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A
DISSERTATION

ON

Dr. JAMES'S FEVER POWDER.

[Price One Shilling.]

1845

DISSERTATION

ON
JAMES'S FEVER POWDER.

[Price One Shilling]

DISSERTATION

O N

Dr. JAMES's FEVER POWDER.

In which the Different Circumstances, wherein
that Remedy may prove beneficial or hurtful,
are considered and distinguished, according to
Observation and Reason.

By MALCOLM FLEMYNG, M.D.

Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri.



L O N D O N :

Printed for L. DAVIS and C. REYMERS, Printers to
the ROYAL SOCIETY, over-against Gray's-Inn, Holborn.

MDCCLX.

DISSEMINATION

OF

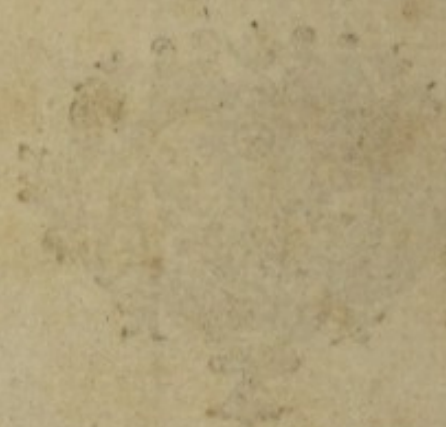
DR JAMES FRANKLIN POWELL

In which are contained
the results of his
researches and his
observations on the
nature and extent of
the disease.

BY MAJOR GEORGE FRANKLIN POWELL

OF THE ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

LONDON: PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.



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130
T O

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

G E O R G E,
EARL of MACCLESFIELD,

President of the ROYAL SOCIETY.

THE FOLLOWING

DISSERTATION

Is most humbly Inscribed, by his LORDSHIP'S

Most devoted Servant,

Caister, in
Lincolnshire,
April 16, 1760.

The A U T H O R.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
GEORGE O. RIGGS
EARL OF MACCLESFIELD
Field of the Royal Society

THE FOLLOWING
DISSERTATION
Is most humbly inscribed to his Lordship's

Most devoted Servant
G. O. RIGGS
The Author

A

DISSERTATION

O N

Dr. JAMES'S FEVER POWDER.

IT is well known that antimonial and mercurial medicines have been used in medicine several centuries ago. Basilius Valentinus is thought to have lived at least a century before Paracelsus, who flourished about the year 1530. The former was so assiduous, and successful in his operations on antimony, that he has been beforehand with the modern chymists, in almost every discovery concerning the properties of that mineral; and was by much too liberal in ascribing medicinal virtues to his preparations of it. The latter had his turbith, which is a mercurial precipitate, amongst his

B other

other favourite arcana ; and gave it often to his patients.

Not to detain the reader with the account of very remote times, Dr. Charleton, a celebrated physician in Charles the II^d's reign, who had the licensing of quacks, told on his death-bed (as Dr. Cheyne was well informed *) that all the useful and successful cures performed by the mountebanks of his time, were solely owing to preparations of mercury and antimony. In the year 1720, the French ministry (the king being then but ten years old) purchased the *pulvis Carthusianorum*, or chermes mineral, a famous secret at that time, originally invented by Glauber, and made it public ; upon which it came into regular practice, and great vogue, especially in the French dominions. Very soon after this publication, Ward, returning from thence, introduced among us his pill, drop, and I know not how many more forms of arcana, which good judges quickly concluded to be made of mercury and antimony, somehow prepared and disguised. After these appeared the Fever Powder of the learned and ingenious Dr. Robert James ; the subject of our present discourse.

That

* English Malady, p. 131.

That what I have to lay before the reader concerning this celebrated remedy, with the greatest impartiality, uninfluenced by any motive, that can in the least clash with the interest of mankind, may be the more clearly understood by the reader, I shall step a little back for some illustrations.

The immortal Boerhaave in his practical course, when discoursing on inflammation, used to say, " That it were much to be
 " wished some internal specific remedy could
 " be found out ;" for, added he, " such a
 " remedy might, in his opinion, cure all,
 " or most acute distempers." And this he spoke of as a thing not altogether impossible. I myself testify his saying so in his lectures, in the year 1723 and 1724.

