engaged. But these lighter remedies—mental relaxations—cannot be borne,—they disgust, as long as the mind is deeply afflicted, or dragged down by the overwhelming weight of gloomy despair. Even music, soothing as it is, at times, requires discrimination in the kind to be introduced, in the varying moods of the mental sufferer. A gay air would stab as effectually, as the silly laugh of ridicule would rend the sensitive feelings of these unhappy patients. Before the mind can enjoy, its burthens must be lightened; and I know no power for this task so commanding and successful as composition.

The foregoing mental remedies,—with repeated conversations of the most soothing character, and by which she saw her character and malady were well understood,—her complaints and refinements treated seriously, with the greatest respect and delicacy,—excited an entire confidence, and she submitted most scrupulously to all and every rule prescribed for her sad case. She was never idle,—the dreadful visions of an imagination refining on wretchedness, faded before the constant exercises of the understanding,—she wrote volumes, and recovered.

EXTRACTS.

“ Tuesday.—I have such a feeling of wretchedness about me that is indescribable; the prospect of existence, present and future, seems to hold out no inducement whatever for me to wish for it.

“ I have been trying to read this morning, but I feel so nervous lest dreadful thoughts should break in upon me, or rather remain with me, that I believe my only safety is in writing. I am sometimes beset with such a wretched feeling of almost despair, through fear that I may lose the impression of God’s goodness to me, that I am almost overwhelmed, and conquest seems impossible; I feel at this moment so harassed, so agitated, and yet I must write on.”

“ Saturday.—Once the tranquillity of my mind, disturbed by irritation, imagination, the enemy of my peace, the destroyer or oppressor of every other attribute of my nature, again begins the sway of despotism. It tramples and holds to the ground, with a grasp of iron, my reason. It shakes its sceptre of defiance at my principles, bursts asunder every bond that would impede its progress, and passion, following its footsteps, rushes in and throws to the ground, in one instant, the frail fabric of

amendment it has cost me so much to erect, and its destruction makes me miserable,—every hope of peace in this world fades from my sight,—all soothing self-approval vanishes,—I become contemptible, hateful in my own eyes. I feel unworthy to live and yet unfit to die, bearing existence, though not as yet daring to shake it from me.”

“ Wednesday.—How grievously my disease feeds upon itself. When once my quiet is interrupted by irritations, all self-control vanishes. I am consumed by them. One moment worn with languor, the next so oppressed with self-reproach, because I see, I feel, the failure of my reason; it is in vain I seek for rest; I am capable, as far as bodily health goes, I think, of almost any exertion, and willingly would I undertake the most arduous task, to acquire repose; or I wish at this moment I could sink into forgetfulness, but I *fear* to lay aside my pen, lest dreadful thoughts should beset me.

“ My nervousness, as I remarked yesterday, has shook every faculty of my mind (there may be such a reaction), more or less, and my judgment and temper materially; but it is the afflictions of my mind that have given birth to this dreadful disease;—*there* is the root of all my sufferings, *that* is the source from whence every minor evil flows, *that* I see, I feel, is the only fountain from which restoration, *peace*, and health are to be extracted. Oh! to whom can I pour out my wretchedness; no one, no one knows, but you, the *root* of the evil, like me; peace, *undisturbed* peace, is the *only* remedy for my sufferings, the only thing that *can* give firmness to my mind, that can impart clearness and solidity to my understanding, that can calm the irritability of my temper.

“ There are times, it is true, when, as I complained to you this morning, a gloom and depression overtakes me, that draws a veil for a time before my eyes, over every prospect in this world, except that of a toilsome and wearying one. But even in *this* involving mist of unhappiness, I am *most* thankful to say, I never have, lately, lost sight of the mercy and benevolence of that God, which *you* have taught me to appreciate; nor of my gratitude to you, for all besides, I have received at your hands. When this dreadful depression has vanished, as I believe, by the close application of writing and reading, although the conviction of the cause of it presses upon each returning attack more heavily upon my spirits; yet, when it subsides, the calm and soothing ray of happiness beams again upon me, with more apparently *steady* and *permanent* lustre; and though my recent sufferings prevent the existence of elated feeling, yet peace and tranquillity in the distance, however, slowly seems *surely* advancing; and my mind in the prospect appears to gain fresh energy, to nerve me against any future obscurity that may cloud it.”

"I tremble in fear that I may fail in keeping God by me, and in following your rules; and depression of spirits is the consequence. The last self-dissatisfaction is occasioned by a flashing remembrance of past follies, and when they chase through my remembrance I seem to see a host of terrible consequences they might have ultimately produced, in such a cloud of darkness was my reason sinking. No creature can be more altered in their tastes, their feelings, and desires, than I am, since I have been here: and this ought to console me, but reflection and impression last longer than their causes."

"I sensibly feel the road to perfect health must be gained through the medium of happiness, and yet to attain that, must be to unravel a web of at least fifteen years' weaving.

"I have been for these last twelve months adopting the plan of trying to level my feelings, my wishes, my tastes, with those it has been my lot to be surrounded by,—so dreary, so lonely, have I felt. But in vain. I may improve under the genial clime of kind and able suggestion: but never, oh! never, can I be what I wish, never *can I be happy*. This dreadful conviction I have long in secret and in silence cherished. Memory, augmented by imagination, have had possession of me.

"The irritation of my head since I have been writing has very much subsided, and a feeling of quiet stealing over me; I shall try and read.

"Sorrows, though even of an imaginary nature, are still acute and hard to be borne; particularly when by meditation they have been increased, and by long habit and education have received the colouring of reality."

"Saturday.—Again have that weight and depression returned upon me which I complained to you about this morning, and a conviction that has been dawning upon me at times during the last week, beams more fully upon me, that I shall never thoroughly recover, though I may live for months. The air revives me always, but it does not appear to impart that strength to me that I formerly experienced; and I sometimes have a declining feeling about my chest. The composure which my mind has recently been gaining—free from tumult and irritation—is so unnatural to my former self, I cannot help thinking it has a foreboding import. And almost daily, by slow degrees, the world seems to fade from me, as I appear to draw nearer to the presence of my God. Eternity is awful, even in a glorious conception of it, is vast and tremendous: in imagination it bursts upon me as a world of light, too dazzling to behold.

"Could I but be left in peace for a time, free from irritation, with your dictates and sympathy, difficulties, tremendous to me *now*, would,

I know, dwindle into comparative air. I should feel the conviction that my mind has travelled on the course you have directed it, too far to be turned, unless by the interposition of Him whose ways are inscrutable."

"I cannot think why I continue to suffer as I do; whether it is that I am not so well in health, or that my mind has been woefully degenerating, lately, I know not; but at times, for the last fortnight, old feelings of monotony have taken possession of me: and to-night I know not where to turn for comfort. You have given me clearer and happier views of religion, than, until I knew you, I ever possessed; and in the contemplation of that to which it leads me, rest all my hopes of permanent peace; but I have, in all probability, a long life to lead. What will become of me? My feelings towards the Deity are not less grateful, and I feel a consolation, a peace, in communion with him, that nothing else affords. But I have a duty to the world to perform, and I am incapable of it. Were it not for a timidity that hangs over me, I feel that I would willingly quit my home, and loiter any where from it all day to escape intercourse with any one, and yet I have no unkindness to encounter, my friends are kind, but they cannot make me happy. Ah! if I had but consulted you years ago I might have been so. Happiness, to me, is a phantom, I have indeed long been pursuing in vain: sometimes in a new garb I have lately chased it, it has seemed not unattainable, but it eludes my grasp and vanishes; and then, dark clouds hover over my future prospects, and I would turn any where to avoid their melancholy aspect."

I have often observed, in mental sufferers, the improvement of the stomach from active employment of the mind only, even when all other circumstances were most unfavourable.

"I have always found (whenever I have by accident or otherwise been disturbed from the intellectual system or composition;) that my stomach becomes weakened, and my health suffers; my mind is distracted, and my imagination again rises pre-eminent, it lingers on the source of my disquiet, magnifies it, and, for a time, involves me in misery and despair; and hence the cause of the contents of the last dated manuscript I was compelled to submit to your inspection."

"Fancy, or the imagination, instead of mental discipline, has always been the ruling principle with me, and where that has led me I have

thought it perfectly harmless, until I knew you, to follow. However circumstances may have impressed me most suitably to my taste, from them, for a time, imagination has taken its colouring, and as that has acted upon the matter which has seized it, so has my mind become influenced by it; gay, and grave; wise, and foolish; amiable, and unamiable; have I been by turns. Loving, and hating; laughing, and crying; scolding, and caressing, all my life; no medium character ever overtook me, and my existence seems to have been one continual routine of violent and incessant action, but one too of perfect inutility."

The effect of trifles.

"Last night a very trifle dispersed happier feelings, a restless and melancholy night ensued, and to-day I am listless, languid, and depressed. This may be, and is unquestionably, diseased mind; but I cannot think but by *nature* I am strange and contradictory, and my attributes are at perpetual warfare with each other, and though naturally there is a lightness of heart about me, approaching to gaiety at times, I shrink from any thing responding to it, and a stream of melancholy feeling, which winds its way through my mind, leads me to scorn the hilarity which otherwise possesses me; and what at one moment contributes to my enjoyment, is thus converted by the next into a source of disgust. A faulty education, in my warm and sensitive character, is the origin of all, I well know. I see the error which is now irremediable, but I would not pine in retrospection, nor lament, could I but secure a degree of moderate happiness, and be not at the mercy of the veriest trifle."

"As irritation increases irritation, and imagination creates imagination, so does the practice of reason accumulate reason. Not to make the latter the leading principle of our conduct, is to force nature from its course, and prevent the intention of the Deity. Reason, the first and naturally the strongest attribute, is, nevertheless, not infallible, and must have a superior power to protect it. A child naturally looks to its parent for guidance and protection; and the parent, feeling the claim it has upon it, as naturally yields the necessary aid. That child, as it advances in years, supposing it endowed with a capacity beyond its parent, must look in vain for the farther assistance and direction which it is human nature still to require; for the strongest are still weak, and must be in a state of dependance. The more then we are endowed with reason, the nearer *naturally* must it lead us to our Creator for that aid which we require; and, therefore, must it be the greater violation of dependant

nature, not to seek it where alone it can be attained. Parents are but agents in the hand of an Omnipotent Power, to conduct the inexperience of their offspring. The young mind must be first made subservient to practical rules, as a foundation for the budding intellect to play its part; and the more promising the latter, the greater extent of ground will it require for its cultivation. The more intellectual the child, the more vigilant need the parent be. Intellect is ever on the wing, and if the foundation be too contracted for its movements, then will it seek farther scope, and rendered light and giddy by escaping the weighty trammels of worn and feeble rules of mere settled mechanism, shakes off, not only the bad, but the better part of the burden reason has laid upon it, and yields itself up to the delusive dictates of IMAGINATION. To counteract the bad effects of a wrongly conducted education, (as when imagination leads instead of reason,) a tremendous effort of our natural energies can alone rouse the slumbering faculty to action; and when roused, it will move but slowly on the onset, from the long suppressed usage of it; but still it will move, accumulate, and finally overpower, but not at one grasp, two such soaring and fiery spirits as imagination and irritation. No! reason will not be hurried, it will take its time; and it must be nourished and strengthened by the plain, but wholesome, food of discipline, neither too powerfully nor too grudgingly administered, and in time it will find its way. But what is the food of discipline, originally by nature, by the Creator intended for it? An imaginary character has so long lost sight of that alone intended for its nurture, and has been so long living on the more luxurious viands of imagination, that the receipt has been laid by and almost forgotten; but dear bought experience must find it at last, and however the homely contents might at first shock such fastidious taste, (for imaginative characters are, in a mental point of view, very *bon-vivants* or sensualists:) the application of them by degrees introduced is very palatable. Yes! high and imaginative characters must bring down their towering spirits to submit to those rules which were intended for *all* mankind implicitly to abide by; they must scrupulously adhere to the commandments, which were made expressly suitable to our nature."

"Nothing is so exalting to the feelings, so soothing to a jaded and disappointed mind, as the contemplation of inanimate nature: I have gazed on a distant and beautiful landscape, I have been engrossed in admiration of the deep green shades of rich and luxuriant foliage, in the summer evening, when the sun has been sinking to rest, till wretchedness itself sunk with it."

The threatening, punishing creed of the day, certainly increased the nervous and mental malady, and often threw this sensitive being into despair. Sketch of the origin, progress, and termination of the case.

