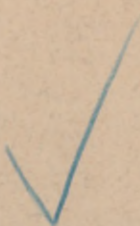


Smith (A. H.)

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE
THERAPEUTICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

BY



ANDREW H. SMITH, M. D.
SECRETARY OF THE SOCIETY

[REPRINTED FROM "ARCHIVES OF MEDICINE," FEBRUARY, 1879]

NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
132 FIFTH AVENUE
1879







ABSTRACTS AND SUMMARIES.

The First Year of the Therapeutical Society of New York. By ANDREW H. SMITH, M. D., Secretary of the Society.

The Therapeutical Society of New York has recently completed the first year of its existence, and a summary of the work accomplished may prove not uninteresting to the readers of the ARCHIVES.

The fundamental idea in the organization of the Society was to concentrate the attention of the members upon definite therapeutical questions given out in advance. These questions were to be tested practically by the members as opportunity offered, and when a sufficient number of observations had been accumulated they were to form the basis of a report to the Society.

For greater convenience the work was divided among committees, as follows: On Anti-pyretics; on Neurotics; on Restoratives; on Surgical Procedures and Appliances, including topical Medication; on Electro-therapeutics; and on Materia Medica. Each member is expected to elect one or more of these committees with which he will serve. Observations are also solicited from persons who are not members of the Society, and a considerable number of such have been received.

It is hoped that in the course of time the Society will become a centre toward which therapeutical observations from all parts of the country will tend, and where they will be assorted, classified and tabulated for publication. Suppose, for instance, a practitioner, perhaps in a distant State, obtains success in a single case with some agent not heretofore employed for that purpose. He

may not consider the observation of sufficient importance to send to a journal for publication, but he transmits a brief sketch of it to this Society. It is referred to the appropriate committee, and at the next committee meeting it is discussed, and the mode of treatment is perhaps adopted as one of the topics for study by the committee. Observations accumulate more or less rapidly, until the committee are in possession of sufficient data to form the basis of a preliminary report. The publication of this elicits observations from a vastly widened circle of practitioners and the merits of the treatment are thus tested upon an extended scale.

During the past year reports have been made by different committees as follows :

I. REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE ON ANTI-PYRETICS, Dr. A. Jacobi, Chairman; a report on *Pilocarpia*. This report was based upon more than sixty carefully observed administrations of the drug, including several physiological experiments. The affections for, or in which pilocarpia was given embraced simple catarrhal fever, muscular and articular rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, acute bronchitis, chronic bronchitis and emphysema, phthisis pulmonum, onanism, ichthyosis, acute nephritis with acute pulmonary œdema, amyloid degeneration of kidneys, cirrhosis of liver, hydrops from mitral incompetency, empyema, convalescence from intermittent fever and from entero-colitis

The conclusions reached are as follows: "Its principal laurels the subcutaneous administration of pilocarpium will reap in the desquamative nephritis of scarlatina, in the parenchymatous nephritis of diphtheria, and in acute and chronic nephritis generally. There is no doubt that a complete diaphoretic effect is, with rare exceptions, obtained with more regularity and rapidity by this than by any other diaphoretic, even the hot pack."*

II. REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE ON NEUROTICS, Dr. E. C. Seguin, Chairman, on the *Use of Chloride of Potassium in Epilepsy*; also, *Preliminary Report on the Use of a Mixture of Chloral and Bromide in Epilepsy*. The first of these effectually disposed of the hypothesis of Prof. Binz that it was the potassium of the KBr. and not the bromine that was the efficient agent against epilepsy, and that the chloride of potassium would be quite as efficacious as the bromide. The report was based upon a large number of observations made by Dr. Seguin at the Epileptic and Paralytic Hospital on Blackwell's Island.

First of all, to determine the positive efficacy of the bromide,

* For full Report see *New York Medical Journal*, for February, 1878.

fourteen patients were selected to whom an inert placebo was given for one or two months. The number of attacks which occurred during this period was compared with the number which took place during a like period while the potassium bromide was administered. The ratio was as 319 to 94. A comparison was then made between the attacks occurring in thirty-four patients for one month under the chloride with the number under bromide during a like period, with the result of 873 to 377.

These figures show conclusively that the potassium is not the active agent in the bromide, and that chloride of potassium is not efficacious in the treatment of epilepsy.

Preliminary report on the use of a mixture of Cloral and Bromides in Epilepsy. Twenty-eight cases were observed. The proportions of the chloral to the bromide was generally one-half. The results seemed to show that the epileptic attacks were warded off quite as well by the mixture as by the bromides alone in equal doses, and that the bad effects of the bromides were materially lessened.*

THE COMMITTEE ON RESTORATIVES, Dr. A. Flint, Chairman, presented a preliminary report compiled by Dr. A. H. Smith, upon the *Use of Ether with Cod-liver Oil*, and also one upon the *Use of Defibrinated Blood for Rectal Alimentation*.

The former of these topics was suggested by a paper read by Dr. Balthazar Foster before the British Med. Association in 1868, on the use of etherized cod-liver oil in phthisis, in which paper he refers to the discovery of Bernard that ether increases the secretion of the pancreas, and proposes its use with cod-liver oil to obviate the defective action of the pancreas usual in phthisis.

The report covers thirty-one cases in which ether was given in connection with cod-liver oil. In twenty-six of these cases the combination was well borne. Of these twenty-six cases it is noted in twenty-four that either pure oil or an emulsion of oil had been tried, and had disagreed.

The ether was given *with* the oil in twenty-two cases; *after* the oil—fifteen to thirty minutes—in nine cases. Of these nine cases, in three the patients had tried, unsuccessfully, to take the oil *with* the ether, but exhibited perfect tolerance when the ether was given *after* the oil. About half a drachm of the spt. ether. sulph. was usually given at a dose.

