

THE VARIOUS DISEASES OF THE DENTAL PULP AND THEIR TREATMENT.

BY G. O. Fiset, D. D. S., QUEBEC CITY.

The dental pulp is one of the most delicate structures of the human organism. It is a highly vascular membrane, having a minute capillary net work, composed of the arterial and venous radicles, and of nervous filaments, supplied by arteries, veins, and nerves entering the apical foramina of the teeth ; it is liable to disease like all other tissues, therefore, it is of the utmost importance to us as surgeons, to save the vital principle of that small organ, placed there by God to serve its purpose in the animal economy. It is in almost all cases in our power, and is also our duty to do so.

An abnormal condition of the pulp generally results from exposure to the action of the atmosphere and foreign substances, either caused by decay, mechanical violence or wearing, produced by the necessary friction of mastication ; it occurs though rarely, without being exposed ; its diseases can be diagnosed when the trouble is taken, and are, viz. : inflammation from dental irritation, congestion, acute inflammation, ulceration, polypus, fatty degeneration, and calcification.

Inflammation of the pulp, without being directly exposed, occurs in cases of exposure of the periphery of the dentinal tubes, either by wear, fracture or decay, which contain the dentinal fibrils, and by changes of temperature and contact with acids, sugars, &c., become irritated and in that way transmit inflammation to the pulp by their continual irritation, or it may also be the result of sympathetic irritability from some diseased tooth, or from cold. Symptoms. Pressure upon the exposed dentine with an instrument will cause a sharp decisive pain, which will last for the moment only, a heavy and strong pressure will not be more painful than a slight touch, and if any irritating substance comes in contact with the exposed surface, pain will be produced and will last for a short time ; but when the pain is the result of sympathetic irritability it comes at intervals and is acute, lasting but a few minutes. Treatment. The affected part should be rubbed, each time the pain is felt, with bicarbonate of soda ; but if the pain is produced by sympathetic irritability, the tooth causing the mischief should be treated. If the affection is the result of decay, the cavity should be filled immediately, being careful to