“As I have before told you, until I had the happiness of hearing your sentiments expressed on religion, a mist, deep, but not altogether involving, hung before my eyes. I have mistrusted myself; I believed, though for no perceptibly adequate reason I acknowledge, that the Almighty had withdrawn himself from me, who, nevertheless, sinner that I *knew* myself to be, was *still* I believed not *worse* than many who, under the influence of this dreadfully denouncing doctrine now so prevalent, fluttered around me in *happiness* and *contentment*. My prayers were mechanical, I could in no way apply them to myself. I dreaded to look into my Bible, for fear of eternal condemnation staring me in the face; I met with no sympathetic feeling from those whom I knew were readers constantly of it. I stood alone,—happiness *here*, from misfortune and a diseased imagination, exerting its baneful influence over me, seemed lost to me for ever. *It was in vain* I turned, with the hope of finding it, to *another* existence; the gate of mercy seemed closed against me, and I was *wretched*. Those around saw me look pale and thin, and become ill. Change of air, and light-hearted unthinking people about me, for a time dispelled the gloom suspended over me; and, after a time, reason dawned, to the exclusion of this distracting doctrine, but no other took the place of it, though I *knew* the one I rejected *must* be wrong.

“I tried to read my Bible,—the labyrinth of words through which I was obliged to wade, to get at a simple fact, disgusted me. I was still not happy, though I had shook off the burthen of despondency: I knew there must be something wrong, but I had wandered too far out of the right road, easily to retrace it. As I have before said, I found no sympathy in sober realities,—imagination was my *world*. I felt the fallacy of my judgment, always veering to extremes. I thought I would descend, and be more common-place, and then, perhaps, I might be happier. I tried to *take an interest in needle-work*; to listen with fixed attention to the ordinary, and twenty times and more told tales, of no interest, (perhaps here I may exaggerate a little in the last assertion,

but certain it is they were thread-bare, and gained nothing by being told;) and in addition to these sentiments and remarks, the origin of which, too old to be traced, comprised the ground-work of my newly-formed plan of *happiness*. I became, and no wonder, dull, stupid, and apathetic; and I concluded at last, that every body was not only *much better*, but *much wiser* than myself. The conviction, too, of sin, hung over me; in fear and trembling, I addressed myself to the Deity, in extempore prayers; I believe, and I trust not presumptuously, that they reached the throne of grace,—on that account I felt happier, but *still* I had no sympathy.

“ I returned again to my old imaginative haunts; *there*, at least, I had however brief intervals of happiness. I submitted, with as good a grace as I could, to the little punctilios our limited circle of society demanded. I moved by mechanism, nothing flowed spontaneously. Every body thought me *strangely altered*; they teased me with enquiries which I knew I could never answer satisfactorily to *them*, even had I thought it worth my trouble to attempt, which in truth I did not. My associates, who used to court my society when I was happy, or rather when I was not *so* miserable, met me coldly, and I in my turn became disgusted. Every cut I received, my sensitiveness led me to believe voluntarily aimed; my health became worse, and my misery increased. I heard of you, and for months tried to persuade myself to seek your advice; but the fear that you might prove like all the world besides, made me shrink from so doing,—a trifle, at last, finally determined me.” [Here follows an eulogium not necessary to repeat, but what succeeds is necessary, to show the effect of the treatment.] “ At *last* I found some one who could thoroughly understand me; my confidence was won in a week, and the ensuing good effects I need not here recapitulate. New channels were opened for my understanding, and newly-created happiness dawned upon me. When I feel this happiness, my heart ascends in thankfulness to the Almighty disposer of events, and after depositing its burthen at the throne of grace, it again wings its way to earth, and lights upon the agent of his divine will. Night and morning, I breathe a prayer for his happiness, and as long as I live, this will I do; and I trust, that peace may take up its abode in his dwelling, and that the evening of his day, at least, may pass in joy and gratified affection.”

This lady truly attributed all her misfortunes and miseries to a bad education, which per-

mitted the formation of an imaginary or romantic, rather than a rational character.

During the progress of the case, I noted some circumstances, corroborating the truth of former views.

I. The towering superiority of mind over body, of mental remedial power over physical. If the patient drank three glasses of wine, and eat too freely of stimulating food, she was certainly more irritable the next morning, under the ordinary circumstances of solitude and painful meditation; but were her mind engaged in composition, or by very agreeable events or persons, the improper diet had no ill effect, its power being altogether superseded by a greater.

II. That although at the worst period of the malady, in these nervo-moral cases, reason is useless, the acquisition of self-command impossible,—especially if there be any physical irritations added from the gastric nerves upon the brain,—yet the sooner the patient has acquired the power of checking the inroads of irritation, by the exertion of the understanding, the better; for if he succeeds in repelling one fit of irritability, by being taught not to give way to its destructive power, he prevents a

paroxysm of the malady, a complete relapse of the disease,—its entire train of horrors, of depression, gloom, and dangerous despair.

As soon, therefore, as the full confidence of the patient is obtained, a cautious introduction of reasoning should be commenced, and carried on in such a manner, as not to irritate or rouse the pride, injure the delicacy, or insult the understanding, of this higher class of mental sufferers, who refine upon every thing, are disgusted with most things, but more especially with a coarse or vulgar manner of doing them. To touch the stern sorrows of the heart in such minds,

“ That pang where more than madness lies
The worm that will not sleep—and never dies,”

requires a cautious and a masterly hand. The advice or reasoning should creep into operation, conveyed in the most gentle and captivating manner by him who ventures on this delicate agency, in such a manner as to awaken the patient's own reasoning powers, which have been overpowered by his afflictions,—and having done so, there the adviser should stop.

The patient will soon feel this new remedy grow upon him in power, which, in conjunction

with his intellectual exercises, will teach him to bear his lot in the painful journey of human life, with less injury to himself;—the fatal influence of an imagination, although refining on matters of real grief and sorrow, will retire, and leave him, though not happy, yet more content, with a sound mind and a healthy body.

III. That in such disturbances of the mind, its organ the brain requires physical or material consideration. It cannot have entirely escaped the evil which has befallen its master and perpetual coadjutor; and, therefore, as the stomach influences the brain, in a very remarkable manner, no irritations from bad quality, or great quantity, of food—whether there be indigestion or not—should proceed thence; although in this case, good food, and wine in moderation (that is tonics), did much better than what is understood by the term “a dieted patient.”

But while the condition of the brain, in such mental cases as the foregoing, is probably that of weakness, thus requiring the tonic plan without irritation, from improper or unselected food; yet, if the last has been taken, a happy state of the mind will often prevent its evil effects. Persons, therefore, in affliction,

with a disturbed nervous system, as a consequence, in mental indigestion, or where there is no indigestion, and who have indiscreetly lived too freely at dinner, should make it a rule to be surrounded on the next morning, as much as possible, with the most agreeable circumstances.

The imagination, as the patient advances in recovery, may be directed to a more useful practice, than that of refining or magnifying real evils, and thus be a remedy for its own diseases. But this remedy will require great care in its application; for there is a constant tendency for this almost omnipotent faculty to fall into its old haunts and bad habits. The safer mode in general will be to keep it in subjection, by the superior faculty of reason employed in the culture of the mind, and especially in the abstracting practice of composition. In this present example, the nervous system was evidently disturbed—the health varied—but it was soothed, and the patient's recovery certainly accomplished by mental processes. Nor is there any doubt but that in all such nervo-mental affections from *misery*, and which are yet short of insanity, that gentleness and delicacy, and the appropriate employment or

discipline of the mind, will, with the auxiliary aid of proper diet, always restore the patient's health.

Change of scene, in deep injuries of the mind, is often but a feeble remedy. It is probable that in the more stern, and less enduring character of man, the case narrated above would, without the necessary remedy, have terminated in suicide.

CASE XIX

BRAIN AFFECTION (ORIGINALLY FROM LONG ANXIETY) DISTURBING THE DIGESTIVE ORGANS, MISTOOK FOR AN ORIGINAL STOMACH AFFECTION.

THE evil consequences of generalizing,—of laying all to the stomach as the original mischief, is a practice becoming notorious; and surely, for the sake of humanity and science, requires to be corrected.

The gentleman, the subject of this case, was also from the northern, speculative, and manufacturing districts, and had passed the ordeal

of five eminent practitioners, as to the seat and nature of his malady, and who had failed to benefit him by their advice. He was told, by all, that his complaint was a stomach case, affecting his head, which would get well by temporary change of scene, diet, and opening medicine; and he now had reached Cheltenham on his travels. On entering the room where he was sitting, there was observed a peculiar expression in his eye, which emitted at its corner, suspicion, and a dislike to company and observation. He was restless, playing with his whiskers, and kicked, unconsciously, at intervals, with his foot, with one leg over the other, as persons do who are deeply abstracted, or thinking imaginatively and deeply. He did not rest long in one position. He would rise, and walk evidently with a faltering motion, as though his head was giddy, or greatly confused, and incapable of directing his progress. When questioned, he would attempt to steady himself, contract his eyebrow, and look at me earnestly to acquire a perfect knowledge of the question; and then, after a long time, he would reply, but with stuttering—extreme slowness and difficulty of utterance—and in broken interrupted sentences. His procrastinating

manner, the frequent contraction of the eyebrow, associated with a prolonged severe and convulsive gripe in shaking hands, constant restlessness, together with the pains (for he had more or less always) and confusion of the head,—which, without these symptoms, would not have meant much,—an uncertain gait, slight trembling of the tongue and hands,—were clearly brain symptoms, and, as I conceived, rather more formidable than a mere disordered stomach would produce. An unnatural smile,—not to be accounted for from the topics of conversation,—would gleam wildly across his countenance. To a question put to his lady, whether his mind had shewn signs of aberration? the reply was “Never, but his head is constantly confused, and in pain, and he often forgets what he says, and yesterday did not know his way back to his lodgings, and the doctors all say it is a stomach affection.”

Upon enquiry, he had, no doubt, the common signs of indigestion in a slight degree; flatulent, with occasional oppression at the stomach after eating; sour eructations from it, and torpid bowels; the last, probably, from the constant use of aperients. But all these

symptoms arose from the disordered brain, no stomach treatment ever relieved him. The air of deep abstraction, the agitation of the feet, &c. led to this question.—“Has Mr. ——’s mind been troubled?” “Yes, greatly, some years ago.”—And it turned out, that during the panic in the money market some years back, this gentleman’s ALL, £200,000, was in other people’s hands, in a manufacturing district. A long uncertainty regarding his fate, preyed daily and nightly upon his thoughts and imagination. For weeks he slept not, or slightly. Hopes and fears harassed him for many months. It was admitted, that from this period, the peculiarities of Mr. ——’s manners commenced, and the signs of indigestion followed. Of late, his memory failed, and the confusion and uncertainty of his motions had increased, yet without the slightest mental alienation.

The opinion delivered was, “This is a serious brain disturbance, from great and long continued mental anxiety, that the stomach symptoms are secondary; that it is possible, by abstraction from all care, with great temperance and exercise, the patient may get

well; though, from the slow and gradual increase of the symptoms, and their duration, there are some doubts also: more especially, as he had not much, if at all, amended, since anxiety had quitted his mind; and from the circumstance of his having had bad headaches, the early part of his life, and from the trembling of his tongue and hands, having lately increased." Apprehensive of some change of a physical character going on in the brain, from the long wear and tear of the mind, upon an organ weakened by constant pain, I recommended, in addition to the other means, a very large drain to be made upon his neck.

The very eminent physician who had prescribed for him, was astonished at this opinion and proceeding, and expressed a hope that I had not begun at the wrong end. But here he was wrong himself,—for the unfortunate patient soon gave a melancholy proof of the fact, and an illustration of the folly of including all and every thing under the fashionable and sweeping conclusion, "It is your stomach."

He burst raving mad from the window of his lodging, leaving his wretched wife—lonely and far away from her children and home—

surprised at an event which she never contemplated: after a number of eminent men had concurred in an opinion that his malady was of an innocent description, and that it would have a happy termination.

CASE XX.

MENTAL NIGHT SUFFERING RELIEVED BY COMPOSITION.

“ Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep.”

HAMLET.

A MENTAL sufferer would have all sleep prevented by a thought or word, which would call to memory the circumstances of an unhappy life. But this effect would be most completely accomplished by some peculiar sources of anguish;—a conviction of the ingratitude of a yet loved child. The anxious parent could not settle for sleep if the house were not closed at a certain hour;—a practice derived from a deep regard for this child's welfare.

But, melancholy to view, is often the true picture of our nature. It is like the homeward journey of the wearied traveller, in a dismal November evening, who feels he has no home when his journey is completed. The winter is setting in with that dead and silent desolation which precedes her storms and vicissitudes,—black and melancholy mists hang on the landscape; the dead and falling leaf is crushed beneath a foot, wetted and chilled on the bleak and dreary pathway. One cheering moment comes. A stream of brilliant sunshine suddenly gleams across his path, a streak of rich and glowing light is in the horizon; but scarcely has he turned to gaze at the splendid farewell, than the dark veil drops, and its soothing glory is gone. And thus, too, are the most beautiful and sunny feelings of the heart first darkened, and finally perish under the withering gripe of ingratitude.

