

Bibliothèque numérique

medic@

**Fothergill, John. - Remarks on that
complaint commonly known under the
name of sick headach**

*In : Medical observations and
inquiries by a society of
physicians in London, 1784,
vol. VI, p. 103-137*



(c) Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de médecine (Paris)
Adresse permanente : http://www.bium.univ-paris5.fr/hist/med/medica/cote?90637x06x103_137

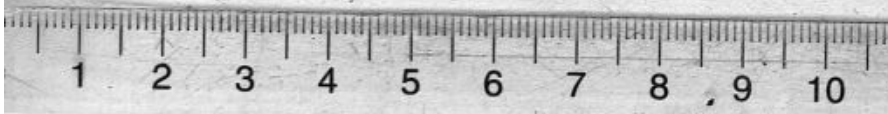
XI. *Remarks on that Complaint commonly known under the Name of the Sick Head-ach.* By John Fothergill, M. D. Read, Dec. 14, 1778.

THERE is a disease, which, though it occurs very frequently, has not yet obtained a place in the systematic catalogues. It is commonly to be met with in practice, and is described by those who are affected with it, and who are not few in number, under the compound title of a sick head-ach.

Under this title they, at least, describe their feelings, and, on a little inquiry, one finds that they are affected by both.—This is not the complaint of any particular age, or sex, or constitution, or season—it is incident to all. The sedentary, inactive, relaxed, and incautious respecting diet, are the most exposed to it; and who are yet, sometimes, not much less sufferers by the means frequently made use of to remove it, than by the disease itself.

H 4

To



104 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

To collect into a short compass all the symptoms which accompany this disease, would be difficult, and not so very interesting; to describe so many, as to make the complaint easily to be distinguished in the first place, and in what manner it may be treated with success, will be of more importance.

Those who are affected with the sick head-ach, most commonly describe it in this manner;—that they awake early in the morning with a head-ach, which seldom affects the whole head, but one particular part of it, most commonly the forehead, over one frequently, sometimes above both eyes. Sometimes it is fixed about the upper part of the parietal bone, of one side only; sometimes, and not unfrequently, the *occiput* is the part affected: sometimes it darts from one to another of these places. It never goes entirely off, from the time it commences, till it wholly ceases, but is sometimes more, sometimes less tolerable.

With this is joined more or less of sickness, and which is just barely, in many people, not sufficient, without assistance,
to

Medical Observations and Inquiries. 105

to provoke vomiting. If this pain does happen, as it most commonly comes on early in the morning, and before any meal is taken, seldom any thing is thrown up but thin phlegm, unless the straining is severe, when some bitter or acid bile is brought up. In this case, the disease begins soon to abate, leaving a soreness about the head, a squeamishness at the stomach, and a general uneasiness, which induces the sick to wish for repose. Perhaps, after a short sleep, they recover perfectly well, only a little debilitated by their sufferings.

The duration of this conflict is very different in different persons; in some, it goes off in two or three hours; in others, it will last twenty-four, or longer, and with a violence scarcely to be endured, when the least light or noise seem to throw them on the rack. In young persons, it most commonly goes off soon; if it continues to harass them many years, as it sometimes has done, the fit continues longer, and leaves the whole frame in so weak a condition, as to require some length of time to recover.

Its

106 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

Its returns are very irregular, as must be the case, since the disease, for the most part, proceeds from accidental causes. Some have it every two or three days, some once in two or three weeks, others in as many months, and some yet feldomer.

I have met with it, in most habits and complexions, mostly in the early and middle parts of life, and amongst the middle and upper ranks in life. Those who use but little exercise, and are inattentive to their diet, are the greatest sufferers. Costive habits are more exposed to it, than others of a contrary disposition. I have known many instances, where a disposition to purging, become habitual, has entirely removed this complaint. And indeed, from numerous circumstances, it is most clear, that the head-ach proceeds from the stomach; not the reverse, as has been the opinion of many who are sufferers by it.

The disease is very frequently treated as a nervous distemper—as an ague in the head, as a spasm (which indeed it appears to be), and perhaps considered as pertaining to other diseases.—But the manner and
time

Medical Observations and Inquiries. 107

time of its attack, which is after digestion is performed, the chyle admitted into the blood, and the bile has acquired its full activity, undiluted by fresh supplies of liquid, the stomach and *duodenum* empty, and the nerves exposed to irritation.

