

may be taken in a much larger quantity when there is occasion.

If wind be the cause of this complaint, the most proper medicines are those called carminatives; as aniseeds, juniper berries, ginger, cannella alba, cardamum seeds, &c. These may either be chewed or infused in spirits or wine. One of the safest medicines of this kind is the tincture made by infusing an ounce of rhubarb, and a quarter of an ounce of the lesser cardamum seeds, in an English pint of brandy. After this has digested for two or three days, it must be strained, and four ounces of white sugar candy added to it. It must stand to digest a second time till the sugar be dissolved. A table-spoonful of it may be taken constantly for a dose.

I have frequently known the heart-burn cured, especially in pregnant women, by chewing green tea.

CHAPTER XLIII.

NERVOUS DISEASES.

OF all diseases incident to mankind, those of the nervous kind are the most complicated and difficult to cure. A volume would not be sufficient to point out their various symptoms. They imitate almost every disease, and are seldom alike in two different persons, or even in the same person at different times. Proteus-like, they are continually changing shape, and upon every fresh attack the patient thinks he feels symptoms which he never experienced before. Nor do they only affect the body; the mind likewise suffers, and is often thereby rendered extremely weak and peevish. The low spirits, timorousness, melancholy, and fickleness of temper, which generally attend nervous disorders, induce many people to believe that they are entirely diseases of the mind; but this change of temper is rather a consequence than the cause of nervous diseases.

CAUSES.—Every thing that tends to relax or weaken the body disposes it to nervous diseases, as indolence, excessive venery, drinking too much tea or other weak watery liquors,

frequent bleeding, purging, vomiting, &c. Whatever hurts the digestion, or prevents the proper assimilation of the aliment, has likewise this effect; as long fasting, excess in eating or drinking, the use of windy, crude or unwholesome aliments, an unfavorable posture of the body, &c.

Nervous disorders often proceed from affections of the mind; as grief, disappointments, anxiety, intense study, &c. Indeed few studious persons are entirely free from them. Nor is this at all to be wondered at; intense thinking not only preys upon the spirits, but prevents the person from taking proper exercise, by which means the digestion is impaired, the nourishment prevented, the solids relaxed, and the whole mass of humors vitiated. Grief and disappointment likewise produce the same effects. I have known more nervous patients who dated the commencement of their disorders from the loss of a husband, a favorite child, or from some disappointment in life, than from any other cause. In a word, whatever weakens the body or depresses the spirits may occasion nervous disorders, as unwholesome air, want of sleep, great fatigue, disagreeable apprehensions, vexation, &c.

SYMPTOMS.—We shall only mention some of the most general symptoms of these disorders, as it would be both a useless and impracticable task to point out the whole. They generally begin with windy inflations or distensions of the stomach and intestines; the appetite and digestion are usually bad, yet sometimes there is an uncommon craving for food and a quick digestion. The food often turns sour on the stomach, and the patient is troubled with vomiting of clear water, tough phlegm, or a blackish-colored liquor resembling the grounds of coffee. Excruciating pains are often felt about the navel, attended with a rumbling or murmuring noise in the bowels; the belly is sometimes loose, but more commonly bound, which occasions a retention of wind and great uneasiness.

The urine is sometimes in small quantity, at other times very copious and quite clear. There is a great straitness of the breast, with difficulty of breathing, violent palpitations of the heart, sudden flushings of heat in various parts of the body; at other times a sense of cold, as if water were poured on them, flying pains in the arms and limbs, pains in the back and belly resembling those occasioned by gravel, the pulse very variable, sometimes uncommonly slow and at other times very quick; yawning, the hiccough, frequent sighings, and a sense of suffocation, as if from a ball or lump in the throat;

alternate fits of crying and convulsive laughing; the sleep is unsound and seldom refreshing, and the patient is often troubled with the nightmare.

As the disease increases, the patient is molested with headaches, cramps, and fixed pains in various parts of the body, the eyes are clouded and often affected with pain and dryness, there is a noise in the ears and often a dulness of hearing; in short, the whole animal functions are impaired. The mind is disturbed on the most trivial occasions, and is hurried into the most perverse commotions, inquietudes, terror, sadness, anger, diffidence, &c. The patient is apt to entertain wild imaginations and extravagant fancies, the memory becomes weak, and the reason fails.

Nothing is more characteristic of this disease than a constant dread of death. This renders those unhappy persons who labor under it peevish, fickle, impatient, and apt to run from one physician to another, which is one reason why they seldom reap any benefit from medicine, as they have not sufficient resolution to persist in any one course till it has time to produce its proper effects. They are likewise apt to imagine that they labor under diseases from which they are quite free, and are very angry if any one attempts to set them right or laugh them out of their ridiculous notions.

