

Ionization should logically be applied to all galvanic treatment, but it is customary to restrict it to those procedures which aim at introducing ions into the body from without; ionization, in the generally accepted sense of the word, is dealt with in the following chapter.

Galvanic applications may be general or local. In the former case, the patient is immersed in the full body bath, with the positive electrode at one end and the negative at the other; or he may have all four limbs immersed in Schnee baths, into all of which pass electrodes, the polarity being controlled at will.

In the case of local applications, two electrodes are applied to the part under treatment, or one electrode (the active) is applied to the desired spot while the indifferent electrode is formed by a Schnee bath. This latter arrangement is often found very convenient.

The galvanic current may be made undulatory by means of the rhythmic interrupter described in Chapter IV. Its general effects are then very similar to those of the sinusoidal current.

The therapeutic effects of galvanism are—

1. General stimulating (full body or Schnee baths).
2. Excitomotor (interrupted galvanic current).
3. Excitosensory.
4. Excitosecretory (heavy currents applied to superficial glands).
5. Sclerolytic.
6. Excitonutritive (cerebral and spinal galvanism).
7. Sedative.
8. Analgesic (the positive pole applied to the painful area).

Certain special applications will now be discussed in more detail.