Having had some little experience of this complaint myself, and having met with numerous occasions of seeing it in others, in a variety of degrees of force and continuance; and having likewise attended to the different ideas and modes of treatment, in regard to this distemper, I thought it might be useful to suggest what had occurred to me on this subject, and the more so, as it may lead to some explanations respecting diet, which it is of some consequence, to the sick especially, to be made to comprehend.

My opinion of this disease is, that, for the most part, it proceeds from inattention to diet, either in respect to kind or quantity, or both; and that whatever medicinal means are proposed for its removal, they will prove ineffectual,

108 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

without enjoining an exact conformity to rule.

Fig. 124 There are some things which, in very small quantities, seldom fail to produce the sick head-ach in some constitutions. Such are a larger proportion than usual of melted butter, fat meats, and spices, especially common black pepper. Meat pies often contain all these things united, and are as fertile a cause of this complaint as any thing I know; so are rich baked puddings, and every thing of a similar nature. A little error in these things will seldom fail to be attended with much suffering, in many constitutions. Indeed, as the disorder comes on, mostly towards morning, the generality of patients are led to consider it as a thing impossible, that they should suffer so long after a meal; it is nevertheless true, and ought to be strictly inquired into, and the conduct of the sick regulated in this respect, or medicine is exhibited in vain.

That strong liquors will produce similar distresses to those who are not accustomed
to

Medical Observations and Inquiries. 109

to them, is but too well known, and has been too generally experienced. Most kinds of malt liquor, taken too liberally, seldom fail to have this effect in particular constitutions, perhaps from the quantity of hops; for most bitters seem rather to increase, than lessen the complaint.

It is not, however, the kind of diet alone that will produce this disorder; repeated errors in quantity will produce the like effects. Bile, if very acid, will prove a *stimulus* sufficiently strong, in many cases, to excite this sick head-ach in a violent degree. There are habits in which the bile, if exceeding in point of activity, either from its bitter or its acid quality, will act as a purgative, sometimes with pain, sometimes without, according to the nature of different habits. Such constitutions rarely are affected with the disease I am describing; even those who have suffered its most violent attacks have been free from it altogether, when a disposition to purging has taken place of habitual costiveness; and on the contrary.

From

110 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

From these considerations, it is therefore evident, that as the quality of the bile, in a great measure, depends on the quality of the food, regard being had, at the same time, to quantity: and that the disease we are treating of appears to arise from this cause, it is necessary to point out, as experience may direct, what kinds of aliment are most likely to add to the disease, in order that the patients who consult us, may be assisted to avoid the causes of so distressing a complaint, as well as directed to such a course of medicine, as may contribute to assist them in the recovery of their usual healths, provided they resolutely submit to the regulations proposed to them.

To obtain pretty speedy relief will not be difficult. An emetic, or mild cathartic—an anodyne, soon, for the most part, restore them to their usual health; to undergo the same conflict in a few days, perhaps, or a month or two, just as the cause of the disease is accumulated; and in this manner I have known many persons spend a great part of their lives. Wearied, perhaps,

haps, with ineffectual endeavours, they, at length, give up all hopes of getting rid of their malady, and think patience must be their only cure.

Many such I have met with, and so, I doubt not, have most other practitioners, and have not often been disappointed in relieving them by the following process:

If they are disposed to costiveness, which is generally the case, some easy laxative is directed to keep the belly gently open, varying the form and substance, as the particular circumstances may require:—where acid bile abounds, the bitter and absorbent laxatives; where the bitter, saline generally are useful.

In the former case, it will be requisite to give small doses of stomach bit-
ters, joined with a little alkaline salt,
or a chalybeate, as the case requires,
once or twice a day. Mineral or vege-
table acids, and a diet of the same na-
ture; soap and *pil. ruf.* or magnesia and
rhubarb, in small doses, daily continued,
will often prove, in cases of acid bile, very
useful remedies; and so will a solution of
aloes

112 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

aloes in lime-water, in the following manner*.

But whatever process the physician's judgment leads him to pursue, there is one object, that will deserve his attention, and will require the patient's. This disease is not the effect of any sudden accidental cause; it is the effect of reiterated errors in diet, or in conduct, which, by weakening the powers of digestion, and otherwise disordering the animal functions, have affected the secretions of those juices, and perhaps the organs themselves, in such a manner, as to require a steady perseverance in the use of such medicines, as experience has suggested are most likely to restore them to full health.

