placed in an open situation, would likewise tend to prevent the spreading of infection. Such places of reception would prevent the poor, when sick, from being visited by their idle or officious neighbors. They would likewise render it unnecessary for sick servants to be kept in their masters' houses. Masters had better pay for having their servants taken care of in a hospital, than run the hazard of having an infectious disease diffused among a numerous family. Sick servants and poor people, when placed in hospitals, are not only less apt to diffuse infection among their neighbors, but have likewise the advantage of being well attended.

We are not, however, to learn that hospitals, instead of preventing infection, may become the means of diffusing it. When they are placed in the middle of great towns; when numbers of patients are crowded together into small apartments; and when cleanliness and ventilation are neglected, they become nests for hatching diseases, and every one who goes into them not only runs a risk of receiving infection himself, but likewise of communicating it to others. This, however, is not the fault of the hospitals, but of those who have the management of them. It were to be wished that they were both more numerous and upon a more respectable footing, as that would induce people to go into them with less reluctance. This is the more to be desired, because most of the putrid fevers and other infectious disorders break out among the poor, and are by them communicated to the better sort. Were proper attention paid to the first appearances of such disorders, and the patients early conveyed to a hospital, we should seldom see a putrid fever, which is almost as infectious as the plague, become epidemic.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE PASSIONS.

The passions have great influence both in the cause and cure of diseases. How mind acts upon matter, will, in all probability, ever remain a secret. It is sufficient for us to

know that there is established a reciprocal influence betwixt the mental and coporeal parts, and that whatever disorders the one likewise affects the other.

ANGER.

The passion of *anger* ruffles the mind, distorts the countenance, hurries on the circulation of the blood, and disorders the whole vital and animal functions. It often occasions fevers, and other acute diseases, and sometimes even sudden death. This passion is peculiarly hurtful to the delicate and those of weak nerves. I have known a hysteric woman lose her life by a violent fit of anger. All such ought to guard against the excess of this passion with the utmost care.

It is not indeed always in our power to prevent being angry; but we may surely avoid harboring resentment in our breast. Resentment preys upon the mind, and occasions the most obstinate chronical disorders, which gradually waste the constitution. Nothing shows true greatness of mind more than to forgive injuries. It promotes the peace of society, and greatly conduces to our own ease, health, and felicity.

Such as value health should avoid violent gusts of anger, as they would the most deadly poison. Neither ought they to indulge resentment, but to endeavor at all times to keep their minds calm and serene. Nothing tends so much to the health of the body as a constant tranquillity of mind.

FEAR.

The influence of *fear*, both in occasioning and aggravating diseases, is very great. No man ought to be blamed for a decent concern about life; but too great a desire to preserve it is often the cause of losing it. Fear and anxiety, by depressing the spirits, not only dispose us to diseases, but often render those diseases fatal which an undaunted mind would overcome.

Sudden fear has generally violent effects. Epileptic fits, and other convulsive disorders, are often occasioned by it. Hence the danger of that practice, so common among young people, of frightening one another. Many have lost their lives, and others have been rendered useless ever after, by frolics of this kind. It is dangerous to tamper with the hu-

man passions. They may easily be thrown into such disorder as never again to act with regularity.

But the gradual effects of fear prove more generally hurtful. The constant dread of some future evil, by dwelling upon the mind, often occasions the very evil itself. Hence it comes to pass that so many die of these very diseases of which they long had a dread, or which had been impressed on their minds by some accident or foolish prediction. This, for example, is often the case with women in childbed. Many of those who die in that situation are impressed with the notion of their death a long time before it happens, and there is reason to believe that this impression is often the cause of it.

The methods taken to impress the minds of women with apprehensions of the great *pain* and *peril* of childbirth are very hurtful. Few women die in labor, though many lose their lives after it; which may be thus accounted for. A woman after delivery, finding herself weak and exhausted, immediately apprehends she is in danger; but this fear seldom fails to obstruct the necessary evacuations, upon which her recovery depends. Thus the sex often fall a sacrifice to their own imaginations, when there would be no danger did they apprehend none.

It seldom happens that two or three women, in a great town, die in childbed, but their death is followed by many others. Every woman of their acquaintance who is with child dreads the same fate, and the disease becomes epidemical by the mere force of imagination. This should induce pregnant women to despise fear, and by all means to avoid those tattling gossips who are continually buzzing in their ears the misfortunes of others. Every thing that may in the least alarm a pregnant or childbed woman ought with the greatest care to be guarded against.

Many women have lost their lives in childbed by the old superstitious custom, still kept up in most parts of Britain, of tolling the parish bell for every person who dies. People who think themselves in danger are very inquisitive; and if they come to know that the bell tolls for one who died in the same situation with themselves, what must be the consequence? At any rate, they are apt to suppose that this is the case, and it will often be found a very difficult task to persuade them of the contrary.

