

## HEADACHES

By A HOMOEOPATHIC PHYSICIAN

It was a cynic who said that only intellectual people suffered from headaches and continued, 'I, of course, have them frequently' but there is some truth in the assertion and this is confirmed by the fact that certain drugs, *e.g.* Belladonna which cause excitement of the brain act more markedly on animals with a large 'cerebrum' according as to whether they have a large brain or a small one. So this may serve as some consolation to those who suffer from headaches, though intellectuality by itself is a poor panacea for pain. But then even thinking is a painful process to some people.

Perhaps the most common cause of headaches is defects of vision, not usually the large defects but, often indeed the very small the so-called astigmatic defects, *e.g.* defects only in certain planes; for astigmatism comes from the Greek word meaning 'not brought to a point' or failure to focus correctly.

So, for those who suffer from recurring headaches, the advice is to seek an oculist and make perfectly certain that there is no such defect. The correction of these by the wearing of glasses may be all that is necessary to cure the headaches. And it is worth noting that headaches due to such eye strain may be morning headaches due to the strain of the *previous* day or evening.

Yet another reminder. Most people even with normal vision, after the age of 40 or thereabouts, may require glasses for reading though as I say, their sight is 100% normal. This is due to changes due to age and that one fears is one reason why so many refuse to wear glasses when they ought to, for wearing glasses for reading shouts "Ah! over 40!" But it is foolish to overstrain one's focussing mechanism (which one can do quite adequately for a long time) for this reason or for the other reason. "Oh, I don't like myself in glasses" or even the more foolish one that "Men seldom make passes at girls with glasses!"

So to return to headaches. If there is a defect which can be corrected by wearing glasses then glasses should be worn. But even admitting *that*, the Homœopath has remedies which do seem to ease the strain of close work or sewing. These are frequently Ruta and Nat Mur. Of the former Milton has noted, 'Purge with Euphrasea and Rue the Visual nerve for it hath much to do' though we now know that Euphrasea exercises its effects mostly on the outer lining of the eye and Ruta, on the muscles of the eye.

Even with Migraines the most common type of chronic headache, the old fashioned sick headache, the element of defects of vision is important and one may say that 50% of migraines will be helped 50% by the correction of such defects.

But, migraines need more than that and are often very difficult to cure though much can be done to alleviate their severity if nothing else. Migraine runs in families. It is rarely that a woman sufferer does not say "Mother used to have them too."

They often start with the "dazzles" and many disturbances of vision are described even to the extent of what we call "hemianopia" the blacking out of one side of the field of vision so that the patient sees one half only of a friend's face. These peculiar symptoms are often very important when looking for a suitable medicine and should be carefully noted. When the right half is lost we think of such remedies as Lithium and Lycopodium! When the upper half is blocked out, we think of Aurum and so forth. The sick headache as its name signifies is almost invariably followed by nausea and vomiting and this may be very distressing. Some patients must go to bed for the day for a migraine rarely lasts longer than 24 hours. What is called classical migraine may result in more severe symptoms almost resembling a 'stroke' but this is again a temporary phenomenon so that, next day, all such symptoms have entirely disappeared till the next attack. Migraine frequently occurs at the time of the menstrual period and those who

consider that migraine is an allergic condition offer this as confirmation, as many allergic phenomenon are aggravated at that time. Allergy is, of course, a chemical idiosyncrasy usually set into action by proteins such as e.g. the pollen of grass, causing hay fever, but also shown by various drugs such as Aspirin and quinine.

So the homœopath knows of drugs such as *Iris Versicolor* and *Gelsemium* which give the picture of sick headache preceded by dazzling vision but, in many cases, the constitutional factor which is generally recognised must be considered and here again the homœopathic physician endeavours to find his patient's constitutional remedy for the cure of the migraine. Subjects for migraine are said to be of the energetic type, intelligent, and meticulously thorough which again draws the attention of the prescriber to the drugs of precision:—*Arsenicum* and *Nux Vomica*: and *Arsenicum* has all the periodicity of the classical migraine. Even when the condition is admitted to be constitutional there are many exciting events which may set off the trigger. Anxiety, over-fatigue, both mental and physical, indiscretions of diet and irregularities in feeding and attention to the correction of these minor misdemeanours may alleviate the migrainous attacks and are worthy of attention. Even in Homœopathy treatment is not all drug treatment, though this is often forgotten: nor is it all diet or all any "one" thing. So the successful treatment of a case of migraine as in all chronic conditions may require the co-operation of drug, diet, habits of life, and change of environment maybe.

