

disorders, being in all cases an excellent auxiliary to the preparations of quicksilver, especially in inveterate states of the disease.

One of the most unfortunate circumstances attending patients in this disease, is the necessity they are often laid under of hurrying the cure. This induces them to take medicine too fast, and to leave it off too soon. To avoid this, we would advise, that the patient should never leave off taking medicine immediately upon the disappearing of the symptoms, but continue it for some time after, gradually lessening the quantity, till there is sufficient ground to believe that the disease is entirely eradicated.

It is not only difficult, but absolutely impossible, to ascertain the exact degree of virulence that may attend the disease; for which reason it will always be a much safer rule to continue the use of medicine too long, than to leave it off too soon.

It is peculiarly unfortunate for the cure of this disease, that not one in ten of those who contract it are either able or willing to submit to a proper plan of regimen. The patient is willing to take medicine; but he must follow his business, and, to prevent suspicions, he must eat and drink like the rest of the family. This is the true source of nine-tenths of all the mischief arising from the venereal disease. I never knew the cure attended with any great difficulty or danger where the patient strictly followed the physician's advice; but a volume would not be sufficient to point out the dreadful consequences which proceed from an opposite conduct. Schirrous testicles, ulcerous sore throats, madness, consumptions, carious bones, and a rotten progeny, are a few of the blessings derived from this source.

CHAP. XLVIII.

DISEASES OF WOMEN.

WOMEN, in all civilized nations, have the management of domestic affairs, and it is very proper they should, as Nature has made them less fit for the more active and laborious employments. This indulgence, however, is generally carried too far; and females, instead of being benefited by it, are greatly injured, from the want of exercise and free air. To be satisfied of this, one need only compare the fresh and ruddy looks of a milk maid with the pale complexion of those females whose whole time is spent within doors. Though Nature has made an evident distinction between the male and the female with regard to bodily strength and vigour, yet she certainly never meant, either that the one should be always without, or the other always within doors.

The confinement of females, besides hurting their figure and complexion, relaxes their solids, weakens their minds, and disorders all the

functions of the body. Hence proceed obstructions, indigestion, flatulence, abortions, and the whole train of nervous disorders. These not only unfit women for being mothers and nurses, but often render them whimsical and ridiculous. A sound mind depends so much upon a healthy body, that where the latter is wanting, the former is rarely to be found.

I have always observed, that women who were chiefly employed without doors, in the different branches of husbandry, gardening, and the like, were almost as hardy as their husbands, and that their children were likewise strong and healthy. We shall proceed to point out those circumstances in the structure and design of females, which subject them to peculiar diseases; the chief of which are, their monthly evacuations, pregnancy, and child-bearing. These indeed cannot properly be called diseases, but, from the delicacy of the sex, and their being often improperly managed in such situations, they become the source of numerous calamities: therefore females whose circumstances will permit, should be under the direction of a skilful physician, on whose advice the patient ought with confidence to rely.

OF THE MENSTRUAL DISCHARGE.

FEMALES generally begin to menstruate about the age of fifteen, and leave it off about fifty, which renders these two periods the most critical of their lives. About the first appearance of this discharge, the constitution undergoes a very considerable change, generally indeed for the better, though sometimes for the worse. The greatest care is now necessary, as the future health and happiness of the female depend in a great measure upon her conduct at this period.

It is the duty of mothers, and those who are entrusted with the education of girls, to instruct them early in the conduct and management of themselves at this critical period of their lives. False modesty, inattention, and ignorance of what is beneficial or hurtful at this time, are the sources of many diseases and misfortunes in life, which a few sensible lessons from an experienced matron might have prevented. Nor is care less necessary in the subsequent returns of this discharge. Taking improper food, violent affections of the mind, or catching cold at this period, is often sufficient to ruin the health, or to render the female ever after incapable of procreation.

If a girl about this time of life be confined to the house, kept constantly sitting, and neither allowed to romp about, nor employed in any active business which gives exercise to the whole body, she becomes weak, relaxed, and puny; her blood not being duly prepared, she looks pale and wan; her health, spirits, and vigour decline, and she sinks into a valetudinarian for life. Such is the fate of numbers of those unhappy females, who, either from too much indulgence, or their own narrow circumstances, are, at this critical period, denied the benefit of exercise and free air.

eaten up by the chlorosis, or green-sickness, and other diseases of the nature. Chlorosis is a disease often difficult to remove, and frequently degenerates into a fatal consumption; we therefore recommend it to all who wish to escape these calamities, to avoid indolence and inactivity as their greatest enemies, and to be as much abroad in the open air as possible. The patient should have medicines of the alterative, aperient, attenuating kind, assisted by a diet of the lightest animal food, broths full of vegetables, light puddings, water, or small beer, without wine.

