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EXPECTORANTS.

BY JOHN L. DAVISON, B.A., M.D., C.M., M.R.C.S. ENG.

Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics in Trinity Medical College; Physician to the Toronto General Hospital.

Read before the Ontario Medical Association.

The small amount of literature on the subject of expectorants is, I think, remarkable. If the gentlemen who have been named to take part in the discussion to follow have experienced as much difficulty in finding anything definite, practical, and scientific in connection with the subject as I have, outside the ordinary run of text books I can sympathize with them. Even the text-books, afford us but meagre information regarding the mode of action and therapeutical indications of this great and important class of remedies. Whittall dismisses them with about a dozen lines; Nothnagel and Rossbach, Bartholow, Ringer, Waring and Potter, do not discuss them at all. Wood gives a few lines, but they all simply state facts, and are unsatisfactory in not giving reasons. Fothergill deals with them more at length, but in rather a loose and discursive manner; while Lander Brunton, as in every other subject connected with pharmacology upon which he has written, is *facile princeps*, so far as the authors I have had the privilege of consulting are concerned. There is even a greater dearth in the transient current medical literature of the day. I have for some months watched closely the leading medical journals of this continent

and of Great Britain, some 200 in number, without finding a single article on the subject. Articles by the score, nay by the hundred, are to be found upon the most recondite subjects connected with medicine and surgery, articles which to, perhaps, 9 out of 10 average medical men are impractical to a degree, but not one article, I assert, have I seen on the subject of expectorants.

It is for this reason that I have thought a consideration of some of the scientific aspects of this very important branch of therapeutics will be both profitable and interesting, and I hope that the discussion which is to follow may elicit from gentlemen present, of large experience, much that may be useful to all of us. For while the vast majority of us, and especially those on the physician's side, will in all probability never be called upon to remove the uterus and its appendages, to perform a resection of the stomach, to trephine for epilepsy, or excise a portion of tuberculous lung, we all every day have to exercise a knowledge of this group of medicines; and while our successes, if we have any, in wielding the instruments in our hands may not be so apparent as those of, say, the laparotomist, the results of our failing to use our instruments—*i. e.*, our drugs, properly, may not be less lamentable than those of the unskilful use of the knife, albeit we shed no blood, in the literal sense of the term; nor do we capture any trophies in the way of tumors or ovaries, or any of the pathological specimens which so much redound to the surgeon's