

CANCER OF TONGUE—RADIUM TREATMENT.

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In reporting the following case of malignant disease of the tongue treated by radium, I feel that it is due to the profession to state that in these early cases the treatment was not carried out in the same scientific manner that it is to-day. The different rays were not well recognized, nor the means of isolating one or other well known until within a very short time, consequently treatment was advantageous to the patient rather in spite of the fact of the use of all the different ray emanations than by selection of the proper ray.

In speaking of the treatment by radium it is well to appreciate the tremendous power that radium exerts. It is the only substance that is known to-day that is continuously parting with its component parts and yet not in any material or discoverable way lessening its power or bulk. It is seen under the Spenthariscope to throw out from a centre luminous bodies like meteoric showers, with an estimated velocity of 150,000 miles per second. It is very difficult for anyone to grasp any such figures as these, but, like the Roentgen ray, we are to understand that it is particles passing through the tissue lodging within it that produces the action that results in change from diseased tissue back to normal.

Briefly the case is as follows: J. W., aged 67 years, consulted me in reference to an ulcer on the left side of the tongue, which involved side of the tongue, floor of the mouth, and extended back to the fold of the palate, which was surrounded by a very hard edge, and evidently had been aggravated by a necrotic tooth. The sub-lingual gland was enlarged on that side to about the size of a large bean. I excised a small portion and had it examined, when it was reported as cancer. The extent of the growth, the involved floor of the mouth and the enlargement of the lingual gland, made it a case unsuitable for operation, but it appeared to me to be one very suitable for radium treatment. I had in my possession a tube of radium, the exact activity of which I cannot give, and began treatment with this at five minutes per sitting every other day for three times, then five minutes every day for ten times. By this time a change was noted in the anterior portion of the growth. The treatment was suspended for a week, and then resumed for five minutes