

INSOMNIA.

There can be no specific for insomnia if for no other reason than this, that insomnia is mostly only a symptom, a symptom of a primarily fundamental ailment, which may have very different causes. The insomnia in heart disease must be adjudged and treated in a manner differing from the insomnia of a fever-patient or of a nervous patient. One person can not go to sleep because there is too little blood in the head, another, because there is too much. All this will have to be weighed and considered. There will always be remedies more or less reliable in certain categories of insomnia. It will always be best to take our refuge to such soporifics as are — harmless. For the injurious nature of many soporifics is demonstrated. There are at this day not only slaves to Morphine, but also slaves to Bromine and to Chloral. Morphine is hurtful from the very beginning in the insomnia of cardiac patients as well as in the insomnia of fever patients.

We shall here treat only of the harmless remedies which nevertheless are often successful. From the therapeutic treasury of Homœopathy we would adduce Ignatia in the insomnia from grief, from continuous vexation, from suppressed indignation and habitual megrim, as well as from hysteria. Coffea in general excitement, throwing oneself around, and feeling as if too strong or too much coffee had been partaken of. If the latter is actually the case, Nux vomica should be chosen.

A very effective remedy for insomnia is also Zincum, which acts on the brain as Ignatia does on the spinal marrow; especially Zincum valerianicum, which I give either in the first centesimal trituration, or freshly made, one decigram triturated with ten decigrams of sugar of milk. Of this mixture I gave two or three doses of the size of a bean. It will also drive away toothache resting on nervousness and attended with insomnia. This state, indeed, is more or less acute, but Zincum is also suitable in sub-acute and chronic insomnia with excitation of the nerves. It is well known that Valerian alone will quiet the nerves and induce sleep, and a sleep that is much more blessed than sleep induced by Morphine. Valerian tea, warm or frequently more effective when cold, or used in doses of 10-15 drops, is a domestic soporific. Pulsatilla

and Sepia quiet the impetuous heart beats. Kali carbonicum is even more effective in this direction, and cannot be too warmly recommended where insomnia is really the chief symptom.

Where Sepia is ineffective Kali carb. may help, and inversely. A wineglass half full of water may receive four drops of Kali carb. (or Sepia) 12 D., and when going to bed take a teaspoonful, and, if needed, another teaspoonful after two hours. Pulsatilla is indicated in persons whose stomach is affected, who are troubled with flatulence, are chilly, may have hysterical tendencies, of pale habit, and showing an effeminate and soft-hearted temperament. Of Pulsatilla patients, if of the female sex, we would say that they would not furnish a Maid of Orleans.

To complete the list we must yet mention Aconite, which is indispensable in rushes of the blood, in nervous palpitations, in restlessness and in tendency to get frightened; also where the body is prone to neuralgia and aggravations appear at every change of weather, during thunderstorms, east winds, raw weather, and especially before a snowfall.

In addition there is the insomnia that is caused by great sensitiveness to external noises.

Dr. Otto Felsing (in his Buch fuer Alle, 1899, No. 13) in an interesting article on "How to Guard Against Noises," gives a simple, innocuous method which has proved itself useful in practice, and which protects from insomnia due to this cause.

White wax for sewing, without any adulteration from stearine or other hard substances, is taken, of the size of a bean, kneaded between the fingers to soften it and extended into a thin wafer. Into this is pressed about as much raw cotton as would equal a down feather; this is imbedded into the plaster of wax and rolled into a ball about the size of a filbert. Around this is laid another thin film of raw cotton, and by kneading it between the fingers it is pressed into the ball. The surface eventually ought not to have a woolly appearance, but ought merely to have slight downy hairs over it. Anyone will after one or two experiments soon get the right size of ball for each ear, the auditory passages being of varying dimensions with most men.

This is Dr. Felsing's method; but we would recommend a certain care in plugging the ears with this mass. In taking out the mass nothing should remain in