Besides, when treating on the small-pox, (before inoculation was introduced into Christendom) he proposed a method to carry off the inflammation in the beginning of the disease ; and to prevent the pustules from advancing, and suppurating ; for which purpose he recommended medicines, *ex antimonie et mercurio ad magnum penetrabilitatem arte deductis, nec tamen salina acrimonia*

corrosive ; sed bene unitis : “ Made of anti-
 “ mony and mercury prepared in such a
 “ manner, as to be highly penetrating ; but
 “ at the same time not corrosive through
 “ saline acrimony ; and well united toge-
 “ ther.” These are his words in every edi-
 tion of his Aphorism, from the first, which,
 if I mistake not, appeared in 1709, to the
 last. And in his *Materia Medica*, or system
 of prescriptions adapted to the Aphorism,
 he gives two formulæ to answer this end,
 in the one of which there is *mercurius dulcis* ;
 in the other *cinnabar* of antimony (which
 contains mercury) : and in both of them
diaphoretic antimony, undivested of its nitre ;
 and some *sal polychrefs*. This *Materia Me-*
dica he used to dictate to his scholars ; and
 did not publish it till the year 1719, being
 forced so to do by the appearance of a sur-
 reptitious edition. Moreover, in a pam-
 phlet published in English in 1726, entitled,
Observations on Dr. Friend’s history of Phy-
sic, written by Dr. William Cockburn, un-
 der a disguised name ; between whom and
 Dr. Friend there were misunderstandings and
 quarrels, I find the following passage :

“ The most learned physicians abroad,
 “ keep up to the reasonable practice in hav-
 “ ing

“ ing secrets. The famous professor Boer-
 “ haave has many, and one more particular-
 “ ly, for making the small-pox come forth
 “ favourably.” This secret was, no doubt,
 a composition of antimony and mercury,
 nearly of the same nature with these above-
 mentioned forms in his *Materia Medica*.
 By concealing what he gave in such cases, he
 kept it in his power to vary his medicines
 as the circumstances of those patients, he
 himself attended, should require; and thought
 it unsafe to publish to the world any other
 formulæ than those in his *Materia Medica*
 already mentioned, lest by opening too wide
 a field, rash practitioners might be encour-
 aged to be too free with these Herculean
 remedies, to manage which, great prudence
 and caution are indispensibly requisite. From
 what hath been said, it appears, that Boer-
 haave, above 50 years ago, gave preparations
 of antimony and mercury joined together, in
 acute diseases. But though he was a very
 great chymist, as every body knows, he was
 not very fond of metallic remedies; thinking
 that many of them acted too violently on the
 animal body; and therefore drew the far
 greatest part of his *Materia Medica* from the
 vegetable kingdom. This moderation was
 indeed wonderful, in so profound a know-
 ledge

ledge of the spagyric art. But the incomparable professor joined to it a thorough acquaintance with botany, and every branch of natural history; and an exquisite knowledge of the animal œconomy; tempering and kneading all together, with the highest prudence, and the strictest integrity.

I therefore look upon him as the first, who gave antimonial and mercurial medicines united, in acute diseases, upon rational principles, and not through vague conjecture, or blind experiment; and that all, who followed him in that method, copied his example, if they had any connexions with literature.

But by asserting this, I mean not to derogate from the praises of any person, who may introduce good remedies into practice, upon solid foundations. On the contrary, he is to be highly commended, for not venturing to make innovations in an art, on which the lives of his fellow-creatures depend, without being supported therein, in a good measure by right reason, and just analogy. He would even be blame-worthy, if he acted otherwise; even though his endeavours were attended with success.

I there-

I therefore hesitate not to congratulate the celebrated Dr. James, whether he be the inventor of the Fever Powder, or had it from another hand, for that the public hath nothing to do with ; and applaud his penetrating judgment and successful diligence, in observing and ascertaining the effects of his valuable remedy, and describing and publishing the manner of its exhibition, with proper cautions, and other circumstances, as he hath done in his book.

Nor have I the least inclination to discover the secret itself ; or teach the way of preparing it. I invade no man's property. It is sufficient at present, that we can come at the remedy, genuine, at a moderate price, in any quantity, that may be wanted. Let me only lay it down as certain, that the Fever Powder is a composition of mercury and antimony united ; which, were it necessary, might be proved with no great difficulty.

My intent in the present discourse is to deliver some things concerning this remedy, which consist with my own knowledge ; and chiefly, to distinguish those species of diseases,

eases, and their particular stages and symptoms, in which it may be beneficial or hurtful, as far as my own observations have gone; or analogical reasoning can help me out. To attempt something of this kind seems at present in a great measure necessary; there being so very different and jarring opinions entertained of its effects and tendency; some holding it a dangerous medicine, scarce to be ventured upon in any case; while others cry it up as a sovereign, and safe remedy in a great variety of diseases; and even extend its use to many more purposes, than the author himself hath done. Besides, not a few can scarce help thinking, something in his book may be exaggerated in favour of his own invention, and to promote his own interest; though, in my own opinion, if that be worth regarding, he seems upon the whole, to have treated his subject with no small discretion, and modesty. Upon these accounts, I have ventured to appear in print, in order to point out a middle way of judging concerning this important matter; and, as far as I can at present, to take care, on the one hand, that a powerful and valuable remedy be not slighted, and laid aside; and on the other, a rash and promiscuous use thereof may not pass unnoticed, and uncensured.

fured. No doubt many others, especially such as have used the famous powder oftner than I have done, are much better qualified to handle this subject. But as such have hitherto kept silence, I shall open, and deliver my sentiments; and that chiefly for the benefit of those practitioners, who may be as little acquainted with the effects of the Fever Powder, as I myself was six or seven years ago; though I had then practised physick almost thirty years. And though upon account of the scantiness of my materials, my present endeavours can be but defective, others, by this essay, may be incited to push theirs further.

