

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF COLDS AND COUGHS.

It has already been observed that colds are the effect of an obstructed perspiration; the common causes of which we have likewise endeavored to point out, and shall not here repeat them. Neither shall we spend time in enumerating all the various symptoms of colds, as they are pretty generally known. It may not however be amiss to observe, that almost every cold is a kind of fever, which only differs in degree from some of those that have already been treated of.

No age, sex, or constitution is exempted from this disease; neither is it in the power of medicine to prevent it. The inhabitants of every climate are liable to catch cold, nor can even the greatest circumspection defend them at all times from its attacks. Indeed, if the human body could be kept constantly in a uniform degree of warmth, such a thing as catching cold would be impossible; but as that cannot be effected by any means, the perspiration must be liable to many changes. Such changes, however, when small, do not affect the health; but when great they must prove hurtful. Hence the chief secret of preventing colds lies in avoiding, as far as possible, all extremes either of heat or cold.

When oppression of the breast, a stuffing of the nose, unusual weariness, or a pain of the head, &c., give ground to believe that the perspiration is obstructed, or, in other words, that the person has caught cold, he ought immediately to lessen his diet, at least the usual quantity of his solid food, and to abstain from all strong liquors. Instead of flesh, fish, eggs, milk, and other nourishing diet, he may eat light bread pudding, veal or chicken broth, panado, gruels, and such like. His drink may be water gruel sweetened with a little honey, an infusion of balm or linseed sharpened with the juice of orange or lemon, a decoction of barley and liquorice with tamarinds, or any other cool, diluting acid liquor.

Above all, his supper should be light, as small posset, or water gruel sweetened with honey, and a little toasted bread in it. If honey should disagree with the stomach, the gruel may be sweetened with treacle or coarse sugar, and sharpened with the jelly of currants. Those who have been accustomed

to generous liquors may take white wine whey instead of gruel, which may be sweetened as above.

The patient ought to lie longer than usual abed, and to encourage a gentle sweat, which is easily brought on towards morning, by drinking tea, or any kind of warm diluting liquor. I have often known this practice carry off a cold in one day, which, in all probability, had it been neglected, would have cost the patient his life, or have confined him for some months to his bed. Would people sacrifice a little time to ease and warmth, and practise a moderate degree of abstinence when the first symptoms of cold appear, we have reason to believe that most of the bad effects which flow from an obstructed perspiration might be prevented. But after the disease has gathered strength by delay, all attempts to remove it often prove vain. A pleurisy, a peripneumony, or a fatal consumption of the lungs, are the common effects of colds which have either been totally neglected or treated improperly.

Many attempt to cure a cold by getting drunk; but this, to say no worse of it, is a very hazardous and fool-hardy experiment. No doubt it may sometimes succeed, by suddenly restoring the perspiration; but when there is any degree of inflammation, which is frequently the case, strong liquors, instead of removing the malady, will increase it. By this means a common cold may be converted into an inflammatory fever.

When those who labor for their daily bread have the misfortune to catch cold, they cannot afford to lose a day or two, in order to keep themselves warm and take a little medicine, by which means the disorder is often so aggravated as to confine them for a long time, or even to render them ever after unable to sustain hard labor. But even such of the laboring poor as can afford to take care of themselves are often too hardy to do it; they affect to despise colds, and as long as they can crawl about scorn to be confined by what they call a *common cold*. Hence it comes to pass that colds destroy such numbers of mankind. Like an enemy despised, they gather strength from delay, till, at length, they become invincible. We often see this verified in travellers, who, rather than lose a day in the prosecution of their business, throw away their lives by pursuing their journey with this disease upon them, even in the coldest season.

It is certain, however, that colds may be too much indulged. When a person for every slight cold shuts himself up in a

warm room, and drinks great quantities of warm liquor, it may bring on such a general relaxation of the solids as will not be easily removed. It will therefore be proper, when the disease will permit and the weather is mild, to join to the regimen mentioned above gentle exercise, as walking, riding on horseback, or in a machine, &c. An obstinate cold, which no medicine can remove, will yield to a proper course of exercise when duly persisted in.

Bathing the feet and legs every night in warm water has a great tendency to restore the perspiration; but care must be taken that the water be not too warm, otherwise it will do hurt. It should never be much warmer than new milk, and the patient should go immediately to bed after using it. Bathing the feet in warm water, lying in bed, and drinking warm water gruel, or other weak liquors, will sooner take off a spasm and restore the perspiration than all the hot sudorific medicines in the apothecary's shop. This is all that is necessary for removing a common cold, and if this course be taken at the beginning it well seldom fail.

But when the symptoms do not yield to abstinence, warmth, and diluting liquors, there is reason to fear the approach of some other disease, as an inflammation of the breast, an ardent fever, &c. If the pulse therefore be hard and frequent, the skin hot and dry, and the patient complains of his head or breast, it will be necessary to bleed, and to give the cooling opening powders recommended in the scarlet fever, every three or four hours, till they give a stool.