But this custom is not pernicious to childbed women only.

It is hurtful in many other cases. When low fevers, in which it is difficult to support the patient's spirits, prevail, what must be the effect of a funeral peal sounding five or six times a day in his ears? No doubt his imagination will suggest that others died of the same disease under which he labors. This apprehension will have a greater tendency to depress his spirits than all the cordials of which medicine can boast will have to raise them.

If this useless piece of ceremony cannot be abolished, we ought to keep the sick as much from hearing it as possible, and from every thing else that may tend to alarm them. So far however is this from being generally attended to, that many make it their business to visit the sick on purpose to whisper dismal stories in their ears. Such may pass for sympathizing friends, but they ought rather to be considered as enemies. All who wish well to the sick ought to keep such persons at the greatest distance from them.

A custom has long prevailed among physicians of prognosticating, as they call it, the patient's fate, or foretelling the issue of the disease. Vanity no doubt introduced this practice, and still supports it, in spite of common sense and the safety of the sick. I have known a physician barbarous enough to boast that he pronounced more *sentences* than all his majesty's judges. Would to God that such sentences were not often equally fatal! It may indeed be alleged that the doctor does not declare his opinion before the patient. So much the worse. A sensible patient had better hear what the doctor says than learn it from the disconsolate looks, the watery eyes, and the broken whispers of those about him. It seldom happens, when the doctor gives an unfavorable opinion, that it can be concealed from the patient. The very embarrassment which the friends and attendants show in disguising what he has said is generally sufficient to discover the truth.

We do not see what right any man has to announce the death of another, especially if such a declaration has a chance to kill him. Mankind are indeed very fond of prying into future events, and seldom fail to importune the physician for his opinion. A doubtful answer, however, or one that may tend rather to encourage the hopes of the sick, is surely the most safe. This conduct could neither hurt the patient nor the physician. Nothing tends more to destroy the credit of physic than those bold prognosticators, who, by

the bye, are generally the most ignorant of the faculty. The mistakes which daily happen in this way are so many standing proofs of human vanity and the weakness of science.*

The vanity of foretelling the fate of the sick is not peculiar to the faculty. Others follow their example, and those who think themselves wiser than their neighbors often do much hurt in this way. Humanity surely calls upon every one to comfort the sick, and not to add to their affliction by alarming their fears. A friend, or even a physician, may often do more good by a mild and sympathizing behavior than by medicine, and should never neglect to administer that greatest of all cordials, HOPE.

GRIEF.

Grief is the most destructive of all the passions. Its effects are permanent, and when it sinks deep into the mind it generally proves fatal. Anger and fear, being of a more violent nature, seldom last long; but grief often changes into a fixed melancholy, which preys upon the spirits, and wastes the constitution. This passion ought not to be indulged. It may generally be conquered at the beginning; but when it has gained strength all attempts to remove it are vain.

No person can prevent misfortunes in life; but it shows true greatness of mind to bear them with serenity. Many persons make a merit of indulging grief, and, when misfortunes happen, they obstinately refuse all consolation, till the mind, overwhelmed with melancholy, sinks under the load. Such conduct is not only destructive to health, but inconsistent with reason, religion, and common sense.

Change of ideas is as necessary for health as change of posture. When the mind dwells long upon one subject, es-

* Nothing can be more ridiculous, not to say absurd, than this piece of medical practice. It may often do mischief, but can seldom have any good effects; besides, it can never be reduced to any degree of certainty, unless in a few cases, which are obvious to most people. Notwithstanding this, many physicians, and some of eminence too, value themselves so much upon their skill in *prognostication*, that they seem very much disappointed, nay chagrined, when any one of their patients is so happy as to survive their sentence. Such gentlemen must excuse me for telling them that they very often, and indeed too justly, render themselves the objects of laughter to those very persons whose day and hour they had fixed many years ago.

pecially of a disagreeable nature, it hurts the whole functions of the body. Hence grief indulged destroys the appetite and spoils the digestion; by which means the spirits are depressed, the nerves relaxed, the bowels inflated with wind, and the humors, for want of fresh supplies of chyle, vitiated. Thus many an excellent constitution has been ruined by a family misfortune, or any thing that occasioned an excessive grief.

It is utterly impossible that any person of a dejected mind should enjoy health. Life may indeed be dragged out for a few years; but whoever would live to a good old age must be good humored and cheerful. This, indeed, is not altogether in our own power; yet our temper of mind, as well as actions, depends greatly upon ourselves. We can either associate with cheerful or melancholy companions, mingle in the amusements and offices of life, or sit still and brood over our calamities, as we choose. These, and many such things, are certainly in our power, and from these the mind generally takes its cast.