This change cannot be effected speedily; it requires a patient observance of proper regimen, in respect both to medicine and diet. The former ought, therefore, to be

* R Aloes Soccotrin. ʒj.

Rad. Rhabarb.

— Glycyrrhiz. incif. āā ʒfs.

Infunde in Aq. Calc. ʒviij.

Colaturæ, adde

Sp. Lavend. C. ʒfs.

M. Capiat Cochl. j. ij. aut iij. pro re natâ.

fo

so contrived, as to be taken without disgust for several weeks together, and to be repeated at proper distances, till the end is obtained, digestion rightly performed, and the bile secreted and discharged as health requires; by which means, all that train of evils, which are the consequences of its detention and distempered state, will be gradually removed.

The benefits resulting, in many cases, from the use of the mineral waters, when drunk in proper quantity, and for a proper length of time, are undoubted proofs of the necessity of perseverance in the use of such medicines, as may appear, at first sight, of no great efficacy, yet, if well directed, and steadily pursued, will, at length, obtain the most substantial advantages.

There is another part of our assistance, which is not less necessary, in this case, than medicine, to a perfect recovery, which, perhaps, is too often disregarded both by the patient and physician; and if I have sometimes succeeded in removing many

114 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

complaints of this nature, where very judicious prescriptions had been used in vain, it has been by entering more minutely into that part of prescription, which depended on the patient's own conduct, than by the use of medicines of greater efficacy, than those which had been prescribed by others.

We are, perhaps, too ready, in chronic cases, where digestion is concerned, to confide in the *materia medica*, and judge it sufficient to select and enjoin such articles in our prescriptions, as are of known use in such cases. But unless the whole plan of diet, both in kind and quantity, are made to conspire with medical prescription, the benefits arising from this are hourly annihilated by neglect or indulgence.

It is not solely with a view to the cure of this sick head-ach, of which I have been treating, that I wish to offer some general reflections on the dietetic part of medicine, and to point out the necessary restrictions, in order to its cure; but likewise, as they may be of some importance in the management

ment of many other chronic and anomalous diseases, as well as for the preservation of health in general.

Nothing is of so much consequence to invalids, and the more delicate of both sexes, as attention to quantity.—There are many people, who seem to be possessed of such powers of digestion, as to be under no restraints on that account, and who never feel themselves incommoded, either with quantity, or the most heterogeneous qualities of their food. They rise from the most plentiful mixed and rich repasts, without any kind of apparent uneasiness. But this is not the case with the generality—They are affected with uneasiness, some in one way, some another, by the unnatural load. And how often do we hear such complaining of the ill effects of this or that particular kind of diet, when perhaps their sufferings arise from the quantity of all, rather than the disagreement of any.

It demands attention to observe that just medium, and no less resolution to keep to it, which the stomach invariably points out

116 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

in respect to quantity. The *how much*, must be determined by every individual; and those who are happy enough to abstain at the first sensation of satiety, have made great progress in the art of maintaining such a command of appetite, as, under most chronic indispositions, is one of the greatest aids of recovery; and in health, is one of the surest preservatives against them.

It is a doctrine, however trite and familiar, which cannot be too strongly inculcated; as a neglect of this attention to the *quantity* of food proportioned to the necessity of each individual, is sooner or later followed with the most serious consequences. To the strong and robust inflammatory diseases happen, and all such as proceed from plenitude and acrimony combined, as the gout, and many other chronic indispositions. To the more tender and delicate, it is the parent of a numerous progeny of distempers, affecting both body and mind; there is scarcely a malady that can be named, which either does not originate from this neglect of diet, or is not increased by it, till the disease at length
bids

Medical Observations and Inquiries. 117

bids defiance, even to temperance itself, and all prescription.

What renders this attention to invalids of this order still the more necessary is, that they are often subject to a false appetite, to a craving that does not arise from the demands of health, but from the morbid picquancy of the juices in the stomach, which prompts them to eat more, and more frequently than nature requires. Whence it happens that such people are often disposed to take in much more than can be digested, to devour their food, rather than eat it; by which means their sufferings are increased; the disease gains ground, defeats every purpose of the Physician, and leads them into some permanent and incurable malady.