Another thing which proves very hurtful to girls about this period of life, is unwholesome food. Fond of all manner of trash, they often indulge in it, till their whole humours are quite vitiated. Hence ensue indigestions, want of appetite, and a numerous train of evils. If the fluids be not duly prepared, it is utterly impossible that the secretions should go properly on. Accordingly we find, that such girls as lead an indolent life, and eat great quantities of trash, are not only subject to obstructions of menses, but likewise to glandular obstructions; as the scrophula or king's evil, &c.

A dull disposition is also very hurtful to girls at this period. It is a rare thing to see a sprightly girl who does not enjoy good health, while the grave, moping, melancholy creature, proves the prey of vapours and hysterics. Youth is the season of mirth and cheerfulness. Let it therefore be indulged. It is an absolute duty. To lay in a stock of health in time of youth is as necessary a piece of prudence, as to make provision against the decays of old age. While, therefore, wise Nature prompts the happy youth to join in sprightly amusements, let not the severe dictates of hoary age forbid the useful impulse, nor damp with serious gloom, the season destined to mirth and innocent festivity.

After a female has arrived at that period of life when the menses usually begin to flow, and they do not appear, but, on the contrary, her health and spirits begin to decline, we would advise her being placed in a situation where she can enjoy the benefit of free air and agreeable company. There let her eat wholesome food, take sufficient exercise, and amuse herself in the most agreeable manner; and we have little reason to fear, but Nature, thus assisted, will do her proper work. Indeed she seldom fails, unless where the fault is on our side.

This discharge in the beginning is seldom so instantaneous as to surprise females unawares. It is generally preceded by symptoms which foretel its approach; as a sense of heat, weight, and dull pain in the loins; distention and hardness of the breasts; head-ach; loss of appetite; lassitude; paleness of the countenance; and sometimes a slight degree of fever. When these symptoms appear about the age at which the menstrual flux usually begins, every thing should be carefully avoided which may obstruct that necessary and salutary evacuation; and all means used to promote it, as sitting frequently over the steams of warm water, drinking warm diluting liquors, &c.

After the menses have once begun to flow, the greatest care should be taken to avoid every thing that may tend to obstruct them. Females ought to be exceeding cautious of what they eat or drink at the time they are out of order. Every thing that is cold, or apt to sour on the stomach, ought to be avoided; as fruit, butter-milk, and such like. Fish, and all kinds of food that are hard of digestion, are also to be avoided. As it is impossible to mention every thing that may disagree with in

dividuals at this time, we would recommend it to every female to be very attentive to what disagrees with herself, and carefully to avoid it.

Cold is extremely hurtful at this particular period. More of the ser date their diseases from colds, caught while they are out of order, than from all other causes. A degree of cold that will not in the least hurt them at another time, will at this period be sufficient entirely to ruin their health and constitution.

The greatest attention ought likewise to be paid to the mind, which should be kept as easy and cheerful as possible. Every part of the animal economy is influenced by the passions, but none more so than this. Anger, fear, grief, and other affections of the mind, often occasion obstructions of the menstrual flux, which prove absolutely incurable.

From whatever cause this flux is obstructed, except in the state of pregnancy, proper means should be used to restore it. For this purpose we would recommend sufficient exercise in a dry, open, and rather cool air; wholesome diet, and, if the body be weak and languid, generous liquors; also cheerful company and all manner of amusements. If these fail, recourse must be had to medicine, especially of the strengthening and antispasmodic kind: moderate exercise, bleeding, and electricity, by the assistance of the warm bath, then a temperate, and afterwards the cold bath, may complete the cure.

When obstructions proceed from a weak relaxed state of the solids, such medicines as tend to promote digestion, to brace the solids, and assist the body in preparing good blood, ought to be used. The principal of these are iron and Peruvian bark, with other bitter and astringent medicines. Filings of iron may be infused in wine or ale, two or three ounces to an English quart, and after it has stood for two or three weeks it may be filtered, and about half a wine-glass of it taken twice a-day: or prepared steel may be taken in the dose of half a drachm, mixed with a little honey or treacle, three or four times a-day. The cinchona and other bitters may either be taken in substance or infusion, as is most agreeable to the patient. This discharge does not at its commencement observe very regular periods of return, but appears only once in two or three months, and afterwards oftener, till at last the habit of a regular monthly return is established.

When obstructions proceed from a viscid state of the blood, or for women of a gross or full habit, exercise, evacuations, and such medicines as attenuate the humours, are necessary. The patient in this case ought to be bled, to bathe her feet frequently in warm water, to take now and then a cooling purge, and to live upon a spare thin diet. Her drink should be whey, water, or small beer, and she ought to take sufficient exercise. A tea-spoonful of the tincture of black hellebore may also be taken twice a-day in a cup of warm water. Warmth in the feet is of great service at the time of menstruation, and cold very injurious; nay, the menses are often suddenly stopped by the coldness of the feet.