The child would remain from home beyond the fatal hour, although the penalty paid by the parent was well known. This conviction struck to the heart of the sufferer. The brain became a tumult of conflicting agonies, which could never be relieved but by sitting down to composition. In one hour, generally, the

wretched feelings would subside, in another they were gone; and then, without giving time to memory to re-call the painful event, the patient would rush into bed, and sleep sound till morning. Yet again

“ — — — — he would feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child !”

the waking hour soon became dreadful, to be relieved only by the same process.

CASE XXI.

IRRITABLE BRAIN, WITH THE MUSICAL BELLOWS
SOUND OF THE ARTERIES, ASSOCIATED WITH MU-
SICAL ORAL SOUNDS,—ORIGINALLY FROM FRIGHT.

THE subject of this curious variety of symptoms, received a fall from her horse in her younger days, which produced an extraordinary degree of fright. It was a fortnight before the nervous system at all recovered the shock. There is no doubt, however, that subsequent moral causes had a share in the full development of the case. The brain had been for years irritable to an extent, dangerous at least, to a sound mind, and the patient, originally a

spoiled child, had met with disappointments ill for such to bear. The usual mental phænomena developed by this state of their agent or organ, need not be recapitulated.

The anomalous sounds to be described were preceded, she said, by a sensation in the lower part of the bowels, which resembled the crawling, entwisting, or coiling of worms around each other; probably some anomalous, nervous, or spasmodic condition of the peristaltic motions, which is rendered still more probable by the curious variety, in shape and character, of her stools at this period. This vermicular abdominal sensation, was associated with the musical bellows sound from the descending aorta, which the patient not inaptly called the "chimes." The sound was composed of an irregular succession of musical tones, just as the varying breeze gives melody to the *Æolian* harp;—or it resembled the sighing of the wind through a chink in a door, or notes drawn at random across the string of a violin. It would then die away into silence, and be no more heard, until some cause of mental agitation, or sudden motion of the body, would re-produce it. About the same period was occasionally heard a musical sound proceeding from the left carotid, in the shape of an octave, running

regularly upwards. Standers by, without a stethoscope, could distinctly hear this octave. This sound sometimes terminated in another of an unusual character. This last would burst from her lips, in a course of short spasmodic or irregular actions, performed in a sort of barking manner, and most commonly imitating the tones of various pieces of music, which had been heard or played by the patient. These imitations would generally be of airs or pieces of music recently heard. But sometimes, and which is remarkable, they would be imitations of those heard in the patient's younger days, and which she had altogether forgotten, until this spontaneous and uncontrollable action of her lips reminded her of the long forgotten song of early youth. Thus, she is certain that the air called the "Lottery," when now played suddenly by her lips, she had not heard since she was eleven years old. No exertion of self-command could arrest these oral sounds, and as their execution (though keeping the time correctly, of the airs played), was of a disgusting character, she has been long obliged to retire from society. But whilst she could not control the action of the lips which emitted these sounds, suddenly exciting, or astonishing

events, would for a time suspend them. It appeared, however, that after such interruptions, they returned with redoubled activity, playing a succession of tunes, with a wonderful and irresistible rapidity. Every air was always terminated by four distinct and similar notes. On the contrary, harassing and disagreeable low toned circumstances, of a teasing, irritating, and monotonous character, would not suspend, but call forth and increase these oral noises, which then became incessant.

This effect is as unquestionably nervous as that which I have observed in some severe cases of indigestion, and which is capable of affecting the voice in a very remarkable manner. The irritability of the patient is morbid to an excess in such a case, and if he be annoyed by worrying circumstances, the nerves of voice will suddenly lose their energy, the patient's voice will sink into a whisper, and should he attempt to speak loud under these harassing circumstances, pain will be felt in the direction of the larynx, or in the situation of the breast bone. Being questioned by a dull disagreeable person, will have a similar subduing effect on the laryngeal nerves. The same class of depressing or low irritating circumstances, would, as already stated, increase

these oral sounds. Again, in either of these cases, of the oral sounds, or the subdued voice, the one would be altogether suspended, and the other restored, by the occurrence of some highly delightful or interesting event. These oral sounds were frequently associated with the bellows sound of the abdominal aorta.

“ November 29, 1820.—This night, or rather this morning, the instant the patient awoke in bed, her lips commenced and continued to play, in spite of all attempts to arrest their strange and ungovernable musical action, ‘ Green grow the rushes, O ! ’ The note was occasionally responded to by the music of the abdominal aorta, exactly in the manner of men answering to the roll call, when a company of soldiers are under muster.” This is a very probable occurrence, though I was not present to verify it.

This lady entertained a fanciful and most absurd theory of the nature of the anomalous sounds, which, however, can only be accounted for as nervous effects, the ground-work of which was probably occasioned by the fright, and afterwards further developed by moral causes, operating on one of the most irritable minds I ever encountered.

CASE XXII.

APHONIA, OR LOSS OF VOICE FROM THE MIND.

I HAVE seen some examples of loss of voice from long indulgence in solitary grief, fear, and remorse, where no evidence of the stomach being affected could be traced, that is to say, the nerves of the voice would lose their power, as a direct sedative effect from the mental cause, the stomach not developing the phenomena called indigestion.

I left, on going abroad, a sensitive man, with a complaint—to him of a highly interesting character,—quite cured. On my return, I received a visit from this gentleman, who, with a melancholy countenance, and a voice scarcely audible,—indeed it was a whisper,—assured me that his complaint was returned, and that he was wretched. Although, on inspection, there was no return of the malady ; yet, by an active imagination, he had worked himself into a belief that there was, and having no remedy, and an invincible repugnance to consult any other person, his mind for a month past, had

been in a state of the utmost distress. He had spent his time chiefly in bed—alone,—indulging his fear to such an extent, as to make him and his friends apprehensive of insanity. There was no other symptom but that of aphonia about him, besides general languor and despondency.

His voice had been gone five weeks. I held a long, cheering, and soothing conversation with this very stout and healthy person, during which he became satisfied, that there was no return of a complaint, the thoughts of which weighed so heavily on his mind. He was directed to rise early, take the air, enter society, and drink a few glasses of wine after dinner. A week afterwards, his voice had fully returned.

Aphonia, or loss of voice, may arise from physical causes, applied immediately to the nerves of the voice, or indirectly from the stomach—through the agency of the all-powerful par vagum. This nerve may be influenced purely by the mind, as in mental indigestion, or made morbidly sensitive by stomach irritants seen in physical indigestion; or it may be affected by both these causes, just in proportion as mental or physical irritations may

happen to predominate. Diseases in the neighbourhood of the larynx, will sometimes produce this symptom, examples of which may hereafter be given in a continuation of the Medico-Chirurgical Notes, the first volume of which has been already published by the Author.

CASE XXIII.

MENTAL INDIGESTION, OR A WIDELY DISTURBED
NERVOUS SYSTEM, FROM DISAPPOINTMENTS IN
THE MORE ELEVATED AND REFINED FEELINGS.

THIS was the worst case I ever beheld. A gentleman, highly imaginative, and fatally gifted with a deep toned, uncommonly sensitive, and glowing disposition, built all his hopes of happiness in this world on certainly the most commendable subject for his extraordinary care and anxiety. He loved to dwell and refine upon the future happy results of his laudable ambition. But in proportion to our elevation so will be our fall. It was a tremendous, and to himself, a most ruinous one.

The first symptoms were on the brain, on which the blow, or succession of blows fell, in almost a constant current of wretchedness, for days, months, and years. The symptoms taking the lead, were those of the irritable brain,—the remainder of the nervous chain, called indigestion, succeeded,—viz. palpitation of the heart, with some corresponding affection of the breath, pain in the left breast, with tenderness of that gland, uneasiness and flatulence after food, pains in the back of a spotty and burning kind, between the shoulders, shooting pains in the left leg,—the left side affected more than the right,—especially around the shoulder, scapula, and that side of the chest, the inner side of the left upper arm;—emaciation and tottering weakness, a foul tongue,—and the mental symptoms of gloomy forebodings, painful retrospection, a vastly increased sensibility, and nervous or mental irritability. These latter phænomena, at once cause and effect, produced the most distressing mental sufferings, which no abstract power of the understanding could remove, because, although the whole mischief arose in the brain, influenced by the mind, yet when it descended upon the stomach nerves, weakening and rendering them also

unnaturally sensitive and irritable, and capable, in their turn, of reflecting physical irritation on the brain or mind, it would not be easy to suppose that such corporeal re-action could have an adequate mental control. Causes and effects—mind and body—thus become so blended, that no lines of distinction can be traced,—and yet nothing can be more certain, than that the whole of the phænomena in this, and all similar cases, are developed and worked out successively, by the operation of the distressed mind upon the brain, as the origin of the nervous system.

By aid of the sufferer's notes, and my own observation, I came to the following conclusions:—

I. That the corporeal symptoms, for the most part, disappeared for days and weeks, if the mind could be kept easy, making allowances for some slight remains or local signs of stomach weakness, and remarkably slow digestion, which varied with the diet, and were the natural effects of that injury the gastric nerves had previously sustained. The malady, therefore, often took the shape of fits;—deep mental suffering or irritation, succeeded by a period of depression.

II. That the whole train of symptoms,

mental and corporeal, would certainly be developed by moral anguish, and this from a state of long repose. The general process was by some afflictive circumstance, which, rousing the irritability, rapidly developed the miserable stores of the memory, and the corporeal symptoms would follow, beginning with the head,—in proportion to the acuteness of the mental agony, for undoubtedly *one* subject would give more agony than any other. It is remarkable that this subject, and no other, would always produce a pain by the side of the sagittal suture, of about an inch in length.

III. No diet or medicine was ever in the least remedial, when placed in opposition to the mental power which produced the malady, that is in spite of, and in the very face of the most simple diet, and best medical treatment, the fatal influence of the mind would predominate and re-produce all the symptoms, though irritating diet in quantity or quality appeared, as already stated, to increase the power of the mental cause. The most gentle aperients to assist the weakened digestive organs were necessary, but purging increased all the local symptoms of indigestion, or morbid irritability of the gastric nerves. The secretions were,

generally, firm and healthy, showing the digestion to be good, though remarkably slow.—The colour was also healthy and well toned, excepting when affected by the action of the ingesta.

The moral effect from the mind, corresponded with the injurious effect of purges, should the former be particularly wretched in the forenoon, or immediately before dinner. The stomach, in both cases, would become more uneasy than usual,—swell uncommonly,—and thus indicate its increased weakness and irritability, from these two very different causes.

IV. The laryngeal nerves, or the tone and condition of the voice, were a certain indication of the state of the patient's malady, and a proof of its immediate and remote cause.

Happy feelings were invariably accompanied by a strong voice, whilst unhappy ones, or mental irritants, acting indeed as sedatives, would reduce it to a whisper, or a grave, subdued hoarseness, according to the varying nature or character of the irritant. More or less pain in attempting to speak loud, would be felt in the course of the back and breast bones.

Physical indigestion will also affect the laryngeal nerves, but in that case the voice does not revive or wholly retire in such a complete

accordance with the moral feelings of the patient. Perhaps, however, there are few cases of severe or protracted disturbed nervous power, diverging from the stomach, even in physical indigestion, in which the mind does not become in time, more or less involved, reacting upon, and increasing the original source of the malady; and indeed sometimes taking the lead, as the patient might happen to encounter, during his tedious illness, more or less, of a series of mental disquietudes. Practically, therefore, where the mischief began is not of so much importance, if we remember, that in all long cases of nervo-stomach ailments, mental remedies are highly valuable and necessary; but when there is a remarkable collocation between the disease and the state of the mind, of cause to effect, as in the present example, the common practice of employing physical remedies alone, for corporeal symptoms,—are alike ignorant, injurious, and reprehensible.

This mental aphonia is then a good illustration of the nervous character of the whole affection, or symptoms going under the name of indigestion in the nervous temperament, and that they proceed, like this species of aphonia, from a diminution of brain energy.

V. Although the mental cause or long continued acute affliction thus originated, and protracted this terrible example of the effects of a wounded mind, in the wide range of nervous phænomena, improperly called indigestion; yet, other mental minor irritations would sustain the malady, independent of the original and mighty one, though in a much milder degree than when the original cause, through memory or reality, was in full operation. Irritations from untoward events in business, from servants, and minor misfortunes, would continue the irritability of brain,—for all such are really *mental irritations*, though of a more feeble and less pitiable character than the deep original affliction. Travellers, for change of scene, in these nervo-mental ailments, will sometimes return not so much benefitted as they might have been, had travelling irritations been prevented by prudent precautions. The effect of these slighter irritations,—often of the most trivial kind—in sustaining such disorders, is as astonishing as it is unquestionable.

