

Selections.

Arterio-Sclerosis—a New Theory and Treatment.

Arterio-sclerosis has been brought very much to the front within the past few years, being a leading subject in every medical congress.

The fact is not surprising. The relations between normal sensibility and arterio-sclerosis are very close, rendering the etiology and treatment of this affection of general if not universal interest. On the one hand, the causes claimed as provoking the development of arterio-sclerosis are so numerous that it is difficult for one to hope to escape their influence, while, on the other hand, very few persons above 45 or 50 years of age can be said to be entirely free from sclerous lesions.

Dr. Scheffler, of St. Etienne, a rising physician, has made a special study of this disease, and has embodied the results of his researches in a small pamphlet which he was good enough to forward to me. His studies cover an extensive ground, and his conclusions seem convincing. For him arterio-sclerosis is the consequence of organic demineralization—that is to say, there exists a deficiency of silicates. Hence the treatment he advocates: Internal administration of silicate of soda, a syrupy liquid like silicate of potash, and easily mixed with water.

The description of the lesions of arterio-sclerosis is hardly necessary to give. They may be given in a few words: Fibrous thickening of the arterial walls in case of vessels of small or average calibre; calcareous infiltration (atheroma) of these same walls in case of the largest arteries (aorta).

These sclerous lesions can affect in general all the arterial system, or, on the contrary, only certain sections, either wholly or partially.

Thus, Levine published two cases of gastric arterio-sclerosis, demonstrated by post-mortem, in the absence of generalized lesions. Frequently the aorta alone is attacked, or the kidney, or the brain. But in reality sclerous lesions rarely attack one organ to the exclusion of all the others; yet one organ may suffer more than another, and, clinically speaking, it is lawful to distinguish, under the name of brain, heart, kidney, sclerosis cases where the predominating symptoms imply one or other of these organs.

As a result of these sclerous lesions, the calibre of the arteries is diminished, and their elasticity weakened. These two causes