REGIMEN.—Persons afflicted with nervous diseases ought never to fast long. Their food should be solid and nourishing, but of easy digestion. Fat meats and heavy sauces are hurtful. All excess should be carefully avoided. They ought never to eat more at a time than they can easily digest; but if they feel themselves weak and faint between meals, they ought to eat a bit of bread and drink a glass of wine. Heavy suppers are to be avoided. Though wine in excess enfeebles the body and impairs the faculties of the mind, yet taken in moderation it strengthens the stomach and promotes digestion. Wine and water is a very proper drink at meals; but if wine sours on the stomach or the patient is much troubled with wind, brandy and water will answer better. Every thing that is windy or hard of digestion must be avoided. All weak and warm liquors are hurtful, as tea, coffee, punch, &c. People may find a temporary relief in the use of these, but they always increase the malady, as they weaken the stomach and hurt digestion. Above all things, drams are to be avoided. Whatever immediate ease the patient may feel from the use of ardent spirits, they are sure to aggravate the malady, and

prove certain poisons at last. These cautions are the more necessary, as most nervous people are peculiarly fond of tea and ardent spirits; to the use of which many of them fall a victim.

Exercise in nervous disorders is superior to all medicines. Riding on horseback is generally esteemed the best, as it gives motion to the whole body without fatiguing it. I have known some patients, however, with whom walking agreed better, and others who were most benefited by riding in a carriage. Every one ought to use that which he finds most beneficial. Long sea-voyages have an excellent effect; and to those who can afford to take them, and have sufficient resolution, we would by all means recommend this course. Even change of place and the sight of new objects, by diverting the mind, have a great tendency to remove these complaints. For this reason, a long journey or a voyage is of much more advantage than riding short journeys near home.

A cool and dry air is proper, as it braces and invigorates the whole body. Nothing tends more to relax and enervate than hot air, especially that which is rendered so by great fires or stoves in small apartments. But when the stomach or bowels are weak, the body ought to be well guarded against cold, especially in winter, by wearing a thin flannel waistcoat next the skin. This will keep up an equal perspiration, and defend the alimentary canal from many impressions, to which it would otherwise be subject, upon every sudden change from warm to cold weather. Rubbing the body frequently with a flesh-brush or a coarse linen cloth is likewise beneficial, as it promotes the circulation, perspiration, &c. Persons who have weak nerves ought to rise early and take exercise before breakfast, as lying too long abed cannot fail to relax the solids. They ought likewise to be diverted, and to be kept as easy and cheerful as possible, as nothing hurts the nervous system or weakens the digestive powers more than fear, grief, or anxiety.

MEDICINES.—Though nervous diseases are seldom radically cured, yet their symptoms may sometimes be alleviated, and the patient's life rendered, at least, more comfortable, by proper medicines.

When the patient is costive, he ought to take a little rhubarb, or some other mild purgative, and should never suffer his belly to be long bound. All strong and violent purgatives are, however, to be avoided, as aloes, jalap, &c. I have generally seen

an infusion of senna and rhubarb in brandy answer very well. This may be made of any strength, and taken in such quantity as the patient finds necessary. When digestion is bad or the stomach relaxed and weak, an infusion of the Peruvian bark and other bitters may be used with advantage.*

Few things tend more to strengthen the nervous system than cold bathing. This practice, if duly persisted in, will produce very extraordinary effects. But when the liver or other viscera are obstructed, or otherwise unsound, the cold bath is improper. The most proper seasons for it are summer and autumn. It will be sufficient, especially for persons of a spare habit, to go into the cold bath three or four times a week. If the patient be weakened by it, or feels chilly for a long time after coming out, it is improper.

In patients afflicted with wind, I have always observed the greatest benefit from the acid elixir of vitriol. It may be taken in the quantity of fifteen, twenty, or thirty drops, twice or thrice a day, in a glass of water. This both expels wind, strengthens the stomach, and promotes digestion.

Opiates are greatly extolled in these maladies; but as they only palliate the symptoms, and generally afterwards increase the disease, we would advise people to be extremely sparing in the use of them, lest habit render them at last absolutely necessary.

It would be an easy matter to enumerate many medicines which have been extolled for relieving nervous disorders; but whoever wishes for a thorough cure must expect it from regimen alone. We shall therefore omit mentioning more medicines, and again recommend the strictest attention to DIET, AIR, EXERCISE, and AMUSEMENTS.

MELANCHOLY.

Melancholy is that state of alienation or weakness of mind which renders people incapable of enjoying the pleasures or performing the duties of life. It is a degree of insanity, and often terminates in absolute madness.

* Take of Peruvian bark an ounce, gentian-root, orange-peel, and coriander-seed, of each half an ounce; let these ingredients be all bruised in a mortar, and infused in a bottle of brandy or whisky for the space of five or six days. A table-spoonful of the strained liquor may be taken in half a glass of water an hour before breakfast, dinner, and supper.

CAUSES.—It may proceed from a hereditary disposition; intense thinking, especially where the mind is long occupied about one object; violent passions or affections of the mind, as love, fear, joy, grief, overweening pride, and such like. It may also be occasioned by excessive venery, narcotic or stupefactive poisons, a sedentary life, solitude, the suppression of customary evacuations, acute fevers, or other diseases. Violent anger will change melancholy into madness; and excessive cold, especially of the lower extremities, will force the blood into the brain, and produce all the symptoms of madness. It may likewise proceed from the use of aliment that is hard of digestion, or which cannot be easily assimilated; from a callous state of the integuments of the brain, or a dryness of the brain itself. To all which we may add gloomy or mistaken notions of religion.