As we take it for granted, that the Fever Powder consists of an antimonial and mercurial preparation united, it will be proper to premise some things concerning the operation of these two powerful minerals on the human body, both simple, that is, as nature hath given them, and as prepared and changed by chemistry.

Antimony, called by the ancients Stibium, if given by itself, crude, in fine flour, to the quantity of a drachm or more a-day,

neither vomits, nor purges. But, if rubbed with equal parts of nitre, it becomes emetic, and cathartic ; according to the testimony of Hoffman, a most experienced physician and chymist. The same is affirmed by Ettmuller *. It kills worms in the alimentary passage. It attenuates the blood and juices ; opens obstructions and glandular infractions, especially those of the strumous kind. It carries off cutaneous foulnesses, and is commended in arthritic pains. It would therefore appear, that our chyle, and the juices of the stomach and intestines, by their saline and saponaceous qualities, dissolve the crude antimony, after it is reduced to fine powder, in such a manner, that it is received into the lacteals ; but the solution is so mild, that it exerts no stimulating power in the *viæ primæ* ; and only manifests its virtues, after its admission into the channels of circulation, then attenuating the blood and juices ; which it seems to do more by acting upon them as a menstruum, than dividing them mechanically by its weight ; being found more effectual in dissipating strumous tumors, than mercury ; which, besides the
easy

* See Rieger de rebus natural. &c. in the article Antimonium.

easy divisibility of its particles, is more than three times heavier.

Chymists have demonstrated by a variety of exquisite processes, that antimony consists of, and may be resolved into, two very different substances; to wit, regulus and sulphur. The former resembles a metal in every property, except malleability; which cannot be given it by any art yet known. It seems to approach the nature of white arsenic; as Stahl, a very great chymist, observes; for taken inwardly, in the quantity of a very few grains, (two or three) it creates excessive vomiting, and purging; and likewise operates by sweat, and urine; and in an encreased dose, brings on faintings and death. Its other constituent part, to wit, sulphur, is held by the best chymists to be the same with common brimstone. But as these two parts are closely united in native antimony, after their separation there always adheres somewhat of the reguline virulence to its sulphur; whence its effects, when given inwardly, are more or less, rough and churlish. And upon this account glass of antimony, and that white powder gained by precipitation from rectified butter of antimony, called mercurius

vitæ, (but improperly, for it contains nothing mercurial) are the most untractable of all preparations purely antimonial. But concerning these things consult the processes in Boerhaave's chymistry ; and Rieger's excellent work on natural and artificial substances, in the articles antimony and chermes mineral. Dr. Huxam's Dissertation on Antimony is likewise highly worth perusal. So that native or crude antimony hath a power to attenuate viscid lentor in the blood and juices, mildly and gradually ; and consequently to open obstructions in the viscera gently and safely. But its acrid preparations exert a most violently stimulating force in the alimentary passage, in such a degree as, if not used with great caution, to prove poisonous and fatal. The stimulating power highly encreases the attenuating of antimony ; and excites, as hath been said, vomiting and diarrhæa, operating likewise by sweat and urine ; and stirring up every moveable humor. Thus much of antimony ; let us pass to mercury.

Mercury or quicksilver, when crude, (but purified) if either swallowed down, or applied outwardly to the skin, dissolved in an ointment, makes its way into the blood ;
whereby

whereby its weight, which exceeds that of every known substance, gold excepted, and the extreme divisibility of its particles, most powerfully dissolves, and, as it were, melts down the blood and juices ; and, if used in sufficient quantity, and long enough, raises salivation. In the alimentary passage it kills worms. It seems to be void of all acrimony ; unless sharp corrosive salts are joined to, and united with it. But if this crude mercury dissolved in aqua fortis, spirit of nitre, or oil of vitriol ; and the aqueous part of the menstruum is evaporated, the remaining dry calx becomes highly corrosive and poisonous ; the acid spicula, which are very fixed, being left intimately united with the mercurial globules. This same calx, if sublimed, by the means of sea-salt added to it, likewise becomes highly acrimonious, and is called corrosive sublimate ; and even in small doses is a deadly poison ; as is too well known. But if mercury dissolved in aqua fortis is precipitated by throwing sea-salt into solution ; and the powder that subsides to the bottom is sufficiently sweetened by frequent ablutions with warm water ; a mild preparation is obtained, called white precipitate ;

precipitate ; which is divested of the far greatest part of the corrosive salts of the menstruum. This Boerhaave seems to prefer to every other preparation of mercury for inward use. See his Chymisty Process CXCVIth.

