II.

Observations on the Utility and Administration of Purgative Medicines in several Diseases. By James Hamilton, M. D. Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and Senior Physician to the Royal Infirmary of that city. Second Edition, corrected and enlarged, 8vo. p. 349. Edinburgh, 1806.

The principal additions which have, in this new edition, been made to the former observations of the author, are a chapter on hysteria, and another on tetanus. And these, for the convenience of the purchasers of the first edition, have, with their corresponding appendixes, been published also in a separate form. The whole work, however, has been revised, and some less important additions made to the general text. It is unnecessary to recall the attention of our readers to the subjects we have already so fully examined, when reviewing the first edition of this useful work, in our fifth number. It will be sufficient here, very shortly, to notice the additional chapters on hysteria and tetanus.

Chap. 7.—Observations on the Utility and Administration of Purgative Medicines in Hysteria.

After premising a short history of the disease, in which the symptoms are narrated in the order of their occurrence, Dr H. remarks, that the most constant and invariable of these, are pains of the abdomen, flatulence, constipation, the hysterical globe, and fetid eructations, vomiting and sometimes purging, all indicative of considerable derangement of the stomach, and alimentary canal. This affection of the stomach and bowels, he considers as primary, and the other multifarious symptoms of hysteria, as depending upon it. According to this view, he employs purgatives in hysteria, with the same limitations as in chorea, and other diseases already treated of.

"I have not been disappointed in my expectations in thus treating hysteria, my success has been equal to my wishes, and the source of much satisfaction to me. Yet my experience is not so complete as to enable me to say to what extent purgatives may be employed in hysteria, exclusively of other medicines. Within certain limits, I accordingly call in the aid of fetid and tonic medicines; but, in my estimation, they are merely subsidiary, and, on some occasions, might be altogether overlooked, as they were in the treatment of Sarah M'Millan and Isabel Black, whose cases are inserted in the Appendix, No VIII. In particular
ler cases, where great anxiety prevails, recourse may be had to wine in moderate quantity, till such time as relief is obtained by purgatives.

"I may add, by way of caution, that in hysteria as well as in chorea, chlorosis, and haematemesis, the full exhibition of active purgatives is necessary to procure even moderate evacuations from the bowels; and that this exhibition must be continued from day to day; till such time as the feces are natural, and till the disease ceases.

"The first purgative that we use, may seem, on some occasions, to aggravate the symptoms, but the practice must not be deserted on that account. The additional irritation, which purgatives may give in the first instance, soon passes away, and the perseverance in the use of them, removes that irritation which gives rise to the disease, which oft course, disappears in proportion as the bowels are relieved of the oppressive mass of accumulated feces."

We believe there is much truth in the doctrine, and much good in the practice of Dr Hamilton. But, we cannot help thinking, that he all along keeps one indication too much in view, that his practice is too exclusively purgative in some cases. We must recollect, how successfully we have seen chlorosis treated by the preparations of iron, and how often we have combated hysteria by tonics, and antispasmodics, and recollecting this, we cannot, all at once, part with them in the treatment of these diseases. But the lesson given us by Dr H. to unload the bowels, is not the less important. And the utility of purgatives in hysteria, might, if necessary, be largely confirmed by other documents.

Chap. 8.—On the Utility of Purgative Medicines in Tetanus.

Hitherto Dr Hamilton has had experience for his guide; his opinions have been founded on observation, and his practice has been confirmed by extensive experience. His observations on the utility of purgatives in tetanus, are more hypothetical and analogical. But the result of the investigation certainly encourages the fair trial of these medicines in a disease, the treatment of which has been hitherto so hopeless. In tetanus, the bowels are obstinately constipated, there is uneasy sensation and tenseness of the præcordia; it occurs in those climates and seasons in which derangement of the hepatic system, and of the alimentary canal prevail; chorea and hysteria are spasmodic diseases, accompanied with disorders of the bowels, and with costiveness, and are relieved or cured by purgatives; the tetanus of children, or trismus nascentium, is cured by free purging; lastly, besides there presumptive circumstances, Dr H. has endeavoured to support his opinion by shewing, that where purgative medicines have been given in tetanus, whether by design or not, they have proved eminently useful, and that some examples of cures may fairly be attributed to the purgative operation of some of the remedies employed, an opinion which is corroborated by Mursinna's cases, inserted in this number of our Journal, p. 435. Cases from his own
own practice are also adduced of tetanic affections cured by purgatives.

III.

Practical Observations concerning Sea Bathing. To which is added, Remarks on the use of the Warm Bath. By A. P. Buchan, M. D. of the Royal College of Physicians, London. P. 207. Svo. London, 1804.

The enlightened practitioner, whose information has kept pace with the progress of science, will not perhaps find any thing very new in this little volume. But, an attempt to embody, and render more accessible, the knowledge which has gradually sprung up, is at all times acceptable; and a treatise on a subject so popular as the present, cannot fail to be useful. While persons of every temperament and predisposition, and invalids of every description, are annually flocking to the sea coast, in search of pleasure and of health; there must be reason to apprehend, that a remedy so powerful, and so useful in some diseases, cannot be of universal application, and must be hazardous and pernicious in others. And in truth, we know but too well, that sea bathing is much abused in this, fully as much as the warm bath is abused in other countries. Misled by the popular theory of the general tonic, and invigorating powers of the cold bath, our countrymen are inclined to regard it as an universal remedy adapted to every case of debility and disease. A similar prejudice has condemned the warm bath as relaxing and debilitating. But, even when sea bathing does suit the disorder, when it has been advised by an experienced physician, the patient is very generally sent to the sea coast, ignorant and uninstructed. He is to bathe indeed, but he has no just notion of the remedy, he has no rules for his direction, he knows not how, in his particular case, he may bathe with safety and advantage. It is certain, however, that the effects of the cold bath not only vary in different constitutions, and in different states of disorder, but that they vary also in the same individuals, and in the same case, with the manner and circumstances of using it. It produces, even in a healthy individual, very different effects, when taken before or after meals, before or after exercise, when the body is cool, temperate, or heated. These varieties of effect are still more remarkable in a debilitated or