

same time remarking that it has a peculiar effect upon the nerves, and that you must continue it until she is perfectly quiet. She generally becomes so immediately, at the same time drawing a deep sigh as much as to say, "You have got the better of me this time." They occasionally use bad language when going out.

I have seen frequent cases of chorea breaking out in schools by imitation. I do not regard them as true chorea, because they are not due to any brain lesion; they are merely a vicious habit to be cured as any other childish vice by appropriate moral or physical influence.

Broadbent, the best living authority on the subject, considers that the morbid processes in chorea are always such as merely weaken the force of the nervous apparatus without destroying its structure. Hence the weakness of the muscular force and the diminution of sensibility, so common in chorea; hence the frequent termination in paralysis. He gives to the condition of the system the name of delirium of the sensori motor ganglia of the brain. In ordinary delirium imperfect ideas are rapidly evolved, and there is no control over the mental processes; in chorea the control over the motor apparatus is wanting. The movements are excessive in number and extent, but without force or precision.

Time does not allow me to do more than mention those interesting cases of chorea in pregnant women, which generally begin at the fourth or fifth month and cease at delivery. Are they due to general anæmia, from poverty of the whole volume of the blood, or are they due to local anæmia of the brain ganglia, brought on by reflex irritation of the sympathetic? I think the latter, for, during the latter half of pregnancy, the uterus is a shut sac, whose walls, containing a close network of sympathetic nerves, are subject to a continually increasing distension.

There are cases again, such as the chorea of pneumonia, typhus, and other diseases, with which are associated profound exhaustion; in them the whole volume of the blood is probably at fault.

In either case the immediate exhibition of large doses of dialysed iron combined with stimulants is of the utmost importance, as such exhaustion as chorea is a symptom of must soon lead to death.

As chorea, to whatever cause it may be due, is a symptom of defective central nervous nutrition, and as sleep affords that rest so necessary for the repair of the nervous structures, I cannot insist too strongly upon the importance of administering chloral in those cases in which the movements are so severe as to deprive the patient of nature's great restorative.

The proximate object of this paper has been to prove that chorea is not a vague and mysterious disease, about whose pathology nothing is known, but that, on the contrary, it is a symptom of a well-known condition of the motor ganglia due to many diseases.

The ultimate object is to prove that the symptom is amenable to treatment, just inasmuch as, and not more than, the cause of the disease may be removed; and that, instead of commencing the treatment at the beginning of the pharmacopœia, as I believe is frequently done, and trying every medicine in turn until the case gets well itself, or dies, and then coming to the unsatisfactory conclusion that the last drug killed or cured it; we should rather search for the cause at the outset, and, having found it to be a subject for treatment, to treat it rationally from the very beginning.

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## Correspondence.

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MONTREAL, May 10, 1879

To the Editor *Canada Medical Record*.

DEAR SIR,—Your article on "Inquests," in March number of *Canada Medical Record*, contains much with which I heartily agree, but the comments on a recent poisoning case, if you refer to the Gillespie case, require correction. You write: "it was stated under oath that a certain bottle contained enough poison in the dose prescribed to produce death."

My evidence was as follows, taken from the *Post* of March 11: "The quantity removed from this bottle, assuming it in accordance with the label, I do not consider sufficient to cause death. \* \* \* \* \* Of the contents of this vial, I know nothing further than what is written on the label. It would require a chemical analysis to determine how much morphia it contained. If two ounces of solution of morphia had been used instead of two drachms, even then