The musical bellows sound existed in this case. It was heard, more or less, according to the intensity of the mental or nervous agitation of the patient; when it was intense, the abdomen ap-

peared to be filled with the hissing of snakes, but at periods—rare indeed—of mental peace, this peculiar sound could only be detected issuing from the aorta, where it passes the diaphragm, when the patient turned in bed, or held his breath, and then it resembled the *Æolian* harp, yielding always three, and sometimes four notes.

VI. Again, notwithstanding the auxiliary agents, (of great value in minor cases, or when the mind is not so deeply concerned) of walking, riding, cold applications to the head, simple food and tonics to improve the vigour of the harassed stomach and the brain, where the mischief commenced; the mental suffering would frustrate the remedial power of the whole, and reproduce all the corporeal and mental phænomena of the disease.

There can be no doubt, that matters would have been worse, had such auxiliary remedies not been employed; but still they were as nothing, when brought into opposition with their powerful antagonist, whose power over its victim the stomach, it would then speedily evince, and show, through that organ, the mighty influence of a wretched mind over the nervous system.

It is clear that such a mental mischief,

producing so many evils, must require a mental remedy to soften its ravages, where the cause itself, is unfortunately incapable of removal. Such, in the present example, was always effected by composition, which would invariably relieve all the wretched feelings of the sufferer, however bitter they might be. The character of the malady, and power of the remedy, cannot be more strongly portrayed, than by the unquestionable fact, that five hours complete abstraction in composition would not only sink all the mental symptoms of gloom, melancholy, and morbid sensitiveness, but also the whole train of corporeal nervous ones in the head, heart, and stomach; nay, the stomach itself would lose all the customary local disordered feelings, and acquire those of hunger, and of health, which no exercise, no medicine, no other remedies, nor all put together, could effect so completely, or to a similar extent.

Nevertheless, the patient, when his mind was sufficiently easy to bear its own thoughts,—never without—received great benefit by rapid motion in the open air;—and it is true that lighter troubles would thus often be dissipated, and the stomach strengthened, by a soothing and beautiful prospect, exercise, and the fresh breezes

of the morning,—but there were other and deeper sorrows, which, once becoming the subject of meditation, admitted of no relief, but by the mode already described; and without this remedy was instantly employed upon such occasions, the stomach powers would sink under the blighting stroke from the mind, and all the symptoms be aggravated.

VII. The mind would foul the tongue, and during *this period* of stomach weakness from such a quarter, purgatives would increase this appearance. But an improper quantity or quality of food would also foul the tongue, when the mind *was easy*, showing that the physical power of the stomach from the influence of the mind was not yet restored, and the necessity of close observation to trace the true source of this appearance, when two grand causes might be in operation. Further does this fact additionally exemplify the necessity of the most rigorous and persevering attention to diet and drink.

VIII. The symptoms would disappear under the influence of a peculiarly attractive change of scene, or quitting the real causes of the malady and objects that sustained their power by association; unless indeed, memory, with its sleeping, miserable stores, were awakened, and

then the previous repose of days and weeks would be broken, and an entire relapse follow, often to the astonishment of the patient. The change from health to misery, from a long period of comparative comfort, to one of extreme suffering and despair, would be effected by a letter, a word, a look, nay, by whatever could fire the irritability, or bring before the mind the fearful array of the patient's misfortunes. Fortunately for this extraordinary and most wretched sufferer, composition, with its superior engrossing power, would always bring relief.

IX. The reflective power of the stomach over the brain or mind,—the union of mind and matter,—is well illustrated by the amendment, which, in this case, always took place after dinner. When strengthened by the tonic power of a *few* glasses of wine; irritations of all kind, bad news or misfortunes, were better borne, and the terrible mental symptoms of exquisite sensibility, irritability, and despairing views, would greatly diminish, and sometimes wholly pass away. But a touch on the old sore place, would, even then, recall the whole mischief, though in somewhat fainter colours.

The morning, however, would again show

the power of the mind. The patient refreshed by his tonic meal, and a good night, would awake quite well; he falls into painful retrospection, and in an hour becomes as bad as ever.

Breakfast was never followed by the same relief as dinner; perhaps the tonic power of the wine upon the gastric nerves, the bodily exercise during the period between the two meals, but especially the exercise of the best tonic, or relief of the mind itself, by composition or otherwise, may account for this remarkable fact, certainly accomplished through the agency and temporally improved state of these highly interesting nerves.

The following notes, copied from the sufferer's own memoranda, give a sketch of his daily and melancholy history, and further show the mental character of the eighth pair of nerves.

“ March 1. This evening, purposely took toasted cheese and beer after a fair dinner of game and rice, and which, should the mind be disturbed the next morning, would infallibly produce a most wretched day.”

“ March 2. On awaking at five, immediately arose, and instantly began to compose,—have

been all day, more free from mental suffering, gloom, irritability, &c., than during my long illness,—although the additional stomach irritation, in quality and quantity of food, showed its power in fouling the tongue, and in producing some palpitation of the heart.”

“March 7. Dined lightly yesterday upon chicken and two glasses of wine. To-day, during the morning, was well, and had been so for some days. At noon, had an uneasy thought from a trivial cause, it grew in importance, nestled in memory, and entwined by association around ancient and irremediable evils. Irritability violent; relieved by two hours’ composition, but not removed; for the pain and confusion in the head, and sense of mental suffering were so excessive, as to induce a cool determination, to make any worldly sacrifice for relief. Symptoms exasperated by a dull person calling on business, which, adding to the previous excitement, was followed by great depression and exhaustion. Painful thoughts again renewed the irritability, &c. Dined on rice, and a little wine and water, but no relief to-day, after this meal. Tried Cooper’s Red Rover, but its magic powers failed; its graphic delineations of the chase,

and the storm, sunk before the more mighty hurricane of human woe. Painful thoughts increased to a dreadful extent. Resumed composition; and in one hour was completely relieved, rushed into bed, and fell asleep."

"March 8. Awoke at four, with happy and healthy feelings. Indiscreet enough to lie awake, instead of instantly rising, for uneasy thoughts soon found their old play-ground; memory furnished the materials, and imagination the scenery and decorations for this tragic rehearsal. Saw no chance of better days,—irritability followed to a dreadful extent, accompanied by all the mental and bodily symptoms, especially in the head, shooting, giddiness, and confusion,—sense of load at the stomach and heart. Sought eagerly and ingeniously, for other and less painful thoughts, no matter what, to get rid of the bitterness and agony of the ancient and most inveterate one. Turned to and fro in bed for two hours, to try to sleep; succeeded at last; and again awoke comparatively well, the sleep had thus kindly, and for a while, snapped the chain of miserable associations."

I have advised this sufferer to take the warning and advice, thus offered to him by

nature herself, in this sweet and friendly sleep, and remove himself far away from the misery of the wretched associations, which, derived from a thousand local sources, certainly perpetuate his malady. Already has it lasted more than three years, and none can dare to say how long the brain and nervous function can safely bear the constant weakening irritation of so much misery. A state of unbroken peace, of entire rest from these incessant shocks,—the best of all tonics;—with the auxiliary ones of air, exercise, an agreeable employment of the intellectual powers, and proper diet, would even yet restore this unfortunate man to health.

Besides the occasional pain in speaking in the course of the larynx, and in the situation of the breast bone, there was also in the foregoing, as in most cases of severe indigestion, a pain both in swallowing and speaking, about the dorsal vertebræ, exactly between the shoulder blades, and opposite to the pain in the breast bone. This symptom (beyond doubt the morbid influence of the par-vagus in this tube) is increased by any additional stomach or mental irritation, and often accompanied by a raw thrilling tenderness along the œsophagus.

The same sort of tenderness and pain,—

though of course not from swallowing,—is often felt lower down the spine, and which may always be instantly developed or increased by pressure on the stomach and bowels. These symptoms in the back are sometimes, under the various appellations of *spinal disease*, and *spinal irritation*, treated too severely; but which in reality are *mock* spinal affections, more commonly dependent on an extraordinary sensitive condition of the œsophagæal, stomach and intestinal nerves, in the course of their immense expansion. Evidence of this interesting fact, will be given in another place.

The pulse in the foregoing case,—as it frequently is in disturbances of the nervous power,—is intermitting,—a nervous affection of the arterial system, produced in the same manner as the bellows sound, and not indicating what formerly it was generally understood to be;—an organic affection of the heart. During the fit of wretchedness, digestion is painfully and slowly carried on, and *then* the foul tongue is never cleared by purgatives. But as the injury inflicted on the nerves leads to congestion of the digestive organs, gentle opening means *after* the fit, relieve its symptoms and clear the tongue.

THE MIND IN OPERATIONS.

CASE XXIV.

CAUTION NECESSARY IN ATTEMPTING THE REDUCTION OF OLD OR GREAT LUXATIONS, EVEN WHERE THE MIND IS WILLING OR COURAGEOUS, AND ESPECIALLY WHERE IT IS NOT. EXAMPLE OF THE EFFECTS OF GRADUAL VIOLENCE ON THE FORMER STATE OF IT.

“ DECEMBER 15, 1831. Edward Birt, aged sixty-one, has had a luxation of the os. humeri, for about eight weeks. It is luxated forwards, and the old man being thin, the head of the bone is easily distinguishable under the clavicle. It appears, from some unaccountable cause, that no attempt has ever been made to reduce this luxation;—not even from the date of the accident, although he has been under the care of two successive practitioners! This is not a good subject for much or long-continued violence; the patient has a look of bad health, and he has been long subject to cough, and some difficulty of breathing. The attempt, however, is to be made. He is an old soldier, has abundance of nerve and courage, and on that account, his constitutional powers are less

likely to yield to, or be led by, sensitive apprehensions, as happened in the case of Fluck, with the luxation of the femur forwards, or upon the pubes."

"December 19. The pupils have reported that he has used a weight according to instruction, appended to the affected limb for an hour daily, and late last evening. He appears a feeble looking old man, though animated with a fine courageous spirit. On coming from the warm bath—rather faint, and in which he was bled, an extension with the pullies was made, slightly downwards, in a slow and gradual manner, the scapula being fixed by a particular bandage, and the trunk of the body made fast to the wall. There is an error in the bandages which encircle the limbs, in the apparatus used by Sir Astley Cooper. They invariably yield to the pullies, rendering the extension broken and unsteady, and requiring an intermission of it, which permits of some recovery of the muscles. In this case it so happened; the bandages gave way, after the extension had lasted about twenty minutes. It was, however, renewed, without much delay, for about twenty minutes more; when the patient, for the first time, began to complain. The head of the

bone was shifted some little from its position,—he took a grain of emetic tartar; the extension increased and continued twelve minutes more, in such a manner of force and some relaxation, so as to tire the muscles. He complained of great agony, but evidently with reluctance; his pulse fluttered,—countenance pale.—Extension continued and increased gradually in force; he complained bitterly, said his arm was being torn from his body. The agony made him irritable and impatient to all attempts to amuse him, and divert his attention from the operation. ‘Did he ever kill any body in the way of *his* profession?’ ‘Bother, aye—a hundud.’—Looking down on the swollen state of the fore-arm of the affected limb, he exclaimed,—‘My precious eyes! this here arm looks as bad as t’other, now.’ He was, indeed, so bothered by the pain of the operation, that he knew not one arm from the other. A few minutes more of this suffering would have killed him outright.—He suddenly turned deadly white, cold, and his pulse was gone. The extension was altogether suspended, the patient rapidly placed in a reclining position, and a dose of brandy got (very willingly accepted) into his stomach.

In this case there was no proof that the loss of the powers of life was, in any degree, attributable to the emetic tartar. It did not apparently act,—the man was sufficiently low to need it. The whole loss, nearly amounting to extinction of life, was certainly referable to the violence of the operation, though cautiously developed, and in a mind full of courage. The luxation was not reduced. On comparing the effects of violence upon this man, with what occurred in the case of Fluck, which follows, it must be observed, that he bore infinitely more than the latter with impunity, which can only be accounted for, from the great difference in their moral characters. The old soldier was not, perhaps, originally sensitive, as in the other case, and moreover he had his habit of courage about him; facts well worthy of attention, and which show that the moral, as well as physical characters of patients should always be studied, before the commencement of long continued or violent operations.

Had this patient suffered great alarm or fright, natural, or acquired from recollection of a previous severe operation, he would have been less able to endure another, and must probably have perished from the depressing

influence of an unwilling mind, upon the nervous function being added to the physical exhaustion of the frame, upon the same important power.