When obstructions proceed from affections of the mind, as grief, fear, anger, &c. every method should be taken to amuse and divert the patient. And that she may the more readily forget the cause of her affliction, she ought, if possible, to be removed from the place where it happened. A change of place, by presenting the mind with a variety of new objects, has often a very happy influence in relieving it from the

deepest distress. A soothing, kind, and affable behaviour to females in this situation is also of the last importance.

An obstruction of the menses is often the effect of other maladies. When this is the case, instead of giving medicines to force that discharge which might be dangerous, we ought by all means to endeavour to restore the patient's health and strength. When that is affected, the other will return of course. The power of mineral waters, especially those of Bath, in promoting the menstrual discharge, is pretty generally known.

A frequent cough, a quick pulse, and difficulty of respiration, are symptoms usually attending a total absence or unfrequent return of the menstrual discharge, consequently these symptoms alone are not indicative of danger; but if the cough, instead of being only occasional, be constant, accompanied with weight and pain in the chest, and an increased secretion of mucus, particularly in the morning; if, with a palid countenance, there be a circumscribed spot of florid colour in the cheek; if there be on the present occasion, or if she has formerly been liable to a spitting of blood; and if not only debility but emaciation attend these symptoms now, there is cause for alarm respecting the state of the lungs, especially if the general structure, and general or hereditary temperament, give her a predisposition to pulmonary consumption; when such is the case, recourse must be had to the best medical advice without delay.

But the menstrual flux may be too great as well as too small. When this happens, the patient becomes weak, the colour pale, the appetite and digestion are bad, to which œdematous swellings of the feet, dropsies, and consumptions, often ensue. This frequently happens to women about the age of forty-five, or fifty, and is very difficult to cure. It may proceed from a sedentary life; a full diet, consisting chiefly of salted, high-seasoned, or acrid food; the use of spirituous liquors; excessive fatigue; relaxation; a dissolved state of the blood; violent passions of the mind, &c.

The treatment of this disease must be varied according to its cause. When it is occasioned by any error in the patient's regimen, an opposite course to that which induced the disorder must be pursued, and such medicines taken as have a tendency to restrain the flux, and counteract the morbid affections of the system from whence it proceeds.

To restrain the flux, the patient should be kept quiet and easy both in body and mind. If it be very violent, she ought to lie in bed with her head low; to live upon a cool and slender diet, as veal or chicken broths with bread; and to drink decoctions of nettle-roots, or the greater comfrey. If these be not sufficient to stop the flux, stronger astringents may be used, as catechu, alum, elixir of vitriol, the Peruvian bark, &c.

Two drachms of alum and one of catechu may be pounded together, and divided into eight or nine doses, one of which may be taken three times a-day.

Persons whose stomachs cannot bear the alum, may take two table-spoonfuls of the infusion of roses three or four times a-day, to each dose of which ten drops of laudanum may be added.

If these should fail, half a drachm of the Peruvian bark, in powder with ten drops of the diluted vitriolic acid, may be taken in a glass of red wine four times a-day.

The uterine flux may offend in quality as well as in quantity. What is usually called the flour albus, or whites, is a very common disease, and proves extremely hurtful to delicate women. This discharge, however, is not always white, but sometimes pale, yellow, green or of a blackish colour; sometimes it is sharp and corrosive, sometimes foul and fetid, &c. It is attended with a pale complexion, pain in the back, loss of appetite, swelling of the feet, and other signs of debility. It generally proceeds from a relaxed state of the body, arising from indolence, the excessive use of tea, coffee, or other weak and watery diet.

To remove this disease, the patient must take as much exercise as she can bear without fatigue. Her food should be solid and nourishing, but of easy digestion; and her drink rather generous, as red port or claret mixed with Pyrmont, Bristol, or lime water. Tea, coffee, and a costive state of the intestinal canal, are to be avoided. I have often known strong broths have an exceeding good effect, and sometimes a milk diet alone will perform a cure. The patient ought not to lie too long a bed. When medicine is necessary, we know none preferable to the Peruvian bark, which in this case ought always to be taken in substance. In warm weather the cold bath will be of considerable service. It is however generally proper for persons who labour under such complaints, to consult without reserve a candid and intelligent professor of the healing art.

The period of life at which the menses cease to flow is likewise very critical to the sex. The stoppage of any customary evacuation, however small, is sufficient to disorder the whole frame, and often to destroy life: hence it comes to pass that so many women either fall into chronic disorders, or die about this time. Such of them, however, as survive it, without contracting any chronic disease, often become more healthy and hardy than they were before, and enjoy strength and vigour to a very great age.

