

case I mention below it appeared as if much benefit might accrue from the use of a continuous galvanic current down the spine. In no case is the effect of the continuous current to the limb so remarkable as in the atrophic paralysis from lead, two examples of which I shall presently relate. The fact has now for some time been observed that the muscles in this affection are not susceptible to the interrupted current of faradization—that a painful amount of it may be used, and yet there shall be no response on the part of the muscle. I have had several cases in the hospital which completely establish the fact. On the other hand, if the continuous battery current is used, even in a mild degree, excitation immediately occurs; that is, when the current is completed and again broken.

In the very first case on which I experimented some years ago we found in the case of a young man suffering from lead paralysis, that whereas no irritation of muscle could be displayed by the magneto-electric machine, immediate contraction took place on the application of fifteen cells of the battery an amount which produced a scarcely perceptible effect on the arm of a healthy student.

It is observed that as the cure progresses so the susceptibility to the continuous current becomes less, and that a faradization greater, until as the healthy subject, both forms cause contraction of the muscles. The case of lead is very striking, because there are kinds of paralysis in which the two forms of galvanism act in the opposite manner; thus, lying in a bed near that of our patient, who was the victim of lead poisoning was a girl suffering from old-standing spinal paraplegia; in her case the continuous current produced not the slightest effect in stimulating the muscles of the leg, whilst faradization produced strong and painful contraction of the muscles. The same occurred in a man who had long been bedridden with an incurable paraplegia. It has been thought that faradization acts directly up on the muscles to stimulate it, whilst the continuous current acts through the nerve. This has by no means been proved, but it had if it might be used as an argument that in lead poisoning it is the muscular rather than the nervous system which is affected by the metal. Such an opinion, however, is not borne out by experience, seeing that the whole cerebro-spinal centres may become atrophied in plumbism, as evidenced by epilepsy, general paralysis or dementia. The atrophy resulting from lead differs from that which is called idiopathic in this respect, that although in the two cases no difference is observable in the form of wasting, yet in the latter there is very little susceptibility to either form of galvanism. It has been suggested by Dr. Russell Reynolds that there is no essential difference between the primary and the induced current, but that the simple interruption in the one case is sufficient to account for its peculiar effect—that muscles under abnormal conditions may not be able to take cognizance of a simple current passing through them, whereas they would if it were broken. If this were so, the primary battery current, if interrupted, should produce the same effect as the ordinary induced current or faradization.

In one or two cases where the experiment was tried, the result did not verify the suggestion. Where, for instance, one pole was placed just below the elbow, and the other pole stroked down the arm, a contraction took place when it was lifted from the limb or again replaced. The current was then interrupted by a wheel, but exactly the same phenomena occurred, contraction on making and breaking contact, but none whatever as the sponge was stroked down the arm. With faradization, on the contrary, violent contraction took place. In this case, therefore, the difference between the two forms, even when both were made to intermit, seemed well marked. Further observations, however, are required before I could give a decision on this matter, either for or against the suggestion of Dr. R. Reynolds.

I have already spoken of the intractability of cases of spasm and contraction of the muscles. In many cases organic disease of the spinal cord and nerves exists, and, therefore, no result could be expected; but even in others, as in wryneck, where an immediate effect of galvanism was witnessed, no permanent good resulted from its use. Even in cases of so-called hysterical contraction of the arm I have been much disappointed at the failure of galvanism.

The effects on the muscles in the cases of spasmodic contraction is seen in the reports, in which it appears that they are more susceptible to faradization than to the continuous current.

One must not forget to mention the soothing effect of galvanism. In cases where neuralgic pains have existed, patients have expressed themselves as much relieved by its application, and have often slept better afterwards.

The public is so much impressed with the value of electric baths that I proposed to try it in a case of lead poisoning. I am aware that others have pronounced it to be valueless, which, in all probability is the case, there being no proof that the galvanic current passes anywhere but over the surface of the body. In my case the speedy success was so remarkable as to throw strong suspicion on its having had any value at all.

I give the case below with the mode of use. Usually, I believe, the plan has been to place the patient on an isolated stool in the water, with one pole in his hand, the other being attached to the bath. In the present case Mr. Sandy used a different method.

*Case 1.—Paralysis of Leg.*—George W., æt. 36, admitted into Stephen Ward June 19th, for weakness of the left leg, and left July 23rd. This man was the subject of a remarkable enlargement of the veins on the surface of the abdomen, indicating some obstruction to the vena cava. He had observed this fourteen years, but it had given him no inconvenience nor interfered with his employment.

Patient stated that in March last he was seized with very acute pains through the left hip and groin, which gradually spread down the leg; and these pains were worse at night. Went to Swansea Hospital, where knee became contracted, and he took to crutches. He was then sent up to Guy's Hospital. He was put to bed, being quite unable to walk, on ec-