But let us suppose a further addition;—a large bleeding, perhaps, took the lead, and then come the overwhelming powers of tobacco, and of emetic tartar, at the critical moment of physical and mental exhaustion!—and who can doubt of the destruction of the patient, as in Case XXVII. And yet the surgeon would not violate the rules of surgery laid down for practice, in such desperate cases. Some alteration, however, is requisite, or too much must be left to individual discrimination or experience, which cannot be sufficiently complete in cases of such rare occurrence, coupled as they must be with various mental and physical constitutions. Violence, however cautiously employed, is necessary, but it ought never to go beyond a certain point. The surgeon should, if possible, rather superintend than execute the operation, and be constantly looking for the signs of exhausted nature; which, as a business of calculation, he will find most difficult to do, if uncertain and dangerous agents are employed, whose power is frequently sudden

and irresistible. But then it may be said, that these subduing agents will supersede the necessity of great violence. Granted, it may be so. Nevertheless, the object here, is to show that continued violence, however cautiously employed, and subduing agents, of irregular action, cannot all be safely employed, especially in some states of the mind; and that tartar emetic and tobacco, are very dangerous auxiliaries to reduce muscular tone, because of their uncertain and powerful effects, and because they obscure the signs by which only you can judge of the condition of the patient's powers.

CASE XXV.

EXAMPLE IN HIP LUXATION OF LESS VIOLENCE
THAN THE FORMER CASE, MADE EXTREMELY DAN-
GEROUS BY THE INFLUENCE OF THE MIND.

WILLIAM FLUCK, aged fifty, had a recent dislocation of the femur on the pubis. The patient was of rather a robust form, but chiefly remarkable for a quick, irritable, and sensitive

temperament; full of apprehension, disliking the thoughts of a severe operation, and yet ultimately submitting to one.

Before being placed in position between the pullies, he had, on the ground of his comparative personal appearance, been purposely lowered, or thinned, by a spare diet and purgatives; had lost sixteen ounces of blood, and had lain in a warm bath for half an hour immediately previous to the operation. He was placed on the sound side upon a proper bedstead, between wooden columns fixed in the floor, and a broad girth was passed between the scrotum and the affected thigh,—this was fixed to a staple screwed in the column, a little above the line of the body. The pullies were affixed above the knee to the circular thigh piece; and the extension slowly commenced, after giving the patient half a grain of emetic tartar. The extension was continued about half an hour, under a gradual increase of power, the patient taking the same dose every ten minutes, until some nausea and faintness ensued, and a little perspiration; and now the usual manœuvres for the reduction of this species of luxation were performed, but in vain. During nearly the whole period of the violence, the

patient complained loudly of his sufferings, declared that no human being could endure them. But there was no correspondence between the quantity of violence, or power really used, and the quantity of suffering experienced by the patient, if this last could be gathered from the vehement complaints, and language in which they were uttered. He would have broken loose from his confinement, had that been possible. The truth is, that the state of his nervous system, influenced by a timid and frightened mind, made him more sensitive to his sufferings than is usual in the hard and rugged class to which he belonged. He thus, probably, suffered to excess from a limited quantity of violence;—a fact which was not overlooked in the course of the operation, and which made me equally watchful of its effects on the constitution, as though we were treating a gentleman, or one who was more likely to possess refined feelings and a vivid imagination, which, in such a scene, would necessarily be employed in the most dreadful forebodings, and a corresponding waste of the nervous energy.—It was well this was done.—The extension had not lasted more than twenty-eight minutes, resting under

pain, and then advancing very tardily and cautiously to the very moderate degree of its limits, when it was clear to all the bystanders that the poor fellow's constitution could not endure the violence. He screamed in agony,—probably more frightened than hurt, though the effect was the same,—but the shrieks, mingled with entreaties for forbearance, suddenly became subdued and faint, and were then, indeed, most touching, especially when added to the solemn and pathetic tone in which they were uttered, and to that look for mercy which gleams wildly from the eye of a bound, suffering, and helpless being. The head fell back—the lips still apparently entreated—he was cold—pulse rapidly fluttering or countless. The extension, (which I have seen twice as powerful, and twice as long continued, in weaker men, without such effect,) was instantly suspended, and brandy given, but it was long before this man rallied from a death like torpor, into a safe reaction.

If at the moment, when the patient fell so dangerously low, from alarm or otherwise, the emetic tartar had happened to have acted upon his stomach, then brain and nervous system, he must have perished.

The joint was not reduced, nor would this

patient on his recovery (and it took a fortnight's good attention for this purpose) submit to another trial. Before his discharge from the hospital he walked well, with some little lameness, the obstinate head of the bone saucily staring the disappointed surgeon in the face, when the part was exposed.

CASE XXVI.

ATTEMPT TO REDUCE AN OLD LUXATION OF THE SHOULDER JOINT: THE PATIENT'S MIND ALARMED—THE TEMPERAMENT NERVOUS—THE CONSTITUTION ENFEEBLED BY A DAMAGED STOMACH.

A MAN (Storney), aged sixty, wished me to attempt the reduction of this accident, which happened about six weeks before his application.

The head of the tumour was in the axilla. The pullies were employed. Before the operation, I took the precaution of ascertaining the kind of constitution to be dealt with, and finding that he had been a drinking fellow,

twenty ounces of blood were taken from the arm, and then he was merely placed in a warm bath. It was soon evident that, on the extension being made, (most slowly and cautiously,) the man possessed the nervous temperament in addition to his bad constitution, and, as the extension proceeded, with alternate increase and remission, he became dreadfully frightened,—vociferated murder so loudly, that the neighbourhood was disturbed by his cries. It should here be remarked, that two severe extensions had previously been endured. The extension, nevertheless, was continued slowly, feebly, and gradually, amidst the most tremendous screams, for more than half an hour, when his voice dropped; he became cold, pulse fluttered and scarcely perceptible,—a clammy sweat was upon his skin, his eyes rolled, with that wild expression of horror, which is seen in a man upon the point of being bayonnetted.

I was satisfied, that, with this man's age, and feeble powers of life, and an injured stomach from intemperance, but more especially from the alarmed and irritable state of his mind,—ten minutes more of extension, would have killed him outright. It was instantly

suspended, and he, also, was wise enough, to reject the kind offer of another trial.

He was reduced to the same dangerous condition as Birt, the old soldier, though by a far inferior quantity of actual force.

CASE XXVII.

DEATH, AFTER AN ATTEMPT TO REDUCE A LUXATED HIP;—THE MIND DEPRESSED,—LOWERING AGENTS EMPLOYED.

THIS was a stout young man, twenty-two years of age, who had luxated the thigh bone, the head of which rested on the pubes. Two unsuccessful attempts had been made, to restore this part to its natural position in the acetabulum,—one, the day succeeding to the accident, the other, three weeks afterwards.

In a consultation, it was decided that a third trial should be made, which was carried into effect about seven weeks after the accident. It was premised by bleeding, the warm bath, and a tobacco enema; the last rapidly produced

faintness, when the extension commenced, the patient on his side, exactly after the manner of Sir Astley Cooper,—and continued very slowly, with the utmost caution, for about half an hour, when a vain, though a skilful attempt was made to raise the head of the bone over the edge of the acetabulum.

The faintness from the tobacco had vanished, and a grain of emetic tartar given,—the extension kept up, but not increased, for ten minutes, when, as no nausea was produced, another grain of emetic tartar was swallowed. Soon sick,—the extension increased in force,—another vain attempt to reduce the bone,—patient complaining,—extension slightly relaxed, and then renewed,—he vomited. The skin had a cold clammy feel, pulse feeble, countenance pale, the voice a whisper, but complaining and wishing the operation to be discontinued. It was discontinued, after another failure to raise the bone into its socket; but the poor fellow did not recover the shock.

It is reasonable to suppose, that great, long continued, and severe operations, occurring in various kinds of constitutions, will sometimes destroy life, in spite of the exertions of the the humane and skilful surgeon. There must

be an uncertainty in the event of such trying examples of human suffering, more especially as there are few whose experience, on such rare occasions, will enable them to predict how much individual constitutions can safely bear. Yet, if we make the most of our experience, much information may be gathered on this interesting point. The powers which endure, and those which inflict punishment, should be carefully balanced by the eye of the greatest possible experience, and the most acute and profound observation. The power of the mind in steeling the body against the wasting effects of pain, must be well known to those who have studied the character of the North American tribes, or a lamentable portion of the history of our own country. It should also be known, to the practical surgeon, that a man with a timid and unwilling mind, will never bear what one of high courage, and full of confidence, will sustain with impunity;—although it should never be forgotten that there are operations, whose severity will pull down the stoutest, as seen in the example of the old soldier. The man who feels not courage, has no confidence in himself; and, to use the striking language of the ring, on so grave an occasion as the present, “ he is

already licked." To such a person who enters the operation room, the inflicting or subduing agents should be most cautiously proportioned; in fact, the question would be, should the operation be for an old or great luxation, whether he is not reduced or subdued enough, whether he is not already in that state of lowness, into which you wished to place a patient about to submit to the hip operation? If so—any additional constitutional treatment, professedly to weaken the powers of life—to deprive the muscles of tone—must be highly dangerous.

There can be no doubt, that the subject of this case was unusually alarmed and nervous, during the last attempt. The memory of past sufferings, probably, was fresh and appalling. He had also been bled in the warm bath, and the nauseating agents in the stomach still further reduced the power of the brain, already sufficiently overwhelmed by a depressed and foreboding mind. Moreover, that most uncertain and dangerous agent, the tartar emetic, acted severely just at the critical moment, when the mind and the body were most exhausted. And yet the surgeon, one of the most humane in the exercise of his profession, did not violate the rules of art; but, on the contrary,

carried them all into action, with that steadiness, gentleness, and firmness, which mark the man of science and the conscientious practitioner.

The safest and most steady constitutional treatment, to reduce muscular strength in these terrible cases, are bleeding, proportioned to the age and strength of the patient, the warm bath, and previous limited diet.

CASE XXVIII.

DEATH AFTER OPERATION; THE NERVOUS POWER
BEING PREVIOUSLY EXHAUSTED BY AN EXCITED
MIND.

It was an old discharged seaman, of the Bellerophon, who came into the hospital to have his leg amputated, on account of a necrosed tibia. He entered the house in perfect health, and was carried out a corpse;—but the operation was done at his own request. The circumstances of this example are simple, though striking.

As is often the case with Jack, this poor fellow was proud of his profession, loved to spin his yarn, and fight his battles over again.

The man was temperate,—but the day before the operation, and during the forenoon of the following, he was in unreasonably high spirits, daring and reckless, amounting to wild bravado, and longing for the time to arrive, when he might show an example of a British tar's indifference—to bodily suffering.

The hour came, and he kept his word. He mounted the table,—would neither be blindfolded nor held,—but with folded arms, and a determined eye, surveyed the preparations, and flooded the modest and astonished nurse with a torrent of sailors' wit.

When the knife penetrated the skin, he began, and continued to sing, with more steady coolness than he had hitherto shown, and without the slightest break—the naval song of “Tom Tough,”—until the completion of the operation. I have said without a break, or interruption, only because I had nearly forgotten a solitary and an amusing one. By some accident, common on such occasions, a part of his person became exposed, which

appeared to excite a more uncommon share of his attention, than the painful process in which he was principally concerned. Making a dead pause in his song, he burst out with a stentorian voice, "Nurse," she was inattentive, "I say, nurse, d——n your eyes, bear a hand here to your old messmate, and kiver up my ——."

This fine fellow fell altogether as low, after the most favourable operation, as he had been previously high. He hardly rallied for a moment, but withered away, to sing and fight no more, on the fifth day from the amputation.

There were no diseased appearances in the brain, and his death, which was powerfully affecting, must be referred to an exhausted state of this organ, knocked up,—leaving the system without nervous energy,—by a long continued excitement, or extreme tension or straining of the mind.

The opposite condition of the mind, of great depression, sometimes witnessed in practice, previous to operation, is more frequently dangerous than that of excitement.

In both examples, the brain energy is impaired or extinguished, though by different

states of the mighty power which governs its actions. The following case will illustrate the position, that great fear, or a deep presentiment of a fatal termination, will bring to pass this event.

CASE XXIX.

DEATH AFTER OPERATION; WHERE THE MIND AND NERVOUS SYSTEM WERE DEEPLY DEPRESSED, BY A BELIEF OF FATALITY.

THE very interesting young woman who was the melancholy subject of this case, had a diseased elbow-joint, for which she gained a letter of admission into the hospital.

