

# NERVOUS DISEASES AND ELECTRO-THERAPEUTICS

IN CHARGE OF

CAMPBELL MEYERS, M.D., C.M., M.R.C.S. Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond.

Neurologist to St. Michael's Hospital. 192 Simcoe Street.

## MULTIPLE NEURITIS FOLLOWING PREGNANCY AND CONFINEMENT: PARALYSIS OF THE FOUR EXTREMITIES: CURE.

BY DR. CHARLES VINAY.

The puerperal multiple neuritis arise generally after confinements; they are only rarely observed during pregnancy, and in this case they are accompanied by incoercible vomiting and assume a grave form sometimes fatal (by paralysis of the phrenic nerve). The case related by the author presents this particular and interesting condition that it relates to an intermediate variety, both in the time of its appearance and the gravity of the multiple neuritis, which exists between the two classical forms of this affection.

The patient was a woman thirty-eight years of age, pregnant for the eighth time, who during the first three or four months of this pregnancy had frequent hæmorrhages; in the course of the last two months she had suffered much from vomiting. Finally several weeks before her delivery she presented the first symptoms of multiple neuritis in the form of pains, burning sensations and a feeling of formication in the limbs, both upper and lower. The delivery was followed by some general trouble such as malaise, headache, fever for 48 hours, indications of a slight degree of infection, and on the fourth day all the symptoms pathognomonic of multiple neuritis appeared: pains, disturbance of sensibility, weakness and muscular atrophy of the four extremities, without implication of the bladder or rectum, diminution of electrical contractility and abolition of the reflexes.

However as the disturbance of sensibility and the wasting of the muscles was moderate and moreover as there was no distinct reaction of degeneration, the author concluded that he might give a favorable prognosis from the first, and in

fact under the influence of a treatment, which consisted in administering every second day a hypodermic of fifteen grains of ergotine, and in giving an electric bath for half an hour on the intermediate days to the legs only, the condition of the patient rapidly improved; at the end of two months she was considered cured. At this time the pains had disappeared and the upper extremities had recovered their normal action: there remained only a little weakness and some slowness in the movements of the legs.—Translated from the *Lyon Med.* by CAMPBELL MEYERS, M.D.

## USES OF ELECTRICITY IN THE TREATMENT OF INSANITY.

Electricity in the treatment of insanity has not received the attention that it deserves. Any measure, whether it be palliative or curative, should have an important place in the therapeutic measures of a hospital for the insane. During the time electricity was being advanced as a therapeutical agent it was thought that insanity offered a rich field to demonstrate the efficiency of the electric current. It was accordingly used, found wanting, and discarded. Doubtless the disappointment in its effects was due to the ignorance of its properties and also of the methods of application. Since those days it has often been used sporadically in various ways with varying results.

Electricity, as we know, is not an empirical remedy. This is conceded by authorities. It is recognized, however, and has been repeatedly demonstrated, that the two forms of current have certain well-defined laws.

Arndt states as follows: "Every electric current, however excited, of whatever quality, is calculated to remove mental disorders, but not every current is capable of removing every mental derangement. On the contrary it may aggravate some forms and make them incurable."

Erb, in his statements, may appear too sanguine, but although his suggestions have been adversely