

ing upwards, agitates all the Parts in its way, till it climbs to the Brain, and communicates to the Spirits that inhabit there a convulsive disposition, and a grievous Train of Symptoms." Then "Uproar and Sedition trouble and embroil all the vital Provinces of the Soul." Truly, a terrific picture!

His method of cure for slight hysterical attacks differs in no way from the present-day treatment, for he remarks, tersely, that the "Patient left to her-self will soon recover, which is all that in this Case ought to be done"; but, during an "acute Paroxysm" he evidently sometimes practised venesection, for he recommends "Letting Blood," "especially in younger Women of a more florid and 'hail' Complexion," as tending to "compose the Fury and Orgasms" (whatever they may be) "of the Spirits by moderating the Velocity of their Flight." He also advises the use of "little Knots, including Flowers of the Lilly of the Valley to be held to the Nose often, to rouse the Spirits and restore their Motion. But," he says, "as to kindled Sulphur, burning Feathers and smoking Linnen applied to the Nostrils, which the Nurfes fly to in the first place; it must be owned that the foetid Particles are so much exalted in these Compositions, that when let loose by the Fire, they strike the Spirits with such violence that they rather enrage them than reduce their Disorder."

This all sounds rather vague, in spite of his efforts towards "clear and obvious expression," which he assures his reader in the lengthy preface is his endeavour in writing; or is it perhaps thus "intricate and obscure" to us nowadays because, as he suggests, the "subject Matter its-self may be superior to our Apprehension, who have been wholly unacquainted with such Ideas"!??

Continuing to enlarge upon his "Method of Cure," he further says that he does not advise the "Clapping fast the convulsed Bodies of such Patients to reduce them by Force to their natural Posture," nor the "holding their Limbs with Violence, to prevent the convulsive Agitations."

During the fit, however, he directs certain "Plasters, quilted in Linnen and worn above the Knees, and also in the Region of the Abdomen" to be applied, as they "inspire the Nerves with such Emanations and Effluvia, as are apt to appease the Elastic Efforts" (an "elastic effort" must be a curious thing!) "of the Spirits, controul their rapid Motions and introduce Quiet and Tranquility."

No stress is laid on the importance of rest, a generous dietary, and moral treatment. Massage is not mentioned, and electricity is, of course, unknown. Certain medicines, among them one called the "Hyfterick Julep," are prescribed, but the author is evidently not at all sure what effect they may have, for he remarks that "when the Remedies of an opposite Quality have been tried in vain, the Physician may have recourse to those of a different Nature."

"A purgative Clyster," he says, "may be administered, or an opening Remedy taken into the Stomach; but at Night going to-Bed, the Patient should always take a quieting Medicine to compose and allay the Disorders of the Spirits, too much agitated and ruffled by the Intigation of purgative Medicines." Opium seems to be his favourite drug. He recommends its use in hysteria when there is a contumacious Indisposition to Sleep," or a "stubborn Hiccough," though in this course of treatment he seems to have met with some opposition from "Objectors" (doubtless "conscientious" ones!), who urged that "Opiates tye up the Humours in the Blood, fix the noxious Matter in the Nerves, distract and confound the Brain, and make the Head dull and muddy," but he goes on to say, with a gentle sarcasm, "if this last Complaint be an effect of it, one would be tempted to think that the Objectors had taken more of it themselves than they were willing to acknowledge"!

But in spite of these objections, opium continues to be his chief stand-by, "first, during the Fit, to suppress its Infults, and when the Fit is over, to prevent the Return of the Enemy."

Almost the only allusion to the value of diet in the whole book is to be found in the chapter on "Melancholy," when the "Copious eating of good Apples" is enjoined as part of the cure, together with "meats and drinks that enrich and comfort the Blood," and a "moderate degree of generous Wines." Recommended also are "all sorts of absorbent testaceous Powders, such as red Coral, Crabs' Claws, and Chalk."

Certain "Internal Palfies" are described as being "very incident" to "Antient Persons," from the "Ware and Tare of Old Age," though "these Distempers are sometimes occasioned by taking cold, either when a Person too thinly clothed is exposed to Sharp and Severe Blafts of Air, or the Rigor and Inclemency of hard Winters."

Some of the appended draughts prescribed as suitable diuretics are curious, and, indeed, distinctly nasty. This, for instance:—

"Take of Millepedes" (are these "centipedes"?) "alive (!) fifty or sixty, bruise them in a Mortar, pouring on them a quarter of a Pint of Rhenish Wine, and half an ounce of Compound Water of Horseradish, and let the Expression be a Draught to be taken twice a day: and five or six Earth-Worms managed in the same Manner, are useful."

Another is this:—

"Take two or three Cloves of Garlick, infuse them in a Quart of White Wine, and let it stand near the Fire on warm Embers, till it has taken the vertue of it fully, to be discerned by the Taste; drink a quarter of a Pint twice a day."

Many other quaintly-worded sentences might be culled from Sir Richard's treatise, with its pages yellow with age, its long "s's" and "antient" spelling; but, as he says himself, towards the close,

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