SYMPTOMS.—When persons begin to be melancholy, they are timorous, watchful, fond of solitude, fretful, fickle, captious and inquisitive, solicitous about trifles, sometimes niggardly, and at other times prodigal. The belly is generally bound, the urine thin and in small quantity, the stomach and bowels inflated with wind, the complexion pale, the pulse slow and weak. The functions of the mind are also greatly perverted, insomuch that the patient often imagines himself dead or changed into some other animal. Some have imagined their bodies were made of glass or other brittle substances, and were afraid to move lest they should be broken to pieces. The unhappy patient, in this case, unless carefully watched, is apt to put an end to his own miserable life.

When the disease is owing to an obstruction of customary evacuations, or any bodily disorder, it is easier cured than when it proceeds from affections of the mind or a hereditary taint. A discharge of blood from the nose, looseness, scabby eruptions, the bleeding piles, or the *menses*, sometimes carry off this disease.

REGIMEN.—The diet ought to consist chiefly of vegetables of a cooling and opening quality. Animal food, especially salted or smoke-dried fish or flesh, ought to be avoided. All kinds of shell-fish are bad. Aliments prepared with onions, garlic, or any thing that generates thick blood, are likewise improper. All kind of fruits that are wholesome may be eaten with advantage. Boerhaave gives an instance of a patient who, by a long use of whey, water, and garden fruits, recovered, after having evacuated a great quantity of black-colored matter.

Strong liquors of every kind ought to be avoided as poison. The most proper drink is water, whey, or very small beer. Tea and coffee are improper. If honey agrees with the patient, it may be eaten freely, or his drink may be sweetened with it. Infusions of balm leaves, pennyroyal, the roots of wild valerian, or the flowers of the lime-tree, may be drank freely, either by themselves or sweetened with honey, as the patient shall choose.

The patient ought to take as much exercise in the open air as he can bear. This helps to dissolve the viscid humors, it removes obstructions, promotes the perspiration and all the other secretions. Every kind of madness is attended with a diminished perspiration; all means ought therefore to be used to promote that necessary and salutary discharge. Nothing can have a more direct tendency to increase the disease than confining the patient to a close apartment. Were he forced to ride or walk a certain number of miles every day, it would tend greatly to alleviate his disorder; but it would have still a better effect if he were obliged to labor a piece of ground. By digging, hoeing, planting, sowing, &c., both the body and mind would be exercised. A long journey, or a voyage, especially into a warmer climate, with agreeable companions, has often very happy effects. A plan of this kind, with a strict attention to diet, is a much more rational method of cure than confining the patient within doors and plying him with medicines.

MEDICINE.—In the cure of this disease great regard must be paid to the mind. When the patient is in a low state, his mind ought to be soothed and diverted with variety of amusements, as entertaining stories, pastimes, music, &c. This seems to have been the method of curing melancholy among the Jews, as we learn from the story of king Saul; and indeed it is a very rational one. Nothing can remove diseases of the mind so effectually as applications to the mind itself, the most efficacious of which is music. The patient's company ought likewise to consist of such persons as are agreeable to him. People in this case are apt to conceive unaccountable aversions against particular persons, and the very sight of such persons is sufficient to distract their minds and throw them into the utmost perturbation.

When the patient is high, evacuations are necessary. In this case he must be bled, and have his belly kept open by purging medicines, as manna, rhubarb, cream of tartar, or the

soluble tartar. I have seen the last have very happy effects. It may be taken in the dose of half an ounce, dissolved in water gruel, every day, for sundry weeks, or even for months if necessary. More or less may be given, according as it operates. Vomits have likewise a good effect, but they must be pretty strong, otherwise they will not operate.

Camphire and musk have likewise been used in this case with advantage. Ten or twelve grains of camphire may be rubbed in a mortar with half a dram of nitre, and taken twice a day, or oftener, if the stomach will bear it. If it will not sit upon the stomach in this form, it may be made into pills with gum assafœtida and Russian castor, and taken in the quantity above directed. If musk is to be administered, a scruple or twenty-five grains of it may be made into a bolus with a little honey or common syrup, and taken twice or thrice a day. We do not mean that all these medicines should be administered at once; but whichever of them is given must be duly persisted in, otherwise no benefit can be expected.

As it is very difficult to induce patients in this disease to take medicines, we shall mention some outward applications which sometimes do good. The principal of these are issues, setons, and warm bathing. Issues may be made in any part of the body, but they generally have the best effect near the spine. The discharge from these may be greatly promoted by dressing them with the mild blistering ointment, and keeping what are commonly called the orrice peas in them. The most proper place for a seton is between the shoulder-blades; and it ought to be placed upwards and downwards, or in the direction of the spine.

THE PALSY.

