

### NEURALGIA.

THE word neuralgia is derived from two Greek words, meaning nervous pain, and is employed as a comprehensive term for indicating severe paroxysmal pain in any part of the body. It has been cutely remarked by a medical writer that all pains are neuralgia, since they are necessarily nerve pains. The affliction commonly known as neuralgia may be defined as follows:—The attack comes on suddenly, and during its progress is characterised by excruciating twinges of pain, described by the sufferers as stabbing, screwing, burning, &c.

The pains are essentially more or less intermittent in character—that is, there may be comparative relief for a time, when afterwards it may recur with redoubled energy. Cases are frequently met with of people having been severely wounded and a small piece of foreign substance forced into the tissue of a nerve. On dressing the wound this injury has passed unobserved, and after the wound has healed the patient has then suffered intolerable agony, and been glad to have the limb amputated in order to obtain relief; or, if the origin is suspected, excision of the part performed, to enable the foreign body to be extracted, the removal being followed by immediate relief from pain.

Pressure upon a nerve by a tumour, a gouty calculus, swollen artery, or enlarged glands, are all different causes of neuralgic pain, which cannot be subdued until the source of irritation is removed.

The part of the nervous system most frequently affected is the trigeminal or fifth nerve, which ramifies in the muscular substance at the side of the face. Neuralgia of this nerve is caused by irritation of its various branches—thus cold to the facial, carries to the dental, and exposure to the auricular or ophthalmic. The network of nerves connected with the brain and spinal chord may be aptly described as a system of telegraphic communication, the slightest injury to the most minute filament being instantly transmitted to the termini.

An attack of neuralgia may sometimes appear with the suddenness of an electric shock, the sufferer experiencing excruciating agony for a time. Facial neuralgia, although extremely painful, does not excite the amount of sympathy which may be accorded to one suffering from a graver malady, although probably the latter may not cause such intense suffering. Unless the friends of the patient have themselves experienced the fury of a similar attack, the greatest consideration will not be shown.

Dean Swift defines accurately the origin of sympathy when he says:—

“ Yet should some neighbour feel a pain,  
Just in the parts where I complain,  
How many a message would he send!  
What hearty prayers that I should mend!”

Now as to the treatment of neuralgia. When severe paroxysmal pain is observed in the side of the face, especially over the brow or temple, along the arm from the inner side of the elbow joint to the fourth and fifth fingers, down the side of the hip or under the breasts, there can be little doubt that the trouble is neuralgia. First remove all causes of irritation; thus, if it be suspected to proceed from a carious tooth, have it stopped or extracted by a dentist. Take plenty of nourishing food, especially fat, such as Devonshire cream and cod liver oil; this latter is best taken as the Kepler Solution of Cod Liver Oil in Malt

Extract, a tablespoonful three times in the day. Quinine in comparatively large doses, one tabloid containing three grains may be taken every two hours until relieved, taken together with a wineglassful of Beef and Iron Wine (Borroughs).

Phosphorus has been found highly beneficial in many cases, and may be taken as the Phosphorus Elixoid (Burroughs, Wellcome & Co.). One teaspoonful three times daily. If the bowels are constipated, two Laxative Vegetable Tabloids should be taken at bed-time. Should the pain persist after trying these remedies (and the external treatment detailed below), ten drops of laudanum may be taken with each dose of the Beef and Iron Wine, three times daily. Anodyne local applications, such as Menthol freely applied to the affected part, or Eucalyptia well rubbed in with the hand, a mustard poultice, or a poultice of poppy heads applied hot, will generally afford relief, even if only temporary. In cases of neuralgia of the hip nerves, known as sciatica, warm woollen clothing should be worn next the skin.

Poorness of blood is decidedly favourable to the continuance of neuralgia, and until the anæmia is removed there is very little prospect of permanent relief. Minute doses of arsenic with iron are pronounced to be the most effective treatment. There are other remedies of a dangerous character which should only be taken under the supervision of a medical attendant. In fact, after ringing the changes on all the known remedies, the pain may prove absolutely intractable. In such cases, stretching the nerve, division of it, or extraction of a piece of the tissue by a surgeon, will sometimes effect a cure.

### INHALERS AND LUNG AILMENTS.

WE have arrived at the time of the year when coughs and colds are very prevalent. Not only are they the dread of invalids, but of delicate children also, and those who think themselves, and are to all appearances, perfectly healthy, but with whom if there be the least weak spot in the armour of health the east wind is sure to find it out and assail it. Under no circumstances should a cold ever be neglected, as a rule not nearly enough importance is attached to these disagreeable precursors; for, if neglected, something far more serious may occur, as asthma, bronchitis, &c. In cases where asthma and bronchitis have supervened, Pinol has excellent results if used as an inhalant.

A crushed vaporole may either be dropped into the water-bottle of a Vereker Chloride of Ammonium Inhaler, or the Pinol itself may be used for dry medication in one of the Pinol Pocket Inhalers, which can be held in the mouth like a cigar, and be used by patients while following their daily occupation. Eucalyptia, another well-known antiseptic, can also be used as a dry inhalant; and when fits of coughing come on during the night, if inhalation be persevered in for a few minutes, this drug has been known to arrest them when nothing else would. Pinol Pastilles may also be used, and will be found both palatable and useful in asthma, &c.

The invention of the Pinol Pocket Inhaler cannot be too highly appreciated, as not only does it form one of the most convenient methods for the antiseptic treatment of many diseases of the air-passages, but it is also an excellent protection against contagion from germs of cholera and fever, as the air inhaled through it becomes antiseptic at once.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)