Sweet mercury, or calomel, is the corrosive sublimate above-mentioned, seven times sublimed ; but with a considerable addition of crude mercury, after the first sublimation. By this operation so often repeated, the acids of the menstruum are so much dissipated, or so much broken, as to leave it mild and free from acrimony.

Now if either white precipitate, or calomel, or any other preparation, sufficiently safe and effectual, be thoroughly united to a proper antimonial medicine, in a due proportion, the composition will possess the combined virtues of mercury and antimony ; which are by no means incompatible with one another, but agree in a friendly manner ; and even are respectively encreased by their union. They both have a dissolving and attenuating power. But the antimonial productions have more of the stimulus,

mulus, the mercurial (I speak of the milder and safer sorts) more ponderosity, together with great divisibility of particles. And therefore, when joined together, and closely united, they will, it is highly probable, produce greater effects in the animal body, by dividing, and subduing lentor, and fitting it for expulsion, than either of them could have done separately.

Since then the Fever Powder is, according to our supposition, compounded of mercury and antimony, prepared in a certain manner, and closely united together, it appears from what hath been said, that its virtues in fevers have a tendency to divide and attenuate febrile lentor, and expel it out of the body; and so bring on a kind of artificial crisis, quicker than the natural; favourable, and salutary to the patient. And, to prove it actually does so, its celebrated author adduces numerous instances.

But as there is an endless variety of fevers; as their symptoms are manifold, and the different stages of the same fever require, in some measure, different treatment,
it

it is evident that no one medicine, however differently managed, can be proper in every kind of fever, in every stage; and preferably to every other remedy: and therefore, that a variety of rules and admonitions is requisite to direct the practitioner in the way of using it.

The ingenious author hath indeed given many such; to which, as I write chiefly to those of the profession, give me leave to add some more; which I hope, you will, candid reader, join with me in thinking not un-
useful.

And first, let me lay it down as a maxim, that rough and churlish medicines, especially of the mineral kind, ought not to be given in order to conquer diseases, which we know can be cured by much milder and safer methods. The brisker antimonial preparations derive their efficacy from the reguline part; which, as we have already observed, is a-kin to white arsenic. And the mildest mercurial medicines cannot but act pretty violently both upon our solids and fluids; as mercury is fourteen times heavier than our blood, while at the same time, its particles are so easily

easily divisible. And the united powers of the two, as hath been shown, are greater, than when they are separated.

From this position the following corollary may be fairly drawn, to wit, that the celebrated Fever Powder should not be given in acute distempers, unless there is some remarkable appearance of danger; and not till after some other remedies appropriated to the case in hand, such as have the sanction of long experience, have had a tolerable fair trial.

If this rule is not followed, as fevers of some kind or other are so very frequent in all ages and conditions; much hurt must be done to mankind upon the whole, however now and then individuals may be benefitted. For the Fever Powder will often be given in slight cases; and sometimes in large quantities: and two minerals unfriendly to animal nature will be thrown into our bodies in diseases, where the constitution, with proper diet, or perhaps the assistance of a very few safe, and gentle means, might have done the whole business. And though these

rough medicines should work the cure, yet, by violently changing the juices, and shocking the solids, they may, without doubt, hurt the constitution; as sharp lees, though they scour and cleanse linen completely well, yet by their searching and half corrosive nature, weaken and tender it, and wear it out, much sooner than soap, or saponaceous substances would do. Violent remedies are then to be avoided in slight diseases; nor should the axe be employed, where the pen-knife might do the needful.

But another reason, and that, in my opinion not a slight one, might be assigned why the Powder should not be given in fevers without some remarkable appearance of danger; which is, that fevers are often produced by seeds lurking in the body, for some considerable time before; and at length bursting forth. In such cases, the fever is nature's chief, and best instrument, by which the morbid juices are concocted, and changed into a healthy state; either without sensible evacuation, or, which often happens, by means of critical sweats, flux of urine, vomitings, diarrhæa, &c. But, in order to bring about such a salutary change, some certain duration

duration of the fever is requisite, longer or shorter, according to the greater or lesser obstinacy of the morbid matter. Nor ought nature to be either retarded, or hurried and spurred on in her work, without a good reason. But, if danger shews not itself, there can be no good reason for giving a medicine composed of two powerful minerals, unfriendly to animal nature, with an intention to force a crisis in a few hours, which there are good grounds to hope, will come of its own accord ; or by the use of safer or milder means, in due time.

We see many persons, after long and smart fevers, recover a better state of health, than they had enjoyed for several years before. But is that salutary effect to be equally expected, if the fever is cut short by an artificial crisis ? I own that long and malignant fevers often leave dismal complaints behind them ; which probably might have been prevented, had the fever been shortened by art. But the middle way is the safest. Fevers are neither to be stifled sooner than enough ; nor suffered to run out into too great lengths, if it is in our power to stop them.

Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique
 fines,
 Quos ultra citruque nequit consistere
 rectum.

