

**ON THE PREPARATION AND
MEDICINAL EMPLOYMENT
OF ACONITINE, BY THE
ENDERMIC METHOD**

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On the preparation and medicinal employment of aconitine, by the endermic method by
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ALEXANDER TURNBULL

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ON THE PREPARATION
AND
MEDICINAL EMPLOYMENT
OF
ACONITINE,

BY THE ENDERMIC METHOD,

IN THE TREATMENT OF TIC DOULOUREUX AND
OTHER PAINFUL AFFECTIONS.

BY

ALEXANDER TURNBULL, M.D.



LONDON:

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PREFACE.

THE object of the following pages is to bring before the notice of the Medical Profession a few facts relating to the History, Preparation, and Medicinal Employment of Aconitine, the active principle of the Aconites. Nearly a year ago, the investigation of this subject was entered upon, with that of two other bodies, Veratria and Delphinia, with a view to determine whether the action of the Aconitine in certain diseases was similar to that of these Alcaloids: for some time the most active preparations of Aconite that could be obtained were employed, but until the month of August last, it was found impossible to procure the active principle itself. At that period,

however, it is believed that the Aconitine was prepared for the first time in England, and its use was immediately resorted to in order to put the mode of action which theory had previously attributed to it to the test of experience. Some difficulty has arisen in obtaining a continued supply for use, and this circumstance has prevented a few of the cases in which it has been employed from being entirely satisfactory; in so far, however, as conclusions can be drawn from these, the Aconitine has fulfilled the anticipations that had been formed of its utility.

It was intended to have deferred giving any opinion upon the subject, or any account of the substance itself, until further opportunities for observing its action had occurred; but the curious properties possessed by the Alcaloid have of late become the topic of conversation amongst several Members of the Profession, and in the course of last week it was

hinted, that unless some communication were speedily made to the Profession regarding these, a notice would, in all probability, soon appear from another quarter, as its effects had been put to the test in one or two of the hospitals. In consequence of this, a hurried statement was drawn up, and sent to one of the weekly Journals; it was, however, not inserted, and in the 150th Number of the London Medical and Surgical Journal, published December 13th ult., were contained notices of five cases, in which the Aconitine ointment had been successfully employed by one of the physicians of St. Thomas's Hospital; two of these occurred in the wards of the establishment, and one of them is given in a detailed form.

The Report I have had reprinted at the conclusion of this Publication; it is a gratifying one, in so far as it gives evidence of the efficacy of the plan of

treatment now about to be described, but it cannot be denied that throughout the Report, any merit that may be attached to the discovery of the plan, is attributed to the gentleman under whose care the patients were placed. This mistake has without doubt arisen from the reporter, as he himself confesses, having been ignorant of the fact of the Aconitine having been employed externally by any one else, and that such has been the true cause of it will at once be seen by referring to the remarks made on the case itself.

It is this Report which has rendered it necessary to send forth the present publication. Although it may not contain all the information that might have been desired, it is hoped that it may not be entirely without interest. Three cases in which the Aconitine has been employed externally, have been given by way of illustration, and there are two reports, one from my friend Mr. Lyon, and the other is the one above alluded to.

It would have been desirable that a longer time had been allowed to elapse from the relief of the patients before the publication of these cases, but for the reason already assigned, their imperfection in this particular must be overlooked, and they must be considered simply as illustrations of the action of the medicine.

Russell Square, Dec. 15, 1834.