The palsy is a loss or diminution of sense or motion, or of both, in one or more parts of the body. It is more or less dangerous, according to the importance of the part affected. A palsy of the heart, lungs, or any part necessary for life, is mortal. When it affects the stomach, the intestines, or the bladder, it is highly dangerous. If the face be affected, the case is bad, as it shows that the disease proceeds from the brain. When the part affected feels cold, is insensible, or wastes away, or when the judgment and memory begin to fail, there is small hopes of a cure.

CAUSES.—The immediate cause of the palsy is whatever prevents the regular exertion of the nervous power upon any particular muscle or part of the body. The occasional and predisposing causes are various, as drunkenness, wounds of the brain or spinal marrow, pressure upon the brain or nerves, very cold or damp air, the suppression of customary evacuations, sudden fear, want of exercise, or whatever greatly relaxes the system, as drinking much tea* or coffee, &c. The palsy may likewise proceed from wounds of the nerves themselves, from the poisonous fumes of metals or minerals, as mercury, lead, arsenic, &c.

In young persons of a full habit, the palsy must be treated in the same manner as the sanguine apoplexy. The patient must be bled, blistered, and have his belly kept open by sharp clysters or purgative medicines. But in old age, or when the disease proceeds from relaxation or debility, which is generally the case, a quite contrary course must be pursued. The diet must be warm and attenuating, consisting chiefly of spicy and aromatic vegetables, as mustard, horseradish, &c. The drink may be generous wine, mustard whey, or brandy and water. Friction with the flesh-brush or a warm hand is extremely proper, especially on the parts affected. Blistering plasters may likewise be applied to the affected parts with advantage. When this cannot be done, they may be rubbed with the volatile liniment or the nerve ointment of the Edinburgh dispensatory. One of the best external applications is electricity. The shocks should be received on the part affected, and they ought daily to be repeated for several weeks.

Vomits are very beneficial in this kind of palsy, and ought to be frequently administered. Cephalic snuff, or any thing that makes the patient sneeze, is likewise useful. Some pretend to have found great benefit from rubbing the parts affected with nettles, but this does not seem to be anywise preferable to blistering. If the tongue be affected, the patient may gargle his mouth frequently with brandy and mustard, or he may hold a bit of sugar in his mouth wet with the palsy-drops or compound spirits of lavender. The wild vale-

* Many people imagine that tea has no tendency to hurt the nerves, and that drinking the same quantity of warm water would be equally pernicious. This however seems to be a mistake. Many persons drink three or four cups of warm milk and water daily without feeling any bad consequences, yet the same quantity of tea will make their hand shake for twenty-four hours.

rian root is a very proper medicine in this case. It may either be taken in an infusion of sage leaves, or half a dram of it in powder may be given in a glass of wine three times a day. If the patient cannot use the valerian, he may take of *sal volatile oleosum*, compound spirits of lavender, and tincture of castor, each half an ounce; mix these together, and take forty or fifty drops in a glass of wine, three or four times a day. A table-spoonful of mustard-seed taken frequently is a very good medicine. The patient ought likewise to chew cinnamon bark, ginger, or other warm spiceries.

Exercise is of the utmost importance in the palsy; but the patient must beware of cold, damp, and moist air. He ought to wear flannel next his skin, and if possible should remove into a warmer climate.

EPILEPSY, OR FALLING SICKNESS.

The epilepsy is a sudden deprivation of all the senses, wherein the patient falls suddenly down and is affected with violent convulsive motions. Children, especially those who are delicately brought up, are most subject to it. It more frequently attacks men than women, and is very difficult to cure. When the epilepsy attacks children, there is reason to hope it may go off about the time of puberty; when it attacks any person after twenty years of age, the cure is difficult; but when after forty, a cure is hardly to be expected. If the fit continues only for a short space and returns seldom, there is reason to hope; but if it continues long and returns frequently, the prospect is bad. It is a very unfavorable symptom when the patient is seized with the fits in his sleep.

CAUSES.—The epilepsy is sometimes hereditary. It may likewise proceed from frights of the mother when with child; from blows, bruises, or wounds on the head; a collection of water, blood, or serous humors in the brain; a polypus; tumors or concretions within the skull; excessive drinking; intense study; excess of venery; worms; teething; suppression of customary evacuations; too great emptiness or repletion; violent passions or affections of the mind, as fear, joy, &c.; hysteric affections; contagion received into the body, as the infection of the small-pox, measles, &c.

SYMPTOMS.—An epileptic fit is generally preceded by unusual weariness, pain of the head, dulness, giddiness, noise in the ears, dimness of sight, palpitation of the heart, disturbed

sleep, difficult breathing; the bowels are inflated with wind, the urine is in great quantity but thin, the complexion is pale, the extremities are cold, and the patient often feels as it were a stream of cold air ascending towards his head.

In the fit, the patient generally makes an unusual noise; his thumbs are drawn in towards the palms of the hands; his eyes are distorted; he starts and foams at the mouth; his extremities are bent and twisted various ways; he often discharges his seed, urine, and *fœces* involuntarily; and is quite destitute of all sense and reason. After the fit is over, his senses gradually return, and he complains of a kind of stupor, weariness, and pain of his head, but has no remembrance of what happened to him during the fit.