And should the patients have admitted an opinion, and such an opinion occurs but too often, that their recovery will be aided by taking in a greater share of food, their misfortune is complete. These are not ideal traits in the history of the sick; they are known to be but too true by every Physician of observation; and they cannot

118 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

be mentioned too often, or with too much fervency, for the sake of those who are liable to become the victims of appetite or inattention.

Early habits of self-command are of the utmost benefit to all; and even those who, without feeling any immediate distress from the utmost repletion at present, would find it their interest to be moderate and discreet.

The customs of countries, in respect to meals, are different. Breakfast, dinner, and supper have been, in this country, habitual. Suppers, at present, are discouraged among the affluent; and excessive ones, such as have been in use among our ancestors, very probably with good reason; yet there are some constitutions to which this practice may not be beneficial: two very moderate meals, at a suitable distance, may perhaps be digested with much more ease than one full meal, and be made more consistent with the duties of life in various situations. From observation, I am led to suspect, that when people assure us they eat no suppers, that it would be better for them

them if they did, than to oppress nature with a cumbrous load, that may be much more detrimental.

The general breakfast of people, from the highest to the lowest, is tea, coffee, or chocolate. I say general, because there are many exceptions, some for one reason, some for others, making choice of other substitutes, as their inclinations or opinions guide them.

To the articles I have mentioned, bread of some kind, with more or less butter and sugar, are commonly joined to make up the meal. It would take up more of yours and my time than we have to spare, and make a volume of no small size, to enter into a minute consideration of these affairs. We are often asked, and not improperly, what our opinion is of these articles respectively, in respect to their being more or less wholesome? Perhaps the most pertinent answer in common would be, that which is reported of the late Dr. Mandeville, of famous memory, who being often the convivial guest, I think it was of one of the first Earls of Macclesfield, was frequently

120 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

quently interrogated on the subject of diet: Doctor is this wholesome? Does your Lordship like it? Yes. Does it agree with your Lordship? Yes. Why then it is wholesome.

Perhaps this is the best direction that can be given, provided we can caution the enquirer against the *too much*.

From many incontestible proofs, that butter in considerable quantities is injurious, it is less used in many families. It is found, by many, to be very difficult of digestion, especially when toasted before the fire, or fried, as well as in sauces. Many people, apparently robust, and whose organs of digestion are strong, often find themselves much disordered by large quantities of butter. Nothing more speedily and effectually gives the sick head-ach, and sometimes within a very few hours. After breakfast, if much toast and butter has been used, it begins with a singular kind of glimmering in the sight; objects swiftly changing their apparent position, surrounded with luminous angles, like those of a fortification. Giddiness comes
on,

on, head-ach, and fickness. An emetic, and warm water, soon wash off the offending matter, and remove these disorders. These are circumstances that often happen to people who are inattentive to the quantity of butter they eat at breakfast, and which are very often attempted to be cured by very different remedies, and improper ones. A sudden giddiness, let it arise from what cause it may, and it arises oftener, I believe, from some disorder in the stomach, than from all other causes put together, is a sufficient motive to call the surgeon, who must have a large share of disinterestedness and skill, not be compelled to bleed the patient, sometimes under circumstances that do not admit of it with impunity.

A moderate quantity of fresh butter, with bread exposed as little to the fire as possible, or not at all, but used cold, appears to me to be wholesome; it is capable of becoming, with the other aliments, as soft and inoffensive chyle, perhaps, as any part of diet.

The

122 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

The same thing may, perhaps, be said of coffee as of tea; the heat, the strength, and the quantity make it unwholesome or otherways. There are nations who almost live upon it, as others do on tea; amongst neither do we meet with diseases, that can justly be ascribed to these ingredients in the common course of living.

Chocolate may seem to require more consideration. It is, as we all know, the fruit of a tree growing in the West Indies, ground into a paste, with other ingredients, and serves as repast to multitudes of people of all conditions. It has not been observed, I believe, that those who, in this manner, make chocolate a part of their food, are subject to any particular distempers. It may be considered, therefore, as a wholesome kind of breakfast to those who like it, and with whom it agrees. It is of an unctuous nature, therefore little or no butter should be used with it. Were it commonly made thinner than is the general practice, and a large proportion of milk added, it would seem to be much more
proper

Medical Observations and Inquiries. 123

proper for common use, than as it is generally served up at present.