These arguments are so much the stronger, the more certainly the powder is said to accelerate a salutary crisis. The author narrates many histories of cases, in which his medicine snatched patients from the very jaws of death. May not then its exhibition be put off; or rather ought it not, according to the rules of common prudence, to be put off, until the disease resists milder and safer means; and danger begins to show itself?

Moreover, such often is the operation of the Powder; and such is the manner of giving it, as directed by the author, that, while it is using, there is scarce any room left for other remedies; except those two, which he advises to be administered along with it; to wit, an opening clyster once a-day, when the body is costive; and acrid cataplasms to be applied to the feet, in case the head be violently affected. He directs first half a paper to be given: and if that brings on no change,

change, in the space of two hours, then another half paper. If in eight hours time, reckoning from the exhibition of the first dose, still no change appears, a whole paper is ordered to be continued every eight hours, until either some sensible evacuation is effected ; as vomiting, stools, or sweating ; or until the fever and its symptoms vanish, or are much abated, without any evacuation ; which, he says, often happens. You see that, while this course is going on, there is little or no room left for interposing any effectual remedies ; except these already mentioned. Can the prudent physician, who values the safety of his patient, and his own reputation, venture to let blood freely ; give emetics, cathartics, and sudorifics ; or use any other powerful means, while there are two or three papers of the Powders in the patient's bowels, or perhaps many more ; If he should run that risk, and the sick person die, would not his friends and the by-standers say, and perhaps with good reason, that the physician killed him, by thwarting and disturbing the operation of the famous Powder ?

From all which, it plainly follows, that the Powder ought not to be given in fevers,
till

till danger appears ; after other remedies, which long experience hath shown to be salutary in similar cases, have been tried. If it is given sooner, and followed out, according to the author's directions, it must in a manner be solely confided in for the cure, and almost every other remedy, found by daily experience, beneficial in acute diseases, when skilfully administered, must be slighted ; as saline juleps, spirit of mindererus, nitre, camphire, saffron, castor, cinnabar of antimony, chermes mineral, peruvian bark, &c. But this, if I have any judgment, would be laying too great a stress upon any one remedy whatsoever ; and paying too little deference to the skill, experience, and integrity of a cloud of illustrious physicians. If the patient so treated should die, I doubt the unhappy doctor would be hard set to defend himself against such expostulations as these : “ Do we not
 “ see numberless persons get over fevers of
 “ the worst kind daily, without taking Dr.
 “ James's Powder ; through the manifest
 “ good effects of other medicines in com-
 “ mon practice, many of whom, were in
 “ appearance, as ill, or worse, before they
 “ had any assistance at all, than your unfor-
 “ tunate patient was, when he begun to
 “ take

“ take the Fever Powder ? He took many
 “ papers of it, according to your, and the
 “ inventor’s direction ; but all in vain ; and
 “ there was scarce any other remedy of
 “ moment used. How could you be certain
 “ he might not have recovered, if he had
 “ been treated in the common regular way ?
 “ Why then did you enter upon, and per-
 “ sist in a method, which scarce allows
 “ any other remedies to be interposed ; and
 “ by so doing, deprived him of the benefit
 “ of many powerful means, the salutary
 “ effects of which, in analogous cases, have
 “ been confirmed by the experience and
 “ testimony of ages ?” I say, if such an ac-
 cufation was urged, I am at a loss to ap-
 prehend what sensible reply the poor culprit
 could make in his own defence ; supposing
 he had begun to give the Fever Powder, and
 persisted in the use of it, before remarkable
 danger appeared.

Having then established it as a general
 rule, that the Powder ought not to be given
 in Fevers (at least so as not to depend upon
 it principally for the cure) till remarkable
 danger appears, we proceed to give some
 more particular admonitions concerning its
 use in acute diseases ; and shall touch upon
 its

its effects in chronical complaints last of all.

Fevers or febrile distempers may be commodiously divided into three great classes; to wit, intermittents, commonly so called, the continual, and hectic fevers.

With respect to intermittents, the author candidly owns, that the Powder is not so effectual in them, as in the confirmed kind. As therefore we are already possessed of so sovereign a remedy against them, to wit, the peruvian bark, and as able physicians have found out, and taught the various ways of using it to the best advantage, it will be very seldom necessary to call in the Fever Powder to its assistance. But, that I may conceal nothing, I apprehend it may probably be useful in particular cases, when the intermitting is upon the point of being changed into a continual. For that state is always in some degree dangerous. But it requires no small prudence to manage properly so rough a remedy in so ticklish a juncture. As I have made no particular observations of this kind, I shall say no more on the head.

The

The author is silent concerning its effects, or use in hectic fevers ; for which he merits praise. For in this kind, the blood and juices derived from it, are too thin, and too much dissolved, being not enough acted upon by the energy of life in the viscera, which is here impaired ; or haunted by a tabid or purulent disposition ; and therefore medicines, composed of antimony and mercury, are to be here dreaded and avoided like poisons. For their effects tend to dissolve and thin the humors still more, which are already too thin, and too much dissolved : and weaken farther the solids, which are already too weak ; and to excite colloquative sweats and diarrhæa, which the disease itself is too apt to bring on.

