

## ON THE TREATMENT OF SCIATICA BY THE VOLTAIC CURRENT OF ELECTRICITY.

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The following two cases of sciatica treated by the voltaic current of electricity, illustrate well the action of the agent in the treatment of neuralgic pain—a subject which is attracting considerable attention.

By the Voltaic current is meant one derived directly from a battery, and distinguished as the primary and continuous current; in contradistinction to that in general use, the Faradic, induced, or secondary, obtained from an induction coil or magneto-electric machine. The latter is a momentary current more or less rapidly repeated. The distinction must be constantly kept in view, for they differ much in their physiological and therapeutic action, and as I shall presently show the Voltaic has much greater effect in relieving and curing pain than the Faradic:

CASE 1.—David L., æt 34, a carter, states that twelve months ago, he had a fracture of the tibia for which he was treated in the Infirmary. Ever since he has had a pain in the outer part of the leg and foot. Eight months ago it extended to the hip over the sciatic nerve, and he has since been quite lame. The pain is easy while sitting but severe whenever he attempts to walk; he cannot stand erect; while in bed, if he moves his leg, he feels unable again to get it into an easy position, and has to get up often during the night on account of the pain. He has always enjoyed good health and has never had rheumatism. He has been attending the Royal Infirmary, where he has been purged, has taken quinine largely, needles were introduced, blisters applied, and twice he has been cauterised with Corrigan's button, but all without benefit.

Dec. 7th, 1870.—A current from ten increased to twenty cells (Daniell's, was applied for five minutes, by means of moist sponge conductors, the positive pole being placed over the sacrum and ischiatic notch, the negative at various points along the course of the nerve. He stated that he felt greatly relieved, but the pain was not entirely away.

8th.—He walked home with greater ease than before; could stand straighter up; he has had a better night's rest than since the pain began. Fifteen cells were again applied as before.

9th.—Walked home quite free from pain; slept well; found a slight pain in the leg in the morning when he rose, but passed off when he began to move about. Fifteen cells as before.