And so to the conditions which though involving the head are not headaches in the true sense of the word. Neuralgias e.g. which involve nerves to the external head and may arise from conditions as far apart as teeth, ears, sinuses, tonsils, glands. The neuralgia of teeth is usually worse at night and is affected in most cases by heat and cold and is usually easily traced to the offending molar. Though the pains can be relieved by drugs (*Coffea* comes

to mind, here the pain is worse for hot drinks) the treatment lies with the dentist.

Pains in the head may come from disease of the mastoid bone but this is usually secondary to discharging ears (otitis media) and should not be neglected, when such conditions are present. Infected sinuses. (cavities within the face bones and skull) arising even from simple colds may give rise to pains in the head often very severe. The pain of sinus infection may be characterised by periodicity i.e. they come on acutely at the same time each day often in the morning 10—11 a.m., etc., and go off later in the day. This is a characteristic of China and China Sulph and Ars. and these remedies have been found extremely useful in treating this condition. Sometimes pus may be present in the cavities and surgical measures may be required but frequently only a complete change of air will do the trick so it is the patient and the general condition of the patient which matters in the end. Homœopathy tries to stimulate this vital reaction without which even the healing of wounds is delayed. Here again the Homœopathic physician knows of drugs which seem to help Hepar Sulph, Lachesis, Silicea, and Sulph, *e.g.*

Then there is the famous "tic douloureux" a neuralgia of the fifth or trigeminal nerve. This gives rise to perhaps the most severe pains of all transmitted along the various branches of the nerve. This is not a headache in the ordinary sense but, of course, gives pain in that part of the head supplied by this nerve. In its most intractable form removal of the ganglion (a little nerve bulb within the skull) may be required or its destruction by injection with alcohol. In its earlier stages this condition may respond to various remedies of which Spigelia perhaps is the most commonly indicated, Magnesium Phos. is another where the pain is relieved by heat and many others according to their particular and the patient's indications for it is just in such cases where the causes are unknown that the Homœopathic method of choosing a remedy on the symptoms

is so valuable. In the fullness of time when the cause of every disease to which man is heir is known it may be possible to remove such cause directly but, at the moment, this is not so and one is often dependent on the symptoms of the patient so that, even without a diagnosis, it is possible to treat the patient until such time as more unequivocal signs make a more accurate diagnosis possible. Even then diagnosis does not mean that one has found a cure: for even Penicillin kills or renders inactive only certain germs and has no effect on others.

Headache is another common symptom in high blood pressure another modern disease. Of course, high blood pressure is not a disease per se. It is a condition which may be due to one of many causes. It is often characterised by feelings of pressure on the top of the head and at the back (the occiput) and is usually accompanied by giddiness. The headaches are often worse in the morning (just like those due to eye defects) may be simple aching but, very frequently is throbbing in character. So also at the change of life women may suffer from headaches again mostly on top of the head pressing inwards or outwards. Often the description aids in the choice of remedy. Lachesis and Sulphur often cover those pressure headaches particularly if there is burning and heat. Whether the headaches are better or worse for lying down (Glonoine heads are frequently worse for lying down and so are the headaches of meningitis) helps in distinguishing one drug from another so also the effects of heat and cold. We all know the person with a bad head who likes to apply cold water rags to the head, others who find benefit from a hot water bag.

