

HEADACHES: THEIR CAUSES AND TREATMENT

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Headaches: their causes and treatment by E. B. Shuldham

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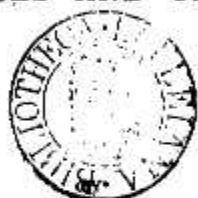
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E. B. SHULDHAM

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Medication.

TO ALL THOSE WHOSE LOT IT IS
TO SUFFER PAIN,
AND
TO ALL THOSE WHOSE HAPPINESS IT IS
TO RELIEVE PAIN,
THESE PAGES
ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

BY way of preface I would say that this little work is simply one long friendly chapter on pains that attack the head. It is not deep enough for a scientific treatise ; it is not terse enough for a medical handbook ; but was written to give lay people a tolerably clear account of some of the most common forms of headache, to offer some plain suggestions for their treatment, and to point out a few shoals and quicksands that are best avoided.

It is my belief that three persons out of every five who make active use of their brains suffer more or less at certain times from headache ; but it is also my belief that not more than one in three have a clear notion of the kind of headache they suffer from. My long chapter has been written to supply this deficient

HEADACHES.

HEADACHES OF PASSIVE CONGESTION

Are caused by weak action of heart, either due to organic or functional derangement.

Profuse menstruation.

Hæmorrhage, either sudden and profuse, or long lasting.

Too prolonged nursing.

Sexual excess.

Long-continued anxiety of mind.

Severe and prolonged intellectual effort.

The weakening influence of constitutional diseases, such as syphilis, tubercle, cancer, Bright's disease, or gout; of fevers, both continued and intermittent; the sympathetic irritation caused by intestinal worms.

Bilious derangement and chronic dyspepsia.

The rheumatic headache is the only one which is almost purely localized in the nerves and fibrous tissue of the scalp; a state of active or passive congestion accompanying every other form of headache, as shown by the paleness or flushing of the face, and by the character of the pulse in the radial or temporal arteries.

The old-fashioned doctrines of physiology that told us of the circulation of the brain being immutable, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, are happily now exploded; for not only is there much more elasticity about the brain substance than was at first supposed, but also from the latest discoveries we find that there are little sheath-like canals running

alongside of the bloodvessels of the brain, which are capable of stretching to accommodate any extra strain or pressure that may be laid upon these same vessels of the brain. Indeed, were it not so, cerebral hæmorrhage would be a much more frequent occurrence than happily it is; and without some provision of this kind, the very sailor tugging at his oar might be struck down with apoplexy, the gymnast on his parallel bars, the very child digging trenches in the sand might fall a victim at any moment to the breaking of a bloodvessel in the brain; nay, whole armies, in the excitement and furious madness of battle, might be decimated by a sudden and lightning-like paralysis, as fatal as bayonet thrust or bullet wound, but for this beautiful arrangement of the brain structure.

To begin with the HEADACHES of CONGESTION, we must divide them into those of Active and Passive Congestion, that is of increased arterial activity or diminished venous power, as in some forms of organic heart disease. But when the heart is free from organic change, and we merely have to deal with an excited functional activity of the arterial system, what phenomena have we before us?

Let us take the example of a young, full-blooded man, who has suddenly been taken from active physical exercise, and who has continued the free use of stimulants and animal food; we will naturally expect to find such a picture as the following, if he is attacked with headache.