ABSTRACTS FROM FOREIGN JOURNALS

Treatment of Variola by Carbolic Acid.

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(*Translations by W. B. Nesbitt, B.A., M.D.*)

He says, in *Bull. Gen. de Therapeutic*, that during the epidemic of variola, which lasted for two years, in Naples, he had every opportunity to study this disease, and he was particularly interested in the action of carbolic acid. At the above hospital, phenic acid has been employed externally and internally. Local treatment consisted in applying compresses of a pomade composed of acid carbolic, sweet oil, and chalk (cretæ preparat). These were applied every five or six hours to different parts of the body with the most favourable results.

Internally the results obtained with this method of treatment in a great number of cases have been most satisfactory. The dose was 1 to 2 grammes (15 to 30 grains) in children according to age, 10 to 50 centigrammes (about 1½ to 8 grains). This dose was administered in a potion of 200-300 grammes (7–10ʒ) of water with syrup.

The first effect of the medicament was noticed in the temperature, which, when high, was constantly reduced. After the absorption of a demi-gramme (7¾ grains) the temperature was lowered sometimes two degrees. In the greater number of cases this remained constant, but it was sometimes noticed that after this reduction the temperature rose again, following on violent shivers. This was noticed more frequently when the temperature had not attained a high degree in the course of the disease and also when treatment was commenced about the suppurative stage; on the other hand very high temperatures were almost completely relieved. Along with the lowering of the temperature there was a constant diminution of pulse with augmentation of its force. It is generally supposed that carbolic acid has a bad effect on morbid pulmonary conditions, but the author brings a host of cases of variola complicated with bronchitis, broncho-pneumonia, and pneumonia, to show the contrary.

He says that he has seen but the best results, that is to say, diminution of the quantity of expectoration, greater ease in expectoration and disappearance of bad odors.

In conclusion, he says that carbolic acid is the *only* remedy which has a certain and good effect on the eruption, modifying its virulence and quantity and hastening dessication. In this hæmorrhagic form of variola, carbolic acid, like all other remedies, fails.

Toxic Effects of Tin.

E. Nugar and G. Bodlander *(Zeitschrift fur Hygiene)* speaking of the immense consumption of jams, meats, etc., which are put up in tin cans and which have come into such general use among both the rich and the poor, in town and in country, undertook a series of investigations to determine the effect of salts of tin, given in *small* quantities for some time. They say:

"It has been generally believed that no ill-effects will arise from chemically-pure tin;" but such is not the opinion of these authors. In a paper published in 1882, they showed that such a belief is not rational, since, on the one hand the tin is easily attacked by, and on the other, readily combines with the substances contained in the cans and can then be absorbed by the mucous membrane of the intestines.

Since the above paper they have instituted a series of experiments to determine the effects of the non-caustic salts of tin introduced into the system in small doses. These salts have been administered to dogs both hypodermically and *per orem*. These have always given rise to diseased conditions, the principal symptoms being emaciation, stupefaction, paralysis, and death. The autopsies revealed nothing of interest. Tin thus comes to be placed alongside of lead, copper, antimony, and arsenic, and the canned and preserved meats which we have been so long considering harmless, appear to have a most dangerous effect, and constitute a great danger to the public health, and added to this the substances which, in this antiseptic age, have been added to the contents of the cans to preserve them, such as tartaric acid, saltpetre, alkalies, etc., greatly facilitate the formation and solution of the tin salts.

The Medico-Legal Aspect of the Gonococcus.

Doctor Laber, in the *Bulletin Medical du Nord de la France* in a trial *(cour d'assises de Douai)*