The surgeon deemed it right to condemn the limb to amputation. The girl consented most cheerfully,—she had long made her mind up to this event, but begged to see her mother before the operation. Whether the parent indiscreetly excited the alarm in the poor girl, or from whatever source it was derived, it appeared that,

soon after her mother's departure, signs of wavering were apparent, with excessive dread of the approaching operation, and ultimately she declared, that her mind had changed, and that she would die with the limb on her body. It was explained, that there would be no dying in the case, if the limb were, or were not amputated. This representation, though true in general, was unavailing. But now, her unsteady or changeable conduct was rather severely commented upon by one of the senior pupils, who had been very kind to her, and for whom she entertained a grateful feeling of respect. The pupil's impression was seconded by that of some friends, and now her mind changed again. She was willing to submit to the operation, of which I was a spectator. But it is probable that the mind, since it was first unsettled, had never recovered its original firmness; and that she yielded now, from a desire of being no longer inconsistent before the favourite pupil. She entered the room trembling, with an expression of wild alarm, mingled with that of vacancy on her countenance, indicating the mind lost or distracted by terror, nor would she have entered the room at all, but for an angry remark of the surgeon, who intimated she was

making a fool of him a second time. This was decisive. She sat down confusedly, without being conscious of a question addressed to her, threw a rapid wild glance around the room, and then sighed deeply. They had neglected to bandage her eyes. Some bloody signs of a previous operation were on the table,—she started,—her hands were cold. The operation was rapidly and skilfully done in the chair where she sat, without her shewing the least reluctance or resistance, as if unconscious of pain. The arteries, which bled little, were secured, and the patient sent to bed, cold and indifferent to all surrounding objects;—but she became warmer with wine, and in about half an hour after the operation the stump was closed and bandaged.

I lost sight of this patient till the third day from the operation, when, struck with her torpid and marbled appearance, I stopped to make enquiries. She had never recovered the shock of this slight operation, had scarcely spoken, or expressed a wish for any worldly object,—even her mother was forgotten. She was evidently on the road to the grave, to verify her own prediction, and perished the sixth day from the operation, withering away

motionless on her back, with largely dilated and sightless pupils.

There is no doubt that the immediate cause of death in this unhappy case, was the blighted condition of the nervous power,—the origin of this,—FEAR, implanted by her weak, unfortunate mother, to whose misjudged influence the poor thing's life fell a sacrifice. It should also, indeed, be a lesson of caution to surgeons, never to operate when the nervous function is deeply injured or impaired, by the influence of a powerfully depressing passion, nor go beyond an earnest, candid, and dignified recommendation of an operation, where he is fully satisfied of its propriety. There may, indeed, be desperate cases—of certain death unless operation be performed,—where an ignorant patient is adverse to it, in which the surgeon, in a degree, might *act* for him, that is,—show a little more energy, or use more personal influence, than, under other circumstances, would be justifiable. Life occasionally may be saved,—beyond doubt,—by such decisive conduct, under the guidance of a sound judgment, within the walls of an hospital. But this vigour beyond the law, requires the greatest caution, backed by the greatest experience, and never should be prac-

tised in unfavourable states of the nervous function,—nor even thought of in cases where life is not immediately endangered, or where the operation is nearly a matter of choice, as in the foregoing examples of ordinary disease of the elbow-joint, which rarely, if ever, requires amputation to save life.

CASE XXX.

THE SUSPENSION OF THE NERVOUS POWER MAY BE COMPLETE THROUGH STUNNING FEAR, AND SUDDEN DEATH MUST FOLLOW, AS A MATTER OF COURSE.

RECORDS of such cases are occasionally useful, as illustrative of the influence of our minds over our bodies, and as furnishing always a moral, and sometimes a professional lesson.

In the summer of —, a gentleman entertained, at dinner, a father and an only daughter. The lady was rich, amiable, highly imaginative, and possessed another quality, which usually ranks high in the scale of female

valuation;—her person was strikingly attractive. But she was sensitive, timid, and nervous beyond example,—a spoiled child. The education of this fascinating being had been so wisely conducted, that its authors must, by some mistake, have supposed this earth to be Paradise itself, or a mansion of bliss, never to be broken by sorrow, nor invaded by woe.

The winds of heaven were scarcely allowed to breathe on this truly unfortunate child, a passing cloud in the sky might portend a thunder storm, “run, Judy, run,” and the shutters were closed. Did her father feel indisposed, (of course, he was never to die,) her fair hands would be clasped together, uplifted in agony, the tears would roll down her cheeks, whilst with a searching eye, and in a touching melodious accent, she would piteously entreat to be told, “whether there was any danger.”

Did any complaint afflict this poor girl herself, the medical man was instructed to lie stoutly, to utter any number of falsehoods that might be necessary to screen a real evil, so that he did not alarm her by speaking the truth,—of course, the patient could never be seriously ill.

The wisdom of such a plan for preparing her

sensitive mind to bear the ills of life, was soon exemplified.

The dinner party had left half an hour in perfect health, when I was hastily summoned to Miss ——'s lodgings: although a rapid, it was an useless journey. The poor young lady was lying on her back, quite dead, the chin resting on her bosom, the eyes wide open and directed upwards with a frightful glare,—the body still warm and flexible.

Some drunken men had mistaken the lodging for a neighbouring public house, and the noise made for admission was considerable. The unfortunate girl's imagination got into play, she became much agitated;—the noise increased,—she screamed in agony, ran into the bed-room for shelter, and there withered the rose of Cambria,—there perished, by a simple knock at the door, in solitude, in darkness, and without a friend to close the protruding eyeballs, for she had locked herself in,—a congregation of all human attractions!—an undoubted victim to the ignorance and folly of those who surrounded her; and a melancholy and awful proof of the necessity of a rational system of education for our females. In the present, the mind, its wholesome, solid culture

and discipline, appear to be forgotten, and a taste for trifling, enervating acquirements is cultivated, which certainly has no tendency to elevate the character of woman. I question not, because I am satisfied of the fact,—that it is gross and degrading injustice to this interesting being (who possesses mental powers equal to our own), to bestow an education more fitted to qualify her for the light graces of the harem, or the office of the almè, than to make a rational companion to man, and a sound instructress to his children;—by whose perpetual influence in their early years, they might hourly imbibe useful knowledge, habitual love of truth, and strength of mind, to bear the ills and disappointments of a troubled life.

THE IRRITABLE BLADDER AS A NERVO-MORAL EFFECT.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

WHEN late authors say that hysteria is a particular malady that simulates all organic affections, they use language which the laws of reasoning do not warrant. Were it simply stated, that the symptoms which pass under that name are those of a disturbed nervous system, affecting different parts of that system at different times, and that in those portions of it, its phenomena often resemble those of organic disease,—they would give a more correct view of the subject. Patients, and medical men also, are perpetually frightened, and the judgments of the latter misled, by the similitude of the phenomena, when attacking vital organs. The whole difficulty is derived from supposing that because there is a pain and disturbance in a part, there must likewise be inflammation or structural mischief in progress; from mistaking an *irritable* organ for

an *inflamed* one; and in overlooking the different temperaments in which these two classes of morbid actions are generally developed, and the signs which distinguish them.

There can be no doubt, indeed, that this capital mistake is hourly made in practice. The irritable and highly disturbed nervous system, develops a spread of symptoms, which may be compared to the arrangement of a bunch of grapes, which possesses little fruit with the pedicles on the right side of the main stalk, but abundance on the left. The broad base of the stalk, at the summit of the branch, answers to the brain; and when the signs of a disturbed nervous power are developed here, it becomes irritable, or we have giddiness, confusion and pain in different parts of the head,—and then, forsooth, diseases of the brain, apoplexy, and palsy, are forthcoming!!

The large mass of fruit near the top of the bunch, answers to the mesh of nerves which encompass and penetrate the left chest, disturb the heart with palpitation, and often produce the fugitive bellows sound. These nerves sprinkle with a sharp leech bite, evanescent kind of pain,—answering to the arrangement of the grapes,—the left back, left side, under the breast,

and the breast itself, which it makes exquisitely tender to the touch. Shooting pains pass up the left neck, and down the left arm to the elbow; and the whole collocation of symptoms thus occupying the left chest and upper arm, gives, when severe, under the term of *angina pectoris*, often very grievous apprehensions of an organic affection of the heart. The spinal marrow, or descending stalk itself, shares in the general disorder—there is pain and tenderness in it, and when the column of the spine is shook, these symptoms are increased. Of course there is inflammatory action! and the young lady is immediately treated with a new crib to repose upon, a library of romances to soothe her solitude, a fine pair of caustics in her back;—with a nice—agreeable—young surgeon to dress them! “Mr. —— is a clever young man; don’t you think he will get on?” “I have no doubt about it.” But lower down the body, we sometimes witness this nervous disorder occupying another branch of the system, spreading itself about the hip and knee, and filling the practitioner with a conviction of the presence of the terrible hip disease, white swelling of the knee!—and then become involved the urinary organs, which is our pre-

sent subject for slight observation. We refer, however, to those cases of disturbed urinary organs, which are accompanied, in an irritable state of the nervous power to a certain extent, with micturition of transparent or healthy urine, and without those white deposits, which may or may not, of themselves, be the cause of the symptoms of the irritable bladder, in those excessive derangements of the nervous system, seen most frequently in young women, and which are called by so many ugly names.

The reader will observe, that in all these cases of great disturbance of the nervous system, in which such wonderful migrations take place,—the malady sometimes occupying one portion of it, which it soon forsakes for another,—that there is not one of them to be found, without the presence of gastro-intestinal irritation, or what is improperly called indigestion, nor in which the patient is not exquisitely prone to moral impressions, nor in which the symptoms are not congregated, in a singular manner, on the left side of the body; whilst on the right, though they occasionally do appear, yet the supply of the morbid phænomena is there comparatively rare and scanty.

THE IRRITABLE BLADDER AS A NERVO-MORAL EFFECT.

WE know that this organ will become irritable, that is painful and impatient of its contents, from a variety of organic affections, either seated within its own cavity, or as sympathizing with disease of the neighbouring parts. Thus, a calculus in the kidney will produce this effect as completely as one within its own cavity. Disease of the mucous lining of the urinary passages,—of the prostate gland and rectum,—and, finally, chemical changes in the urine itself (which in its natural state will not excite this effect), will all, in their turn, produce the phænomena of the irritable bladder.

But these phænomena will undoubtedly, and not unfrequently occur, where no disease of the bladder,—of the neighbouring parts,—or morbid changes in the urine, can be detected to account for their existence; a circumstance which, in practice, has not a little puzzled our very best surgeons. I have never known this state of the bladder, without organic disease, take place in any but those who possess the

nervous temperament, who have been subject to indigestion, or rather gastro-intestinal irritation, either arising solely from moral causes, or whose sensitive character have greatly influenced that disease when arising from physical irritations. The pain and suffering, in the case in question, is often fully equal in degree, and exactly similar in kind, to that yielded by the same condition of the bladder, when this derangement of its functions arises from structural disease;—an important fact, which, if well known in practice, would prevent the gross error of treating, alarming, and punishing the patient, for organic diseases, which do not in reality exist in this particular case. The pain in question is clearly neurotic, perhaps sometimes neuralgic, and the morbid irritability of the cavity of the bladder, is of the kind which gives pain, after taking improper food, to the stomach of a highly irritable or dyspeptic person, or which is felt in such cases in the back, between the shoulders, and sometimes lower down in the left breast and just beneath it, and are like all those pains observed to exist in that wide disturbance of the nervous power, improperly called *hysteria*. This condition of the nervous power, so called, is more

frequently observed in young women, but it is by no means confined to that sex, and, therefore, cannot always arise from uterine irritation, as some authors have most erroneously supposed. The leading feature of this very important derangement of the nervous function is, the morbid and exquisite susceptibility of the whole, or a part of the nervous system, to the slightest irritations, *but more especially to those of a moral character.*

In this case of nervous irritability of the bladder, its morbid sensitiveness to its healthy contents, may either be a part of the general disorder of the nervous power, or it may be that the nerves of the organ have become themselves particularly sensitive,—or influenced, sympathetically, by a highly irritable and dyspeptic state of the gastro-intestinal canal. It is probable that the former is the case; and the patient, as he lies in bed, may obtain a proof of this fact, and of the character of the urinary malady, by attending to the variety of his disordered and painful feelings, which sometimes occupy one part of the body, and sometimes another. Thus, in considerable nervous or dyspeptic disorders, painful disturbances will wander about the system,—in

the head, heart, back, left breast, and in the urinary organs, giving a correct notion of the *irritable* condition of the whole nervous power. This nervous irritability of the urinary bladder, is also remarkably influenced by the mind, in common with other nervous affections, and, I believe, not unfrequently arises altogether from the unbounded dominion exercised by this mighty power over our physical structure. During the whole of the forenoon, especially if the mind be not thoroughly engaged, the patient will be distressed by the incessant calls to micturition.—“It troubles me sadly,” said one of these fitful and sensitive beings, who are always fluctuating between the gloomy depths of despondency, and the very sunshine of gaiety, “but the more I trouble and think about it, the more I —.” The same individual plagued all the morning, so that he could obtain very little rest, would then dine out, and amidst the roars of laughter, his own witty powers would elicit the total abstraction of his mind from the contemplation of his malady; and the festivities of the evening, his morning and solitary habit would be altogether suspended and forgotten. Or if it casually struck him, this was “strange,

passing strange," and that he would just try whether there was no mistake in the matter; he would, to his astonishment, discover, that he could not pass one drop of water; the very mind, which in the morning under one feeling, perpetually called him to micturition, now, under the operation of another, suppressed all desire to that act, and it was not until he left the company, and the burthen of modesty it created, that the irritable and sensitive organ could empty itself. Then, indeed, was he further astonished, for the same bladder which in the morning was impatient at the residence of an ounce of water in its cavity, and, indeed, could not retain that quantity, would now expel an immense mass, in a powerful current, that threatened to be perpetual! The union of the mind with the nervous function, as the cause of this variety of the irritable bladder, is further exemplified by the fact, that if the patient sleeps well, he is not troubled with the frequent micturition during the night. The morbidly sensitive or nervous mind sleeps also, and, in profound repose and entire oblivion, no longer notices those slight sources, for anxious contemplation, physical or moral, which in-

terests it too deeply, and influences and agitates so powerfully all the actions of our wonderful structure.