There remains then only the class of continued fevers, in which the Fever Powder can be remarkably useful ; which, that our doctrine may be the more distinct, we shall subdivide into different ranks.

The first comprehends those, in which, at the approach of the fever, the body and its juices were pure ; the fault lying principally in their too great motion ; and its im-

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mediate

mediate effects. Such fevers arise from errors in the non-naturals. Ephemera is the slightest species of them; and the ardent fever may be reckoned the most violent.

The second is that, in which there is a local circumscribed inflammation. Most of the species receive their appellation from the inflamed part, as pleuritis, phrenitis, peripneumonia, hepatitis, &c. In these the blood is so hot, and tense, first obstructing, and in its progress destroying the small vessels of the affected part.

The third class may be called eruptive, containing those feverish disorders, in which spots appear; as the small-pox, measles, the miliary, erysipelatous, scarlet fevers, &c.

The fourth comprehends those which are truly putrid; the blood and juices being sharp, dissolved, and gangrenous. In such fevers, hemorrhages of various kinds; and mortifications appear. To this class the goal, and hospital fever may be reduced.

The fifth contains the slow or nervous kind: in which the blood is neither dense and inflammatory; nor sharp and putrid; the
thinnest

thinnest animal fluids, and particularly the nervous juice, seem here to be principally affected.

The sixth class is that of pituitous or catarrhal fevers; in which there abounds a viscid rosy lentor, stopping the small pulmonary vessels. Peripneumonia notha is the general name for such fevers. They are commonly brought on by catching of cold.

Under the seventh and last class may be ranged all the epidemical anomalous fevers from the slightest to the most malignant and pestilential kinds, not properly reducible under the foregoing heads; which being infinitely various, and so often putting on new appearances, cannot be enumerated, much less divided into distinct species.

As such diseases are either already past, or have not yet made their appearance, for I know of no uncommon epidemic fever stirring in this neighbourhood, now while I am writing; I can have but little to say concerning the use of the Fever Powder in this last class. Let me only observe in general, that if there should appear hereafter a new dangerous fever, resisting the common methods of cure, that bid fairest for carrying

it off, I should not hesitate to have recourse to the Fever Powder; but with this reserve, that the symptoms of the new disease did not contraindicate the principal and leading virtues of mercury and antimony. This will be better understood by what shall be said anon. Proceed we then to consider the other classes.

But let us first recommend one general rule, to wit, that the Fever Powder is not to be given where it appears, that the mass of blood and juices is too thin, and too much dissolved. For as it is compounded of antimony and mercury, it will thin and dissolve them further. And whatever advantage may be expected from its febrifuge virtue, will, it is justly to be feared, be out-weighed by the harm it may do in this respect.

By this rule the use of the powder is excluded from the whole fourth class of febrile distempers; in which a putrid gangrenous disposition prevails; where hemorrhages and mortifications demonstrate the broken state of the red globules. Dr. Huxam hath treated excellently of such fevers, as he hath done of most others; and shown that acids, and astringent, with a mixture of antiseptic aromatics,

aromatics, as elixir of vitriol, rough red wines, peruvian bark, &c. are principally to be depended upon for their cure. Who then but the ignorant or mad, would venture to give antimonial and mercurial medicines in such a state of blood and humors? They have a power of changing even sound juices into a putrid liquamen: much more easily will they render them worse, if already tainted that way.

By the same rule it must be refrained from in the black kind of small-pox, as Sydenham calls it; where the blood is in a putrid gangrenous state.

From which it follows, that its use is not adviseable in order to remove any symptom, either of acute or chronic distempers, which is caused by a general over-thin and dissolved state of humors; as for example; in an obstinate colliquative diarrhæa. If any antimonial preparation were proper in such cases, it would be the vitrum ceratum; as it wants the mercurial addition; and at the same time is guarded with wax, which wonderfully corrects the poisonous nature of the glass of antimony; and renders it tollerable to the bowels. But even that I should not choose
to

to direct in a colliquative flux ; if I could possibly do without.

Let us then take a short view of the remaining classes of the febrile diseases, in which the Fever Powder may be supposed useful.

In the first class, which consists of such as attack clean constitutions, with sound juices ; where the principal fault lies in their too great motion, and its immediate effects. In this, class, I say, there seems to be much less need of the Fever Powder, than in several other kinds ; because the remedies already commonly known, if seasonably and skilfully administered, will almost always sufficiently answer. And as such fevers are probably the most frequent of any, it would for reasons already given, be detrimental to mankind, if it should become quite fashionable to give antimonial and mercurial medicines in them, without a sufficient reason ; that is before danger appears. Blood-letting, rest, warmth, dilution, saline juleps, opening the body if costive, and other easy and safe remedies, known to every practitioner, with proper diet, ought to be fairly tried, before recourse is had to such rough means. But if either through neglect of proper methods in the beginning,

beginning, or their not proving successful, danger shows itself, I should not be against giving the Fever Powder, according to the author's directions.

