

A Treatise on the Gout, from the French of M. Charles Louis Liger, M. D. Professor of Physic in the University of Paris. 8vo. 5s. Griffiths.

ON a cursory view of this performance, from the frequent repetition of the term *Hypothesis*, we conceived a kind of prejudice against it; being always of opinion, that a true knowledge of the nature or cure of distempers is not to be acquired by ostentatious hypothetical reasoning; that, on the contrary, they serve often to mislead the judgment, and to promote methods of practice inconsistent with observation and experience. However, on a more intimate acquaintance with our Author's sentiments, we became sensible of the injustice of our first conceptions. Although some of his opinions are new, in regard to the nature of the gouty matter, the manner of its formation and deposition on the articulations and bowels, yet they are not only ingenious, but seem perfectly consistent with the laws of the animal œconomy and the nature of diseases in general; they appear to be rational deductions from obvious facts by a sensible Practitioner, not the vague speculations of a Theorist. Without adhering to the methodical precision for which the generality of French Writers are remarkable, we shall endeavour to give our Readers some idea of what Mr. Liger advances on this subject.

He observes, that people most subject to the Gout, are such as indulge in rich meats and sauces, racy wines, strong beer and cyder, and use but little exercise: that on the contrary, those who either from choice or necessity live on a spare diet, who drink plenty of thin liquors, and gain their bread by daily labour, are happily exempted from the tortures inflicted by this scourge of the luxurious.—These propositions, which few, we presume, will controvert, he farther illustrates by several instances, such as most of the inhabitants of the provinces of Burgundy and Champagne, where they eat moderately, and drink plentifully of thin wines, being free from the Gout, while those of Normandy, and some parts of Flanders, accustomed to drink strong beer and cyder, heavy wines, and use greater quantities of food, are almost universally subject to this distemper. He infers, therefore, that the gouty matter chiefly consists of the nutritive particles of those richer aliments, which are of an adhesive, gelatinous, or mucilaginous nature, taken in too large quantities to be thoroughly mixed or assimilated with the circulating

ing fluid. He supposes the consequence of a super-abundance of such a mucilage would be a total obstruction of the necessary secretions, and even of the circulation of the blood itself, did not Nature, or that organical spring which, in this, as in all other diseases, endeavours to free itself from whatever is noxious to the constitution, by extraordinary efforts, effect a separation of this adventitious and heterogeneous matter from the mass of blood. This act of depuration is termed a Fit of the Gout. That the gouty matter is a mucilage of this kind, Dr. Liger endeavours, from various circumstances, to demonstrate.

He farther shews, that as a mucilaginous liquor, in several respects analogous to that by which the Gout is occasioned, is separated, in order to lubricate the different articulations, Nature generally chuses to expel this adventitious mucilage from the mass of humours, by the vessels appropriated for secreting this Synovia. Hence the depuration or deposition of the gouty matter, is usually made upon the joints.

Our Author opposes the common received opinion, of the mobility of the gouty humour, or of the sudden metastasis, which is imagined frequently to happen in this distemper. He contends that the supposed translation of the Gout is effected in the following manner: when the part on which the gouty matter has been first thrown, either from the quantity already deposited, its natural rigidity, or the injudicious use of repellents, can receive no more, the remainder of the gouty matter still to be depurated, will, in such a circumstance, necessarily be conveyed to some other outlet.

His principal argument that there is no Metastasis is, that were this the case, the tumour occasioned by the first deposition would subside, like what happens in pestilential distempers, on a second part being attacked, which is contrary to experience.

In the manner above mentioned our Author very ingeniously accounts for all the different appearances of the Gout; and shews, that the number and severity of the fits, will be in proportion to the strength of the constitution, the quantity of gouty matter, and the nature and capacity of the recipient parts.

Having very copiously discussed whatever relates to the cause of the Gout, the formation of the gouty *Moleculæ*, and the manner in which the fits, whether regular or irregular, are produced, our Author proceeds, with great exactness, to enumerate the pathognomic signs, and to point out the methods

thods of cure adapted to the several stages and degrees of the distemper.