The fits are sometimes excited by violent affections of the mind, a debauch of liquor, excessive heat, cold, or the like.

This disease, from the difficulty of investigating its causes and its strange symptoms, was formerly attributed to the wrath of the gods or the agency of evil spirits. In modern times it has often, by the vulgar, been imputed to witchcraft or fascination. It depends however as much upon natural causes as any other malady; and its cure may often be effected by persisting in the use of proper means.

REGIMEN.—Epileptic patients ought, if possible, to breathe a pure and free air. Their diet should be light but nourishing. They ought to drink nothing strong, to avoid swine's flesh, water-fowl, and likewise all windy and oily vegetables, as cabbage, nuts, &c. They ought to keep themselves cheerful, carefully guarding against all violent passions, as anger, fear, &c.

Exercise is likewise of great use; but the patient must be careful to avoid all extremes either of heat or cold, all dangerous situations, as standing upon precipices, riding deep waters, and such like; as any thing that makes him giddy is apt to occasion a fit.

MEDICINE.—The intentions of cure must vary according to the cause of the disease. If the patient be of a sanguine temperament, and there be reason to fear an obstruction in the brain, bleeding and other evacuations will be necessary. When the disease is occasioned by the stoppage of customary evacuations, these, if possible, must be restored; if this cannot be done, others may be substituted in their place. Issues or setons, in this case, have often a very good effect. When there is reason to believe that the disease proceeds from worms,

proper medicines must be used to kill or carry off these vermin. When the disease proceeds from teething, the belly should be kept open by emollient clysters, the feet frequently bathed in warm water, and, if the fits prove obstinate, a blistering plaster may be put betwixt the shoulders. The same method is to be followed when epileptic fits precede the eruption of the small-pox or measles, &c.

When the disease is hereditary, or proceeds from a wrong formation of the brain, a cure is not to be expected. When it is owing to a debility, or too great an irritability of the nervous system, such medicines as tend to brace and strengthen the nerves may be used, as the Peruvian bark, preparations of steel, &c.*

Colebatch says that the misletoe cures an epilepsy as certainly as the Peruvian bark does an intermittent fever. The dose to an adult is half a dram of the powder, four times a day, drinking after it a strong infusion of the same plant. Though this medicine has not been found to answer the high encomiums which have been passed upon it, yet in obstinate epileptic cases it deserves a trial. It must however be used for a considerable time, in order to produce any salutary effects.

Musk has sometimes been found to succeed in the epilepsy. Ten or twelve grains of it, with the same quantity of factitious cinnabar, may be made up into a bolus and taken every night and morning.

Sometimes the epilepsy has been cured by electricity.

* Fuller recommends the following electuary as a most excellent *anti-epileptic*. Take Jesuits' bark in powder three ounces, Virginian snakeroot powdered one ounce, as much syrup of pæony or cloves as is sufficient to form it into a soft electuary. The dose to an adult is a dram, or about the size of a nutmeg, morning and evening. It must be continued for three or four months, and afterwards repeated, three or four days before the new and full moon, for some time.

Mead likewise recommends an electuary of a similar nature for the epilepsy, only he uses valerian-root in place of the snakeroot. It must be taken in the same manner as the above. The patient ought always to be bled, and to take a purge or two, before he begins to use these medicines. They will likewise have a better effect if the patient drinks a tea-cupful of the decoction of guaiacum after each dose. It may be made by boiling two ounces of guaiacum shavings, and one ounce of raisins of the sun stoned, in two English quarts of water to one. Strain the liquor, and afterwards let it stand to settle, then pour off the clear from the fæces.

Convulsion fits proceed from the same causes, and must be treated in the same manner, as the epilepsy.

There is one particular species of convulsion fits which commonly goes by the name of St. Vitus's dance, wherein the patient is agitated with strange motions and gesticulations, which by the common people are generally believed to be the effects of witchcraft. This disease may be cured by repeated bleedings and purges, and afterwards using the medicines prescribed above for the epilepsy, viz., the Peruvian bark, and the snake-root, &c. Chalybeate waters are found to be beneficial in this case. The cold bath is likewise of singular service, and ought never to be neglected when the patient can bear it.

THE HICCOUGH.

The hiccough is a spasmodic or convulsive affection of the stomach and midriff, arising from any cause that irritates their nervous fibres.

It may proceed from excess in eating or drinking; from a hurt of the stomach; poisons; inflammations or scirrhus tumors of the stomach, intestines, bladder, midriff, or the rest of the viscera. In gangrenes, acute and malignant fevers, a hiccough is often the forerunner of death.

When the hiccough proceeds from the use of aliment that is flatulent or hard of digestion, a draught of generous wine, or a dram of any spirituous liquor, will generally remove it. If poison be the cause, plenty of milk and oil must be drank, as has been formerly recommended. When it proceeds from an inflammation of the stomach, &c., it is very dangerous. In this case the cooling regimen must be observed. The patient must be bled, and take frequently a few drops of the sweet spirits of nitre in a cup of wine whey. His stomach must likewise be fomented with cloths dipped in warm water, or bladders filled with warm milk and water applied to it.

