

PEPPERMINT WATER IN PRURITUS PUDENDI.

DR. AMAND ROUTH calls attention to the value of peppermint water in pruritus pudendi. In pruritus, due to pediculi, ascarides, an irritable urethral caruncle, an endocervical polypus, early cancer of the cervix, distension of Bartholini's ducts or glands, the leucorrhœa of vaginitis, endocervicitis, and metritis, or the irritating discharges of advanced carcinoma uteri, or to a gouty or diabetic diathesis, peppermint water excels all others, cocaine inclusive, in affording relief, whilst endeavors are being made to remove the cause. The agent here alluded to is peppermint water used as a lotion. The B. P. preparation answers well, but is bulky for carrying about, and is incapable of concentration unless rendered alkaline. This is best done by borax, as being in itself soothing and antiseptic. Patients can easily make their own lotion, as required for use, by putting a teaspoonful of borax into a pint bottle of hot water, and adding to it 5 drops of oleum menthæ piperitæ, and shaking well; the parts affected to be freely bathed with a soft sponge. If no cracks or sores are present, this lotion will remove the itching; but if there be eczema or a rawness from scratching, it is inapplicable. Olive oil, with 5 grs. of iodoform to the ounce, is then more useful. The greatest and most permanent relief is afforded in the neurosal form, especially in the pruritus which often accompanies pregnancy. It is also very useful in the pruritus which occurs at the climacteric, or in elderly women, in whom it may be only part of a general pruritus, and also in those cases of women of all ages, where the urine simultaneously becomes of very low specific gravity without any evidence of having a gouty or granular kidney as a remote cause.—*Brit. Med. Jour.*, April 14, 1888.

ELECTRICITY IN THE TREATMENT OF FIBROIDS OF THE UTERUS.

(By Maria B. Werner, M.D., Philadelphia, Pa.)

The use of electricity in the treatment of fibroids has, until within later years, been more or less in the hands of charlatans, their accidental good results induced many inquiring and scientific minds to investigate its therapeutical value, and endeavor to place it before the profession as an agent whose known quantities produce definite results. While this latter still presents many sides for improvements, all will agree that a steady advance has been made in this study.

About 1870, Dr. Cutter began to use the galvanic current for uterine fibroids. The patient was placed under the influence of an anæsthetic, and the electrodes were introduced through the abdomen, deeply into the growth (three to four inches), but not allowed to approach each other. The application lasted from three to fifteen minutes, the operator being guided by the systemic symptoms. The intervals were usually from one week to a fortnight, but it has been repeated every day for one week.

In the February number of the *American Journal of Obstetrics* for 1887, Dr. Cutter has given a statistical report of fifty cases; eleven cured, three relieved, twenty-five arrested, seven not relieved, and four fatal. These results may seem encouraging, but the method seems not entirely free from danger, almost the first thought being a possible wounding of the intestines or bladder, and while this might be avoided by careful percussion, the chances for a sharp attack of peritonitis seem to require courage as an indispensable factor.

In 1878, Dr. Semeleder modified Mr. Cutter's treatment by using *one* puncture through the abdomen, the other being thrust either through the vagina or rectum into the tumor. The treatments lasted five minutes, and were repeated from every seven to fifteen days. There were reported at that time fifty cases, thirty-four of these were ameliorated; in a certain number the tumor disappeared completely. In sixteen, progress was not arrested, while four cases proved fatal from peritonitis.

In 1879, Drs. Martin and Cheron reported four cases in which they had used the continuous current. One pole on the neck of the uterus, the other placed upon the abdominal wall. They claimed that an uninterrupted continuous current rapidly diminished the size of a fibroid tumor, but would not make it disappear entirely in less than two and a half years. They also noted that the hemorrhages were much diminished.

In 1881, M. Gallard, with his pupil, Dr. Pegoud, studied the action of the continuous current on fibroid uteri, using an instrument resembling a sound with an olive-shaped tip of platinum. This was introduced, if possible, into the cervical canal; otherwise it was simply placed upon the neck, the tip being protected by a sponge. The other pole was connected with copper plates, covered with chamois skin dipped into a saline solution, these were placed upon the abdomen.

Their observations differed from all the previous ones, in that the hemorrhages were not arrested or diminished, that the menstrual period always appeared a few days too soon; the other results were also negative. This was discussed by Dr. Onimus, who thought it due to the use of too many (elements) cells—fifteen having been used by the operator—and suggested that never more than ten should be used. The error was, however, on the wrong side; when we come to look at Dr. Apostoli's work on the subject, we find he has used as many as seventy-two cells on patients, who had borne them well, and produced good results. The mere mention of cells, however, gives no definite idea of strength, since two cells composed of the same elements vary in strength in direct ratio with the amount of usage and age of exciting liquid, not considering the effect generally produced on electricity by the state of the weather.