With respect to the second class, to wit, fevers attended with local inflammation, it is well known that free repeated blood-letting, with a low, thin, diluting diet, and safe attenuating medicines, external and internal, are the principal remedies. But if these, notwithstanding the inflammation, continues obstinate, I doubt not, but the Fever Powder may be given with advantage between hands, in small doses. However, I incline to believe, that chermes mineral is here preferable to the Fever Powder; because it contains no mercury. It was a celebrated medicine in inflammatory cases, before the secret was purchased at the royal expence, and made public, long before the Fever Powder was known; and I should with less hesitation advise a proper antimonial preparation, than any mercurial one, where the pulse is full and hard; and the lentor of the blood tough; resisting the knife like leather. The great weight of mercury may here sometimes prove hurtful; by raising the pulse before the viscidty is diminished.

In

In the third class, to wit, that of eruptive fevers, I shall only touch upon the small-pox ; having nothing at present to communicate, worth the reader's while, concerning the other species. And first, at the beginning of the eruption, if the fever and its symptoms are violent, and the pustules threaten to be of a very bad kind ; after once bleeding, I should venture to recommend either Boerhaave's prescriptions already mentioned, or the Fever Powder, with a view to assuage the inflammatory disposition of the blood ; and change the pustules into a milder kind. But great delicacy and caution is required here.

But if the Powder promise signal benefit in any stage, or any juncture of the small-pox, it is, in our opinion, on the 11th day of the disease, according to Sydenham's computation, in the confluent kind ; when the saliva, that till then flowed copiously, now becomes thick and viscid, threatening fatal consequences from its suppression. “ Whence
 “ matters come to such a pass, (these are
 “ his own words) that the afflicted patient
 “ is in danger of being suffocated every mo-
 “ ment ; lies overwhelmed with stupor, and
 “ pinched

“ pinched breathing on all sides.” In such
 cases, that great and worthy physician some-
 times gave an emetic with success ; and that
 in a larger dose than common ; because, says
 he, “ A lesser one will not operate upon the
 “ account of the extraordinary stupor ; and
 “ at the same time, by stirring humors,
 “ which it cannot effectually bring up, may
 “ throw the patient into great danger of his
 “ life.” The vomit he used was tincture
 of crocus metallorum, to the quantity of an
 ounce and a half. But hear, candid reader,
 what he says further on the same subject.
 “ We cannot altogether depend even upon
 “ this remedy ; and, which is truly lament-
 “ able, we want a more certain one, to con-
 “ quer this most direful symptom, which
 “ alone, by its fatal agency, destroys almost
 “ every one, that dies of the confluent small-
 “ pox on the 11th day.” This defect in
 our Instrumenta Medendi, of which, if I
 am not mightily mistaken, will be better
 supplied by the Fever Powder, than by any
 other remedy we are acquainted with, if
 given in due time, and in sufficient quantity.
 For it is, as I have seen in several instances,
 the most effectual of all medicines to atte-
 nuate viscid phlegm, stuffing the throat and
 F lungs ;

lungs ; and render it fit to be expectorated. But of this its peculiar virtue we shall say more by and by, when we come to consider catarrhal fevers.

In the abovementioned state, which is so extremely ticklish and dangerous, I would direct half a paper of the Powder to be given every two hours (to a grown person) and if, in four hours space, no change for the better appears, a whole paper at the same distances of time, till some relief is procured. There is no time to be lost here. For, if the patient is not somewhat better that very day ; or, at least, if his uneasiness cease not to increase, all is over with him. I wonder the very acute and learned author did not more particularly advert to this. He has indeed, something in his short section on the small-pox, which seems to bear an affinity to what hath been said ; but not full and distinct enough for the importance of the subject.

We pass next to the slow, or nervous kind of fevers, which constitute the fifth class ; concerning which, for want of observations, I can say but very little, that relates to the use of the Powder. But as these fevers
some-

sometime spin out to very great length, if, after trying the methods in common practice ineffectually, danger is prognosticated either from the malignity of the symptoms, or the long continuance of the fever, I should not scruple to give the Powder between hands along with other means, in small doses; for we have time enough; with an intention to quicken the crisis, which otherwise might be overflow. This method I should the more willingly pursue, that such fevers, by running out into a very great length, often leave dismal calamities behind them, as palsy, settled melancholy, &c. And I should here clearly prefer the Fever Powder to chermes mineral, or any other antimonial preparation, in which there is no mercury. For, as in this kind the pulse is generally weak, small, and thready, mercury joined to antimony seems to promise benefit, by encreasing the impetus of the circulation, and momentum of the fluids; by penetrating into the smallest vessels where the lentor resides, and there attenuating and dissolving it; thus promoting and accelerating a salutary crisis. Accordingly cinnabar of antimony, which contains mercury, is not unfrequently used in slow fevers. But the Fever Powder will, in

my judgment, answer the end just now mentioned much more effectually.

