

immediate symptoms. We must also bear in mind that the intestinal canal differs materially in its functions from the other organs of the body possessed of mucous linings, and throwing out a secretion to defend them from the injurious effects of substances brought in contact with their surfaces.

In the intestinal canal we have the secretion, but we have also a process of digestion going on there at the same time, by which a constant change in the ingesta is effected, and those discharges produced, that leave the body as egesta.

Bowel complaints, in the first instance, are the disordered state of this function, by which the egesta are thrown out, altered in consistency and appearance, and in larger quantities than in a state of health. This is altogether different from common inflammation of the mucous membranes, by which their natural secretions become altered, often purulent, and from which ulceration may proceed. This state is often to be found in the bowels with little or none of the functional derangement; and the functional derangement may exist to a considerable extent without this state of inflammation being present, or at all events, without any of the symptoms by which it is usually recognised; in evidence of which we would refer to the Penitentiary disease, and the effects of cholera and choleraic diarrhœa.

With digestion is also connected the proper formation and discharge of bile; indeed, this is a part of the process, and must be included in any terms implying the healthy discharge of the functions of the alimentary canal.

In diarrhœa arising from direct irritation applied to the bowels, we find a few drops of laudanum or a dose of any common aperient sufficient to carry it off; but when it arises from a general cause, it will be more severe, and require more decided treatment.

A succession of purgatives, followed by opium and astringents is usually had recourse to, but such a course will seldom put a stop to those complaints attended with diseased secretions so common in malarious districts. Sudorifics, fomentations, injections of opium, and astringents are recommended, and may be exceedingly useful to relieve symptoms, being in fact more palliatives, than remedies calculated to cure the disease. Bleeding, and indeed the strictest antiphlogistic regimen, are also recommended, and often become absolutely necessary, but not so much to relieve the discharges, as to subdue local inflammation with which they may be joined.

There is nothing connected with increased discharges from the bowels to prohibit the free use of the lancet; but it must be indicated by the particular state of each case, and those symptoms denoting inflammation, particularly the state of the pulse and skin, and presence of fixed pain and tenderness on pressure over the abdomen.

The effect of mercury in correcting any depraved state of the biliary and intestinal secretions, and in subduing inflammation, is admitted by all, and even the most adverse to it as a general remedy, look on it as a last resort in those diseases, but only to be used when others have failed.

The dire effects of mercury in this class of diseases are entirely imaginary. We have sufficient testimony and experience of the safety of its use in their first stages, with scarcely a reason to justify delay; indeed the modern treatment of bowel complaints in a great measure consists in regulating the dose, and mode of exhibiting this medicine, and to which we will allude when speaking of the use of calomel in fevers.

Dunnville, 8th July, 1851.