

Gradually with the extension of bacteriological researches into the causation of disease many investigators were led to regard acute articular rheumatism as a germ disease, although no specific organism has yet been discovered.

The change of ideas as to the etiology of rheumatism, however, has not brought a corresponding change in the treatment. Salicylic acid and its salts still continue to be the most prominent remedies. To the general practitioner these theoretical considerations are of no practical value unless they lead to a radical change in the treatment. What we are particularly interested in are improvements in our older forms of medication, and it is for this reason that I venture to say a few words here in regard to a new form of salicylic acid, which, in my experience, has shown itself superior to the sodium salicylate or the other members of this group.

It is a well known fact that there are many persons who cannot take the salicylates for any length of time or in sufficient doses to derive any benefit from their use, and that in some they are directly injurious. This is especially the case in patients suffering from digestive or circulatory disturbances, and, unfortunately, these are the very ones who most often require these drugs. In rheumatic conditions of the acute type we are compelled to saturate the system with salicylic acid for some time in order to neutralize the toxic material in the blood, and it is there that their irritating effect upon the digestive organs and their depressing action upon the heart are particularly observed. Some of the substitutes for salicylic acid are practically salicylic acid disguised in some form or other. Thus, for instance, a certain physician of my acquaintance, who was afflicted with rheumatism, took salicylic acid in 4 to 8 grain doses, without any relief. Some one suggested to him to try certain capsules of proprietary character which were said to be absolutely safe and reliable. He took them for a short time and experienced decided benefit and later was completely cured, but he was left with marked digestive disturbances, muscular weakness and depression of the heart. Afterwards he found that the capsules contained ten grains each of salicylic acid.

It has been recommended that the unpleasant effects of salicylic acid can be avoided by using a pure quality of the drug obtained from vegetable sources, but the physician has no positive way of knowing that his patient will get the pure article, and moreover, the injurious action of the acid is due less to impurities than to its inherent irritating and depressing effects.

To my mind substitutes for the salicylates which are insoluble in the stomach and are not decomposed until they reach the intestinal canal are the most logical, since by their use we avoid gastric irrita-