To all these, sugar is for the most part a necessary addition: and, perhaps, much depends on the quantity of this addition, whether they are to be styled wholesome or otherwise. Nothing is more common than to hear persons complaining of the heartburn after breakfast, ascribing it to the tea, or the other articles they have been drinking. The liquors themselves have no share, or very little, in producing this complaint. It arises from the bread, the butter, the sugar, in conjunction: and is a proof that more of some of these, or all of them together, have been taken than the stomach could digest: and this circumstance ought to be a standing monitor against excess in quantity, even of things deemed the most inoffensive.

Coffee, perhaps, is an exception to what was said above, that the liquors themselves have little or no share in producing the heartburn. Coffee made sweet, seldom fails to produce it; and it would be right to use as little sugar with it as possible.

The

124 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

The effects of improper conduct in respect to those things which now constitute our breakfasts, are of little consequence, compared with those which arise from the well-covered table at noon. The indulgences of breakfast supply but very few materials for destruction. The repeated excesses at dinner, are serious affairs. It has been thought that more people suffered by hard drinking, than immoderate eating. My observation leads me to take the opposite side. At present, indeed, the former practice is generally banished to the vulgar; but whilst it prevailed to the utmost, it seems to me that more were injured by excess of diet, than of drinking. But leaving this to other enquirers, I haste to a few observations on a subject, very interesting to the generality of mankind.

Though I think the quantity of food is a matter principally to be regarded, yet the quality is not a matter of indifference. I am not to be ranked among the robust and athletic; perhaps I am a good deal below the middle point of general strength.

It

Medical Observations and Inquiries. 125

It was necessary for me to observe some management in respect to my own health, and to attend to the *juvantia* and *ledentia*, yet without adopting it as a rule, that others ought to live as I found was most consistent with strength and ability. A great part of my life has been spent amongst the infirm and invalid: it was easy, it was necessary to observe what kind of diet, what kind of conduct was proper to be attended to by the generality. From this source I have endeavoured to draw instruction; and for the benefit of such, these reflections are offered.

If we look into the history of mankind inhabiting the different parts of the globe, so far as we are acquainted with it, we shall find that different nations subsist on kinds of diet very different from each other; yet all enjoy a degree of health that is competent to their duties in life in the countries they inhabit. A great part of the Eastern world is principally subsisted by rice and vegetables. Many countries live upon fish; others on a mixed diet, partly animal, partly vegetable. Some have

126 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

have no fermented liquors, others use none else. Yet all, compared with each other in the same community, are healthy. The Author of Nature has so formed us, and constructed the organs of digestion, that we can gradually accommodate ourselves to every species of aliment;—live on rice, on vegetables, on animal food solely, or mixed with vegetables, without suffering injury. No *kind* of food hurts us; we are capable of being accustomed to every thing; but this is not the case in regard to quantity. Nature, by degrees, may be accustomed to subdue and change into nutriment almost every part of the creation that is produced; but to quantity she yields: if there is not sufficient, decay ensues; if too much is used, fatal oppression.

large
phal
om
man
One of the first articles of diet I shall mention, is bread; and that only to say, that to digest it properly, if taken in considerable quantities, very strong organs are requisite. The husbandman and labourer find no difficulties in this respect; but to many others, this is not the case. In weak stomachs, a large proportion of bread is indigestible;

Medical Observations and Inquiries. 127

indigestible; it turns sour, produces the heartburn, flatulencies, and interrupts the perfect concoction of every thing else. This is not owing to any supposed adulteration in common; nor do I believe bread is adulterated to such degree as many apprehend; but to its own nature, which requires organs of a certain strength, to assimilate it properly; and if not so assimilated, it happens, as in many other cases, the corruption of what is good, makes it the worst of all others.

On this principle, I have endeavoured to inculcate the necessity of paying much attention to this capital article of diet, to valetudinaries in general; never to abstain from it wholly, but to use it with moderation; to consider it as one of those things which, sparingly used, was extremely necessary and beneficial; if otherwise, the fruitful source of many complaints, which were little suspected to arise from this cause.