The variety of scenes which present themselves to the senses were certainly designed to prevent our attention from being too long fixed upon any one object. Nature abounds with variety, and the mind, unless fixed down by habit, delights in contemplating new objects. This at once points out the method of relieving the mind in distress. Turn the attention frequently to new objects. Examine them for some time. When the mind begins to recoil, shift the scene. By this means a constant succession of new ideas may be kept up, till the disagreeable ones entirely disappear. Thus travelling, the study of any art or science, reading or writing on such subjects as deeply engage the attention, will sooner expel grief than the most sprightly amusements.

It has already been observed that the body cannot be healthy unless it be exercised; neither can the mind. Indolence nourishes grief. When the mind has nothing else to think of but calamities, no wonder that it dwells there. Few people who pursue business with attention are hurt by grief. Instead therefore of abstracting ourselves from the world or business when misfortunes happen, we ought to engage in it with more than usual attention, to discharge with double diligence the functions of our station, and to mix with friends of a cheerful and social temper.

Innocent amusements are by no means to be neglected.

These, by leading the mind insensibly to the contemplation of agreeable objects, help to dispel the gloom which misfortunes cast over it. They make time seem less tedious, and have many other happy effects.

Many, when overwhelmed with grief, betake themselves to drinking. This is making the cure worse than the disease. It seldom fails to end in the ruin of fortune, character, and constitution.

LOVE.

Love is perhaps the strongest of all the passions: at least, when it becomes violent, it is less subject to the control either of the understanding or will than any of the rest. Fear, anger, and several other passions, are necessary for the preservation of the individual, but love is necessary for the continuation of the species itself. It was therefore proper that this passion should be deeply rooted in the human breast.

Though love be a strong passion, it is seldom so rapid in its progress as several of the others. Few persons fall desperately in love all at once. We would therefore advise every one, before he tampers with this passion, to consider well the probability of his being able to obtain the object of his love. When that is not likely, he should avoid every occasion of increasing it. He ought immediately to fly the company of the beloved object; to apply his mind attentively to business or study; to take every kind of amusement; and, above all, to endeavor, if possible, to find another object which may engage his affections, and which it may be in his power to obtain.

When love becomes a disease, it is not easily cured. Its consequences, in this case, are often so violent, that even the possession of the beloved object will not always remove them. It is therefore of the greatest importance early to guard against its influence; but when the passion has already taken too deep hold of the mind to admit of being eradicated, the beloved object ought if possible to be obtained; nor should this be deferred for every trifling cause. Those who have the disposal of young persons in marriage are too ready to trifle with the passion of love; such, for the most sordid considerations, frequently sacrifice the future health, peace or happiness of those committed to their care.*

* Even the conduct of parents themselves in the disposal of their children in marriage is often very blamable. An advantageous

RELIGIOUS MELANCHOLY.

Many persons of a religious turn of mind behave as if they thought it a crime to be cheerful. They imagine the whole of religion consists in certain mortifications, or denying themselves the smallest indulgence, even of the most innocent amusements. A perpetual gloom hangs upon their countenances, while the deepest melancholy preys upon their minds. At length the fairest prospects vanish, every thing puts on a dismal appearance, and those very objects which ought to give delight afford nothing but disgust. Life itself becomes a burden, and the unhappy wretch, persuaded that no evil can equal what he feels, often puts an end to his own miserable existence.

It is great pity that ever religion should be so far perverted as to become the cause of those very evils which it was designed to cure. Nothing can be better calculated than the *Christian Religion* to raise and support the mind of its votaries under every affliction that can befal them. It teaches them that the sufferings of this life are preparatory to the happiness of the next, and that all who persist in a course of virtue shall at length arrive at complete felicity.

Those whose business it is to recommend religion to others should beware of dwelling too much upon gloomy subjects. That peace and tranquillity of mind which true religion is calculated to inspire is a more powerful argument in its favor than all the terrors that can be uttered. Terror may indeed deter men from outward acts of wickedness; but it will never inspire them with that love of God and real goodness in which alone true religion consists.

To conclude, the best way to counteract the violence of any passion is to encourage those of an opposite nature, and to keep the mind so closely engaged in some useful pursuit as to allow it no time to reflect upon misfortunes.

match is the constant aim of parents, while their children often suffer a real martyrdom betwixt their own inclinations and the duty which they think they owe to their parents. The first thing which parents ought to consult in disposal of their children in marriage is certainly their own inclinations. Were due regard always paid to these, there would be fewer unhappy couples; and the parents would not have so often cause to repent the severity of their conduct, after a ruined constitution or a distracted mind has shown them their mistake.