But in the irritable bladder, from chemical changes in the urine, from disease, or from sympathizing with disease, sleep makes no difference in the degree of micturition. The patient is perpetually disturbed, by the frequent calls to evacuate the bladder, which being produced by a permanent cause, is most harassing and incessant. To help the practitioner still further in his diagnosis, a diligent search should be made for organic disease in the bladder, or its neighbourhood, or in those distant parts which influence its actions by sympathy; if none be found, the urine itself be free from those deposits which indicate chemical changes in its own character,—which are certainly capable of exciting the bladder when they do exist,—if the subject for attack possess the nervous temperament, and whose nervous system bears other marks of considerable disturbance, when this affection itself is constantly varying in degree, and sometimes passes away altogether,—then the practitioner may safely pronounce, that the malady of the bladder, often severe and alarming, is neurotic, and

requires only the appropriate dyspeptic, nervous and mental remedies for its removal.

A more particular account of the nervous irritable bladder is useless, but it may be illustrated by the two following cases, selected from many, because they occurred in most intelligent surgeons, who were, themselves, alarmed by the continued severity of the symptoms, and the fear of organic disease;—and because others of great distinction, who were consulted, were equally puzzled with themselves.

No stronger proof need be given, that the subject is one of some importance.

CASE XXXI.

NERVOUS IRRITABILITY OF BLADDER RESEMBLING ITS IRRITABILITY FROM ORGANIC DISEASE.

A MEDICAL gentleman, in the year 1821, consulted me on account of the following symptoms. “He has a frequent desire to pass his water, which he does to the extent of an

ounce and a half, but sometimes much less. The urine is constantly healthy and transparent. He has considerable uneasiness above the pubes, occasional shooting pains along the urethra, and especially at its orifice, his testes have a general feel of uneasiness, which frequently urges him to support the scrotum with his hand, and place it out of the way of pressure. There is also a feeling of pain across the lower part of the back, and downwards along the sacrum to the anus. All these uneasy sensations are usually relieved by micturition; but sometimes they are apparently increased by it, as though the bladder in contracting, received some violence in its cavity. This patient has a foul tongue, is dyspeptic, and possesses the nervous temperament to an uncommon degree, and has suffered greatly from anxiety of mind, is very irritable, and is now anxious to know, whether his symptoms do not arise from the irritation of an unsound prostate gland."

I sounded this gentleman for a stricture in the urethra, and for a stone in the bladder, and carefully examined the rectum, and the back of the prostate, but nothing was found to account for the irritable bladder and the pain-

ful affection of the neighbouring organs, and the secretions of the kidney were perfectly healthy, as already described. "He says, that the micturition is not so frequent at night, nor when he is highly interested by company, or his mind is deeply interested by agreeable circumstances. He is quite sure that his urine is always clear, unless on occasions when he takes a severe cold, or has lived more freely than usual, or when illness was accompanied by fever. The symptoms vary in degree, but for the last five weeks have been rarely absent altogether." At the period in question, and from the absence of any proof of organic disease, I believed that the whole of the symptoms were connected with the disturbed digestive organs; but this opinion did not satisfy him, and he consulted Sir E. Home, who again examined his prostate, suspected a stone to be in the bladder, but ultimately advised him to pass a large bougie twice a week, under an idea that there was a stricture; with this plan he got rather worse, when at length, I persuaded him to live abstemiously, or be dieted, to take some dyspeptic remedies, drink wine mixed with water, and altogether abstain from the indulgence of certain feelings

to which he was prone. During this plan, great attention was directed towards composing his mind, and the patient became well, and remained so for years.

In the year 1823, he suffered some severe domestic afflictions, and he became more dyspeptic and nervous than ever; his abdomen swelled greatly after food, tongue became very foul, and great despondency ensued. At this period it was that the irritable bladder,—the frequent micturition of clear water, and distress of the urinary and generative organs returned. And now also it was, that from his own observation of the course of the symptoms, he was satisfied that his mind had a strong share in the production of his maladies. He attended to this important point as well as circumstances would permit, lived temperately, attended regularly to the action of his bowels, with the mildest aperients, and again he lost this particular disturbance of the organs in question.

In some of these cases it may be doubtful where the irritability originates, for bladder testes and kidneys all give pain. But it is probable, from the circumstance of the pains in the kidneys, &c. being sometimes increased by the contractions of the bladder, that the

nerves of the latter organ are chiefly concerned, and that those of the former suffer from sympathy.

The following Case shows, that the irritable bladder, as a mere nervous affection, cannot be generally understood,—its nature being utterly unknown to the high surgical authorities consulted on this occasion.

CASE XXXII.

NERVOUS IRRITABILITY OF BLADDER MISTAKEN FOR THE IRRITABILITY PRODUCED BY A STONE.

A HIGHLY intelligent medical friend of mine, who possessed largely the nervous temperament, and whose nervous system was greatly shook by circumstances unnecessary here to relate, became worse from anxiety: moreover, he was constantly meditating, on account of the symptoms about to be detailed. His bad health was generally evinced by uneasiness at his stomach, tenderness and pain in the spine, which occasionally ascended to his neck, and

descended to his loins, pain between the shoulders, and in the back of his head, foul tongue, great irritability and despondency, so great as to determine him to retire from business. In truth he had that variety or mass of symptoms, loss of memory, &c., which are morbid varieties of the wide spreading malady, improperly called indigestion. But to all these symptoms was added, an affection of his urinary organs. He was incessantly occupied in micturition, passing a small quantity of healthy, transparent urine. There was considerable uneasiness of a transitory nature, sometimes felt in the testes, then above the pubes, in the groins, across the lower part of the back, and sacrum. Harassed by his troublesome malady, he went to London, consulted one of the most eminent in the art, and a public teacher, who, after a minute examination, consoled him by a declaration, that, he believed, there was a stone in his bladder, but that the evidence of its existence was not, perhaps, enough to warrant the performance of lithotomy. He gave him a letter to another eminent professor, to obtain from him a confirmation of his own opinion. This gentleman assured him *there was no stone, but that the*

prostate gland was certainly enlarged, which alone accounted for the symptoms.

But it was perfectly clear that there was neither a stone nor a diseased prostate gland, for the symptoms of the irritable bladder all vanished, as health and the nervous function were improved, by temperance, horse riding, and a quiet mind.

In answer to a question, this gentleman said, that whenever his mind was agreeably engaged at a dinner party, he suddenly lost the symptoms with the micturition, which had previously and severely harassed him. When this gentleman died, from another cause, dissection showed no marks of disease in the urinary organs.

Although other causes than the mind produce nervous disorders, yet are there none of a kind so terrible and destructive. Some unfortunates commit suicide, others go mad;—and yet it is consoling to know, that under kind and skilful treatment the majority recover, if by recovery is meant escape with life and a sound mind. But vestiges of the storm will

for ever remain. Like in that which has passed over the face of nature, life, from among the ruins, will again be seen to spring, the sun will again cheer; ambition, affection, and worldly pursuits may, to a certain extent, again interest!

But the noble tree has been scathed, its beauty and vigour are no more! Its foundation shook, its limbs scattered by the blast, the trunk creaks and moans, and hourly threatens to fall,—whilst the mutilated branch sighs in the morning breeze, as if mourning the approaching fate of its parent,—which yet falls not, but lives on astonishingly, though in appearance but a mere remnant of vitality.

The same tenacity to life observed in the nervous, from any cause,—and whose creaking longevity is also so remarkable, arises partly from the circumstance of the almost constant connection of stomach ailment, which ensures temperance, and from these persons, when vulgar hypochondriacal habits have been formed, being perpetually on the watch to detect the early signs of real disease, at which period it is more capable of removal.

But it is not the vulgar, selfish, or less elevated hypochondriacal cases, arising out of physical or stomach causes, that we are chiefly

considering, although even here the mind, in a far less pitiable way, becomes gradually engaged in the evil, and will call for its peculiar remedies. But it is the more purely mental examples, where the mind disorders the health, not where the health disorders the mind, that we are reviewing,—more particularly where the latter takes the lead, and demands often decisive relief, before an evil, more dreaded than death, overtakes the patient.

If the foregoing slight illustrations, tend in the least to promote a gentle, soothing, and mental practice, in the general treatment of this class of sufferers, and caution in the use and selection of medical or physical agents—for these cases will bear neither physical nor moral roughness—the author will be content; but he will be especially gratified, if they make more generally known, a remedy of remarkable power for those desperate examples of a mind wounded by affliction, where change of scene and place, and time itself, have altogether failed to bring relief. Yet it is not offered as a general remedy, or rather as one suited to every case; for the author is too well aware of the folly of generalizing, to do so, and because he is satisfied that different moral and

intellectual characters, will demand different and appropriate mental remedies.

But it is to the mind deeply sensitive and steeped in wretchedness, and its wondrous train of bodily evils, that the practice of composition brings certain relief. Memory, with its thousand stings, will pass away; and the anguish of the varied wounds, which such a mind receives, in its short journey through life, will be soothed; till that hour has arrived, when this journey is completed, and then, an earthly remedy can no longer be required.

NOTE

ON THE

IRRITABLE OR NERVOUS BLADDER.

THE Author has just seen Mr. BRODIE'S book on the Urinary Organs, and under the head of the Irritable Bladder are the following words:—"Irritability of the bladder is occasionally a symptom of disease in, or of disease affecting, the nervous system. An elderly man, for example, complains of frequent attacks of giddiness: sometimes, in walking, his head turns round, so that he is in danger

of falling; and this symptom, probably, arises from an altered structure of the arteries of the brain, causing an imperfect state of the cerebral circulation. Not unfrequently this is attended with an irritable state of the bladder; and although the urine is of a healthy quality, and the bladder itself is free from disease, the patient is tormented by a constant micturition." If I understand this passage rightly, it must leave a most erroneous impression, and derived from so high a quarter, it could not prove otherwise than a mischievous error. The passage gives the idea, that because the irritable bladder is associated with giddiness in the head, there is probably a change in the structure of the cerebral arteries. This cannot be true. No symptom is more common, or more innocent, *in a disturbed nervous system* (even in elderly persons), than giddiness and confusion in the head, but which is especially observed in females, because in them the nervous temperament and its disorders more abundantly prevail.