In regard to the certainty of obtaining a compleat cure, our Author's sentiments differ widely from those of many Physicians, who chuse to leave this distemper to Nature, and only recommend a proper use of the non-naturals in the intermediate spaces, and patience and warm flannel during the fits. He, on the contrary, provided the Patient will strictly conform to his directions, and where the disease is not inveterate, seems to make no doubt of being able, not only to relieve the fits, but even radically to extirpate the cause. How far his pretensions may be valid, experience alone must determine. We will, however, venture to affirm, that the fear of disturbing Nature in her operations is often too prevalent with those who are best qualified to assist her; like timid friends, they become spectators of a struggle, in which, for want of timely succour, she is often overpowered. We shall give, in Dr. Liger's own words, what he says in regard to the general plan of cure.

‘ In treating a distemper, the surest, easiest, and speediest method is to apply our utmost attention to understand the character of the distemper; and discover the causes that produce it. The first cause being once known, nothing more is requisite, because by destroying that, the distemper it has occasioned will be dispersed.

‘ But it is not always possible, when this cause is well known, to destroy it; either because it has too long existed, and by that means affected the machine too strongly, to admit of any hopes of an entire restoration; or the subject in whom the cause exists, by a forwardness of temper, will not, or by some other defect independent of himself, cannot undergo the proper treatment. In this case, the secondary, or determining causes must be enquired into; more especially that which is most conducive to determine the distemper in this or that subject; it is then to be attacked with more vigour and advantage, as there can be no danger, or room for fear.

‘ It is taken for granted, that the gouty humour is of a mucilaginous character; a character which is the effect of a plentiful use of liquors and aliments containing a great deal of mucilage. This matter giving no indications of its presence, and declaring itself only by tortures, which is always the case when its quantity superabounds, it follows, that there are two different methods of procuring relief, and treating

' this distemper with success; either by totally destroying its
 ' efficient cause, the very mucilaginous particles, or by re-
 ' moving the secondary causes, which determine the fits.

' The destruction of the mucilage will be easily compassed
 ' by a proper regimen, opposite to that which has produced
 ' the distemper. Nothing is more easy, it being the product
 ' of substances hererogeneous to the mass of our juices; I
 ' mean of aliments and liquors, the use of which is not ab-
 ' solutely necessary to the preservation of life, or even to
 ' health, but such as may be easily abstained from. A cure
 ' might speedily be effected where there is a sincere inclina-
 ' tion to be cured; especially if in the first appearances of
 ' the Gout, the Patients would resolutely confine themselves
 ' to foods and liquors of very little nourishment, and, which,
 ' consequently contain very little mucilage.

' But gouty persons no sooner imagine the fit to be over,
 ' than they forget the tortures of it, and are immediately for-
 ' making themselves amends for the long time they have been
 ' debarred from their favourite way of living. They are im-
 ' patient till they renew their epicurean practices; dishes
 ' must be prepared for them, to revive that appetite which
 ' the distemper had taken away; they will be obeyed, and
 ' which, to their misfortune, they are too readily. Accus-
 ' tomed to enjoy the pleasures of life with all possible freedom
 ' and facility, and being able to gratify all their caprices,
 ' they refuse to listen to those salutary advices by which their
 ' constitutions might be improved, and their health confirm-
 ' ed. On the least respite they imagine themselves in a con-
 ' dition of partaking in all the freedoms and engagements
 ' permitted to one in a confirmed state of health.

' The result of this stubbornness is, that the respite is soon
 ' over, and the gouty person is sometimes seized with fits
 ' more violent than they have yet known. But there are
 ' some who are scarce got free from this fit, before they re-
 ' turn to their former course of life. Sobriety, or even any
 ' regularity of regimen, they dread; and, therefore, no
 ' cure can be expected; nor should the Physicians attempt it.
 ' Not that I blame their condescension to such Patients, who
 ' reproach Physicians with their being unable to cure the
 ' Gout; and the Physicians seem, in some measure, to ac-
 ' quiesce in it, the sooner to free themselves from such Pati-
 ' ents, who are the constant Scourges of Medicine, and
 ' the Torture of the Physician.