It will likewise be proper to put a blistering plaster on the back, to give two table-spoonfuls of the saline mixture ordered page 121 every two hours, and, in short, to treat the patient in all respects as for a slight fever. I have often seen this course, when observed at the beginning, remove the complaint in two or three days, when the patient had all the symptoms of an approaching ardent fever or an inflammation of the breast.

COMMON COUGH.

A cough is generally the effect of a cold, which has either been improperly treated or entirely neglected. When it proves obstinate, there is always reason to fear the consequences, as this shows a weak state of the lungs, and is often the forerunner of a consumption.

If the cough be violent, and the patient young and strong with a hard quick pulse, bleeding will be proper; but in weak and relaxed habits bleeding rather prolongs the disease. When the patient spits freely, bleeding is unnecessary, and sometimes hurtful, as it tends to lessen that discharge.

When the cough is not attended with any degree of fever, and the spittle is viscid and tough, sharp pectoral medicines are to be administered; as gum ammoniac, squills, &c. The solution of gum ammoniac may be prepared as directed page 130, and two table-spoonfuls of it taken three or four times a day, more or less, according to the age and constitution of the patient. Squills may be given various ways. Two ounces of the vinegar, the oxymel, or the syrup, may be mixed with the same quantity of simple cinnamon water, and an ounce of balsamic syrup. Two table-spoonfuls of this mixture may be taken three or four times a day.

A syrup made of equal parts of lemon juice, honey, and sugar candy, is likewise very proper in this kind of cough. A table-spoonful of it may be taken at pleasure.

But when the defluxion is sharp and thin, these medicines rather do hurt. In this case gentle opiates, oils, and mucilages are more proper. A cup of an infusion of wild poppy leaves and marsh-mallow root, or the flowers of colts-foot, may be taken frequently; or a tea-spoonful of the paregoric elixir may be put into the patient's drink twice a day. Fuller's Spanish infusion is also a very proper medicine in this case, and may be taken in the quantity of a tea-cupful three or four times a day.*

When a cough is occasioned by acrid humors tickling the throat and *fauces*, the patient should keep some soft pectoral lozenges almost constantly in his mouth; as the Pontefract liquorice cakes, barley sugar, the common balsamic lozenges, Spanish juice, &c. These blunt the acrimony of the humors, and by taking off their stimulating quality help to appease the cough.

In obstinate coughs, proceeding from a flux of humors upon the lungs, it will often be necessary, besides expectorating medicines, to have recourse to issues, setons, or some other

* The Spanish infusion is made by infusing in an English quart of boiling water two drams of the salt of tartar, half a dram of saffron cut into small pieces, and an ounce of Spanish juice, likewise cut small. These must stand in a close vessel for twenty-four hours in a gentle heat; afterwards let the infusion be strained.

drain. In this case I have often observed the most happy effects from a Burgundy pitch plaster applied between the shoulders. I have ordered this simple remedy in the most obstinate coughs, in a great number of cases, and in many different constitutions, without ever knowing it fail to give relief, unless where there were evident signs of an ulcer in the lungs. About the bulk of a nutmeg of Burgundy pitch may be spread thin upon a piece of soft leather, about the size of the hand, and laid between the shoulder-blades. It may be taken off and wiped every three or four days, and ought to be renewed once a fortnight or three weeks. This is indeed a cheap and simple medicine, and consequently apt to be despised; but we will venture to affirm, that the whole *materia medica* does not afford an application more efficacious in almost every kind of cough. It has not indeed always an immediate effect; but if kept on for some time, it will succeed where most other medicines fail.

The only inconveniency attending this plaster is the itching which it occasions in the part to which it is applied; but surely this may be dispensed with, considering the advantage which the patient may expect to reap from the application; besides, when the itching becomes very uneasy, the plaster may be taken off and the part rubbed with a dry cloth, or washed with a little warm milk and water. Some caution indeed is necessary in discontinuing the use of such a plaster; this however may be safely done by making it smaller by degrees, and at length quitting it altogether in a warm season.*

But coughs proceed from many other causes besides effluxions upon the lungs. In these cases the cure is not to be attempted by pectoral medicines. Thus in a cough proceeding from a foulness and debility of the stomach, syrups, oils, mucilages, and all kind of balsamic medicines, do hurt. The *stomach cough* may be known from one that is owing to a fault in the lungs by this, that in the latter the patient coughs whenever he inspires or draws in his breath fully, but in the former that does not happen.

* Some complain that the pitch plaster adheres too fast, so that they find it difficult to remove it, while others find difficulty in keeping it on. This proceeds from the different kinds of pitch made use of, and likewise from the manner of spreading it. I generally find it answer best when mixed with a little beeswax and spread as cool as possible. The clear, hard, transparent pitch answers the purpose best.