If the menses cease all of a sudden, in women of a full habit, pains in the stomach, giddiness, flatulence, frequent acid eructations, and pains in the joints resembling rheumatic affections, form a part of the sufferings of the patient; they ought then to abate somewhat of their usual quantity of food, especially of the more nourishing kind, as flesh, eggs, &c. They ought likewise to take sufficient exercise, and to keep the body open. This may be done by taking, once or twice a-week, a little rhubarb, or half an ounce to an ounce of aloetic wine, or five to fifteen grains of the powder of aloes with guaiacum.

It often happens that women of a gross habit, at this period of life, have ulcerous sores break out about their ankles, or in other parts of the body. Such ulcers ought to be considered as critical, and should either be suffered to continue open, or have artificial drains substituted in their stead. Women who will have such sores dried up, are often soon after carried off by acute diseases, or fall into those of a chronic nature. In very relaxed habits, a prolapsus viteri (falling-down of the womb) not unusually happens, which requires the assistance of a skilful surgeon and ought never to be neglected.

OF PREGNANCY.

THOUGH pregnancy is not a disease, yet that state is often attended with a variety of complaints which merit attention, and which sometimes require the assistance of medicine. Some women indeed are more healthy during their pregnancy than at any other time; but this is by no means the general case: most of them breed in sorrow, and are frequently indisposed during the whole time of pregnancy. Few fatal diseases, however, happen during that period; and hardly any, except abortion, that can be called dangerous.

Pregnant women are often afflicted with the heart-burn. The method of treating this complaint has already been pointed out. They are likewise, in the more early periods of pregnancy, often harassed with sickness and vomiting, especially in the morning. The method of relieving these complaints has also been shewn. Both the head-ach and tooth-ach are very troublesome symptoms of pregnancy. The former may generally be removed by keeping the body gently open by the use of prunes, figs, roasted apples, and such like. When the pain is very violent, bleeding may be necessary. For the treatment of the latter, we must refer to that article. Several other complaints incident to pregnant women might be mentioned, as a cough and difficulty of breathing, costiveness, suppression and incontinency of urine, &c.; but as all of these have been taken notice of before, it is needless to repeat them.

Every pregnant woman is more or less in danger of abortion. This should be guarded against with the greatest care, as it not only weakens the constitution, but renders the woman liable to the same misfortune afterwards. Abortion may happen at any period of pregnancy; but it is most common in the second or third month. Sometimes, however, it happens in the fourth or fifth. If it happens within the first month, it is usually called a false conception; if after the seventh month, the child may often be kept alive by proper care.

The common cause of abortion are, the death of the child; weakness or relaxation of the mother; great evacuations; violent exercise; raising great weights; reaching too high; jumping or stepping from an eminence; vomiting; coughing; convulsion fits; blows on the belly; falls; fevers; disagreeable smells; excess of blood; indolence; high living, or the contrary; violent passions or affections of the mind, as fear, grief, &c. The tenesmus to which some pregnant women are subject, and which sometimes occasions abortion, is most speedily relieved by clysters of the oil of almonds, with a few drops of the tincture of opium.

The signs of approaching abortion are, pain in the loins, or about the bottom of the belly; a dull heavy pain in the inside of the thighs; a slight degree of coldness or shivering; sickness; palpitation of the heart: the breasts become flat and soft; the belly falls; and there is a discharge of blood or watery humours from the womb.

To prevent abortion, we would advise women of a weak or relaxed habit to use solid food, avoiding great quantities of tea, and other weak and watery liquors; to rise early and go soon to bed; to shun damp houses; to take frequent exercise in the open air, but to avoid fatigue; and never to go abroad in damp foggy weather, if they can shun it; and to take the electuary of cinchona with a large cupful of lime-water, with which a little milk may be mixed, three times a-day: two or three glasses of port wine may be drank in the course of the day, and she may go into the cold bath, or use the shower bath, once or twice a-week.

Women of a full habit ought to use a spare diet, avoiding strong liquors, and every thing that may tend to heat the body, or increase the quantity of blood. Their diet should be of an opening nature, consisting principally of vegetable substances. Every woman with child ought to be kept cheerful and easy in her mind. Her appetite, even though depraved, ought to be indulged as far as prudence will permit. For restraining hæmorrhage in these cases, the application of cloths dipped in cold water to the back and external parts will have a much better effect than internal astringents, and ought always to be had recourse to; but the most effectual local method of stopping the hæmorrhage is by plugging the vagina. This is best done by taking a pretty large piece of soft cloth, and dipping it in oil, and then wringing it gently; it is to be introduced portion after portion, until the lower part of the vagina be well filled; the remainder is then to be pressed firmly on the orifice, and held there for some time. This gives no pain, produces no irritation, and it acts by giving the effused blood time to coagulate.

To restrain the velocity of the circulation, and promote a determination to the skin, exhibit a quarter to half a grain of the powder of fox-glove with the eighth part of a grain of tartarized antimony every night at bed-time.

