

Translations.

THE CURE OF INSANITY BY MORPHIA.

BY DR. VOISIN.

(Translated from a review in the *Paris Médical*.)

Almost all the varieties of insanity improve under the morphine treatment, and there are few which have not resulted in cure. But that which gives the most satisfactory result is *melancholic insanity with hallucinations*. One might say, in reading the observations published by M. Voisin, that muriate of morphia is a specific against hallucinations. The reader will perhaps think that the treatment has been lengthy; but we will draw his attention to the fact that the question is principally of affections [generally considered] incurable, and that the morphine treatment deserves a good deal of consideration, as well on account of this specific property as for the facility of its administration in the form of subcutaneous injection.

(The histories of fifteen cases are here recorded. In all the patients were females, their ages ranging from sixteen to sixty-three years. All recovered; in several cases the recovery is reported as being permanent as far as was known—no cases are recorded as having relapsed. One case was cured in twelve days, one in three weeks, one in six weeks, three in three months, one in three months and a half, two in four months, one in five months, one in six months, one in seven months, two in eight months, one in ten months. The smallest dose commenced with was three milligrammes, about one twentieth of a grain, the largest dose reached was thirty-nine centigrammes—about six grains. The injection was usually given twice daily, morning and evening, the dose being gradually increased until improvement was evident, and then gradually decreased until recovery took place. In some cases the dose never exceeded half a grain.)

It is to be remarked that the patients absorbed considerable quantities of morphia muriate, without, in certain cases, any physiological effect being met with. One case is extremely remarkable in this connection. They injected into her

more than 818 grains in a month, from June 22nd to July 22nd. This tolerance of the drug is exceptional; however, patients afflicted with insanity and other neuroses sometimes bear with impunity enormous doses of narcotics. The practitioner must approach the large doses gradually. In reading the histories of the cases one sees that the treatment is (generally) pretty long. It is with a few milligrammes that one commences, increasing the dose slowly and gradually till well-marked improvement in the mental condition is manifested. It is then diminished till a dose of a few milligrammes is again reached, and the treatment is not stopped till after the symptoms have disappeared.

In the most of the cases where the patients offer great resistance to the action, even physiological, of the morphia, one will find a great deterioration of the general condition; in these cases M. Voisin employs transfusion to improve this. The morphia treatment afterwards acts with greater efficacy.

Under certain circumstances a complete intolerance of the drug is remarked, manifesting itself by frequent vomitings, loss of appetite, heaviness, wasting. M. Voisin sees in this intolerance an indication that the disease is of a congestive form, and in these cases it is necessary to precede the morphine treatment with anti-congestive treatment.

If this congestive condition of the brain could be diagnosed beforehand, it would be a contra-indication to the administration of opiates.

SYMPTOMS OF PREGNANCY IN VERY YOUNG GIRLS.

We owe to one of our French exchanges the following *résumé* of a paper published in *Annales de Gynécologie* by M. G. Bergeron, associate Professor in the Faculté de Médecine, &c., Paris:—

When a very young girl, in whom the catamenia have only recently made their appearance, is subjected to the approaches of a man, it may happen that the courses may cease for some months, that the breasts swell, that the most characteristic symptoms of pregnancy show themselves.