In this country, animal food of one kind or another, constitutes the chief part of our nourishment. That there are some

128 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

kinds of more easy, some of harder digestion than others, is well known to every body. Yet I am inclined to think, there is scarcely any part of animal diet in use, that would not occasionally be made to agree, that is, to be digested without much difficulty, if we were full as anxious in respect to excess of quantity, as the unsuitableness of the kind ; at least this opinion corresponds with my own observation and experience. If a person eats as much of ham, salted beef, or bacon, as he ought to do of fish or of chicken, he may suffer by it.

The article of puddings, on an English table, is an affair of consequence. After a plentiful dinner of animal food, rich sweet puddings, deserts, or even fruit, seem a very unnatural and improper addition; more especially if the puddings are baked: for a little butter, long exposed to the heat of an oven, becomes, oftentimes, a cause of much suffering.

Of vegetables it will be necessary to say something. The rule in general is, to appeal to what best agrees, in this respect,

spect, with each particular constitution. I have only one short caution to give on this head:—Those who think it necessary to pay any attention to their health at table, should take care that the quantity of bread, and of meat, and of puddings, and of greens, should not compose each of them a meal, as if some were only thrown in to make weight; but carefully to observe, that the sum of all together do not exceed due bounds, or inroach upon the first feelings of satiety.

In respect to fruit, I apprehend it is a most injurious practice to eat it, as is generally done, after a plentiful meal. There are some people who may be happy enough not to feel themselves incommoded by any quantity they can take; but this is not the case with the generality, to whom I appeal for the proof of this assertion. Fruit was given us for use, as well as pleasure; to contribute to our health, not to hurt it. The forenoon seems, of all others, the most suitable season, unless it is taken instead of a meal. This I believe is the custom in many parts of the world,

Nov. VI.

K

and

130 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

and seems most consistent with health and right reason. This, and another custom which I believe prevails in France, I should be glad to see introduced into England more generally, for some families have long been in the practice of it; which is, to drink what may be necessary, what health or inclination requires, during the repast, and then to dismiss the bottle entirely.

It might seem not improper, in this place, to mention my opinion of the different kinds of liquors, respecting their comparative advantages; but this might likewise demand a volume. It must be left at last to the experience of the individual.

The lesser quantity of fermented liquors we accustom ourselves to, the better.

To abstain from spirits of every kind, however diluted, as much as may be.

Where mild, well-brewed beer agrees, to keep to it, as beverage.

Where water does not disagree, to value the privilege, and continue it.

In respect to wine, custom, for the most part, will decide. The less the excess in quantity,

quantity, the more consistent with health and long life.

Punch is a favourite with many;—if weak, in hot bilious constitutions, when naturally so, or which become such by a long residence in warm climates, it seems not to be an unwholesome composition. Like what has been said of diet in general, so likewise it may be added in respect to liquors: it is the quantity, in common, that does more harm than the kind; and people, especially in the fore-part of life, cannot be too solicitous to shun the first temptations to the love of spirituous liquors.

There is another repast which, since the introduction of tea, is become a kind of necessary of life, and as much expected in every family as the other usual meals themselves. It may not, perhaps, be wholly improper to suggest some considerations respecting the use of tea and coffee after dinner. If we may judge from various circumstances, from the time of dinner, digestion is performing during the course of several hours. This operation requires labour and time in performing it, more or

K 2

less,

132 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

less, in proportion to the quantity of food taken in, and the powers of digestion. Much food taken into a weak stomach, requires a greater length of time, if it is digested at all, than where less has been received.

Whilst that power, which we call nature, is performing this task, a second is added, which, though of a lighter quality, adds to the quantity, and as it must be assimilated to the chyle now forming, is an additional burthen. To the robust, this may appear trifling, it is not felt. But to those who may be said to be barely not valetudinary, it is a matter of some consequence.

It is thought by many, that tea assists digestion, by the additional stimulus of its quantity; it may excite the stomach and duodenum to pass the digesting food sooner than they otherwise would have done, and sooner than the chyle is properly elaborated; —it may perhaps assist in carrying off flatulency, and the food together. This, at least, is my opinion of it; and I therefore think the subjects of whom I have been speaking, ought to drink either tea or coffee,

Medical Observations and Inquiries. 133

fee, with great moderation; never to make it sweet, coffee especially; and to eat with it as seldom as possible. For either sweet cakes, cakes of any kind, or butter in any proportion, rather retard digestion than promote it. The only proper time to drink either tea or coffee, or any such beverage, with safety or advantage, is to take it as soon after dinner as possible, and instead of sitting down to the bottle. This is one of those customs, which perhaps might be adopted by us, with fewer disadvantages than many of the fashions we receive from our neighbours. As on the due performance of digestion depends much of our health, ease, and prospect of longevity; so we ought most studiously to avoid every thing that has a probable chance of interrupting it.

