

THERAPEUTICS.

BROMIDE OF POTASSIUM.

By ALEXANDER R. BECKER, M.D., Boston.

While reading Anstie's capital work on Neuralgia, lately, I came, on page 242, to the following paragraph:—"Having decided that Bromide of potassium is the proper remedy, we mixt use it in sufficient doses. Not even epilepsy itself requires more decidedly that bromide, to be useful, shall be given in large doses. It is right to commence with moderate ones (ten to fifteen grains), because we can never tell, beforehand, that our patient is not one of those peculiar subjects in whom that very disagreeable phenomenon—bromic acne—will follow the use of large doses. But we must not expect good results till we reach something like ninety grains daily."

I have frequently seen it insisted that large, even very large, doses of the bromide were necessary for the control of neuralgia. But I feel myself constrained—although with diffidence—to enter my protest against this dictum. A large proportion of neuralgic cases are developed in enfeebled constitutions where full depressants cannot be otherwise than injurious. In fact, Dr. Anstie himself recognizes, more fully than any other author I know, the great advantages of a full, generous diet, and even cod-liver oil. In such cases, I believe that the beneficial results of the bromides may be obtained with very small doses. If so, anything large is, of course, superfluous, and therefore positively injurious. I have had many neuralgic cases, in persons of middle age and onwards, as well as some younger ones, who were in an anæmic condition, who derived the best benefit from five, six, and eight-grain doses, repeated four times daily, persistently, for weeks. And, in several instances, I came down to these doses finding that they derived as much benefit as they had previously done from larger ones. For I believe in the principle of employing the smallest possible dose to secure the desired effect. In other cases—of this class, remember!—having begun with small doses, and being impatient of tardy results, I have increased them; but, almost invariably, I have repented my impatience (on getting no additional benefit), and have gone back. And, in at least two or three cases, the comparative results have been so marked as so lead patients to point out to me the advantage of small doses. Even granting that they were intelligent people, such observation is remarkable, and must count for something. I therefore beg that, for this class of neuralgics, small doses of the bromides may have a fair and patient trial, and I thoroughly believe that they will bring to the physician increased satisfaction, and to the patient increased benefit.—[Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

The medical man must warn the public from popular medical fallacies and the foolish pretensions of the quack. He will be called upon to expose the follies of homœopathy—a system founded in deceit, built up in ignorance, and supported by credulity. The true physician will endeavour to practise rational medicine, and not this or that.

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