It remains for us to consider catarrhal fevers, which are commonly brought on by catching of cold ; and attended with cough, and a great quantity of mucous, ropy phlegm, stuffing the throat and lungs. Peripneumonia notha, as hath been said, is the general name for all this class, that rise to any remarkable degree of violence and danger ; and is described by Sydenham with his usual accuracy. But for the cure, what Boerhaave, and his commentator, Vansweeten, have said upon the subject, should be consulted ; and likewise the excellent Doctor Huxam's Essays on Fevers. In this distemper, if after proper bleeding, blistering and purging, after the exhibition of the most powerful expectorating medicines in common practice, still phlegm continues to be heaped in the lungs, and threatens suffocation, and a mortal rattling ; recourse must be had to antimonials. I heartily assent to what the last mentioned author says, concerning his essence of antimony, and agree with him in preferring it to all or most preparations solely antimonial ; but it wants the mercurial

rial adjunct. As therefore at a dead lift, I should chiefly trust to the Powder in catarrhal fevers. In three cases, where I attended, I saw most surprising and almost miraculous success from its exhibition ; such success as I could not have believed, had I not been an eye-witness. This my duty obliges me publicly to declare. And I cannot help thinking, but the addition of mercury to the antimony contributes to render it so effectual in thinning, and dissolving catarrhal viscosity. And, as far as my observations have gone, the Fever Powder seems more wonderfully and more certainly to operate in such cases, than in any other. I have seen it fail more than once in delirium, though it was given four or five days before the patient died ; though it was given often and in large doses ; though it operated briskly either by sweat or stools ; and sometimes both ways. I have seen it fail in a comatous stupor, though it was given neither sparingly, nor very late in the distemper. But I never found it miss in catarrhal fevers, if there was any foundation of hope left.

Dr. Young, in his very acute and useful Treatise on opium, finds repeated small bleedings to be the chief remedy in the peripneumonia

ripneumonia notha of old persons. If therefore the Fever Powder can supersede the losing of blood, in a considerable measure, at an age where it ought to be husbanded, which I am convinced it may, is it not a commendable medicine?

This is the small light I am able at present to throw upon the operation and virtues of the noted Fever Powder in acute diseases. I shall dispatch in a very few words what I have to say concerning its use in chronic disorders. A penury of observations, and solid principles to reason upon, prevents me from being fuller.

Since the Fever Powder, as hath been said, does wonders in catarrhal fevers, by thinning the tough pituitous matter, that stuffs the lungs, and thereby preventing imminent suffocation, it must certainly be an excellent medicine in the humoral asthma, both in the fits (which are sometimes very long) and in the intervals between them. For, if it is given with great success in fevers, where there is an infarction of the lungs, and a difficulty of breathing, I can see no objection against trying it in an humoral asthma, where there
is

is no stated fever. And even if there should be something spasmodic, or convulsive in the case, I think it may be safely given, mixt with cephalics. The prudent practitioner will easily know how to adapt the manner of exhibition, to the circumstances of the case. The unskilful never can meddle in affairs of this kind without danger.

The author hath shown by many instances that it is a powerful remedy against chronic rheumatism. And I am certainly informed, that, in our navy, it is used with great success in that distemper. And no wonder ; for as rheumatism is caused by a viscid lentor in the serum or lymph, somewhat approaching to inflammatory nature, with an acrimonious taint ; obstructing and gnawing the small vessels of the joints, and other parts ; what can bid fairer for dissolving the morbid matter ; and fitting it for being expelled out of the body, than a medicine compounded of antimony and mercury ; which, for the most part, operates by sensible evacuation ; and sometimes seems to do its office by insensible discharges ? But let it be a constant rule always to recommend a prudent regimen while the powder is taken ;
and

and direct abstinence from acids, temperance, and care not to catch cold. Constitutions are very different ; though some are hard, and scarce to be moved by the roughest medicines ; others are delicate, and may be disordered by the slightest causes. And the same constitutions differ very much at different times.

Before I conclude, let me observe that powerful and valuable medicines, especially while they are new, have always had, and always will have both unreasonable enemies, and rash unenlightened admirers, and partisans. That therefore, it is the duty of physicians to distinguish between truth and falsehood ; between extravagant praises, and groundless prejudices : at the same time taking care that mankind is not defrauded of useful remedies. And if even the most skilful and experienced practitioners are often at a loss to pass a right judgment on the effect of medicines, which is most certainly the case ; so that it can very seldom be in the power of strangers to the profession so to do. And therefore, it is incumbent on the latter to think and speak modestly and diffidently concerning matters of this kind. But, above
all

all to be cautious in advising and directing the exhibition of brisk and churlish medicines; lest, while they charitably intend a benefit, they do their neighbour irreparable damage.

F I N I S.



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