When the hiccough proceeds from a gangrene or mortification, the Peruvian bark, with other antiseptics, are the only medicines which have a chance to succeed. If the hiccough be a primary disease, and proceeds from a foul stomach, loaded either with a pituitous or a bilious humor, a gentle vomit and purge, if the patient be able to bear them, will be of service. If it arises from flatulencies, the carminative medicines directed for the heart-burn must be used.

When the hiccough proves very obstinate, recourse must be had to the most powerful aromatic and antispasmodic medicines. The principal of these is musk; fifteen or twenty grains of which may be made into a bolus, and repeated occasionally. Opiates are likewise of service; but they must be used with caution. A bit of sugar dipped in compound spirits of lavender, or the volatile aromatic tincture, may be taken frequently. External applications are sometimes also beneficial; as the stomach plaster, or a cataplasm of the Venice treacle of the Edinburgh or London dispensatory, applied to the region of the stomach.

I lately attended a patient who had almost a constant hiccough for above nine weeks. It was frequently stopped by the use of musk, opium, wine, and other cordial and antispasmodic medicines, but always returned. Nothing however gave the patient so much ease as brisk small beer. By drinking freely of this, the hiccough was often kept off for several days, which was more than could be done by the most powerful medicines. The patient was at length seized with a vomiting of blood, which soon put an end to his life. Upon opening the body, a large scirrhus tumor was found near the pylorus or right orifice of the stomach.

CRAMP OF THE STOMACH.

This disease often seizes people suddenly, is very dangerous, and requires immediate assistance. It is most incident to persons in the decline of life, especially the gouty, hysteric, and hypochondriac.

If the patient has any inclination to vomit, he ought to take some draughts of warm water, or weak camomile tea, to clean his stomach. After this, if he has been costive, a laxative clyster must be given. He ought then to take laudanum. The best way of administering it is in a clyster. Sixty or seventy drops of liquid laudanum may be given in a clyster of warm water. This is much more certain than laudanum given by the mouth, which is often vomited, and in some cases increases the pain and spasms in the stomach.

If the pain and cramps return with great violence, after the effects of the anodyne clyster are over, another, with an equal or larger quantity of opium, may be given, and every four or five hours a bolus with ten or twelve grains of musk and half a dram of the Venice treacle.

In the mean time, the stomach ought to be fomented with cloths dipped in warm water, or bladders filled with warm milk and water should be constantly applied to it. I have often seen these produce the most happy effects. The anodyne balsam may also be rubbed on the part affected, and an antihysterical plaster worn upon it, for some time after the cramps are removed, to prevent their return.

In very violent and lasting pains of the stomach, some blood ought to be let, unless the weakness of the patient makes it improper. When the pain or cramps proceed from a suppression of the *menses*, bleeding is of use. If they be owing to the gout, recourse must be had to spirits or some of the warm cordial waters. Blistering plasters ought likewise, in this case, to be applied to the ankles. I have often seen violent cramps and pains of the stomach removed by covering it with a plaster of Venice treacle.

OF THE NIGHTMARE.

In this disease the patient, in time of sleep, imagines he feels an uncommon oppression or weight about his breast or stomach, which he can by no means shake off. He groans, and sometimes cries out, though oftener he attempts to speak in vain. Sometimes he imagines himself engaged with an enemy, and, in danger of being killed, attempts to run away, but finds he cannot. Sometimes he fancies himself in a house that is on fire, or that he is in danger of being drowned in a river. He often thinks he is falling over a precipice, and the dread of being dashed to pieces suddenly awakes him.

This disorder has been supposed to proceed from too much blood; from a stagnation of blood in the brain, lungs, &c. But it is rather a nervous affection, and arises chiefly from indigestion. Hence we find that persons of weak nerves, who lead a sedentary life and live full, are most commonly afflicted with the nightmare. Nothing tends more to produce it than heavy suppers, especially when eaten late or the patient goes to bed soon after. Wind is likewise a very frequent cause of this disease; for which reason those who are afflicted with it ought to avoid all flatulent food. Deep thought, anxiety, or any thing that oppresses the mind, ought also to be avoided.

As persons afflicted with the nightmare generally moan

or make some noise in the fit, they should be waked or spoken to by such as hear them, as the uneasiness generally goes off as soon as the patient is awake. Dr. Whytt says he generally found a dram of brandy, taken at bedtime, prevent this disease. That, however, is a bad custom, and in time loses its effect. We would rather have the patient depend upon the use of food of easy digestion, cheerfulness, exercise through the day, and a light supper taken early, than to accustom himself to drams. A glass of peppermint-water will often promote digestion as much as a glass of brandy, and is much safer. After a person of weak digestion however has eaten flatulent food, a dram may be necessary; in this case we would recommend it as the most proper medicine.

Persons who are young and full of blood, if troubled with the nightmare, ought to take a purge frequently and use a spare diet.

SWOONINGS.

