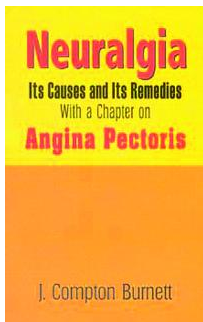


# James Compton Burnett Neuralgia

Reading excerpt  
[Neuralgia](#)  
of [James Compton Burnett](#)



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## *On Neuralgia : its Causes and its Remedies.*

IN Germany, a number of years ago, I was one morning standing at the side of a celebrated professor of medicine, surrounded by a crowd of patients, **watching** his procedure, listening to his words of wisdom, and taking mental notes. One of the poor folk had pleurodynia, and seemed very particularly anxious to impress upon the professor the important fact that the *pain* was a *neuralgia*, and this he

did so volubly and persistently that the professor finally retorted rather testily, "Of course your pain is a neuralgia ; did you ever know a pain that was *not* a neuralgia ? every pain is a neuralgia."

And, equally of course, the professor was right in so far as pain is necessarily *nerve* pain. For the practical purposes of this little treatise I shall understand by neuralgia any sharp paroxysmal pain that, *apparently*, constitutes in itself the entire case, *i.e.*, where there is no *demonstrable* pathological, change or anatomical cause. I do *not* maintain that neuralgia is a strictly scientific term, inasmuch as I hold that *every* neuralgia has a positive pathology if we only knew it, for

or very high dilutions, and do not readily repeat. If Mr. Hutchinson will follow these lines he will be able to claim many triumphs.

#### LIGHTNING PAINS.

On the 28th June 1892, a London clergyman, fifty-five years of age, of rufous constitution, came to consult me in regard to certain pains in the left foot and left thigh. These pains were irrespective of period, had existed for "a long time," *i.e.*, months, and were getting worse. While sitting before me in my consulting-room he repeatedly twitched with his leg, and writhed with the pain, his face at the same time becoming contorted. These pains he described as "awful agony" and

been going from one doctor to another, and finally on this day came to me most unwillingly and in sheer despair, driven hither by a severe attack then on. These attacks were not well defined as to time, but they were distinctly intermittent, and started as a small pain, going on *crescendo*, and eventually passing off *decrecendo*. Patient had been three times vaccinated; and, moreover, she tells me she once had true cow-pox, caught from a cow. Patient has been about a great deal in the world, and though very strong she has had a great many diseases, she enumerating to me measles, whooping-cough, chicken-pox, scarlet fever, South American fever (ague cured by *Quinine*),