

in mixed or double aortic disease must be determined by the nature and indications of each case, and especially by the condition of the ventricular walls. When the ventricle falters, digitalis may be safely resorted to; till then it is better withheld. We may sum up as follows.

1. Digitalis is useful in aortic stenosis. By exciting a more powerful ventricular contraction, it enables an equal bulk of blood to be driven through a narrowed orifice in an equal time, thus establishing a new equilibrium.

2. In the earlier stages of aortic regurgitation, with massive hypertrophy, it is harmful rather than useful.

3. In the later stages of aortic regurgitation, where the heart failing from mural decay, and especially when intermitting, digitalis may be given with at least temporary advantage.—*Brit. Med. Journal.*

SOME AFFECTIONS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM DEPENDENT UPON A GOUTY HABIT.*

BY J. RUSSELL REYNOLDS, M.D., F.R.S.

Professor of the Principles and Practice of Medicine in University College, and Physician to University College Hospital; etc.

The dependence of "nervous derangement" upon a "gouty habit" has long been known; but I do not think that the frequency of such association has been fully recognized; and my object in writing this paper is to recall attention to the subject, and to point out, so far as I am able, the characters of disturbances in the "nervous" functions which would lead to a diagnosis or suspicion of a "gouty" diathesis.

First, let me say a word or two as to both "gout" and "gouty habit." The former means a "special" change, of inflammatory sort, in the tissues of the joints, accompanied by the deposit in those tissues of urate of soda. The latter, the "gouty habit," means the underlying cause of those special symptoms in the joints, a something which may express itself also in various organs and in diverse ways.

We do not know what is the starting point or essential fact of "gouty habit," but this we may remember, that between the simply chemi-

cal process of food-digestion in the stomach, and the ultimate making up, and breaking down, and carrying away of the waste, of tissues—be they in brain, or nerve, or heart—there comes in the process of "assimilation"—or "concoction of the juices," as our forefathers called it—and also the conveyance of "excretory" material to excreting organs, and that these involve an infinity of changes in the quality of blood. This blood, which comes from food and goes to tissue, which comes from tissue and goes to excreting organs, may be healthy and lead to the formation of healthy tissue and the performance of healthy function; or it may be so deranged as to pervert the "nutrition" of certain tissues by a specific inflammatory process—"gout"; or it may disturb the "functions" of other organs by the impression which it makes upon them—"gouty habit." In other words, the "gouty habit" is a "toxæmia," chronic in its duration and multiform in its phases—a "blood-poisoning" induced *within* the system, and so far forth differing from the toxæmiæ with which we are so familiar, but which are introduced from *without*. That which has led me to believe that many so-called "nervous affections" are due to this "gouty habit" may be thus summarised. 1. The actual presence of gout in the joints of the individual at the time or at previous times. 2. The evidence of "gout" in ancestors or collateral relatives. 3. The frequent occurrence of acid eructations with chronic dyspepsia. 4. The emission of 'pale, limpid, acid urine, of low specific gravity, and with traces of albumen or sugar, or both. 5. The variability of symptoms, both as to kind and place. 6. The presence of some alterations in skin-nutrition, such as eczema and psoriasis. 7. The impossibility of referring the symptoms to any known disease of brain or spinal cord. 8. The immediate relief of such symptoms after treatment by colchicum and saline aperients, although simple purgation and treatment upon many other principles had failed.

In the endeavour to arrange this subject, there is great difficulty to be encountered; but I will adopt the method of describing "groups of symptoms" under five headings.

1. *Mental Disturbances.*—Many cases have come before me in which there was great restless-

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