

CHAP. IV.

REMITTENT FEVER.

THIS fever takes its name from a remission of the symptoms, which happens sometimes sooner and sometimes later, but generally before the eighth day. The remission is commonly preceded by a gentle sweat, after which the patient seems greatly relieved, but in a few hours the fever returns. These remissions return at very irregular periods, and are sometimes of longer, sometimes of shorter duration: the nearer, however, that the fever approaches to a regular intermittent, the danger is the less.

CAUSES.—Remittent fevers prevail in low marshy countries abounding with wood and stagnating water;* but they prove most fatal in places where great heat and moisture are combined, as in some parts of Africa, Bengal, in the East Indies, &c. where remitting fevers are generally of a putrid kind, and prove very fatal. They are most frequent in close calm weather, especially after rainy seasons, great inundations, or the like. No age, sex, or constitution is exempted from the attack of this fever; but it chiefly seizes persons of a lax habit, who live in low dirty habitations, breathe an impure stagnating air, take little exercise, and use unwholesome diet.

SYMPTOMS.—The first symptoms of this fever are generally yawning, stretching, pain, languor, and giddiness in the head, with alternate fits of heat and cold. Sometimes the patient is affected with a delirium at the very first attack. There is a pain and sometimes a swelling, about the region of the stomach, the tongue is white, the eyes and skin frequently appear yellow, and the patient is often afflicted with bilious vomitings. The pulse is sometimes a little hard, but seldom full; and the blood, when let, rarely shows any signs of inflammation. Some patients are exceedingly costive, and others are afflicted with a very troublesome looseness.

It is impossible to describe all the symptoms of this disease, as they vary according to the situation, the season of the year, and the constitution of the patient. They may likewise be greatly changed by the method of treatment, and by many other circumstances too tedious to mention. Sometimes the bilious symptoms

* Although originally produced by marsh miasma, and in its simple state not of an infectious nature, this fever under bad management, such as crowding too many sick together, neglecting proper cleanliness and a free ventilation, there cannot be a doubt that it may in its course engender a matter capable of occasioning a fever of a highly contagious nature; and although remittent fever cannot be communicated at any great distance from the source of its exciting cause, however severely and epidemically it may prevail in certain situations and districts; and although the matter producing it be essentially the same, still we may conclude, "I think," says Dr. Thomas, (a) "that a more aggravated form of the disease is occasioned by a more concentrated state of the person: hence the different degrees of severity of remittent fever at different periods of the year, and in different climates." ED.

(a) Modern Practice of Physic.

predominate, sometimes the nervous, and at other times the putrid. Nor is it at all uncommon to find a succession of each of these, or even a complication of them at the same time, in the same person.

DIET.—The regimen must be adapted to the prevailing symptoms. When there are any signs of inflammation, the diet must be slender, and the drink weak and diluting. But when nervous or putrid symptoms prevail, it will be necessary to support the patient with food and liquors of a more generous nature, such as are recommended in the immediately preceding fevers. We must, however, be very cautious in the use of things of a heating quality, as this fever is frequently changed into a *continual* by an hot regimen, and improper medicines.

Whatever the symptoms are, the patient ought to be kept cool, quiet, and clean. His apartment, if possible, should be large, and frequently ventilated by letting in fresh air at the doors and windows. It ought likewise to be sprinkled with vinegar, juice of lemon, or the like. His linen, bed clothes, &c. should be frequently changed, and all his excrements immediately removed. Though these things have been recommended before, we think it necessary to repeat them here, as they are of more importance to the sick than practitioners are apt to imagine.*

MEDICAL TREATMENT.—In order to cure this fever, we must endeavour to bring it to a regular intermission. This intention may be promoted by bleeding, if there be any signs of inflammation; but when that is not the case, bleeding ought by no means to be attempted, as it will weaken the patient and prolong the disease. But in all protracted cases, under every climate, where the pulse is weak, but where the head is still much affected, the application of cupping-glasses to the back part of the head, or of leeches to the temples, will be more advisable than venesection. As nausea usually prevails at the commencement of the disease, an emetic will seldom be improper, and is generally of great service. Twenty or thirty grains of ipecacuanha will answer this purpose very well; but where it can be obtained, we would rather recommend a grain or two of tartar emetic, with five or six grains of ipecacuanha, to be made into a draught, and given for a vomit. This may be repeated once or twice at proper intervals, if the sickness or nausea continues.

Cold affusion, where it can be practised with propriety, produces the most agreeable effects with a tendency to sleep, fuller and more uniform pulse, moist skin, and now and then a distinct remission. To alter the type of the fever, it may be proper to give

* The patient's shirt, bed-clothes, and bedding, ought frequently to be changed, and exposed to the air, and all his excrements immediately removed; the bed-chamber should be well ventilated, and frequently sprinkled with vinegar; in short, every attention should be paid to the patient. I can affirm, that a physician who puts these in practice will much oftener succeed, than one who is even more skilful, but has not opportunity of using these means. DR. LIND.

antimonials,* in small and repeated doses. To allay vomiting, warm fomentation of camomiles, and bruised poppy-heads, clear the seat of the stomach. Saline draughts in a state of effervescence, to each of which may be added ten drops of the tincture of opium.