Silicea and Mag. Phos. like warmth to the head. Sulphur and Phosphorus like the head cool. Remember that Arsenicum likes heat generally except to the head. "Body wrapped up and head out of the window" is a useful way of remembering this. Then there are so-called headaches which are not true headaches at all mostly at the back of

the neck extending to the head and mostly of a rheumatic nature in the tendons of the muscles attached to the skull. There are usually tender spots and the pain is usually aggravated by movements of the head. Here diagnosis may lead to the use of different remedies from those when the headache is due for example to causes within the skull, *i.e.* Bryonia and Rhus Tox though, of course, these are often used even for true headaches depending upon the symptoms. Bryonia is a very useful drug in intracranial headaches when the characteristic symptoms are present, *e.g.* better rest, worse movement, better pressure, worse noise, etc., so though diagnosis helps in choosing a drug it is only one guide. The headaches of what are called organic disease, *e.g.* brain tumour, acromegaly (increase of the pituitary gland with overgrowth of the bones including those of the skull) brain abscess, meningitis, are usually of a nature which leads the patient to seek advice because of the persistence and acuteness of the pain in addition to other symptoms such as vomiting, *e.g.* with brain tumour due to increased pressure within the skull. So it will be seen that headache by itself may mean something much more serious. It is not mere propaganda for the doctor to say that persistent headaches demand a thorough examination to discover what may be an obvious cause far removed from the head, *e.g.* Bright's disease or one closely related be it eyes, ears, or sinuses. One may stop a leak in the pipe before sending or even whilst awaiting the plumber but, to attempt to mend the pipe itself is a job for a craftsman so, with the human body. Even with the best of skill it is often impossible to find a cause but then one does frequently find quite a simple cause as, *e.g.* in the famous story of the man who suffering from giddiness found his cure in wearing a collar one-half size bigger! It is alleged that it was the collar maker who found the cause here but, then, he *was* the expert for just that case!

Now this does not mean that one must get into a panic because one has a headache or begin to think that one is developing meningitis or infantile paralysis but it *does*

mean that one should not have headaches every other day or every week and simply dose oneself with aspirins. This is foolishness. The occasional headache may mean nothing but some domestic worry and, if that does not recur, neither does the headache but if in spite of a peaceful life, one keeps on getting headaches then it is time to have them seen to. Of course, there are "funny" heads as some people describe them, funny feelings and one pretty safe rule is that the more bizarre the feeling the less likely is it to be serious. Or again another safe rule is that a headache which 'lasts' for weeks is NOT a headache. Many of these queer feelings may be nervous in origin, may mean worry hidden and submerged. So this type of case wants treatment not particularly for the head but for the whole individual. A simple explanation—may be of some domestic worry—may cure. Recently in the medical press appeared the description of a man who had an intractable eczema. It was not cured until it was explained to him that this was a manifestation of his hidden worry. So too many of the so-called headaches can and are cured by a study of the circumstances in which the patient lives of their anxieties, ambitions, griefs and so forth. When treated with a knowledge of these environmental factors with or without drugs the results are often astounding. The Homœopathic physician often finds his greatest triumphs from a study of this sort. The sort of story, I have never been well since so and so upset or bereavement or even insult. *He* has drugs which cover all such reactions, ailments from grief, from fright, etc., etc., so patients should be encouraged to reveal their private worries. In them may be found the clue which leads to full recovery. Staphisagria is often the remedy for conditions due to repressed anger from insult, grief is often covered by Ignatia or Nat Mur or Sepia or Pulsatilla depending upon that particular patient's reaction to such events. Pulsatilla will weep her heart out and seek sympathy. Nat Mur will hide her grief and not even cry, and so we distinguish drug and disease reactions.

There is a story of the Crimean War about a soldier whose head was removed by a cannon ball that the body continued to walk forward for a few paces but only a few! So one would conclude, look after the head and the rest of the body will look after itself. It is not strictly true but it may be a useful reminder not to seek the Aspirin bottle so often!

—*Health through Homœopathy, February, 1948.*

### TABLOID MATERIA MEDICA

HARVEY FARRINGTON, M.D.

#### ANTIMONIUM TART.

1. Coarse rattling of mucus in the chest
2. Horrible nausea in waves, better from vomiting
3. Aversion to being looked at
4. Faintness, prostration and cold, sweaty skin
5. Thirstlessness during fever
6. Drowsiness
7. Aggravation from warmth; from cold or damp air

#### EUPATORIUM PERF. •

1. Influenza with bone-breaking pains, bruised soreness and chills running up the back
2. Nausea from the odour of food
3. Jaundice and vomiting of bile with many complaints
4. Intermittent fevers with thirst during all stages, vomiting of bile between the chill and the heat
5. Restlessness; impelled to move but not relieved thereby
6. Worse from cold air; cold drinks

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