' But

' But if there are any who are really desirous of being
 ' cured, and who will themselves contribute towards their
 ' cure, their endeavours will not be in vain. Let them only
 ' abridge themselves of one meal a day, especially supper;
 ' content themselves with a good dinner, which must, how-
 ' ever, consist only of foods containing very little nourish-
 ' ment in a considerable volume, and make use of the sapo-
 ' naceous medicines I shall mention in the third part of this
 ' work.

' By such a conduct the superabundance of the gouty hu-
 ' mour will be prevented, and at the same destroyed. This
 ' is not, indeed, the work of a moment; but which is not
 ' to be abandoned, as it will relieve us from a distemper
 ' which, when regular, is attended by such terrible torments;
 ' and, when irregular, so dangerous and fatal.

' This treatment, however, will not alone be sufficient to
 ' conquer the hereditary, nor even the acquired Gout, if
 ' inveterate; the destruction, if possible, of the mucilage or
 ' germ of the Gout, contained in the mass of humours,
 ' must, at the same time be attempted; or, at least, endea-
 ' vours must be used for diminishing its superabundance.
 ' But this end can only be obtained by removing the causes
 ' of this superabundance; and I venture to say, that if hi-
 ' therto Physicians have cured some gouty persons, for there
 ' is hardly one, who during the course of a long practice,
 ' but must have enjoyed the satisfaction of curing some, it is
 ' principally by this method.

' The manner of treatment must necessarily admit of great
 ' variations; the accidental causes of the superabundance
 ' being so greatly increased, that some are very different
 ' from others; and it often happens, that what has procured
 ' relief to one person, has augmented the pains, and aggra-
 ' vated the distemper, in another.

' Thus it is no wonder to me, that Galen, by bleeding,
 ' cured gouty persons in whom a plethora was the cause of
 ' the superabundance of the gouty humour: that he recover-
 ' ed others by purging, the superabundance in these, being
 ' owing to peccant humours. Others have cured the Gout
 ' by gentle sudorifics; but in most of these cases, the super-
 ' abundance was occasioned by a defect of perspiration. Suc-
 ' cess may also attend the use of diuretics, chalybeates, and
 ' aperitives; in case of a suppressed evacuation, and the ge-
 ' neral inspissation of the fluids.

‘ Lastly, In case of a too great relaxation of the fibres, or excessive evacuations, cordials, wine, chalybeates, and astringents may be happily administered.

‘ If it be possible to treat properly all gouty persons by endeavouring to remove the true cause of the superabundance of the gouty humour, it is, also, very dangerous to attempt the cure without being acquainted with this cause. For this reason, possibly, it has always been thought less dangerous to leave this distemper entirely to itself than to attempt its extirpation; because it has often happened, that a person cured of the Gout by some remedy prescribed by a Physician, has communicated and recommended the same to other gouty persons, who, so far from deriving any relief from it, have found themselves much worse. This distemper can be treated only by a Physician; a Physician alone being capable of investigating and examining the causes so necessary to be known; and the only one who can properly distinguish them.’

To relieve the particular fits, Dr. Liger recommends bleeding, according to the strength of the Patient: this remedy, however repugnant to practice in this country, he remarks, agreeably to the observation of Galen, has often alone proved efficacious in the first attack of the Gout. Recourse should likewise be had to diluents; such as a Ptisan made with Ground-pine, Germander, and Maidenhair, sweetned to the taste of the Patient with a little sugar; and the body should be kept open with simple, emollient glysters, light broths, without veal or fowl, should be used; but jellies or sweetmeats prohibited. If the stomach should be incommoded by such a diet, the Patient may be indulged with three or four small glasses a-day of good Canary, or the best Burgundy and Champaign, taken at different times, with a toast in them.