People of weak nerves or delicate constitutions are very liable to swoonings or fainting fits. These indeed are seldom dangerous when duly attended to; but when wholly neglected, or improperly treated, they often prove hurtful, and sometimes fatal.

The general causes of swooning are, sudden transitions from cold to heat; breathing air that is deprived of its proper spring or elasticity; great fatigue; excessive weakness; loss of blood; long fasting; fear, grief, and other violent passions or affections of the mind.

It is well known that persons who have been long exposed to cold often faint or fall into a swoon upon coming into the house, especially if they drink hot liquor or sit near a large fire. This might easily be prevented by people taking care not to go into a warm room immediately after they have been exposed to the cold air, to approach the fire gradually, and not to eat or drink any thing hot till the body has been gradually brought into a warm temperature.

When any one, in consequence of neglecting these precautions, falls into a swoon, he ought immediately to be removed to a cooler apartment, to have ligatures applied above his knees and elbows, and to have his hands and face sprinkled with vinegar. He should likewise be made to smell to vinegar, and should have a spoonful or two of water, if he can

swallow, with about a third part of vinegar mixed with it, poured into his mouth. If these should not remove the complaint, it will be necessary to bleed the patient, and afterwards to give him a clyster.

As air that is breathed frequently loses its elasticity or spring, it is no wonder if persons who respire in it often fall into a swoon or fainting fit. They are, in this case, deprived of the very principle of life. Hence it is that fainting fits are so frequent in all crowded assemblies, especially in hot seasons. Such fits however must be considered as a kind of temporary death; and, to the weak and delicate, they sometimes prove fatal. They ought therefore with the utmost care to be guarded against. The method of doing this is obvious. Let assembly rooms, and all other places of public resort, be large and well ventilated; and let the weak and delicate avoid such places, particularly in warm seasons.

A person who faints in such a situation ought immediately to be carried into the open air; his temples should be rubbed with strong vinegar or brandy, and volatile spirits or salts held to his nose. He should be laid upon his back with his head low, and have a little wine, or some other cordial, poured into his mouth, as soon as he is able to swallow it. If the person has been subject to hysteric fits, castor or assafœtida should be applied to the nose, or burnt feathers, horn, or leather, &c.

When fainting fits proceed from mere weakness or exhaustion, which is often the case after great fatigue, long fasting, loss of blood, or the like, the patient must be supported with generous cordials, as jellies, wines, spirituous liquors, &c. These however must be given at first in very small quantities, and increased gradually as the patient is able to bear them. He ought to be allowed to lie quite still and easy upon his back, with his head low, and should have fresh air admitted into his chamber. His food should consist of nourishing broths, sago gruel with wine, new milk, and other things of a light and cordial nature. These things are to be given out of the fit. All that can be done in the fit is to let him smell to a bottle of Hungary water, *eau de luce*, or spirits of hartshorn, and to rub his temples with warm brandy, or to lay a compress dipped in it to the pit of the stomach.

In fainting fits that proceed from fear, grief, or other violent passions or affections of the mind, the patient must be very cautiously managed. He should be suffered to remain at rest,

and only made to smell to some vinegar. After he is come to himself he may drink freely of warm lemonade or balm tea, with some orange or lemon peel in it. It will likewise be proper, if the fainting fits have been long and severe, to cleanse the bowels by throwing in an emollient clyster.

It is common in fainting fits, from whatever cause they proceed, to bleed the patient. This practice may be very proper in strong persons of a full habit; but in those who are weak and delicate, or subject to nervous disorders, it is dangerous. The proper method with such people is to expose them to the free air, and to use cordial and stimulating medicines, as volatile salts, Hungary-water, spirits of lavender, tincture of castor, &c.

HYSTERIC AND HYPOCHONDRIAC AFFECTIONS.

These likewise belong to the numerous tribe of nervous disorders, which may justly be reckoned the reproach of medicine. We would have treated of them at greater length, but for this reason, that they are diseases which nobody chooses to own; and indeed it would be better if their names were never mentioned. One cannot tell a lady she is hysteric without affronting her, nor say that a gentleman is hypochondriac without in some measure insinuating that he is mad or at least whimsical. But although these names were liable to no such unfavorable acceptation, they are by no means proper, and for that reason ought to be discontinued.

Physicians are not more at a loss to account for the symptoms of these disorders than to prescribe medicines for removing them. There are indeed so many nervous antidotes daily puffed away, that one would be apt to think no person could long labor under any disease of this nature. But, alas! whoever trusts to these will be sure to meet with a disappointment. Nervous diseases proceed either from disagreeable affections of the mind or from errors in the regimen, and can only be cured by removing the one or rectifying the other.

Though this truth is well known to physicians, yet they are often obliged to disguise it. Patients who labor under nervous diseases are generally very fond of medicine, and when they are not swallowing drugs they think themselves neglected. For this reason the doctor must either give medi-

cine or lay his account with being dismissed. Nothing indeed is more characteristic of the disease than an inclination to consult new physicians. Hence few persons of fortune who are nervous fail to consult every physician they meet with. Nor do they stop here, but generally they take the advice of every quack and old woman, however ignorant or contemptible; but, though fond of advice, seldom follow it so long as to reap any benefit from it. Fickle and unsteady, they fly from one thing to another, till at length, tired out with disappointments, and despairing of relief, they sink under a load of calamities.