The body ought to be kept open either by clysters or gentle laxatives, as weak infusions of senna and manna, small doses of the lenitive electuary, cream of tartar, tamarinds, stewed prunes, or the like; but all strong or drastic purgatives are to be carefully avoided.

In this fever, as well as in that called the yellow fever (*typhus uterocles*), the submuriate of mercury,† combined with rhubarb or jalap, may be regarded as a valuable remedy, where it is wished to carry off putrid feculent matter from the bowels, and there is at the same time any degree of nausea or vomiting present, as, from the smallness of the bulk, it may possibly be retained on the stomach when every other purgative might be rejected.

In cold climates we may wait for a perfect and complete remission before the bark is administered; but in warm climates it ought to be given even in the most imperfect and shortest remission; and although it may not prove sufficiently efficacious to prevent a fresh attack at first, it will, nevertheless, mitigate the subsequent return of the fever, and at last bring about regular and a perfect remission. When this is omitted in warm climates, it is apt to assume a continued form.

By this course the fever in a few days may generally be brought to a pretty regular or distinct intermission, in which case the Peruvian bark may be administered, and it will seldom fail to perfect the cure. It is needless here to repeat the methods of giving the bark, as we have already had occasion frequently to mention them.

The most likely way to avoid this fever is to use a wholesome or nourishing diet, to pay the most scrupulous attention to cleanliness, to keep the body warm, to take sufficient exercise, and in hot countries to avoid damp situations, night air, evening dews, and the like. In countries where it is endemical, the best preventive medicine which we can recommend is the Peruvian bark, which may either be chewed, or infused in brandy or wine, &c. Some recommend smoking tobacco as very beneficial in marshy countries, both for prevention of this and intermitting fevers. And to guard against a relapse, the bark should be continued for some days after the attacks have ceased, and not, as is frequently the case, too hastily laid aside.

A remittent fever is always attended with some hazard, particularly in warm climates, in which it usually goes through its course in the space of five or six days; but in cold ones, its crisis is not usually affected until the twelfth or fourteenth. The shorter and

* Take compound powder of ipecacuanha,
4 grains.
Camphor, 3 grains.
Confection of Roses, enough.
Make a bolus, to be taken every third or fourth hour.

† Take powdered Rhubarb, 10 to 20 grs.

Submuriate of Mercury (Calomel,) 5 grains.
Simple Syrup, enough to make up into four pills for a dose.
or
Take powdered Jalap, 15 grs.
Submuriate of Mercury, 15 grs.
Make a powder.

more obscure the remissions are the greater the danger, and each succeeding paroxysm is attended with more risk than the former one. On the contrary, the milder the attack, and the nearer the fever approaches to the intermittent form, the sooner will be the prospect of the patient's recovery.

As disorders of this kind are more to be dreaded in a camp than the approach of an enemy, it is the duty of superior officers very earnestly to concur with their medical attendants in enforcing the proper means of prevention. The spirit of our soldiers betrays them into a contempt of disease, as well as of danger; and they are too apt to forget, that no hardihood can of itself resist the warm, sickly moisture of autumn, and the damp air of the night to which they are often unavoidably exposed. Those brave, but thoughtless men, should, therefore, be obliged to pay more attention to the simple preservatives from fevers above pointed out. I have too high an opinion of the talents of many eminent physicians and surgeons now in the army, to think any farther remarks on this subject necessary. I am persuaded that a hint will be sufficient to call forth the fullest exercise of their skill, their humanity, and their zeal also, for the honour and security of their country, in saving their lives, and promoting the health and vigour of its gallant defenders.

CHAP. V.

CONTINUED FEVERS.

FEVERS of this type continue for several days, with nearly the same degree of violence, having evident exacerbations and remissions daily.

SYNOCHUS, OR SIMPLE CONTINUED FEVER.

A COMBINATION of synochal or inflammatory typhoid or putrid symptoms appear to constitute this species of fever; the former being apt to preponderate at the commencement, the latter towards the termination of the disease. It is contagious, and is of more frequent occurrence in this country.

REMOTE CAUSES.—Every thing having a tendency to enervate the body, may be considered as a remote cause of fever; and, accordingly, we often find it resulting from great bodily fatigue, too great indulgence in sensual pleasures, violent exertions, intemperance in drinking, errors in diet, &c.; and now and then from the suppression of long accustomed evacuations; with all the causes enumerated under the general observations on fevers. *See FEVERS.*

It is the opinion of many physicians, that there is something in the nature of all acute diseases, except those of a putrid kind,