The cure of this cough depends chiefly upon cleansing and strengthening the stomach; for which purpose gentle vomits and bitter purgatives are most proper. Thus, after a vomit or two, the sacred tincture, as it is called, may be taken for a considerable time, in the dose of one or two table-spoonfuls twice a day, or as often as it is found necessary to keep the body gently open. People may make this tincture themselves, by infusing an ounce of *hiera picra** in an English pint of white wine, letting it stand a few days, and then straining it off for use.

In coughs which proceed from a debility of the stomach, the Peruvian bark is likewise of considerable service. It may either be chewed, taken in powder, or made into a tincture along with other stomachic bitters.

A *nervous cough* can only be removed by change of air and proper exercise; to which may be added the use of gentle opiates. Instead of the saponaceous pill, the paregoric elixir, &c., which are only opium disguised, ten, fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five drops of liquid laudanum, more or less, as circumstances require, may be taken at bedtime, or when the cough is most troublesome. Immersing the feet and hands in warm water will often appease the violence of a nervous cough.

When a cough is only the symptom of some other malady, it is in vain to attempt to remove it without first curing the disease from which it proceeds. Thus when a cough is occasioned by *teething*, keeping the belly open, scarifying the gums, or whatever facilitates the cutting of the teeth, likewise appeases the cough. In like manner, when *worms* occasion a cough, such medicines as remove these will generally cure the cough; as bitter purgatives, oily clysters, and such like.

Women, during the last months of pregnancy, are often greatly afflicted with a cough, which is generally relieved by bleeding and keeping the belly open. They ought to avoid all flatulent food, and to wear a loose easy dress.

A cough is not only a symptom, but is often likewise the forerunner of diseases. Thus the gout is frequently ushered in by a very troublesome cough, which affects the patient for some days before the coming on of the fit. This cough is

* The powder called *hiera picra* is made by pounding together of Socotrine aloes four ounces, Virginian snakeroot and ginger each half an ounce.

generally removed by a paroxysm of the gout, which should therefore be promoted by keeping the extremities warm, drinking warm liquors, and bathing the feet and legs frequently in lukewarm water.

HOOPING-COUGH, OR CHIN-COUGH.

This cough seldom affects adults, but proves often fatal to children. Such children as live upon thin watery diet, who breathe unwholesome air, and have too little exercise, are most liable to this disease, and generally suffer most from it.

The chin-cough is so well known, even to nurses, that a description of it is unnecessary. Whatever hurts the digestion, obstructs the perspiration, or relaxes the solids, disposes to this disease; consequently its cure must depend upon cleansing and strengthening the stomach, bracing the solids, and at the same time promoting perspiration and the different secretions.

The diet must be light and of easy digestion; for children, good bread made into pap or pudding, chicken broth, with other light spoon-meats, are proper; but those who are farther advanced may be allowed sago gruel, and if the fever be not high a little boiled chicken, or other white meats. The drink may be pennyroyal tea, sweetened with honey or sugar candy, small wine whey; or, if the patient be weak, he may sometimes be allowed a little negas.

One of the most effectual remedies in the chin-cough is change of air. This often removes the malady even when the change seems to be from a purer to a less wholesome air. This may in some measure depend on the patient's being removed from the place where the infection prevails. Most of the diseases of children are infectious; nor is it at all uncommon to find the chin-cough prevailing in one town or village, when another at a very small distance is quite free from it. But whatever be the cause, we are sure of the fact. No time ought therefore to be lost in removing the patient at some distance from the place where he caught the disease, and if possible into a more pure and warm air.

When the disease proves violent and the patient is in danger of being suffocated by the cough, he ought to be bled, especially if there be a fever with a hard full pulse. But as the chief intention of bleeding is to prevent a rupture of the blood-vessels of the lungs, and to render it more safe to give

vomits, it will seldom be necessary to repeat the operation yet if there be symptoms of an inflammation of the lungs, a second, or even a third bleeding may be requisite.

It is generally reckoned a favorable symptom when a fit of coughing makes the patient vomit. This cleanses the stomach, and greatly relieves the cough. It will therefore be proper to promote this discharge, either by camomile tea or lukewarm water; and when these are not sufficient, small doses of ipecacuanha may be given. A child of three or four years of age may take five or six grains; and to others less or more must be given, according to their age and strength.

It is very difficult to make children drink after a vomit. I have often seen them happily deceived by infusing a scruple or half a dram of the powder of ipecacuanha in a teapot, with half an English pint of boiling water. If this be disguised with a few drops of milk and a little sugar, they will imagine it tea and drink it very greedily. A small tea-cupful of this may be given every quarter of an hour, or rather every ten minutes, till it operates. When they begin to puke there will be no occasion for drinking any more, as the water already on their stomach will be sufficient.

