

was the invention of a negro; for the discovery of which he had his freedom purchased, and a hundred pounds *per annum* settled upon him during life, by the General Assembly of Carolina.

It is possible that there may be in nature specific remedies for every kind of poison; but as we have very little faith in any one of those which have yet been discovered, we shall beg leave again to recommend the most strict attention to the following rules, viz.: That when any poisonous substance has been taken into the stomach, it ought, as soon as possible, to be discharged by vomits, clysters, and purges; and, when poison has been received into the body by a wound, that it be expelled by medicines which promote the different secretions, especially those of sweat, urine, and insensible perspiration; to which may be joined antispasmodics, or such medicines as take off tension and irritation; the chief of which are opium, musk, camphire, assafoetida, and such like.

CHAPTER XLV.

DISORDERS OF THE SENSES.

WE do not mean to treat of the nature of our sensations, nor to give a minute description of the various organs by which they are performed; but to point out some of the diseases to which these organs are most liable, and to show how they may be prevented or remedied.

THE EYE.

No organ of the body is more subject to diseases than the eye, nor is there any one of which the diseases are more difficult to cure. More ignorant persons however pretend to cure these than any other class of diseases; but a very superficial acquaintance with the structure of the eye and the nature of vision will be sufficient to convince any one of the danger of trusting to them. These diseases often exceed the skill of the most learned physicians; hence we may easily infer the

danger of trusting them to ignorant quacks, who, without all peradventure, put out more eyes than they cure. But though the diseases of the eye can seldom be cured, they might often, by due care, be prevented; and even where the sight is totally lost, many things might be done, which are generally neglected, to render the unhappy person both more useful to himself and to society.

The eyes are hurt by viewing bright or luminous objects; keeping the head too long in a hanging posture; violent headaches; excessive venery; the long use of bitters; the effluvia from acrid or volatile substances; various diseases, as the small-pox, measles, &c.; but above all from night-watching and candle-light studies. Long fasting is likewise hurtful to the eyes, and frequent heats and colds are very pernicious. The eyes are often hurt by the stoppage of customary evacuations, as morning sweats, sweating of the feet, the menses in women, and the bleeding piles in men, &c. All kinds of excess are likewise hurtful to the sight, particularly the immoderate use of ardent spirits and other strong liquors.

In all diseases of the eyes, especially those attended with inflammation, the cool regimen ought to be observed. The patient must abstain from all spirituous liquors. The smoke of tobacco, smoky rooms, the vapors of onions and garlic, and all vivid lights and glaring colors, are carefully to be avoided. The drink may be water, whey, or small beer, and the aliment must be light of digestion.

For preventing disorders of the eyes, issues and setons are of prime use. Every person whose eyes are tender ought to have one or more of these in some part of the body. It will likewise be of use to keep the body gently open, and either to purge or bleed every spring and fall. All excess and night-studies are carefully to be avoided. Such as do not choose a seton or an issue will find great benefit from wearing a small Burgundy pitch plaster between their shoulders.

A *gutta serena*, or *amaurosis*, is an abolition of the sight, without any apparent cause or fault in the eyes. When it is owing to a decay or wasting of the optic nerve, it does not admit of a cure; but when it proceeds from a compression of the nerves by redundant humors, these may be in some measure drained off and the patient relieved. For this purpose, the belly must be kept open with the laxative mercurial pills. If the patient be young and of a sanguine habit, he may be bled. Cupping, with scarifications on the back part of the

head, may likewise be of use. A running at the nose may be promoted by volatile salts, stimulating powders, &c. But the most likely means for relieving the patient are issues or blisters kept open for a long time on the back part of the head, behind the ears, or on the neck. I have known these restore sight even after it had been for a considerable time lost.

Should these fail, recourse must be had to a mercurial salivation; or, what will perhaps answer the purpose better, twelve grains of the corrosive sublimate of mercury may be dissolved in an English pint and a half of brandy, and a table-spoonful of it taken twice a day, drinking half a pint of the decoction of sarsaparilla after it.

A *cataract* is an obstruction of the pupil, by the interposition of some opaque substance which either diminishes or extinguishes the sight. It is generally an opacity of the crystalline humor. In a recent or beginning cataract, the same medicines are to be used as in the *gutta serena*; and they will sometimes succeed. But when this does not happen, and the cataract becomes firm, it must be couched, or rather extracted. I have resolved a recent cataract by giving the patient frequent purges with calomel, keeping a poultice of fresh hemlock constantly upon the eye, and a perpetual blister on the neck.

The *myopia*, or *short-sightedness*, and the *presbytopia*, or *seeing only at too great a distance*, are disorders which depend on the original structure or figure of the eye, and therefore admit of no cure. The inconveniences arising from them may, however, be in some measure remedied by the help of proper glasses. The former requires the aid of a concave and the latter of a convex glass.

