

Crystallized aconitia is one of the most energetic poisons; and you ought rarely to exceed the dose of two milligrams a day; there are some patients even in whom, owing to their susceptibility to the drug, this dose cannot with safety be reached. Suspend the medicine when the patient complains of an uncomfortable constriction of the mouth and eyes, and tingling in the tongue, which are the first toxic manifestations.

When aconitia cannot be obtained then the tincture of the root may be employed. The tincture of the leaves is not to be relied on. Of the former ten drops every three hours may be given. Fleming's tincture is much stronger, and should not be given in a larger dose than five drops; at least as a commencing dose. The tincture is much inferior to aconitia—at least in the treatment of facial neuralgia. Dr. Dujardin-Beaumetz cannot too highly commend the alkaloid in prosopalgia; he has obtained cures in many instances and always an amelioration.

Gelsemium sempervirens, and gelsemin merit a place far below aconite and aconitia.

Electricity is one of the most active agents in the treatment of rebellious neuralgias. It modifies the molecular state of the nerves during its application, and sets up polar currents in them which prolong its effect; you need not be surprised then at its beneficial effect in neuralgia. Galvanic currents are much to be preferred. The negative pole is to be applied near the nerve centre, the positive pole (which is the truly sedative pole) may be moved over the different painful points of the affected nerve. When you are treating *tic douloureux* your currents should be very mild. In the case of sciatica the current should be much stronger.

As for the duration of the current, authorities are far from being agreed, some recommending prolonged, others very short sittings. The duration of the *séance* cannot be fixed in advance. The passage of

the current should be continued till the pain disappears, or at least till some mitigation is obtained.

Hydrotherapy is one of the most active agents in the treatment of neuralgia. Cold water acts by modifying directly the neurility of sensory nerves, and promotes healthy circulation and nutrition. Dr. Dujardin-Beaumetz knows of no better means of arresting a paroxysm of neuralgia, or even of preventing the return of an attack than the douche.

Next in order come the surgical measures, which have a direct action on the painful nerve. 1. Neurotomy; 2. Neurectomy; 3. Nerve stretching.

1. The section of nerves is an old operation. Its results are generally temporary and disappointing; 2. Neurectomy. This method, which is only applicable to regions where the sensory and motor nerves are distinct, as in the face, has been signally successful in those painful affections of the fifth nerve, known as *tic douloureux*. Unfortunately, the results are sometimes negative. In these cases the neuralgia was undoubtedly central; 3. Nerve stretching. Generally after the stretching the pain disappears, but is liable to return in a short time; yet, in a good many cases, the benefit obtained is permanent. How does this elongation of nerves operate in the alleviation of pain? It is probable that the stretched nerves have a reactive influence on the sensory spinal centres, an influence which somehow favourably modifies the molecular state of the cells; this view receives support from the fact that very powerful tractions often do the most good.

#### AN ANOMALOUS CASE OF NERVOUS DISEASE.\*

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II. A., male, æt. 46.—The history of the patient's antecedents not procurable from

\* Read before the Ontario Medical Association.