Again—no symptoms are more commonly in conjunction, *in the disturbed nervous system*, than this staggering giddiness and confusion of brain, and the irritable bladder. If the practitioner closely examines his female nervous patients, he will prove the truth of this assertion. The case is as frequent as that of simple fractures in an hospital, and as far as life

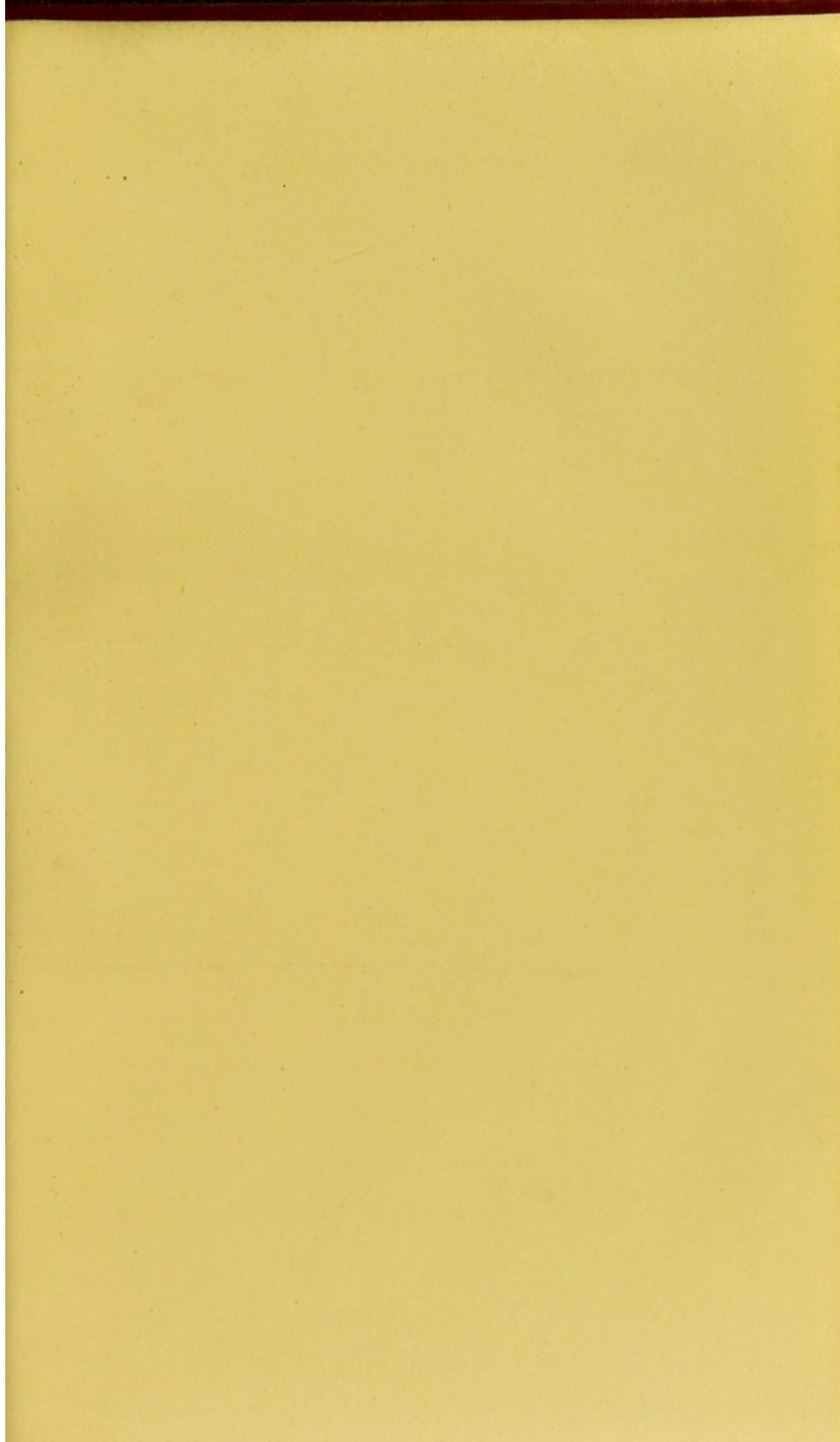
is concerned, it is equally innocent;—and, therefore, it cannot arise from any change of structure in the cerebral arteries. In all considerable derangements of the nervous power,—we see, or we may see, these two symptoms, and various others, according to the temporary sojourn of the disorder in different portions of it,—for its migrating and inconstant character leads it to float about that system in a very remarkable manner. Thus, sometimes, we have the *irritable brain* already described, the *irritable left breast*, the *irritable hip joint*, the *irritable knee*—or (as he calls it) the hysterical knee—lectured upon by Mr. BRODIE himself—and the *irritable bladder*, all of which affections, parts or parcels of the same malady, are unhappily and hourly treated, either as inflammation, or examples of organic disease !!

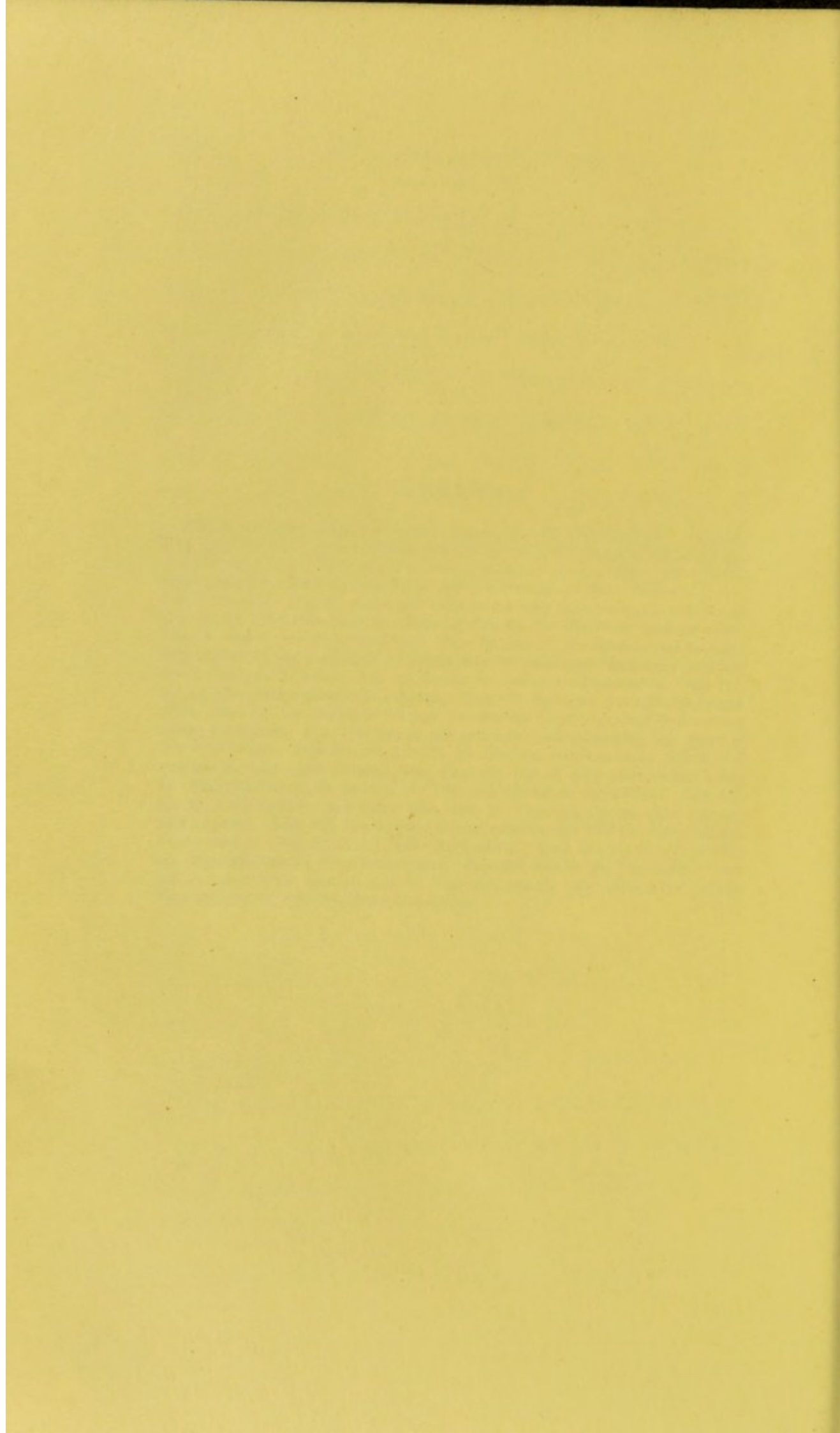
To assist in the detection of the *irritable organ*, (which is, however, occasionally combined, though rarely, with inflammatory action or real disease,) the practitioner should look to the *temperament* of the patient, in whom doubtful morbid actions are developed. The other signs for distinguishing irritable from inflamed organs, and their combinations, will be considered in another place.

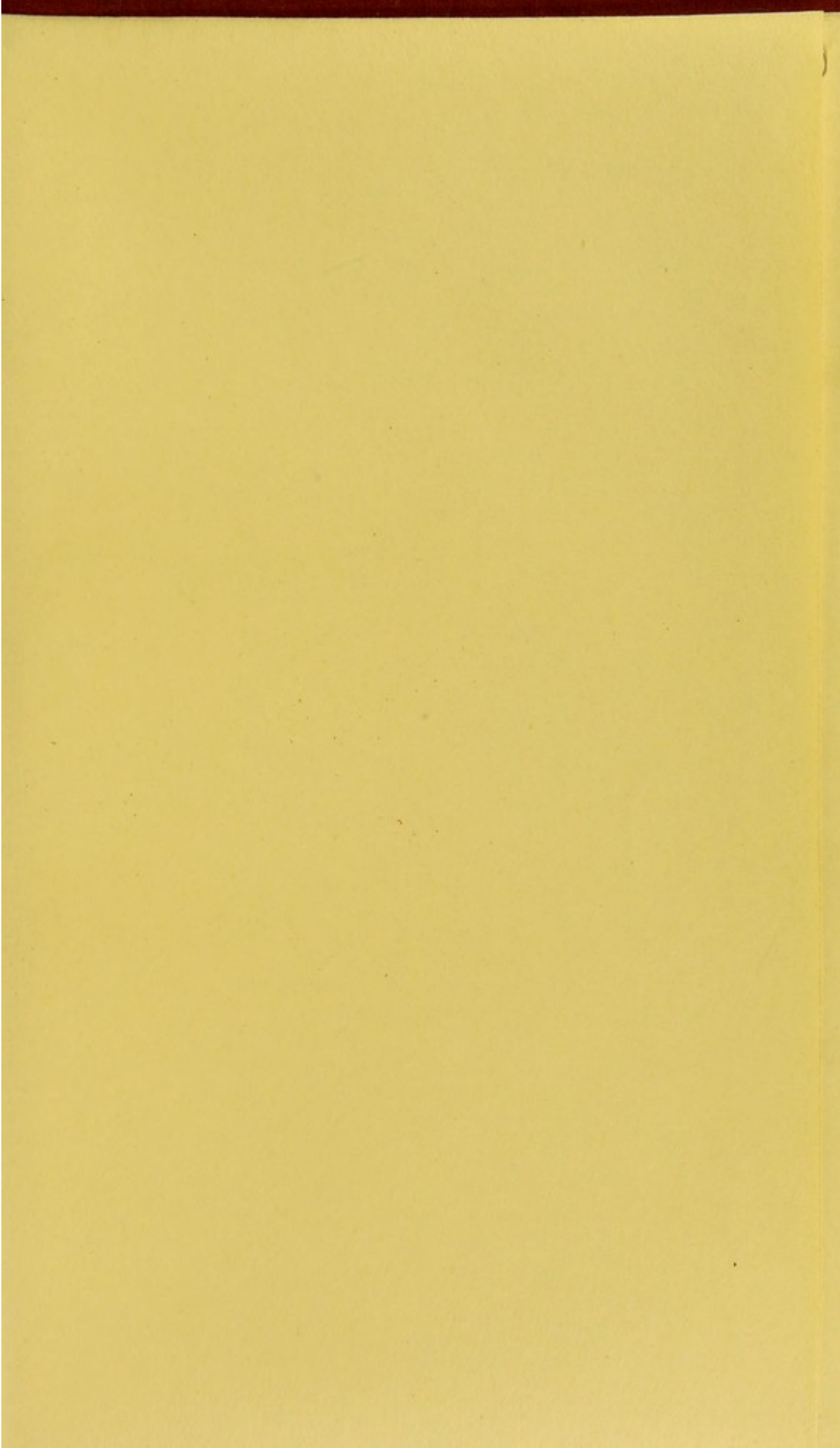
FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 4, line 8, *for* reigns *read* reign. Page 9, line 15, *after* you *add* " Page 26, line 1, *after* sensibility *add* a comma. Page 36, line 1, *after* refinement *add* a comma. Page 38, line 1, *after* open *add* a comma; line 4, *for* is *read* helps; line 5, *after* which *omit* but. Page 42, line 26, *for* and as well *read* and also. Page 47, line 23, *omit* cause, and. Page 57, line 4, *for* either in the *read* indicated by the presence of the; line 11, *after* than *omit* in. Page 58, line 26, *for* described *read* describes. Page 66, line 3, *for* stops *read* stop. Page 67, line 23, *for* believe *read* believes. Page 73, line 12, *for* They occurred chiefly from the panic *read* These cases were produced chiefly by the panic. Page 85, line 13, *for* suicide *read* infanticide. Page 165, line 14, *after* temperament *add* a comma. Page 167, line 5, *for* peristaltic *read* peristaltic. Page 170, the heading of the page, *for* nervous fever diminished *read* nervous energy diminished. Page 175, line 15, *for* peristaltic *read* peristaltic; and wherever the word occurs. Page 178, line 6 and 7, *for* then can *read* can then; line 15, *for* certainly do have *read* certainly has. Page 190, line 18, *after* pressure *add* would be. Page 194, line 15, *for* on *read* or. Page 204, line 22, *for* its *read* the. Page 207, line 15, *for* If *read* It; and *after* time *omit* it. Page 209, line 20, *after* enjoying *add* a comma. Page 266, line 4, *after* furnish *add* baleful; line 24, *for* on passion *read* a passion. Page 278, line 7, *after* light *add* of. Page 280, line 26, *for* on *read* or. Page 289, line 16, *for* anti *read* ante. Page 333, line 20, *for* are *read* is. Page 346, last line, *after* stomach *add* " Page 377, line 21, *after* elicit *add* a comma. Page 383, line 23, *after* bladder *add* a comma.









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