Dr. Burns, a professor of midwifery, has observed, that sometimes it is the stomach, not the uterus, which is irritable; and the person is often very sick, takes little food, and digests ill. A small blister applied to the pit of the stomach often relieves this: a little of the compound tincture of cinchona, taken three or four times a-day, is serviceable; or a few drops of muriated iron in a tumbler of water impregnated with fixed air, or in pure water.

When the woman is very restless and feverish, especially if she be of a full habit, immediate relief is given by bleeding, and afterwards she may have for some time, every night, half a grain of the powder of the fox-glove, with two grains of the extract of henbane; but in every species of abortion, and especially in cases requiring the use of such deleterious medicines as we have just mentioned, we earnestly recommend recourse to be had to the best medical assistance that her situation and circumstances permit.

When any signs of abortion appear, the woman ought to be laid in bed on a mattress, with her head low. She should be kept quiet, and her mind soothed and comforted. She ought not to be kept too hot, nor to take any thing of a heating nature. Her food should consist of broths, rice, and milk, jellies, gruels made of oatmeal, and the like, all of which ought to be taken cold.

If she be able to bear it, she should lose at least half a pound of

blood from the arm. Her drink ought to be barley-water sharpened with juice of lemon; or she may take half a drachm of powdered nitre, in a cup of water-gruel, every five or six hours. If the woman be seized with a violent looseness, she ought to drink the decoction of calcined hartshorn prepared. If she be affected with vomiting, let her take frequently two table-spoonfuls of the saline mixture. In general, opiates are of service; but they should always be given with caution.

Sanguine robust women, who are liable to miscarry at a certain time of pregnancy, ought always to be bled a few days before that period arrives. By this means, and observing the regimen above prescribed, they might often escape that misfortune.

Though we recommend due care for preventing abortion, we would not be understood as restraining pregnant women from their usual exercises. This would generally operate the quite contrary way. Want of exercise not only relaxes the body, but induces a plethora, or too great a fulness of the vessels, which are the two principal causes of abortion. There are, however, some women of so delicate a texture, that it is necessary for them to avoid almost every kind of exercise during the whole period of pregnancy.

OF CHILD-BIRTH.

MANY diseases proceed from the want of due care in child-bed, and the more hardy part of the sex are most apt to despise the necessary precautions in this state. This is peculiarly the case with young wives. They think when the labour pains are ended, the danger is over; but in truth it may only then be said to be begun. Nature, if left to herself, will seldom fail to expel the fœtus; but proper care and management are certainly necessary for the recovery of the mother. No doubt mischief may be done by too much as well as by too little care. Hence females who have the greatest number of attendants in child-bed generally recover worst. But this is not peculiar to the state of child-bed. Excessive care always defeats its own intention, and is generally more dangerous than none at all.

Though the management of women in child-bed has been practised as an employment since the earliest accounts of time, yet it is still in most countries on a very bad footing. Few women think of following this employment till they are reduced to the necessity of doing it for bread. Hence not one in a hundred of them have any education, or proper knowledge of their business. It is true, that Nature, if left to herself, will generally expel the fœtus; but it is equally true, that most women in child-bed require to be managed with skill and attention, and that they are often hurt by the superstitious prejudices of ignorant and officious midwives. The mischief done in this way is much greater than is generally imagined, most of which might be prevented by allowing no women to practise midwifery but such as are properly qualified. Were due attention paid to this, it would be the means of saving many lives.

During actual labour, nothing of a heating nature ought to be given. The woman may now and then take a little panado, and her drink ought to be toast and water, or thin groat-gruel. Spirits, wines, cordial waters, and other things which are given with a view to strengthen the mother

and promote the birth, for the most part, tend only to increase the fever, inflame the womb, and retard the labour. Besides, they endanger the woman afterwards, as they often occasion violent and mortal hæmorrhages, or dispose her to eruptive and other fevers.

When the labour proves tedious and difficult, to prevent inflammations, it will be proper to bleed. An emollient clyster ought likewise frequently to be administered, and the patient should sit over the steams of warm water. The passage ought to be gently rubbed with a little soft POMATUM or fresh butter, and cloths wrung out of warm water applied over the belly. If nature seems to sink, and the woman is greatly exhausted with fatigue, a draught of generous wine, a drop or two of the oil of cinnamon on sugar, or some other cordial, may be given, but not otherwise. These directions are sufficient in natural labours; and in all preternatural cases, a skilful surgeon, or man-midwife, ought to be called as soon as possible.

Women who have hard labours, have experienced much benefit by taking repeated doses of the oil of almonds: the best means however of lessening the pains of child-birth are occasioned by blood-letting during the period of gestation; the frequent use of oily purgative lavements, accompanied by a low diet ten or fourteen days before delivery, but especially blood-letting AT THE TIME OF LABOUR, to the extent of thirty, forty, or near fifty ounces, which by diminishing the rigidity of the parts facilitate their distention; so that a lingering labour, which had continued for thirty-six hours, after the free use of the lancet, has speedily finished by the expulsion of the child without the least degree of pain. The severity and frequency of after-pains may be diminished by giving every two, three, or four hours, ten, or if necessary fifteen, or twenty, drops of the TINCTURE OF OPIUM in two or three table-spoonfuls of mint-tea or cinnamon water.

