

Treatment of Disease—The Few Great Drugs.

Osler says that from the day the student enters the hospital until graduation he should study under skilled supervision the action of the few great drugs. Which are they? The author does not give his list, but quotes a story told of James Jackson; when asked which he considered the greatest drugs, his reply was: "Opium, mercury, antimony, and Jesuit's bark; they were those of my teacher, Jacob Holyoke." "Yes," replied his interlocutor, "and they were those of Holyoke's master, James Douglas, in the early part of the eighteenth century."

The author tells us that his list is a much longer one. It is his belief that the student should follow most carefully the action of those drugs the pharmacology of which he has worked out in the laboratory. He should be sent out from the hospital knowing thoroughly how to administer ether and chloroform. He should know how to handle the various preparations of opium. Each ward should have its little case with the various preparations of the ten or twelve drugs, and when the teacher talks about them he should be able to show the preparations. He should study with special care the action of digitalis on the circulation in cases of heart disease. He should know its literature, from Withering to Cushney. It should be taken as the typical drug for the study of the history of therapeutics—the popular phase, as illustrated by the old woman who with it cured the Principal of Brasenose; the empirical stage, introduced by Withering in his splendid contribution, a model of careful clinical work of which every senior student should know; and the last stage, the scientific study of the drug, which he will already have made in the pharmacological laboratory. He should day after day personally give a syphilitic baby inunctions of mercury; he should give deep injections of calomel; and he should learn the history of the drug from Paracelsus to Fournier. He should know everything relating to the iodides and the bromides, and should present definite reports on cases in which he has used them. He must know the use of the important purgatives, and he should have a thorough acquaintance with all forms of enemata. He should know cinchona historically, its derivatives chemically, and its action practically. He should study the action of the nitrites with the blood-pressure apparatus, and he should over and over again have tested for himself the action, or the absence of action, of strychnine, alcohol and other drugs supposed to have a stimulating action on the heart and blood-vessels. While the author would, on the one hand, imbue him with the firmest faith in a few drugs, "the friends he has and