Vomits not only cleanse the stomach, which in this disease is generally loaded with viscid phlegm, but they likewise promote the perspiration and other secretions; and ought therefore to be repeated according to the obstinacy of the disease. They should not however be too strong; gentle vomits frequently repeated are both less dangerous and more beneficial than strong ones.

As the patient is generally costive, it will be proper to keep his belly gently open. The best medicines for this purpose are rhubarb and its preparations, as the syrup, tincture, &c. Of these a tea-spoonful or two may be given to an infant twice or thrice a day, as there is occasion. To such as are farther advanced the dose must be proportionally increased, and repeated till it has the desired effect. Those who cannot be brought to take the bitter tincture may have an infusion of senna and prunes, sweetened with manna, coarse sugar, or honey; or a few grains of rhubarb mixed with a tea-spoonful or two of syrup, or currant jelly, so as to disguise the taste. Most children are fond of syrups and jellies, and seldom refuse even a disagreeable medicine when mixed with them.

Many people believe that oily, pectoral, and balsamic medicines possess wonderful virtues for the cure of the chin-cough,

and accordingly exhibit them plentifully to patients of every age and constitution, without considering that every thing of this nature must load the stomach, hurt the digestion, and of course aggravate the disorder.

The *millepedes*, or woodlice, are greatly recommended for the cure of a chin-cough. Those who choose to make use of these insects may infuse two ounces of them bruised in an English pint of small white wine for one night. Afterwards the liquor may be strained through a cloth, and a table-spoonful of it given to the patient three or four times a day.

Opiates are sometimes necessary to allay the violence of the cough. For this purpose a little of the syrup of poppies, or five, six, or seven drops of laudanum, according to the age and constitution of the patient, may be taken in a cup of hyssop or pennyroyal tea, and repeated occasionally.

The garlic ointment is a well-known remedy in North Britain for the chin-cough. It is made by beating in a mortar garlic with an equal quantity of hog's lard. With this the soles of the feet may be rubbed twice or thrice a day; but the best method is to spread it upon a rag, and apply it in the form of plaster. It should be renewed every night and morning at least, as the garlic soon loses its virtue. This is an exceeding good medicine, both in the chin-cough and in most other coughs of an obstinate nature. It ought not however to be used when the patient is very hot or feverish, lest it increase these symptoms.

The feet should be bathed once every two or three days in lukewarm water, and a Burgundy pitch plaster kept constantly betwixt the shoulders. But when the disease proves very violent, it will be necessary, instead of it, to apply a blistering plaster, and to keep the part open for some time with issue ointment.

When the disease is prolonged and the patient is free from a fever, the Peruvian bark and other bitters are the most proper medicines. The bark may be either taken in substance, or in a decoction or infusion, as is most agreeable to the patient. For a child, ten, fifteen, or twenty grains, according to the age of the patient, may be given three or four times a day; for an adult, half a dram or two scruples will be proper. Some give the extract of the bark with cantharides; but to manage this requires some skill and attention. It is more safe to give a few grains of castor along with the bark. A child of six or seven years of age may take seven or eight

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grains of castor, with fifteen grains of powdered bark, for a dose. This may be made into a mixture with two or three ounces of any simple distilled water and a little syrup, and taken three or four times a day.

CHAPTER XXX.

INFLAMMATION OF THE STOMACH AND OTHER VISCERA.

ALL inflammations of the bowels are dangerous, and require the most speedy assistance; as they frequently end in a supuration, and sometimes in a mortification, which is certain death.

CAUSES.—An inflammation of the stomach may proceed from any of the causes which produce an inflammatory fever; as cold liquor drank while the body is warm, obstructed perspiration, the sudden striking in of any eruption, &c. It may likewise proceed from the acrimony of the bile, or from acrid and stimulating substances taken into the stomach; as strong vomits or purges, corrosive poisons, and such like. When the gout has been repelled from the extremities, either by cold or improper applications, it often occasions an inflammation of the stomach. Hard or indigestible substances taken into the stomach, as bones, the shells of nuts, &c., may likewise have that effect.

SYMPTOMS.—It is attended with a fixed pain and burning heat in the stomach; great restlessness and anxiety; a small, quick, and hard pulse; vomiting, or at least a nausea and sickness; excessive thirst; coldness of the extremities; difficulty of breathing; cold clammy sweats; and sometimes convulsions and fainting fits. The stomach is swelled, and often feels hard to the touch. One of the most certain signs of this disease is the sense of pain which the patient feels upon taking any kind of food or drink, especially if it be either too hot or cold.

When the patient vomits every thing he eats or drinks, is extremely restless, has a hiccough, with an intermitting pulse and frequent fainting fits, the danger is very great.