After delivery, the woman ought to be kept as quiet and easy as possible. Take spermaceti dissolved in the yolk of an egg two drachms, compound powder of contrayerva one drachm, purified nitre one scruple, simple syrup one ounce, pennyroyal water seven ounces; make a mixture, of which exhibit three table-spoonfuls every five or six hours; and if pain and restlessness continue long, a few drops of the TINCTURE OF OPIUM may be added to each dose. Her food should be light and thin; as gruel, panado, &c. and her drink weak and diluting. To this rule however there are exceptions: some women cannot be supported in child-bed by an abstemious diet; to such, a glass of wine and a bit of chicken may be allowed.

Sometimes an excessive hæmorrhage or flooding happens after delivery. In this case the patient should be laid with her head low, kept cool, and be in all respects treated as for an excessive flux of the menses. If the flooding proves violent, linen cloths which have been wrung out of a mixture of equal parts of vinegar and water, or red wine, should be applied to the belly, the loins, and the thighs: these must be changed as they grow dry, and may be discontinued as soon as the flooding abates.

In a violent flooding after delivery, I have seen very good effects from the following mixture: Take of pennyroyal water, simple cinnamon water, and syrup of white poppies, each two ounces, elixir of vitriol a

drachm. Mix, and take two table-spoonfuls every two hours or oftener if necessary.

If there be violent pains after delivery, the patient ought to drink plentifully of warm diluting liquors, as groat-gruel, or tea with a little saffron in it; and to take small broths, with carraway-seeds, or a bit of orange peel in them: an ounce of the oil of sweet almonds may likewise be taken in a cup of any of the above liquors; and if the patient be restless, a spoonful of the syrup of white poppies may now and then be mixed with a cup of her drink. If she be hot or feverish, one of the following powders may be taken in a cup of her usual drink every five or six hours. Take of crab claws prepared half an ounce, purified nitre two drachms, saffron powder half a drachm; rub them together in a mortar, and divide the whole into eight or nine doses.

When the patient is low spirited, or troubled with hysterical complaints, she ought to take frequently ten, fifteen, or twenty drops of the tincture of asafetida in a cup of pennyroyal tea.

An inflammation of the womb is a dangerous and not unfrequent disease after delivery. It is known by pains in the lower part of the belly, which are greatly increased upon touching; by the tension or tightness of the parts; great weakness; change of countenance; a constant fever, with a weak and hard pulse; a slight delirium, or raving: sometimes incessant vomiting; a hiccup; a discharge of reddish, stinking, sharp water from the womb; an inclination to go frequently to stool; a heat, and sometimes total suppression of urine.

This must be treated, like other inflammatory disorders, by bleeding and plentiful dilution. The drink may be thin gruel or barley water: in a cup of which half a drachm of nitre may be dissolved, and taken three or four times a-day. Clysters of warm milk and water must be frequently administered: and the belly should be fomented by cloths wrung out of warm water, or by applying bladders filled with warm milk and water to it.

A suppression of the lochia, or usual discharges after delivery, and the milk-fever, must be treated nearly in the same manner as an inflammation of the womb. In all these cases, the safest course is plentiful dilution, gentle evacuations, and fomentations of the parts affected. In the milk-fever, the breasts may be embrocated with a little warm linseed-oil, or the leaves of red cabbage may be applied to them. The child should be often put to the breast, or it should be drawn by some other person.

Nothing would tend more to prevent the milk-fever than putting the child early to the breast. The custom of not allowing children to suck for the first two or three days is contrary to Nature and common sense, and is very hurtful both to the mother and child.

Every mother who has milk in her breast ought either to suckle her own child, or to have her breast frequently drawn, at least for the first month. This would prevent many of the diseases which prove fatal to women in child-bed.

When an inflammation happens in the breast, attended with redness, hardness and other symptoms of suppuration, the safest application is a poultice of bread and milk, softened with oil or fresh butter. This

may be renewed twice a-day, till the tumor be either discussed or brought to suppuration. The use of repellants in this case is very dangerous they often occasion fevers, and sometimes cancers; whereas a suppuration is seldom attended with any danger, and has often the most salutary effects.

When the nipples are fretted or chapt, they may be anointed with a mixture of oil and bees-wax, or a little powdered gum-arabic may be sprinkled on them. I have seen Hungary water applied to the nipples have a very good effect. Should the complaint prove obstinate, a cooling purge may be given, which generally removes it.