By this manner of proceeding, two great points, our Author observes, are obtained; the gouty humour is diluted and rendered more fluid, and the vessels acquire the necessary elasticity for precipitating, dividing, and comminuting it. He recommends great caution in the use of opiates. Where they are absolutely necessary, he recommends the different Theriacas, which while they assuage the pain, do not so much weaken the elasticity of the fibres.

When the severity of the fit is past, in order to hasten the recovery, he advises to clear the first passages by means of gentle purgatives, which discharge the humours resulting from

from a depraved digestion, at the same time they help to carry off the remainder of the Gout. Insensible perspiration ought likewise to be as much as possible restored. It is not, however, to be supposed, where Nature is vigorous, and her operations regular and effectual, that it is necessary to attend to the cure of the particular paroxysm. The only object in view in that case should be, the entire removal of the cause. This is to be effected by two different intentions; first, by preventing the superabundance of the gouty humour by moderation in diet, gentle exercise, and purges of the brisker kind frequently repeated.

‘ The remedies,’ says our Author, ‘ for preventing a superabundance of the gouty humour, should be the same with those employed for diminishing it, even at the time when the fit is still felt; but with this difference, that in treating the fit of the Gout, care should be taken not to disturb Nature, in order to which the gentlest remedies are to be made use of. On the contrary, to secure the Patient from fresh fits, it is very allowable, and even necessary, to have recourse to more active remedies. They should, indeed, always be of the same class with those that procured relief in the last fit.

‘ Therefore, when a Patient of a phlegmatic constitution, is afflicted with a Gout sensible of cold, resinous purgatives, as jalap or diagyridium, must be used, and perspiration facilitated, or rather provoked by a strong infusion of camel’s-hay, but in a something less quantity if the sudorific woods are added. These remedies may also be given in substance, and their use continued for a month after the period of the fit; and afterwards from time to time, taken only for one day, and at equal intervals. Such a method carefully observed, seldom fails of keeping off the fits of the Gout for a considerable time.

‘ Take Diagyridium iij. gr. Jalap viij. gr. Ipecacoanha j or ij. gr. Powder of Sena xv. gr. Rhubarb x. gr. Powder the whole, mix and incorporate it in a sufficient quantity of the syrup of Buckthorn. This is to be administered every other day.

‘ The day following that on which the pills are taken, at the medicinal hours, the Patient must drink three glasses of the sudoric ptisan.

‘ Many gouty persons have found themselves greatly relieved by uniting these two remedies in the following manner. They use them three days successively every month of the

‘ first year, and afterwards only every three months; but
 ‘ to be punctually continued till they are entirely freed from
 ‘ the Gout.

‘ Take leaves of Sena \mathfrak{z} ss. seeds of Carthamus, and of
 ‘ Carduus Benedictus, Hemodactyles, Guaiacum wood, Sar-
 ‘ aparilla, Diagrydium, ana \mathfrak{z} ij. Rhubarb, Cinnamon, ana
 ‘ \mathfrak{z} j. Pulverise the whole, and mix it thoroughly. The
 ‘ dose is from \mathfrak{z} ij. to \mathfrak{z} j.

‘ The purging powder against the Gout, inserted in the
 ‘ Faculty's Dispensatory, which is nearly the same, produces
 ‘ also the same effect, and is given in the same doses.

