

TREATMENT OF SCIATICA

The term sciatica denotes an inflammation of the interstitial tissue of the sciatic nerve or its roots. J. P. Martin, M.D., M.R.C.P., writing in the "Lancet" indicates four or five methods which may give early and rapid relief, if not complete cure, the choice depending on the severity and on the stage of the ailment. These are: (a) electrical methods (b) use of oxygen (c) injection of saline (d) epidural injection of antipyrin (e) surgical methods. With all of these methods, the general principles which govern the treatment of inflammatory conditions must be practised.

The patient must be kept at rest in bed and heat in some form should be applied to the affected limb. John H. Anderson, M.D., C.M.G., (Lancet, April, 1927,) maintains that in this condition heat is always grateful, either as a poultice, hot bricks or sandbags, radiant heat, antiphlogistine, hot air baths, or the humble hot-water bottle." In view of the fact that its active ingredients are readily absorbed, antiphlogistine has a favorable effect on the inflammation in the fibrous tissues, and by penetrating among them and loosening them it separates small inflamed surfaces and breaks down many minute adhesions.

As for the general treatment, in the early stage the first essential is, with the aid of simple hypnotics, to secure sufficient sleep for the patient, in order that he may not become exhausted. As soon as the acute phase has subsided the patient should have a general tonic. Debilitating factors such as infective foci, glycosuria or albuminuria should be sought for and constipation carefully treated. If the patient has pyorrhœa the extraction of the teeth is to be recommended at this time.

PUERPERAL FEVER

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Introduction.—Puerperal Fever is the most common complication after child birth and its importance lies in the fact that more women die from this disease than from any other single accident or disease during pregnancy, labour or puerperium. In England and Wales during 1922 the mortality from pregnancy and child birth was 2,971 and from puerperal sepsis alone it was 1079 or nearly 36 per cent. In Madras puerperal fever alone accounted for 43 per cent of the mortality connected with child birth. Besides this, among the women who recover from this fever, a fairly large number are more or less invalided for life, by the train of symptoms following incomplete resolution of the septic infection of the uterus and its appendages. Many a woman will recall her pelvic pain, discomfort