The miliary fever is a disease incident to women in child-bed; but as it has been treated of already, we shall take no further notice of it. The celebrated Hoffman observes, That this fever of child-bed women might generally be prevented, if they, during pregnancy, were regular in their diet, used moderate exercise, took now and then a gentle laxative of manna, rhubarb, or cream of tartar; not forgetting to bleed in the first months, and avoid all sharp air. When the labour is coming on it is not to be hastened with forcing medicines, which inflame the blood and humours, or put them into unnatural commotions. Care should be taken, after the birth, that the natural excretions proceed regularly; and if the pulse be quick, a little nitrous powder, or some other cooling medicines, should be administered.

The most fatal disorder consequent upon delivery is the puerperal or child-bed fever. It generally makes its attack upon the second or third day after delivery. Sometimes indeed it comes on sooner, and at other times, though rarely, it does not appear before the fifth or sixth day.

It begins, like most other fevers, with a cold or shivering fit, which is succeeded by restlessness, pain of the head, great sickness at the stomach, and bilious vomiting. The pulse is generally quick, the tongue dry, and there is a remarkable depression of spirits and loss of strength. A great pain is usually felt in the back, hips, and region of the womb; a sudden change in the quantity or quality of the LOCHIA also takes place; and the patient is frequently troubled with a TENESMUS, or constant inclination to go to stool. The urine, which is very high coloured, is discharged in small quantity, and generally with pain. The belly sometimes swells to a considerable bulk, and becomes susceptible of pain from the slightest touch. When the fever has continued for a few days, the symptoms of inflammation usually subside, and the disease acquires a more putrid form. At this period, if not sooner, a bilious or putrid looseness, of an obstinate and dangerous nature, comes on, and accompanies the disease through all its future progress.

There is not any disease that requires to be treated with more skill and attention than this; consequently the best assistance ought always to be obtained as soon as possible. In women of a plethoric constitution, bleeding will generally be proper at the beginning; it ought however to be used with caution, and not to be repeated unless where the signs of inflammation rise high; in which case it will also be necessary to apply a blistering plaster to the region of the womb.

During the rigour, or cold fit, proper means should be used to abate its violence and shorten its duration. For this purpose the patient may drink freely of warm diluting liquors, and, if low may take now and

then a cup of wine-whey: warm applications to the extremities, as heated bricks, bottles or bladders filled with warm water, and such like, may also be used with advantage.

Emollient clysters of milk and water, or of chicken water, ought to be frequently administered through the course of the disease. These prove beneficial by promoting a discharge from the intestines, and also by acting as a kindly fomentation to the womb and parts adjacent. Great care however is requisite in giving them, on account of the tenderness of the parts in the PELVIS at this time.

To evacuate the offending bile from the stomach, a vomit is generally given. But as this is apt to increase the irritability of the stomach, already too great, it will be safer to omit it, and to give in its stead a gentle laxative, as a decoction of tamarinds with senna, which will both tend to cool the body, and to procure a free discharge of the bile. Neither vomits nor purges, however, should be administered to women in child-bed without the utmost caution; yet as after labour there is a particular increase of heat and disposition to fever, a costive state of the body may prove, without seasonable relief, fatal in the issue. Were this dangerous habit guarded against by proper attention before and after delivery, child-bed indispositions would be less frequent than they are.

The saline draught, so effectual against vomiting, so efficacious in obviating fever, and correcting any putrescent tendency, may be given every three or four hours. To a scruple of PREPARED KALI, or salt of tartar, previously dissolved in two table-spoonfuls of spring water add a table-spoonful of fresh lemon juice: as soon as the frothing or ebullition begins, it is to be immediately drank. To render it aperient, two drachms of the tincture of rhubarb may be added to each draught, but should the saline mixture run off by stool, omit the tincture of rhubarb; and, especially if the patient is restless, a few drops of TINCTURE OF OPIUM, or some syrup of white poppies may occasionally be added. After proper evacuations, and an abatement of febrile heat, the saline mixture may be omitted, and the following astringent, antiseptic draught, given to corroborate the relaxed viscera: Take two grains of alum, half an ounce of fresh orange juice, two drachms of the COMPOUND TINCTURE OF CINCHONA (commonly called Huxham's tincture of bark), and two ounces and a half of spring water; mix, and exhibit it every six hours.

If the stools should prove so frequent as to weaken and exhaust the patient, a starch clyster may be administered as occasion shall require; and the drink may be a decoction of hartshorn, or rice-water, in every English pint of which half an ounce of gum-arabic has been dissolved. Should these fail, recourse must be had to a bolus composed of half a drachm of powdered Columbo root, with a grain of opium, which may be given every three or four hours, and occasionally the chalk mixture seven ounces, tincture of catechu six drachms, opiate confection two drachms: mix, and give a table-spoonful or two after every loose stool. Where there is much purging, an emollient clyster may be thrown up with advantage once or twice in twenty-four hours; and if with the diarrhoea should be much tenesmus, lavements, with thirty or forty drops of the tincture of opium, will be necessary, but not otherwise.

