

THE
ELEMENTS
OF
MATERIA MEDICA.

Part First.

THERAPEIA GENERALIS.—GENERAL THERAPEUTICS.

THERAPEUTICS (*Therapeia, Therapeutice, Therapeutica*, from *Θεραπεωω*, *I cure*) is that branch of medicine which has for its object the treatment of diseases. It is divided into *general (Therapeia generalis)* and *special (Therapeia specialis)*.

Authors are not agreed as to the proper limits of Therapeutics. In the most extended sense of the word, and which I have adopted in the text, it embraces all the known means of cure, and, consequently, all surgical operations. Guersent, (*Dictionnaire de Médecine*, tom. xx. art. *Thérapeutique*, 1828) however, excludes Amputations, Lithotomy, Tracheotomy, &c. from its domains, though he includes Bloodletting, Issues, Setons, Acupuncture, and all those operations which are useful in the treatment of diseases, by producing modifications of the vital properties.

Sprengel (*Institutiones Medicæ*, tom. i. p. 7) applies the term *Iatreusologia* (from *ιατριωω*, *I cure*; and *λογος*, *a discourse*) to general Therapeutics.

ACOLOGY (*Acologia*, from *ακος*, *a remedy*, and *λογος*,) or *Iamatologia* (C. H. E. Bischoff, *Die Lehre von den chemischen Heilmitteln*. Bd. i. S. 22. Bonn, 1825) (from *ιαμα*, *a remedy*, and *λογος*,) is that department of Therapeutics devoted to the consideration of remedies.

Some authors (Sprengel; and C. H. E. Bischoff; *op supra cit.*) limit Acology to the consideration of surgical and mechanical remedies.

REMEDIES (*Remedia*, from *re* and *medeor*, *I heal*; *Auxilia medica*) are agents used in palliating or curing diseases.

They are of two kinds: *psychical*, or *mental*; and *somatical*, or *corporal*. The first affect the bodily functions, and influence disease by the agency of the mind; the second act on the body directly.¹

I. REMEDIA PSYCHICA.—PSYCHICAL OR
MENTAL REMEDIES.

Affections of the mind influence the corporal functions,² favour or oppose the action of morbid causes on the system, and modify the progress of diseases.

¹ Strictly speaking, this division may, perhaps, be inaccurate. We know that changes in the condition of the brain produce corresponding alterations in the state of mind; and it may be fairly inferred, that changes in the state of the mental faculties are necessarily associated with some molecular alteration in the cerebral substance. If this be true, all remedies are somatical or corporal. But, in the absence of direct and positive evidence of this, we may continue to speak of *mental* as distinguished from *corporal* agents, just as we speak of *functional* as distinguished from *organic* diseases.

² For some pertinent observations on the powerful influence of mental causes in deranging the functions of the body, see Dr. J. Johnson's *Essay on Indigestion*, 10th ed. 1840.

Their employment as therapeutical agents is necessarily limited; on account of the difficulty experienced in producing, regulating, and controlling them. Yet they are by no means unimportant, or to be neglected.

They may be conveniently divided into two sets or classes,—the one including those affections which immediately result from the presence of objects external to the mind, and which may be denominated *external affections*;—the other comprising those affections which arise in consequence of certain preceding affections of the mind itself, and which may be termed *internal affections*.¹

CLASS 1. External Affections of the Mind.—To this division belong those phenomena or states of the mind commonly termed *sensations*, and which may arise either from influences external to the body (*external sensations*), or from organic causes existing within the body (*internal sensations*.) They suggest, by the association of ideas, other affections, which, as they arise from preceding states of the mind, are truly internal. But, in considering external affections as remedial agents, it is scarcely possible to estimate their influence independent of the internal affections which immediately arise from them. Indeed, the great remedial value of some external affections depends on the internal affections which they suggest; as in the case of Music, the therapeutical effects of which are referrible, not to the mere perception of the sounds, but to the resulting emotions.

The mental affections of this class, which will require a brief notice, are the external sensations; viz., those ascribed to the organs of smell, taste, hearing, vision, and touch.

1 & 2. SMELL AND TASTE.—*a.* An important object in the art of prescribing is to cover the unpleasant taste and smell of medicines by other substances possessed of an agreeable flavour and odour.

β. In some nervous affections we endeavour to increase the faith of our patients in the powerful agency of the remedies employed, by augmenting the odorous and sapid qualities of the substances used.

3. HEARING.—*a.* Monotonous noises favour sleep; as the humming of bees, the ticking of a clock, the murmur of a rivulet, a dull discourse, &c. We avail ourselves of this fact in therapeutics, and combat want of sleep by directing an attendant to read aloud to our patient.

β. Silence frequently disposes to sleep. Under some circumstances, however, it "may become a stimulus, while sound ceases to be so. Thus, a miller being very ill, his mill was stopped, that he might not be disturbed by its noise; but this, so far from inducing sleep, prevented it altogether; and it did not take place till the mill was set a-going again." (Dr. Robert Macnish's *Philosophy of Sleep*, p. 32. Glasg. 1830.)

