ART. V.—*On a New and Successful Treatment for Febrile and other Diseases, through the medium of the Cutaneous Surface. Illustrated with Cases.* By WILLIAM TAYLOR, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons England, and Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries London; Surgeon to the Clerkenwell Infirmary, and to the Police of that Division of the Metropolis. London, 1850. Post 8vo. Pp. 170.

THE new Treatment which Mr Taylor recommends, consists in applying and rubbing over the skin a compound consisting of lard and common beef-suet in equal proportions, previously melted carefully over a slow fire or a water bath. The consistence of this compound, to which Mr Taylor gives the name of the Hard Ointment, may be increased during hot weather, by increasing the proportion of suet.

The great advantage of this application the author represents to be, that it does not run off by liquefaction from the surface of the skin, but is slowly diffused over it, and is rubbed in so as to saturate the skin with the ointment. To attain this object, it appears that a large quantity is required; and the friction, he adds, must be performed with vigour and energy, not by the ancient feeble crones so common in work-houses, infirmaries, and similar hospitals, but by strong, active, and enduring arms and hands.

The beneficial effects of this unctuous friction Mr Taylor represents to be very great, indeed all but marvellous. When the skin is dry and harsh, as in fever and similar disorders, and the ointment has been well rubbed in, it renders the skin soft and pliant, and the countenance indicates the favourable change by its improved expression. In short, friction with the hard ointment Mr Taylor represents to be superior either to the cold bath or the vapour bath, and we suppose the hot bath is not excluded, in restoring the functions of the skin in febrile and similar disorders. Even, he states, in typhus, scarlet-fever, small-pox, and measles, where, especially in the abodes of the poor, the atmosphere surrounding the patient exhales a heavy, disagreeable, offensive odour, after this hard ointment has been used on the skin of the sick person for twenty-four hours, the disagreeable odour is in general removed, and it is hardly perceived that the room contains a patient so seriously affected.

As soon as the skin is saturated with the ointment, all the acrid and pungent smell of the air of the apartment, which the author represents to be not only perceptible by the olfactory or-

gans, but also as impressing the tongue, is dispelled, the fever ceases to increase, and the fear of contagion may be regarded as over.

With respect to the mode of applying the hard ointment, and the most suitable time for application, Mr Taylor finds that it is desirable to rub it night and morning, and oftener in urgent cases, on every part of the skin which is hot and dry. This should be done freely, though gently, during from half an hour to one hour at a time, and repeated until the skin is saturated. The effect of this is to render the skin soft, and, after a few applications, to give it the feeling of velvet.

The diseases in which Mr Taylor recommends the use of this unctuous friction are the following:—Common Inflammatory Fever, Typhus Fever, Scarlet Fever, Measles, Dropsy, Pulmonary Consumption, Insanity, Delirium Tremens, and Hydrocephalus. In order to illustrate the effects of the treatment, the author gives examples of diseases belonging to each of these heads, in which, under the diligent use of the hard ointment, recovery was effected.

A number of these cases, especially those of fever, scarlet fever, and measles, took place in the Clerkenwell Infirmary; and the author maintains that the employment of this method saved the institution considerable expense, by diminishing the amount of wine, spirits, and similar stimulants and cordials required, both during the treatment and during convalescence. This he justly regards as a strong argument for the adoption of the method in workhouses, infirmaries, hospitals, and other charitable institutions in which economy is an object.

Mr Taylor does not, however, neglect the use of other remedial agents, though he employs them to a very limited extent. Thus, he prescribes calomel as an aperient, saline draughts with excess of alkali, and prohibits the exhibition of all acid or acidulous articles. In the treatment of dropsy he administers blue pill, squill, and saline diuretics.

The advantages of this method of treatment are conceived to be presented in the following summary.

First, the operation of friction with the hard ointment reduces the force and frequency of the pulse, and abates the morbid heat and dryness of the skin in febrile affections; blood-letting being seldom required. It corrects the fœtid and offensive odour arising from patients; and, after its use, contagion seldom spreads, even in crowded apartments. When early employed, the fever is prevented from passing into the continued type, and the patient soon becomes convalescent. The dry and brown state of the tongue and the attendant thirst disappear, as the skin becomes saturated, and the healthy secretions of the latter are restored.

Secondly, in cases in which much vascular disturbance is ac-

companied by morbid pungent heat of the skin, and functional disorder in the brain, beneficial results are more speedily obtained than by any other method of treatment. The cases given by the author, he maintains, show that after a few applications of this ointment, the pulse may be reduced from 120 to 90 beats in the course of a few hours.

The patient generally insensibly falls into a calm, tranquil, and profound sleep, which lasts for from twelve to twenty-four hours, awakening apparently for the purpose of taking nourishment, and complaining only of languor and weakness. The delirium and pain have then disappeared; the skin, at the same time, has lost its morbid and unnatural heat; the thirst has become abated; and the tongue has become moist and clean.

In short, the remedy is represented to be advantageous and applicable in all fevers, and in every instance of acute inflammation where the surface is very hot and dry. The remedy then acts, in the course of twenty-four hours, as soothing the nervous system, allaying irritation, procuring sleep, and reducing the frequency of the pulse.

In the third place, the use of this agent does not interfere with that of other remedies. If collapse, the usual stimulants, as nitre, ether, musk, ammonia, and similar agents must be employed.

Lastly, the application is not attended with injurious effects.

To any objections that may be probably urged against the use of this method, that it clogs the pores of the skin, and may prevent transpiration, the author answers by saying, that he has never seen it do so, in numerous instances in which it has been employed.

In the foregoing account of this method of treating febrile diseases, we think it right, that the author should be allowed a fair and deliberate hearing for his cause. It must be allowed that Mr Taylor, according to his own showing, makes a strong case for the use of the hard ointment. But so it may be said do all advocates of new and singular methods of treatment. It would be idle to offer any remarks on the method; because, after all, its merits must be determined by actual trial and experience. Let it then be tried in situations and circumstances in which it can be conveniently subjected to trial; and let the results decide the question of its real value. After all, it is only a sort of revival of the method of the ancient JATRALIPTÆ, who are reported to have effected wonderful cures by anointing the surface of the body, and employing assiduous friction with oleaginous substances.