Though in general the food ought to be light, and the drink diluting,

yet when the disease has been long protracted, and the patient is greatly spent by evacuations, it will be necessary to support her with nourishing diet and generous cordials.

It was observed, that this fever, after continuing for some time, often acquires a putrid form. In this case the Peruvian bark must be given, either by itself, or joined with cordials, as circumstances may require. As the cinchona in substance will be apt to purge, it may be given in decoction or infusion mixed with the tincture of roses, or other gentle astringents; or a scruple of the extract of cinchona, with half an ounce of spirit of cinnamon, two ounces of common water, and ten drops of tincture of opium, may be made into a draught, and given every second, third, or fourth hour, as shall be found necessary.

When the stomach will not bear any kind of nourishment, the patient may be supported for some time by clysters of beef-tea or chicken-water.

To avoid this fever, every woman in child-bed ought to be kept perfectly easy; her food should be light and simple, and her bed-chamber cool, and properly ventilated. There is not any thing more hurtful to a woman in this situation than being kept too warm. She ought not to have her body bound too tight, nor to rise too soon from bed, after delivery: catching cold is also to be avoided; and a proper attention should be paid to cleanliness.

To prevent the milk-fever, the breasts ought to be frequently drawn; and if they are filled previous to the onset of a fever, they should, upon its first appearance, be drawn, to prevent the milk from becoming acrid, and its being absorbed in this state. Costiveness is likewise to be avoided. This will be the best effected by the use of mild clysters and a laxative diet.

We shall conclude our observations on child-bed women by recommending it to them, above all things, to beware of cold. Poor women, whose circumstances oblige them to quit their bed too soon, often contract diseases from cold, of which they never recover. It is a pity that the poor are not better taken care of in this situation.

But the better sort of women run the greatest hazard from too much heat. They are generally kept in a sort of bagnio for the first eight or ten days, and then dressed out to see company. The danger of this conduct must be obvious to every one.

The superstitious custom of obliging women to keep the house till they go to church is likewise a very common cause of catching cold. All churches are damp, and most of them cold; consequently they are the very worst places to which a woman can go to make her first visit, after having been confined in a warm room for a month.

OF BARRENNESS.

BARRENNESS may be very properly reckoned among the diseases of females, as few married women who have not children enjoy a good state of health. It may proceed from various causes, as high living, grief, relaxation, &c., but it is chiefly owing to an obstruction or irregularity of the menstrual flux.

It is very certain that high living vitiates the humours, and prevents fecundity. We seldom find a barren woman among the labouring poor

while nothing is more common among the rich and affluent. The inhabitants of every country are prolific in proportion to their poverty; and it would be an easy matter to adduce many instances of women, who by being reduced to live entirely upon a milk and vegetable diet, have conceived and brought forth children; though they never had any, before. Would the rich use the same sort of food and exercise as the better sort of peasants, they would seldom have cause to envy their poor vassals and dependants the blessing of a numerous and healthy offspring, while they pine in sorrow for the want of even a single heir to their extensive domains.

Affluence begets indolence, which not only vitiates the humours, but induces a general relaxation of the solids; a state highly unfavourable to procreation. To remove this, we would recommend the following course; First, sufficient exercise in the open air; secondly, a diet consisting chiefly of milk and vegetables; thirdly, the use of astringent medicines, as steel, alum, dragon's blood, elixir of vitriol, the Spa or Tunbridge waters, Peruvian bark, &c.; and lastly, above all, the cold bath.

Barrenness is often the consequence of grief, sudden fear, anxiety, or any of the passions which tend to obstruct the menstrual flux. When barrenness is suspected to proceed from affections of the mind, the person ought to be kept as easy and cheerful as possible; all disagreeable objects are to be avoided, and every method taken to amuse and entertain the fancy.

Dr. Cheyne avers, that want of children is oftener the fault of the male than of the female, and strongly recommends a milk and vegetable diet to the former as well as the latter; adding, that his friend Dr. Taylor, whom he calls the Milk-doctor of Croydon, had brought sundry opulent families in his neighbourhood, who had continued some years after marriage without progeny, to have several fine children, by keeping both parents, for a considerable time, to a milk and vegetable diet.

CHAP. XLIX.

DISEASES OF CHILDREN

MISERABLE indeed is the lot of man in the state of infancy! He comes into the world more helpless than any other animal, and stands much longer in need of the protection and care of his parents; but, alas! this care is not always bestowed upon him; and when it is, often suffers as much from improper management as he would have done from neglect. Hence the officious care of parents, nurses, and midwives, become one of the most fruitful sources of the disorders of infants.

Of the officious and ill-judged care of midwives we shall adduce only one instance, viz. the common practice of torturing infants by squeezing