

EXPERIENCES WITH THE USE OF ASPIRIN.*

By DR. F. WIELSCH, VIENNA.

The therapeutic action of salicylic acid in rheumatic affections is so marked that we are accustomed, in enumerating the various specific remedies, to mention salicylic acid among those in the first rank. Unfortunately, salicylic acid and the salicylate of sodium have a number of undesirable by-effects, which are responsible for the fact that frequently we are compelled to abstain from their use, and almost always from any prolonged administration.

With the hope of retaining the beneficial action of salicylic acid and eliminating its objectionable features new derivatives are constantly being introduced, and although their number has become quite considerable none of them has been able to displace the salicylate of sodium. Even though their by-effects are not identical with those of the salicylate, they exhibit other disagreeable properties due to the other components.

In aspirin, or acetyl salicylic acid, no effect was to be expected from its other component, and hence there only remained the fear that the salicylic acid split up in the organism might produce sequelæ similar to those of salicylate of sodium. Clinical observations, however, showed that while the therapeutic action of aspirin was at least equal to that of the salicylate of sodium the sequelæ of the latter are usually absent, or at least are less intense and unpleasant.

My experiments with the drug were made in the medical clinic of the University of Vienna, under the direction of Professor Neuser. Even the first case illustrates the superior effect of aspirin over that of the salicylate of sodium.

Case 1. A. B., 40 years old, suffered in the autumn of 1897 with pains in the left knee, which became swollen, together with the foot and toes. For a number of weeks she took salicylic acid until vomiting ensued. Improvement was not obtained, and, on the contrary, the right knee and ankle began to swell. Citric acid in water afforded some amelioration, but no permanent result, while the use of sulphur baths for three months proved equally inefficient. On April 20th, 1899, when admitted to our clinic, the shoulder joints were found painful; the elbow joints in a position of flexion, puffed, and eliciting a grating sound when moved. The right wrist was deformed, the left somewhat less. The movements of the left hip joint were quite free, while the right was completely fixed; both knees were markedly swollen and flexed at an angle of about 150°. The ankles were painful. Walking was impossible.

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