

for anything. There is a lively fear of empiricism and an insatiable desire for rational explanation. Pathological anatomy stimulated to brilliant diagnosis, but for a time at least it encouraged therapeutic pessimism. Skoda, the type of a therapeutic nihilist, even went so far as to say "we can diagnose disease, describe it and get a grasp of it, but we need not expect by any means to cure it." In such a temper drugs of unknown physiological action cannot conscientiously be set to act upon bodily tissues in disease in which we are ignorant of the deviations from the normal of the chemical and physical processes going on in the cells. The death blow came first to polypharmacy and to-day with many physicians pharmacotherapy as a whole is almost moribund. Ask the prescription chemist how his work now compares with that of fifteen or twenty years ago. He will tell you that he is lucky if he fills ten recipes to-day, where he formerly filled a hundred. The druggist in the village or small town may still receive an occasional prescription which orders ten or fifteen varieties of herbs, but the fine old concoctions known to our fathers have almost entirely disappeared. It is seldom in this day that more than one or two drugs are prescribed at one time and these two often because "the patient must have something." A dozen drugs altogether suffice for the pharmacotherapeutic armamentarium of some of the most eminent physicians on this continent.

The reaction against the use of drugs together with the development of the expectant method of treatment permitted of a more accurate study of the natural cure of the disease than was before possible. Consistent homeopathsists who pushed their minimal dosage to such a degree that any conceivable drug effect was prevented did much though unintentionally to illustrate the healing power of nature unaided. Dietl's studies of pneumonia treated without blood-letting convinced him and the world that the effects of therapeutic interference in this disease had been greatly over-estimated.

Marked as have been the advantages derived from these therapeutic revolutions, I cannot help but feel that the time has come for a more hopeful outlook for therapy in internal medicine. More thought among the best men might with advantage be given to it. Not that a whit less attention should be given to diagnosis of the pathological study—only through these is a successful therapy thinkable; but may it not be time to interest ourselves more in the therapeutic measures of proven value which are really at our disposal. I am fully aware that many practitioners fail to properly diagnose their cases, that some of them have but little scientific knowledge of disease, and it is these usually who possess huge magazines of misplaced confidence in drugs.