

ease, is tedious and protracted. There is little of what may be designated vital elasticity. We have often witnessed the injurious effects of purgatives on such constitutions, prescribed for the purpose of keeping down the imagined fulness or plethora of the system, and persevered in beyond just limits, as a preventive against the determination of the blood to the head. Symptoms seldom fail to arise from the *practice*, which, as they are usually interpreted, seem to establish the necessity for its continuance, such as dizziness, lightness, or a swimming sensation; or at times a feeling of weight or pressure at the back or upper part of the head, or occasionally a constant humming in the ears, or a distressing throbbing at the temples; and not unfrequently palpitation of the heart on slight exertion, or on the occurrence of any sudden emotion: great nervous anxiety—an apprehension of some serious, undefined evil, almost invariably accompanies this class of symptoms. The patient is withdrawn from his usual nourishing and stimulating diet, and he soon becomes unequal to any steady mental or bodily labor.—He gradually loses flesh—the countenance becomes sallow or partially jaundiced—the tongue furred—the appetite indifferent—the pulse small and frequent—the extremities mostly cold, and yet alterative or aperient remedies are enforced, as the brain is still disordered in its functions—the symptoms, of which it is the seat, are indeed aggravated and must necessarily be so from the injudicious character of the practice pursued.

Purgatives and other depletory measures which have been employed are the *cause* of these effects. They have reduced the system beyond its normal standard—they have exhausted the nervous energy, and yet the treatment is persevered in for the purpose of keeping down that degree of corpulency, which is as natural to some men as the colored skin is to the negro; whilst the attempt to accomplish the object by such means is scarcely less ridiculous than would be the effort to wash the negro white. We have at present under our care two cases which illustrate the justness and force

of these observations. The one is that of a gentleman turned fifty, who has suffered for years from distressing head symptoms, such as weight and pressure at the forehead extending to the crown—dizziness—palpitation of the heart—and latterly an acute pain in the region of this organ on slight exertion.

The symptoms which first showed themselves were those of the head, and as he was inclined to be stout, he was bled several times in the arm—had leeches frequently applied to the temples—blisters to the nape of the neck—blisters to the calf of each leg—was salivated on several different occasions, and the bowels for a long period were constantly freely acted upon. He consulted various practitioners in his own immediate neighborhood, as well as in the metropolis, but they similarly bled, blistered, or purged. Palpitation of the heart, and acute pain in the chest, were the consequences of this treatment; and they are effects, as well as others kindred in their nature, which must necessarily follow such practice. It is this, and not the original disease, that gives rise frequently to lamentable results.—Under milder measures—which had for their object the gradual restoration of the exhausted nervous system, displayed in the improved appetite—in the digestion of nutritious food—in the regular action of the bowels—in the production and distribution of a more liberal stream of healthy blood throughout the body, the patient rapidly advanced to convalescence.

The other case, which is equally fraught with instruction, is that of a manufacturer, aged 34, who, a year and a half ago, was seventeen stone in weight and remarkably healthy and strong. He had some head affection, for which he was bled, blistered, and purged. The purging was steadily continued with scarcely any intermission for at least nine months, and was enforced, as the bowels would not otherwise act: but it must be remembered that the cessation of their natural functions was to be ascribed altogether to the uninterrupted operation of the purgatives which had