

July number of the *American Journal of Insanity*, an interesting report of the action of ergot in certain nervous affections. He used the fluid extract prepared by Squibb, and the aqueous extract, or ergotine, made by Merck, of Vienna. The dose of the former is from one to two drachms; the latter from six to ten grains. One drachm of the alcoholic extract of Squibb's preparation is equal to about six grains of the ergotine. He also used a few ounces of a solid extract, made by Squibb, which is about equal in strength to imported ergotine. The full physiological effect of ergot will last from one-half to three-quarters of an hour.

"There is probably no condition so annoying to the patient as headache, and certainly it is the most common. In the following forms we have used ergotine with much benefit and comfort to the patient: 1. Headache, depending on plethora or fulness of blood; 2. Headache from anæmia; 3. Headache, depending on changes in brain substances and the membranes; 4. Epileptic headaches; 5. Migraine; 6. Headache, depending on disordered menstruation. The most common form of headache is the first, or that depending on a plethoric condition of the blood-vessels of the brain. Of course we cannot estimate correctly the amount of pain endured at each sickness, but it depends largely upon the constitutional character and nervous susceptibility of the patient. In plethoric headaches the course is either very short (a few hours at most), or they last for some days. The pain is usually referable to the back of the head, and there is much throbbing of the temporal arteries. In this class of headaches we have used ergotine largely; about one hundred patients have been prescribed for, and in almost every instance relief was given in less than half an hour, and the attack thoroughly cut short.

"In headache from an anæmic condition of the brain the blood-vessels are usually lax, and as a consequence there is a slowness of the circulation. Ergotine contracts the blood-vessels, thereby giving tone to the arterial system; the blood is forced more quickly and regularly through the brain, and of course in greater quantity. Our cases of cerebral anæmia are comparatively few, and experiments are therefore limited; yet in those cases where we have had an opportunity of using it happy results have followed. In epileptic headaches and in epilepsy we have used ergot largely. In *petit mal* there are muscular twitchings, congestions of the face, suffusion of the eyes, and a rush of blood to the head. We have in many of these cases been able to ward off the *grand mal* by large doses of ergotine. We have often combined it with conium, and it seems in this combination to work even more satisfactorily than alone, which is chiefly due, we suppose, to the sedative effect of the conium. In migraine, or sick-headache, we have distended blood-vessels pressing on the ophthalmic division of the fifth nerve, thereby causing the pain; and, if we accept this theory, then ergotine, by contracting the blood-vessels, will relieve the headache. In headaches depending upon some disordered condition of menstruation, we usually have a fulness or congestion of the cerebral

vessels; sometimes, however, it may occur from anæmia of the brain. In both forms the use of ergotine is beneficial."

Dr K. concludes his paper with the following statements: "1. Benefit of combination with bromide of potassium in epilepsy; 2. It is apt to produce cramps and pain in the stomach, which is remedied by combination with conium; 3. In nervous diseases it soothes all renal irritation and catarrh of the bladder; 4. It dilates the pupil sufficiently to be noticed; 5. Increases both frequency and tension of the pulse; 6. Has no appreciable effect on the heat of the body; 7. In large doses it produces the same effect as conium, by inducing sleep; 8. Its beneficial action in delirium tremens, after bromide of potassium has failed; 9. It combines readily in the form of a pill with sulphate of quinine; 10. It is a cerebral sedative; 11. Ergotine possesses an advantage over the alcoholic extract in not producing any pain or cramps in the stomach, and is given in smaller quantity; 12. Ergot is not likely to be adulterated, and we also secure an appreciable effect after its administration."

A NEW METHOD FOR HEALING ULCERS.

Dr. Nussbaum (*Wien. Med. Presse*, May 4, 1873) claims to have successfully treated upwards of sixty cases of chronic, extensive, and otherwise intractable leg-ulcers, by the following simple procedure. It is at least worthy of a trial. The patient is first narcotized, and then around the ulcer of the leg or foot, a finger's breadth from its margin, an incision extending down to the fasciæ is made; numerous blood-vessels are divided, and a severe hemorrhage ensues unless a fine pledget of lint be packed into the cut and the entire ulcer strongly compressed. The packing with lint is also necessary to prevent union of the cut edges by the following day. Upon the second day the bandage and lint are removed; from then until a cure is effected a simple water-dressing is applied.

The author states that an astonishing change can be seen, even in the first twenty-four hours: the ulcer, which yesterday threw off quarts of thin offensive, ichorous pus, furnishes to-day not more than a table-spoonful of thick non-offensive, healthy pus. The old ulcer becomes rapidly smaller, healing from the margin towards the centre, and is healed in a short time, but the cut is changed into a broad circular sore, which also speedily cicatrizes.

The great diminution of the secretion, and other favourable changes occurring in the ulcer, find an explanation from the fact that the circumscription has divided dozens of large, abnormally widened blood vessels. Time is thus given for the lessened nutritive material, which previously was carried off by the excessive secretion, to be transformed into cells and connective tissue; in other words, granulations are formed, which fill up and heal the deep ulcer.

Without claiming this as a radical method, the author assures us that the cure is much more rapid, and the cicatrix becomes more elastic and resisting,