I have provisionally recommended suppers to the objects of these remarks; as thinking that nature can effect that easily at twice, which at once would cause some degree of distress. I have had occasion to remark to you, that the robust are not perfectly secure from the dangerous effects

134 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

of a full meal. Apoplexies, perhaps, proceed more frequently from this cause, than all the rest put together. If persons feel no injury from eating twice a day, neither from a meal sufficient to serve the purposes of health taken at once, let them persevere in the practice. Experience, cautiously attended to, is most certainly the best guide. From one cause or another, the practice appears to increase, of abstaining from suppers entirely, and is rather to be encouraged in the general. For those who have but little command over themselves at dinner, ought not to have the farther temptation to exceed what is right at a second meal. Where discretion prevails, and especially in persons of business where attention is required, the plan I have proposed would seem more proper, to divide the meals; especially such whose occupations require the full and immediate exercise of every faculty.

To describe in detail what would be proper for the purpose, belongs not to this place. I will only mention, that the less it is in quantity, and the lighter in kind, the better.

Medical Observations and Inquiries. 135

better. Many of the persons I have described, will not bear liquid suppers so well as solids. Indeed the volume hurts them as much as any thing. Broth, gruel, panada, and the like, seldom are easy to them, and seem to disagree, by becoming flatulent and oppressive.

I will detain you no longer than to mention a circumstance in which I am concerned, and which one day or other may possibly be your fate; and I trust you will therefore allow me to expose a Bookseller's imposition.

I would observe, that several years ago, a pamphlet was published under the title of, *Rules for the Preservation of Health, &c.*; it consists of parts taken from Dr. Mackenzie's *Rules of Health*, and extracts from several other Authors: it was the produce of an eminent Bookseller's son, who being in want of a little ready cash, threw these together, and published them under a name as near like mine as he dared to do*, and which

* The Title-page now before me is—" Rules for the Preservation of Health; being the Result of many Years Practice.

136 *Medical Observations and Inquiries.*

which has been tortured since into as many likenesses as the change of a few letters would allow him. Many people have purchased it, under an opinion that it was mine; and against this imposition I wish to enter a caveat, where I believe it will remain, as long as any books in our profession are read. Having informed the Public oftener than once, of its spurious origin—the title has been reprinted, and

rice. By J. FOTHERGILL. The Sixth Edition, with the following Additions:

I. Above Two Hundred of the most approved Receipts for all Disorders incident to Mankind.

II. Dr. Jurin's Account of the Effect of Soap Lye, taken inwardly, for the Stone.

III. The History of Mrs. Stephens's Medicines; and her Original Receipt for the Cure of the Stone.

IV. The present new Method of Inoculation, the Small Pox, [omitted,] and also in the Natural Way.

The Title page is here given at full length, as it may assist the Public in guarding against the imposture. I have seen the fourteenth edition of the Title page. Sometimes my name is printed as above, sometimes S. Fothergill; sometimes M. D. is added; with many other variations, none of them exactly corresponding to the name and designation, yet all of them retaining such a similitude, as to impose upon the inattentive part of the Public.

The Title page now bears the name of J. Fothergill, M. D. being the Result of many Years Practice.

the name varied every time. As you, Gentlemen, are all of you liable to a similar treatment, you must make my case your own; and permit me to declare, that the tract in question is a barefaced imposition.

A. G. a healthy youth, fourteen years old, was taken, in April 1766, with an incessant dry cough, preceded by frequent chills, and such a sense of cold about the præcordia, as if a lump of ice had been lodged there.

About the end of May, the cough was changed into a continual grunt, and he became afflicted with a train of nervous symptoms, that rendered him truly miserable: he had frequent darting pains in his head, chest, belly, and legs, and convulsive fits, and involuntary shakings. It is here worth remarking, that the appearance of any of these symptoms blunted that effort, which for want of a more apt term, I call grunt; but it returned immediately on their ceasing.

A fair