A *strabismus*, or *squinting*, depends upon an irregular contraction of the muscles of the eye from a spasm, palsy, epilepsy, or an ill habit. Children often contract this disorder by having one of their eyes too much exposed to the light. They may likewise acquire it by imitation from a squinting nurse or playfellow, &c. As this disorder can hardly be cured, parents ought to be careful to prevent it. Almost the only thing which can be done for it is to contrive a mask for the child to wear, which will only permit him to see in a straight direction.

Spots or *specks* on the eyes are generally the effect of inflammation, and often appear after the small-pox, the measles, or violent ophthalmies. They are very difficult to cure, and

often occasion total blindness. If the specks are soft and thin, they may sometimes be taken off by gentle caustics and discutients, as vitriol, the juice of celandine, &c. When these do not succeed, a surgical operation may be tried. The success of this however is always very doubtful.

The *bloodshot eye* may be occasioned by a stroke, a fall, retching, vomiting, violent coughing, &c. I have frequently known it happen to children in the whooping-cough. It appears at first like a bit of scarlet, and is afterwards of a livid or blackish color. This disorder generally goes off without medicine. Should it prove obstinate, the patient may be bled, and have his eyes fomented with a decoction of comfrey roots and elder flowers. A soft poultice may be applied to the eyes; and the body should be kept open by gentle purgatives.

The *watery or weeping eye* is generally occasioned by a relaxation or weakness of the glandular parts of the eye. These may be braced and strengthened by bathing the eye with brandy and water, Hungary-water, rosewater with white vitriol dissolved in it, &c. Medicines which make a revulsion are likewise proper, as mild purgatives, perpetual blisters on the neck, bathing the feet frequently in lukewarm water, &c.

When this disease proceeds from an obstruction of the lachrymal duct or natural passage of the tears, it is called a *fistula lachrymalis*, and can only be cured by a surgical operation.

THE EAR.

The functions of the ear may be injured by wounds, ulcers, or any thing that hurts its fabric. The hearing may likewise be hurt by excessive noise, violent colds in the head, fevers, hard wax or other substances sticking in the cavity of the ear, too great a degree of moisture or dryness of the ear. Deafness is very often the effect of old age, and is incident to most people in the decline of life. Sometimes it is owing to an original fault in the structure or formation of the ear itself. When this is the case, it admits of no cure, and the unhappy person not only continues deaf, but generally likewise dumb, for life.

When deafness is the effect of wounds or ulcers of the ears, or of old age, it is not easily removed. When it proceeds from cold of the head, the patient must be careful to keep his head warm, especially in the night; he should likewise take

some gentle purges, and keep his feet warm, and bathe them frequently in lukewarm water at bedtime. When deafness is the effect of a fever, it generally goes off after the patient recovers. If it proceeds from dry wax sticking in the ears, it may be softened by dropping oil into them; afterwards they must be syringed with warm milk and water.

If deafness proceeds from dryness of the ears, which may be known by looking into them, half an ounce of the oil of sweet almonds, and the same quantity of liquid opodeldoc or tincture of assafoetida, may be mixed together, and a few drops of it put into the ear every night at bedtime, stopping them afterwards with a little wool or cotton. Some, instead of oil, put a small slice of the fat of bacon into each ear, which is said to answer the purpose very well. When the ears abound with moisture, it may be drained off by an issue or seton, which should be made as near the affected parts as possible.

Some, for the cure of deafness, recommend the gall of an eel, mixed with the spirit of wine, to be dropped into the ear; others, equal parts of Hungary-water and spirit of lavender. Etmuler extols amber and musk; and Brookes says he has often known hardness of hearing cured by putting a grain or two of musk into the ear with cotton wool. But these and other applications must be varied according to the cause of the disorder.

Though such applications may sometimes be of service, yet they much oftener fail, and frequently they do hurt. Neither the eyes nor ears ought to be tampered with; they are tender organs, and require a very delicate touch. For this reason, what we would chiefly recommend in deafness is to keep the head warm. From whatever cause the disorder proceeds, this is always proper; and I have known more benefit from it alone, in the most obstinate cases of deafness, than from all the medicines I ever used.

TASTE AND SMELL.

Though these senses are not of so great importance to man in a state of society as the sight and hearing, yet, as the loss of them is attended with some inconveniency, they deserve our notice. They are seldom to be restored when lost, which ought to make us very attentive to their preservation, by carefully avoiding whatever may in the least prove injurious to

them. As there is a very great affinity betwixt the organs of tasting and smelling, whatever hurts the one generally affects the other.

Luxury is highly injurious to these organs. When the nose and palate are frequently stimulated by fragrant and poignant dishes, they soon lose the power of distinguishing tastes and odors with any degree of nicety. Man, in a state of nature, may perhaps have these faculties as acute as any other animal.

The sense of smelling may be diminished or destroyed by diseases; as the moisture, dryness, inflammation, or suppuration of that membrane which lines the inside of the nose, commonly called the olfactory membrane; the compression of the nerves which supply this membrane, or some fault in the brain itself at their origin. A defect, or too great a degree of solidity, of the small spongy bones of the upper jaw, the caverns of the forehead, &c., may likewise impair the sense of smelling. It may likewise be injured by a collection of fetid matter in those caverns, which keeps constantly exhaling from them. Few things are more hurtful to the sense of smelling than taking great quantities of snuff.