The second topic reported upon, "*the Use of Defibrinated Blood for Rectal Alimentation*" had been so short a time before the Committee that the material for a report was limited to two

* For full report see *N. Y. Medical Journal* for April, 1878.

experiments and six cases. There were afterwards reported to the Committee nearly fifty additional cases, which will soon be made the basis of a report to the Society. From the aggregate of these observations, it appears that the treatment may often be extremely useful, not only in the class of cases in which chiefly rectal alimentation has heretofore been employed, viz., those in which alimentation by the stomach is nearly or quite suspended, but in a much wider range of cases, embracing all in which there is deficient nutrition from any cause which does not involve the rectum itself. Some of the results attained have been very remarkable.

From 4 to 8 oz. may be administered at bedtime, and, if desirable, a like quantity after the morning evacuation. In most cases it is retained without difficulty, and it is frequently so completely absorbed that the passages are not even stained with blood.*

A second report by the Committee on Neurotics, also preliminary, was on the subject of *the use of Duquesnel's aconitia internally in trigeminal neuralgia*. Ten cases were observed, from which the following conclusions were drawn :

1. The susceptibility of individuals to Duquesnel's aconitia varies enormously, one patient having been severely affected by $\frac{1}{100}$ of a grain, while another tolerated without any special symptoms $\frac{1}{8}$ every three hours. On an average, distinct physiological and therapeutical effects were obtained from $\frac{1}{100}$ of a grain three times a day.

2. Out of six cases of severe trigeminal neuralgia, one, probably reflex from a decayed tooth, was not at all benefited. Three cases epileptiform in form, were slightly or only temporarily relieved. Two cases were cured. One of these had existed for seven years, with an interruption of twenty months, procured by resection of the nerve. It would thus appear that in Duquesnel's aconitia, we must recognize one of the most powerful and best agents for relieving and curing trigeminal neuralgia.

3. We do not as yet know the forms of trigeminal neuralgia most influenced by aconitia. †

Besides the work here outlined, much has been done in committees which will eventually be embodied in reports to the Society.

Brief reports of observations upon any of the topics mentioned above, or upon other points of interest in therapeutics are solicited from members of the profession throughout the country; such

* For full report see *N. Y. Med. Journal* for July, 1878.

† For full report see *N. Y. Med. Journal* for December, 1878.

contributions will be referred by the Secretary to the proper committees, and if use is made of them in reports due credit will be given to the authors, and a copy of the report sent to them. Address Dr. Andrew H. Smith, 110 East 38th Street, N. Y. City.

ARCHIVES OF MEDICINE

A BI-MONTHLY JOURNAL

Edited by Dr. E. C. SEGUIN, in conjunction with THOMAS A. MCBRIDE, M. D., Lecturer on Symptomatology in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, in charge of general medicine; MATTHEW D. MANN, M. D., Physician to the New York Dispensary, Class for Diseases of Women, in charge of Obstetrics, and Diseases of Women and Children; and LEWIS A. STIMSON, M. D., Professor of Pathological Anatomy in the Medical Department of the University of New York, in charge of Surgery.

The ARCHIVES OF MEDICINE is designed by the publishers to be in some respects a continuation of the "Archives of Scientific and Practical Medicine," formerly issued by them under the editorial charge of Dr. C. E. Brown-Sequard and Dr. E. C. Seguin, and of the "American Clinical Lectures," edited by Dr. Seguin, of which the third volume, closing the series, was completed in December, 1878.

The ARCHIVES OF MEDICINE will for the present be published every two months; the first number being issued in February, 1879.

Each number will be handsomely printed in large octavo form on heavy paper, and the articles will be liberally illustrated whenever their subjects render this desirable.

The ARCHIVES will contain the following departments:

1. Original articles, comprising essays, lectures, and short contributions of importance, to the extent of 60 or 70 pages.
2. Editorial Department, which will consist of one or more analytical and critical reviews of some topics which at the time of writing seem to possess special interest.
3. Reviews of books and descriptions of new instruments.
4. Abstracts or translations of important contributions to medical science in foreign journals and societies; and a summary of valuable society proceedings at home.
5. A Case Record, comprising briefly recorded cases from Hospital and private practice, and from foreign periodicals, with short comments upon their meaning and value, and reference to similar cases.

The ARCHIVES will not be a neutral or impersonal journal. The views of its Editorial staff upon topics of current interest and upon books will be expressed without favor or enmity, over the writers' initials or full names.

COLLABORATORS.

Early contributions have been arranged for from the following:

Dr. W. T. BULL, A. FLOYD DELAFIELD, A. B., Drs. H. J. GARRIGUES, V. P. GIBNEY, W. R. GILLETTE, L. C. GRAY, A. McL. HAMILTON, Wm. A. HAMMOND, C. HEITZMAN, A. JACOBI, MARY PUTNAM JACOBI, E. L. KEYES, F. P. KINNICUTT, C. C. LEE, F. P. MUNDÉ, M. A. PALLAN, THOMAS R. POOLEY, H. B. SANDS, J. C. SHAW, A. J. C. SKENE, E. C. SPITZKA, R. W. TAYLOR, T. G. THOMAS, WILLIAM H. VAN BUREN, CLINTON WAGNER, ROBERT WATTS, R. F. WEIR.

The subscription price of the ARCHIVES will be \$3.00 per year, and the price per separate number 60 cents. Specimen numbers will be sent on receipt of 25 cents.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, Publishers, 182 Fifth Ave., N. Y.