

sionable individuals, now and then, there is no returning thump, the intermission, as Paddy would say, becomes permanent, and we have sudden death from emotional causes, of which not a few are upon record. At other times, partly from the intensity of the impression but chiefly from debility of the nervous system, this "loup," thump, or intermission, of which the loup is the most striking subjective symptom, not only occurs under the instantaneous excitement of any emotion, but repeats itself, at first at shorter, afterwards at longer intervals, until at length it dies out under the reassertion of the normal condition of the nervous system. Now and then, however, it never dies out, but repeats itself so long as life continues. We may, however, be permitted to doubt in such cases if the emotional excitement have any other connection with the intermittence except simply as the accidental incentive to a series of actions already from other causes about to begin. Be that as it may, however, the connection between emotional excitement and muscular motility of a convulsive and rhythmical character is not an unknown thing in other departments of medicine; and cardiac intermittence and irregular action from emotional causes, finds its counterpart in those imitative choreas and epilepsies, which are of no infrequent occurrence, and has even no very distant connection with the vagaries of the convulsionnaires and choreomaniacs of the Middle Ages.

In the treatment of intermittent or irregular pulse, we must be guided very much by the condition of the patient, and the existence of any actual cardiac disease, or of any irritation capable of reflexly producing such irregularities. And this we must carefully ascertain for ourselves, and never trust to the mere statements of the patient; because there is nothing more common than for a dyspeptic patient to say, "I never have a headache; I may eat and drink what I please, my stomach never troubles me." True, but his heart does; and careful examination will discover that his stomach is not so perfect as he represents it to be. It is precisely the same with him as with a patient with neuralgia of the shoulder-joint and a decayed molar-tooth. "You need not look there," he says, "I never have toothache." But he winces

when we touch the tooth, and if we get leave to extract it his neuralgia is cured. The one man has toothache in his shoulder, the other dyspepsia in his heart. The cases are analogous, and teach us to put more faith in our own careful examination than in the statements of any patient, which, let me add, however, there is no need to contradict. We are bound to cure our patient if we can, but it would be both thankless and dangerous to attempt to confute all his prejudices.

In the intermittent pulse of infancy and childhood little treatment is required; the bowels must be regulated if necessary, but more by food and exercise than by medicine, for whatever enfeebles the frame tends to keep up the intermittence. We must also by moderate exercise in the open air, early hours, plenty of sleep, and the use of a nutritious but unstimulating diet, seek to tone down any nervous instability, and to develop a state of rude unconscious health. The patient ought also to be warmly clad, and the use of quite cold water as a bath avoided, as any nervous shock ought to be most carefully shunned. If any remedies seem needful, the bromide of iron is a very useful one, or in very irritable patients it may be necessary to have recourse to the bromide of potassium, for a time at least.

In patients affected with cardiac disease, we of course regard the irregular pulse as a mere symptom, and treat the central lesion upon which it depends whatever that may be. In by far the larger proportion of cases it will be found to be mitral stenosis, as I have already told you; and as the irregular action accompanying this lesion is merely a sign of cardiac debility, what we require to do in these cases is simply to slow and steady the heart's action, increasing at the same time the force of its muscular contractions. All this we can do most effectually by the judicious use of digitalis, so much so, that in a few days the patient will express himself as feeling a new man, and he will not much mind any little remains of irregularity, which it may be difficult if not impossible altogether to remove. Of course, though digitalis in small, repeated, tonic doses, must be our main stand-by in these cases, other drugs as subsidiary agents are frequently of great