Would such persons, instead of hunting after medicines, and flying from one physician to another, persist steadily in a proper plan of regimen, they might often render life tolerably easy, and sometimes even agreeable.* This however requires more resolution than most people are masters of. They will swallow a drug because it is soon over, and they expect immediate relief from it; but can by no means think of pursuing a plan that requires patience and perseverance, and which perhaps strikes at the root of some of their most darling enjoyments.

The general causes and symptoms of these diseases having been pretty fully pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, under the general title of nervous disorders, we shall not repeat them. It may not however be improper to add, that from whatever source these disorders may spring, their principal seat seems to be the alimentary canal; at least most of their symptoms arise from thence; as flatulence, indigestion, nausea and vomiting, the hysteric globe, cramps of the stomach, &c. All these show a weak and relaxed state of the stomach and intestines; to which, if we add an over-degree of sensibility of the nervous system, we shall be able to account for most of the symptoms denominated *nervous*, *hysteric*, or *hypochondriac*.

* It were to be wished, in diseases where the cure depends chiefly upon the patient's own endeavors, that no medicines were prescribed at all. Wherever physicians order medicine patients will trust to it, and when that is the case it is ten to one but their own endeavors are neglected. The physician, therefore, who has so much hardness and honesty as to give advice without medicine, is, in many cases, the most likely to perform a cure, as it puts the patient upon exerting his own powers, which he will never do so long as he has any faith in medicine.

This view of nervous diseases plainly points out the intentions of cure, viz., to strengthen the nerves and promote the digestion. But as this can only be done by *labor, simple food, and free air*, we must again beg leave to recommend an attention to these. The lazy, the indolent, and the luxurious, will despise this advice; but such are incurable, and deserve to suffer. I have known the most obstinate nervous diseases cured by labor, but never knew them yield to medicine. Some of their symptoms may indeed for a time be mitigated by it, but that is all it can do.

The persons most liable to these disorders are the lazy, the luxurious, the unfortunate, and the sedentary. For the two first of these classes we shall prescribe nothing, as the cure is in their own power; and to the third we can only recommend hope, amusement, &c. The fourth, however, merits our further attention, both because it comprehends a great number of the useful part of mankind, and likewise because it is often out of their power to alter their situation. Many of them might however do a great deal, if they would. For example, the clergy are almost to a man hypochondriac, and often poor, yet think it much below them to labor. I have been able to persuade some of them to thresh, &c., others to dig; nor did such ever fail to get well. Let the rest follow their example, or take exercise in what way they please.* As to indolent girls who are eat up with hysteric fits merely because they will not work, I see no reason why they should not be sent to the workhouse, and put upon hard labor. This would be both a benefit to themselves and the society to which they belong.

Those, however, who are willing to take exercise, but whose occupations confine them to the house, and perhaps to an unfavorable posture, really deserve our pity. We have in a former part of the book endeavored to lay down some rules for their conduct; and shall only add, that where these

* Some people will think it strange that we should recommend labor to the clergy; but they ought to consider that the regulations of society can never alter the laws of our nature; and if a man must either labor or be sick, surely no set of men have any title to an exemption from the general rule. The monkish notion that a clergyman ought rather to beg than dig, has more bad consequences than we choose to name. It must however be acknowledged, that a clergyman who has the charge of a parish may find sufficient exercise, if he chooses to take it, without either threshing, digging, or ploughing.

cannot be complied with or fail of having the desired effect, their intentions may in some measure be answered by the following medicines, viz., the Peruvian bark with other bitters, preparations of steel, assafœtida, elixir of vitriol, infusions of valerian root, pennyroyal, &c. The various ways of preparing and using these have already been pointed out.

CHAPTER XLIV. OF POISONS.

EVERY person ought in some measure to be acquainted with the nature and cure of poisons. They are generally taken unawares, and their effects are often so sudden and violent as not to admit of delay or allow time to procure the assistance of physicians. Happily indeed no great degree of medical knowledge is here necessary; the remedies for most poisons being generally at hand or easily obtained, and nothing but common prudence needful in the application of them.

The vulgar notion that every poison is cured by some counter poison, as a specific, has done much hurt. People believe they can do nothing for the patient unless they know the particular antidote to that kind of poison which he has taken; whereas the cure of all poisons taken into the stomach, without exception, depends chiefly on discharging them as soon as possible.

There is no case wherein the indications of cure are more obvious than in this. Poison is seldom long in the stomach before it occasions sickness, with an inclination to vomit. This shows plainly what ought to be done. Indeed common sense dictates to every man, that, if any thing has been taken into the stomach which endangers life, it ought immediately to be discharged. Were this duly regarded, the danger arising from poisons might generally be avoided. The method of prevention is obvious, and the means are in the hands of every man.