‘ These remedies discharge the humours by stool, and, at
 ‘ the same time, fit them for being carried off by perspiration,
 ‘ without too much increasing or forcing this last excretion;
 ‘ for otherwise the consequence would certainly be disagree-
 ‘ able. The gouty humour, deprived of its fluidity, would
 ‘ thus become very obstinate, so as hardly to be overcome by
 ‘ any remedies; for then the Patient may think himself very
 ‘ happy, if the most gentle remedies do not cause a return of
 ‘ the sharpness of the pains, and occasion a closer succession
 ‘ of fits than usual; as I have had occasion to observe in per-
 ‘ sons who, in order to evacuate the gouty humour by per-
 ‘ spiration, had made use either of dry baths, or the strongest
 ‘ purgatives, especially those who had added Mercury to their
 ‘ compositions. It is a great point in the cure, not to render
 ‘ the gouty humour too dry, tho' it has hitherto been neglect-
 ‘ ed, under pretence of its being a heterogeneous humour,
 ‘ and of which one cannot be too soon freed.

‘ When the Gout in a phlegmatic constitution is sensible
 ‘ to heat, the hydrogogues are to be more sparingly admini-
 ‘ stered: gentle purges are then only to be given, and these
 ‘ may be more frequently administered than during the fit.

‘ Take of the small leaves of Sena \mathfrak{z} ij. Vegetable salt \mathfrak{z} jss.
 ‘ Infuse them in seven or eight ounces of water, together
 ‘ with two ounces, or two ounces and a half of Manna.
 ‘ Strain it off, and add of the compound Syrup of Ap-
 ‘ ples \mathfrak{z} j.

‘ This is to be taken every three days, drinking plentifully
 ‘ of the ptisan made of the infusion of Ground-pine and
 ‘ Germander.

‘ These remedies are to be continued till the gouty humour
 ‘ is sufficiently diluted, in order for its being expelled by
 ‘ nearly

‘ nearly the same remedies as before mentioned, but given in
 ‘ smaller quantities.

‘ In dry bilious constitutions, which are most subject to the
 ‘ Gout, sensible to heat, the treatment must begin with the
 ‘ use of some ptisan having very little salt in it, and to be used
 ‘ plentifully. This ptisan may be made of certain bitter
 ‘ herbs, as Germander and the Lesser Centaury. Pour on
 ‘ half a handful of these herbs about two quarts of boiling
 ‘ water, which after standing a sufficient time on the herbs
 ‘ is to be decanted off, and drank when necessary, till the
 ‘ gouty humour is brought to the fluidity necessary to its ex-
 ‘ pulsion by the above mentioned remedies. Here ground-
 ‘ pine, sage, and all hot plants, are to be excluded: and
 ‘ during the use of this infusion, the Patient is to be gently
 ‘ purged with better purgatives, as sena, rhubarb, and com-
 ‘ pound syrup of apples.

‘ If from an excessive tension of the fibres, or an inspissa-
 ‘ tion of the humours, these remedies are not attended with
 ‘ much success, recourse must be had to baths of a heat not
 ‘ exceeding that of the human body. Nothing more effectually
 ‘ macerates the humours, but they must be discharged
 ‘ veay gently, in proportion as they become macerated; for
 ‘ otherwise new distempers may be contracted.

‘ The effect of these remedies is afterwards to be seconded
 ‘ by those of a digestive nature, which, at the same time,
 ‘ gently purge and liquify the bile; but with this caution,
 ‘ that they be given only in small doses.

‘ Take extract of Aloes prepared with the juice of Fumi-
 ‘ tory, the best gum ammoniac ana ℥ss. aperitive saffron of
 ‘ iron, Diagyrium ana ʒij. best Myrrh, oriental Saffron,
 ‘ salt of Tamarisk ana ʒj. Rivirius's salt of iron ʒj. Let
 ‘ the whole be pulverized, carefully mixed, and incorporated
 ‘ in a sufficient quantity of compound syrup of Succory. The
 ‘ dose is twelve grains, to be taken fasting in the morning,
 ‘ for eight days, and on the ninth, both morning and even-
 ‘ ing. Afterwards it is to be taken only once a day; unless
 ‘ there be a necessity of more frequent purgations, the pills
 ‘ are to be continued for six weeks. In case the Patient be
 ‘ costive, he must take them constantly twice a day, and
 ‘ afterwards use the alterative powder against the Gout, de-
 ‘ scribed in the Faculty's Dispensatory. This powder is
 ‘ made in the following manner.

