

in hæmoptysis, and in menorrhagia—and without any advantage. From my observations, aconite does not appear to be more suitable to the plethoric : and upon the whole, I am inclined to think that it answers best with persons of a nervous or lymphatic temperament, and especially with those predisposed to rheumatism and catarrhal affections. I do not, however, maintain that aconite never acts as an antiphlogistic : for by, and by I am going to mention cases in which it has sensibly reduced the pulse ; but then I will show, at the same time, that the action on the circulation was *indirect*, and that it is by regulating another function that aconite diminishes fever.

**3. ACTION ON THE SKIN.**—If the principal therapeutic action of aconite be neither narcotic and calmative, nor antiphlogistic, what is it ? My reply is, that the special action of aconite is on the skin. It possesses the property of eliminating from the vessels of the skin the hurtful matter, and of re-establishing the cutaneous functions when deranged by checked transpiration, or by some virus. I think that it has the special power of controlling diseases arising from cold, and others in which a morbid principle is retained in the cutaneous tissues, as occurs in the exanthematous fevers. It is a suitable medicine in all those diseases in which the function of the skin is disordered, as in articular and muscular rheumatism, as well as in rheumatism of the nerves including sciatica and odontalgia ; also in affections of the mucous membranes, such as bronchitis, etc. ; likewise in the exanthemata.

**DISEASES IN WHICH ACONITE IS USED.**—**COURBATURE.**—A bruised feeling in the limbs, creeping sensations on the surface, lassitude, headache, and general discomfort, constitute the group of symptoms called by this name : and they are also symptoms which specially indicate the use of aconite. The desired relief will generally follow, by taking daily from five to ten drops of the alcoholic tincture, in a little water, or bland vegetable infusion.

**CATARRHAL FEVER**, as Hufeland showed, is caused by the suspension of the active functions of the skin. Its physical characters are : alternations of heat and cold, dragging pains in the limbs, increased frequency in the desire to make water, a tendency to sweat, general fever, complicated with a local affection, which is generally coryza, angina, or bronchitis. The therapeutic indications are : 1st, To re-establish the functions of the skin ; 2d, To subdue the irritation of the nose, throat, and bronchial tubes. Aconite fulfils all these intentions. In catarrhal fever, as in courbature, it causes the pain in the limbs, the shiverings, and the heats to subside, and, at the same time, greatly simplifies the progress of the affection of the mucous membrane. But aconite does not, unaided, fulfil the second intention, which requires the assistance of opiates, blisters, or such other means as may be suitable.

**ANGINA AND ACUTE BRONCHITIS.**—Like MM. Tessier, of Paris, and Gabalda, the author has seen aconite of much service in these affections, by diminishing, in the former, the pains of deglutition, and in the latter, rendering the fits of coughing much less distressing.

**RHEUMATISM.**—To have a correct appreciation of the action of aconite in rheumatism, it is necessary to discriminate between the different forms of rheumatism, for it is very far from possessing the same influence over all of them. The cases in which it succeeds best are—recent rheumatic pains, unaccompanied by swelling and fever, or in which these symptoms are slight. In them, it possesses very great efficacy, and is preferable to bleeding ; also to inoculation with morphia, or the use of belladonna—which drugs are mere palliatives of pain. In acute articular rheumatism, accompanied by decided swelling of the joints and ardent fever, aconite is of less value. At the onset, however, of

such attacks, it may be administered with advantage, for the purpose of diminishing the afflux of blood [*la fluxion*] to the joints ; but when the synovial membrane and the fibrous and ligamentous structures of the joints become inflamed, aconite is useless, and, in my opinion, the best treatment is by large doses of nitrate of potash. In chronic apyrexial rheumatism, the results are good, though not so striking as in recent attacks. By persevering in the use of aconite for six weeks or two months, obstinate rheumatic pains, which have existed for years, may be subdued. Aconite, besides being remedial, possesses preventive properties, by its decided influence over the rheumatic diathesis. When given with this view, it must be continued for months. In all rheumatic affections, but especially those which are chronic, the doses must be much larger than those which are suitable in the diseases formerly spoken of. It is necessary to begin with ten or twenty drops of the alcoholic tincture, and to increase the quantity up to four, six, or eight grammes.\*

**ERUPTIVE FEVERS.**—In these affections, as in catarrhal fever, the pulse is brought down : the eruption is also made to come out better. The beneficial influence of aconite on the progress of the exanthemata has already been mentioned, in a work published at Lyons—*La Pharmacopée de Vitet*. It does not appear whether the discovery of this property of the medicine belongs to Vitet, or whether it was stated by him at second hand.

**ERYSIPELAS.**—M. Tessier agrees with Drs. Fleming and Gabalda in believing that aconite diminishes the duration and the danger of this disease. I would wish to call the attention of surgeons to its value in erysipelas attacking wounds ; so that my observations may be verified. I have several times seen a prompt and remarkable amendment follow the daily use of from ten to twenty drops of the tincture, in cases of erysipelas spreading around wounds and ulcers, and accompanied by severe constitutional symptoms.

**PNEUMONIA.**—M. Tessier agrees with Dr. Fleming that the aconite, when administered at the commencement, tends to restore the suppressed transpiration from the skin, and may thus give a milder character to the disease ; but if inflammation have actively set in—if auscultation reveal engorgement and condensation—we must not anticipate resolution from the exhibition of aconite.

**MODE OF ADMINISTRATION.**—I am truly astonished at Dr. Fleming recommending the largest doses to be used when an antiphlogistic, rather than an anodyne or narcotic, effect is desired. However much I respect so distinguished an authority, I must state that my practice is entirely different. In a case of rheumatism, neuralgia, or any other affection in which I wish the calmative properties of the medicine, I give from ten to twenty drops of the tincture, and gradually augment the dose to three, four, five, or even to eight grammes in the day ; but, on the contrary, when I give it in the courbature or catarrhal fever, I order only from five to ten drops in the twenty-four hours, and by such doses I bring down the pulse, and diminish all the other febrile symptoms, without inducing any symptoms of poisoning. I prefer the tincture, as more certain than the extract. The

\* Let us caution our readers not to use the tinctures in common use in this country in such doses. No physician ought to prescribe aconite, without minutely specifying the preparation he intends to be used. That which we prefer is Dr. Fleming's *Tincture of the root*, which is transparent, in colour like sherry wine, and of a slightly bitter taste. The following is the formula—Take of root of *A. Napellus*, carefully dried and finely powdered: sixteen ounces troy ; rectified spirit, sixteen fluid ounces ; macerate for four days ; then pack into a percolator ; add rectified spirit until twenty ounces of tincture are obtained. Dose, from three to five minims in repeated doses.