

When this symptom numbness occurs in daytime, as a unilateral trouble, and is associated with headache, or noises in the head, and is found also in the face, and involves some thickening of speech, it is a graver matter. When, also, it occurs in people past fifty, and when there is with it any tendency to inco-ordination of movements in the hand, and the least trace of lessened sense of tact, it should at once put the physician on his guard. Then there is another question to solve. If the patient be weak and anæmic, the path is plain, and we need to use good diet, cod-liver oil, and tonics. If there be grave valvular disorder of the heart, we may suspect that a minute embolus has entered one of the vessels, and so affected the blood-supply of the regions in or near the opposite side of the optic thalamus, or the posterior parts of the corpus striatum. But, if the sufferer be a vigorous man, in general good health, with or without distinct evidence of altered vascular walls, there is one remedy which I am sure is of value. It is simply a change of diet to milk, and vegetables, and fruit, and a total abandonment of all meats. I do not mean to pause here to reason on the why and the wherefore of this treatment. I can only assure you, from long experience, that it is of the utmost value, and that the change is often followed by a continued sense of relief from the numbness, and from all feelings of pressure and fulness. Of course, as everyone knows, the organic palsies of the spine are apt to set out with sensations of numbness in the feet. These, at first, are often unassociated with true, or, at least, with perceptible changes in the capacity to feel, or to localize touch, although this is apt very soon to follow, and to end in more or less dysæsthesia. There is no need to dwell on such well-known facts. I should like, however, to remind you that lead poisoning sometimes gives rise to formication, that ague poisoning occasionally assumes this disguise, and that both in Bright's disease and saccharine diabetes numbness of the limbs may be met with. I have seen, within a week, illustrations of both of the latter cautions.

A lad of eighteen consulted me last week for formication of the feet, without dysæsthesia. He told me that he had had, three years before,

scarlet fever, followed by slight general œdema, but the water had not been examined. The left eye-ground showed three small splotches of old retinitis, and he had evidence, also, of mitral regurgitation. The urine was highly albuminous, and had in it an abundance of fatty and granular casts; also, the feet were slightly swollen. Under the use of skimmed-milk diet, with tinctura ferri in full doses, the numbness is already much better, and the œdema has gone.

Numbness from diabetes is a yet more serious symptom, because it is associated with true anæsthesia, and is due, I believe, to plugging of the peripheral blood vessels. I have seen it but two times in this disease; once it was a simple subjective sense of formication, and once it was a grave trouble, resulting in gangrene of one foot, and death. Sometimes, however, the slough is local and small, and recovery takes place. I have thus run over some of the rare causes of numbness, and some of the more common ones, but whenever it exists, you will do well to study it thoroughly, because, whether it has been as a mild tingling, without dysæsthesia, or as a profound and lasting symptom, with grades of lack of feeling, it is always a valuable symptom, when viewed with the other signs, which it in turn helps to make clear.

The sensation of prickling, of being asleep—in a word, of numbness in its various forms and degrees—is due always to a slight irritation of the nerves, or their connected nerve centres, so that at any point of a nerve track, from the sensory ganglia to its endings in the skin, a slight irritation will give the referred sensation we have been discussing. In the extremities, we can cause it by rolling a nerve under the finger, or by an electric current through it, or by freezing the nerve at any point; and thus, in the chapter of accidents, tumours, pressure from any cause, blows, wounds, anything which slightly hurts without destroying, may cause numbness. So, too, in the centres, all disturbances of nutrition from imperfect circulation, or from small emboli, may cause it, while it is probable that the intrusion on the brain of small aneurismal dilations of minute vessels, such as Charcot has described, may have a like result, and also, it seems, that in the presence