‘ Take Gentian root, Rhapontic, round Birthroot, leaves
 ‘ of Germander and of Ground-pine, the heads of the Lesser
 ‘ Centaury, ana \mathfrak{z} ij.

‘ These powders being made into a bolus with a sufficient
 ‘ quantity of syrup, half a dram may be taken morning and
 ‘ evening. This has proved very beneficial to many gouty
 ‘ persons who took a dram of it in the morning in a glass of
 ‘ water, and only half a dram in the evening. The use of
 ‘ it is to be continued for a long time.’

The second intention of destroying the gouty humour, is to be effected, in our Author's opinion, by a remedy which he extols as a universal solvent, the Medicinal Soap. It is compounded of a very pure alkaline salt prepared with quick lime, and the finest olive oil. The oil is to be placed in a vessel over the fire, and during its boiling, as much of the salt thrown in as is sufficient to form a white mass. To prevent its oily part from clogging the stomach, the following is the properest manner for exhibiting it.

Take of this saponaceous mass \mathfrak{z} ss. Rhubarb and Gentian ana \times gr. let them be made into a bolus, with Syrup of Roses; which is to be taken every morning for a fortnight, drinking after it the Germander or Ground-pine ptisan.

This, probably, may be a very good medicine, although we cannot help thinking the high encomiums bestowed upon it somewhat extravagant. We could have wished likewise that our Author, instead of quoting Boerhaave's opinion concerning the virtues of soap, had mentioned a sufficient number of instances of its success, from his own experience.

We cannot pretend, how interesting soever the subject, to enter into a particular detail of our Author's treatment of the different appearances of the Gout, but must refer our Readers to the treatise itself; and shall conclude with the following Remarks.

The performance, upon the whole, is ingenious, and the Author seems to have considered his subject with great attention; but, like most French Writers, as we before observed, he treats his subject with a certain methodical precision, which leads him into frequent repetitions. This practice, useful perhaps in teaching the elements of an art, does not suit the taste of English Readers, who, in general, are more accustomed to think and express themselves with closeness and brevity. There seems likewise great room for improvement, in
 answering

answering his intentions of cure, by a form of medicines more convenient and elegant.

As to the exactness of the translation, we shall not pretend to determine, not having an opportunity of comparing it with the original—Some inaccuracies, however, we have noted; but none of consequence enough to make us doubt of its being, upon the whole, a faithful translation.

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IN our Review of the Dialogues written by the learned Mr. Hurd, we took occasion to speak of the difficulty of excelling in the colloquial way of writing, and ventured to assign some reasons why it has been so little cultivated in our language. The ancients, it is true, and, among the moderns, our neighbours the French, have happily succeeded in this species of composition: but we would observe farther, that there is something, perhaps, in our manners, and peculiar cast of temper, which disqualifies us from entering into competition with them, in this respect.

The English being generally reserved and uncommunicative in their dispositions, are sententious and nervous in their expressions; which naturally inclines them to deliver their sentiments in set dissertations. The French, on the contrary, who, in some particulars, come nearer the polite Athenians, being more open, communicative, and social in their nature, have carried the charms of conversation to higher perfection, and are consequently better capable of writing in the familiar way of dialogue.

Probably, likewise, the difference between the two species of Government, may be assigned as one, among other causes of this distinction. The freedom of our constitution allows us to search truth to the bottom, and to maintain our opinions with all the strength of reasoning, and bold energy of expression. Their Government, on the contrary, lays them under such political restraints, that they must be content to glance at truth, on many occasions, whilst they dare not attempt to prove their discoveries by a chain of argument. This naturally inclines them to a loose, desultory, chit-chat method of writing. Even the celebrated Montesquieu, who, in this respect, is perhaps the least of a Frenchman, has, on the most important subjects,

* See Review, vol. XXI. p. 35.