

T H E

LONDON MEDICAL JOURNAL.

- I. *An Account of uncommon Symptoms succeeding the Measles; with some additional Remarks on the Infection of Measles and Small Pox. By Mr. James Lucas, one of the Surgeons of the General Infirmary at Leeds.* ✓

AN unmarried woman, aged twenty-three years, was seized with a fever July 21st, 1790. On the 23d, in the evening, the measles began to appear, and on the 28th the eruption seemed to be gradually declining. On the 29th, in the evening, she perceived that she was deprived of the use of her lower limbs, although she had not any other uncommon complaint. During the eruption she had menstruated, but the discharge and the time were not in any respect unusual. The following morning she could not pass any urine, and an obstinate constipation succeeded, which was scarcely to be overcome by the most powerful cathartics, administered not only by the mouth, but also by clysters. Castor oil seemed to claim a preference to any other purgative that was employed. The tobacco clyster seems, in such cases

of

of debility, to be somewhat objectionable, although in inflammatory affections I have found it efficacious, not only as an aperient, but also as an antiphlogistic remedy.

She had little pain : her chief complaint was a sense of fulness in the abdomen. The warm bath, which was directed as a stimulus to the viscera, was followed by a slight pain in the legs. Although the uneasiness was of short duration, yet it seemed to prognosticate farther advantage from persisting in the use of the bath : it was, therefore, directed to be employed of an agreeable heat, and for the space of ten minutes, every other night. The pain appeared to be increased after every bathing, which proved of essential service in producing a feeling in the limbs.

During ten days no urine was evacuated, except what escaped upon moving her, or was drawn off by the catheter, which was daily employed ; for although the attendants seemed to be of opinion that a sufficient quantity occasionally and accidentally flowed, yet the intumescence in the region of the bladder clearly pointed out the necessity of more effectually removing its distention. She neither passed urine at the time of fecal discharges, nor had any voluntary inclination to void it until her limbs had

so far recovered that she was able to move over the floor.

In such cases too supine a posture may be pernicious; and endeavours should be used, by the patient, to void urine about the time that it has been accustomed to be extracted by the catheter.

In every instance, but more especially when the feelings of the patient are imperfect, it is necessary to distinguish between an involuntary flowing of urine, and an evacuation under the direction of the patient; for if the bladder is never sufficiently emptied, its tone will be much longer in being recovered, although the swelling in the abdomen should not be of a very painful kind. It would be a fortunate circumstance if women, in such unhappy cases, could accomplish the introduction of the catheter themselves.

The patient was a week before she could move a limb, and yet in two days more she was able to walk over the floor without much aid. Occasional aperients and a preparation of bark, together with the warm bath, were the only means employed. Every potent remedy was purposely delayed, until it was seen what nature's assistance would accomplish, as the paralysis seemed to arise from debility.

During

During her indisposition she was confined to a large chamber with a north aspect, and in a fine situation in the country: she was neither blooded nor blistered, nor were any powerful medicines given, to which such singular affection could be ascribed.

Could menstruation at that period have occasioned such temporary palsy? — I have known the same evacuation, during eruptive fevers, occur without any bad consequence. An adult and a child passed through the disease in the same family, and about the same time, without any remarkable symptoms. The patient herself observed, that after the small pox, about nine years ago, she had been somewhat similarly affected, and had gradually recovered. For a week or two she complained of pain in her back, especially upon motion.

Several months ago, the hooping cough, since that time the small pox, and now the measles, have become very prevalent in this town and neighbourhood. The measles have, in general, been of a favourable kind. I have not seen one instance of a fatal termination. Great debility has, in many cases, succeeded. I bled one patient, and found his blood of a loose texture; but his recovery appeared to me somewhat

somewhat impeded, although at the time his symptoms seemed to require such an evacuation.

The eruption has commonly been copious, and in many accompanied with great fever.

Persons in a country situation have passed through the disorder in a more favourable manner than those in the town.

An opinion has been maintained, that the small pox is not infectious naturally previous to maturation; but an instance has appeared of the measles being infectious during the eruptive fever. A woman, who had no suspicion of any such infection about her, took her child with her to pay a visit to a family in the country. This child having been observed by the family to have a cough, and to be ill, its mother was requested to take it away, and reminded that the small pox and measles were at Leeds, from whence she came. The child was accordingly removed, and the next morning had an eruption, which proved to be the measles. On the fourteenth day from the removal of this patient three children of the family, who resided in the country, and also a man servant, all of whom had been close to the child that had been

taken there upon a visit, sickened, and had the measles. Three other children, two of whom were the youngest, and had not been equally near the child, received the infection from their sisters. They all had the disorder in as moderate a degree as any that I have attended.

A young lady was sensible of a bad smell, and complained of being sick, soon after she discovered that she had been near a child with the small pox. In about three weeks the eruption in herself was as copious from head to foot as I ever saw, and she died on the fourth day, before there were any signs of maturation. Her eldest sister, who had been cautiously prevented from seeing the patient during her life, imprudently saluted the corpse, and with great hazard passed through the disorder. I have no doubt but that inoculation might, in each of these cases, have superseded the natural infection, had it been done even some days after the natural infection had been received; and I am inclined to think that in so dangerous a case, as the former, cold bathing might be warrantable, as petechiæ were very numerous. In the case of a weakly child, who had a copious eruption of small pox, I once saw the cold bath used, accidentally, without any apparent harm.

Although

Although under natural infection the small pox and measles may be, during the eruptive fever, infectious, yet it is most probable that when these diseases are milder, or artificially received, there would at such times be less danger of contagion. The custom of persons unnecessarily visiting infectious corpses, and inviting numbers to such funerals, are certainly of more serious consequence than is generally imagined.

Leeds,
August 22, 1790.

II. *Observations on the Angustura Bark. Communicated in a Letter to Dr. Simmons, F. R. S. by Mr. G. Wilkinson, Surgeon at Sunderland, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, and honorary Member of the Chirurgo-physical Society of Edinburgh.*

AFTER having perused the very favourable accounts given of this bark, in the London Medical Journal*, by Drs. Ewer and Williams, I was induced to send for some to Messrs. Taylor and Davy; since

* Vol. X. p. 154, 158.