When the nose abounds with moisture, after gentle evacuations, such things as tend to take off irritation and coagulate the thin sharp serum may be applied, as the oil of anise mixed with fine flour, camphire dissolved in oil of almonds, &c. The vapors of amber, frankincense, gum mastic and benjamin, may likewise be received into the nose and mouth.

For moistening the mucus when it is too dry, some recommend snuff made of the leaves of marjoram, mixed with oil of amber, marjoram, and aniseed; or a sternutatory of calcined white vitriol, twelve grains of which may be mixed with two ounces of marjoram water and filtrated. The steam or vapor of vinegar upon hot iron received up the nostrils is likewise of use for softening the mucus, opening obstructions, &c.

If there be an ulcer in the nose, it must be dressed with some emollient ointment, to which, if the pain be very great, a little laudanum may be added. If it be a venereal ulcer, it is not to be cured without mercury. In that case, the solution of the corrosive sublimate in brandy may be taken, as directed in the *gutta serena*. The ulcer ought likewise to be washed with it; and the fumes of cinnabar may be received up the nostrils.

If there be reason to suspect that the nerves which supply

the organs of smelling are inert or want stimulating, volatile salts, strong snuffs, and other things which occasion sneezing, may be applied to the nose. The forehead may likewise be anointed with balsam of Peru, to which may be added a little of the oil of amber.

The taste may be diminished by crusts, filth, mucus, apthæ, pellicles, warts, &c., covering the tongue; it may be depraved by a fault of the saliva, which, being discharged into the mouth, gives the same sensation as if the food which the person takes had really a bad taste; or it may be entirely destroyed by injuries done to the nerves of the tongue and palate. Few things prove more hurtful either to the sense of tasting or smelling than obstinate colds, especially those which affect the head.

When the taste is diminished by filth, mucus, &c., the tongue ought to be scraped and frequently washed with a mixture of water, vinegar, and honey, or some other detergent. When the saliva is vitiated, which seldom happens, unless in fevers or other diseases, the curing of the disorder is the cure of this symptom. To relieve it however in the mean time, the following things may be of use: If there be a bitter taste, it may be taken away by vomits, purges, and other things which evacuate bile; what is called a nidorous taste, arising from putrid humors, is corrected by the juice of citrons, oranges, and other acids; a salt taste is cured by plentiful dilution with watery liquors; an acid taste is destroyed by absorbents and alkaline salts, as powder of oyster-shells, salt of wormwood, &c.

When the sensibility of the nerves which supply the organs of taste seems to be diminished, the chewing of horseradish, or other stimulating substances, will help to recover it.

TOUCH.

The sense of touching may be hurt by any thing that obstructs the nervous influence or prevents its being regularly conveyed to the organs of touching; as pressure, extreme cold, &c. It may likewise be hurt by too great a degree of sensibility, when the nerve is not sufficiently covered by the cuticle or scarfskin, or where there is too great a tension of it or it is too delicate. Whatever disorders the functions of the brain and nerves hurts the sense of touching. Hence it appears to proceed from the same general causes as palsy and

apoplexy, and requires nearly the same method of treatment.

In a *stupor*, or defect of touching, which arises from an obstruction of the cutaneous nerves, the patient must first be purged; afterwards such medicines as excite the action of the nerves or stimulate the system may be used. For this purpose, the spirit of hartshorn, *sal volatile oleosum*, horseradish, &c., may be taken inwardly; the disordered parts, at the same time, may be frequently rubbed with fresh nettles or spirit of sal ammoniac. Blistering plasters and sinapisms applied to the parts will likewise be of use, as also warm bathing, especially in the natural hot baths.

CHAPTER XLVI.

OF A SCIRRHUS AND CANCER.

A SCIRRHUS is a hard indolent tumor, seated in some of the glands, as the breasts, the armpits, &c. If the tumor becomes large, unequal, of a livid, blackish, or leaden color, and is attended with violent pain, it gets the name of an *occult cancer*. When the skin is broken, and a *sanies* or ichorous matter of an abominably fetid smell is discharged from the sore, it is called an *open* or *ulcerated cancer*. Persons after the age of forty-five, particularly women, and those who lead an indolent sedentary life, are most subject to this disease.

CAUSES.—This disease is often owing to suppressed evacuations; hence it proves so frequently fatal to women of a gross habit, particularly old maids and widows, about the time when the menstrual flux ceases. It may likewise be occasioned by excessive grief, fear, anger, religious melancholy, or any of the depressing passions. Hence the unfortunate, the choleric, and those persons who devote themselves to a religious life in convents and monasteries, are often afflicted with it. It may also be occasioned by the long-continued use of food that is too hard of digestion or of an acrid nature, by barrenness, celibacy, indolence, cold, blows, friction, pressure, or the like. Women often suffer from the last of these by