γ. Music has been employed in the treatment of diseases (especially those of the mind) from very remote times (F. A. Steinbeck, *Diss. Inaug. De Musicis atque Poësis*, Berol, 1826.) The most ancient notice of its remedial use occurs in the Bible, (*Samuel*, xvi. 15—23.) where the Sacred Historian tells us that David cured the melancholy of Saul by music. This happened more than a thousand years before Christ. The ancient Greeks also had recourse to music in medicine, though Hippocrates makes no mention of it. It would appear to be principally adapted for the relief of the melancholic form of insanity; but its beneficial effects are very transitory, and have been greatly exaggerated. Esquirol (*Des Maladies Mentales*, tom. ii. p. 538. Paris, 1838) tried it at Charenton in every way, and under the most favourable circumstances, but with little success. "Sometimes," he reports, "it rendered the patients furious, often it appeared to divert them, but I cannot affirm that it contributed to their recovery. To the convalescent, however, it proved advantageous." A more recent writer (Dr. Conolly) also observes,² that "little regard is probably due to music as a remedial means, its effects being usually only temporary. Violent patients often become silent, and then moved to weeping, when the piano is played to them."—As, in the therapeutical employment of music in insanity, our object is to create agreeable emotions, by recalling the happy events of by-gone times, and by restoring old associations and trains of thought, particular attention should be paid to adapt the character of the music to the peculiarities of each case; for it is obvious that what may prove beneficial to one patient, may be injurious to another.

4. VISION.—*a.* Sleep is promoted by "the sight of any thing waving; as of a field of standing corn, or of the hand drawn up and down before the face by a mesmeriser, attracting attention much more than an object at rest." (Dr. Elliotson's *Human Physiology*, p. 608, 5th ed. 1840.)

¹ Consult Dr. Thomas Brown's *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. i. p. 341. 2d ed. 1834.

² *The Report of the Resident Physician of the Hanwell Lunatic Asylum, presented to the Court of Quarter Sessions for Middlesex, at the Middlesex Sessions, 1840.*

β. An
5. To
Its soot
headach
of every
convicti
the sleep
part of h
β. "C
whence
them to
7. Fre
δ. In
to which
methods
a bunch
CLAS
states o
make o
it will
tions.

a. An
derange
or keep
with ext
appeals
jurious,
either o
to travel
abstract
employ
of the p
ficially,
to add t
view, w
cit. tom.
of tranq
dies in t
β. E
of the b
is rather
I shall e
passion,
few, if i
prospect
life may
malady.
skill of t
them be t
the prac

¹ The f
horse hai
cutaneous
poses, a g
agent, co
² Chan
cise, chan
4th ed. 18
³ See D
Hanwell
humanity
⁴ Cons
Dr. Conol
⁵ See D
London.
⁶ For s
communi
Gazette, v
duty of tl

2. Absence of light is one of the circumstances which usually dispose to sleep.

5. Touch.—*a.* Gentle friction¹ with the fingers, on some part of the body, disposes to sleep. Its soothing and lulling effects I have repeatedly experienced when suffering with severe headach. "I knew a lady," says Dr. Elliotson, (p. 609) "who often remains awake, in spite of every thing, till her husband very gently rubs her foot: and, by asserting to a patient my conviction that the secret of an advertising *hypnologist*, whom I allowed to try his art upon the sleepless individual, and which he did for a time successfully, was to make him rub some part of his body till he slept, he confessed this to be the fact."

2. "Gentle friction acts on the same sense; and a combination is still more effective: whence experience has taught nurses to rock, and otherwise agitate infants, while they hum them to sleep." (Ibid.)

3. Freedom from pain and uneasiness of any kind favours sleep.

4. In some soporose affections, as poisoning by opium, apoplexy, &c., remedies are resorted to which, by exciting the sensibility of the body, are calculated to rouse the patient. Various methods of causing pain have been devised: one of the oldest is *urtication*, or flagellation by a bunch of nettles (*Urtica dioica*.) This practice is mentioned by Celsus. (Lib. iii. cap. 2.)

CLASS 2. Internal Affections of the Mind.—This class includes the *intellectual states of the mind* and our *emotions*. But, as the observations which I have to make on the therapeutic employment of this class, are rather general than specific, it will be unnecessary to attempt any systematic division of the internal affections.

a. An important part of the treatment of mental affections, as well as of many corporal derangements, is the *removal of all moral or mental circumstances which either have produced or keep up the morbid condition*. This, however, cannot be effected in many cases, or only with extreme difficulty. In a considerable number of nervous and hypochondriacal affections, *appeals to the reasoning faculties* are not only useless, but, in many instances, absolutely injurious, "by exciting irritation in the mind of the sufferer, who thinks his counsellors are either unfeeling or incredulous towards his complaints."² In such cases no remedy is equal to *travelling*, especially in a mountainous country; for it combines the salutary influence of abstraction of mind from painful reflections, change of scene, respiration of pure air, and employment of bodily exercise. If the extent of the mental disorder, or the circumstances of the patient, preclude the trial of this remedy, *removal from home* is calculated to act beneficially, by withdrawing the patient from the influence of domestic circumstances calculated to add to, or at least to keep up, the morbid condition, and by presenting new objects to his view, which arrest his attention, and excite new trains of ideas. (Consult Esquirol, *op. supra cit.* tom. ii. p. 743.) In lunatic asylums, *seclusion* proves a simple but most valuable means of tranquillizing violent maniacs.³ *Amusement and employment* are powerful psychical remedies in the treatment of the insane.⁴

2. Emotions and passions of the mind have a most powerful influence upon the disorders of the body.⁵ Much of the evidence, however, which establishes the truth of this statement, is rather curious than practically useful, and as the general fact is well known and admitted, I shall confine myself to a few practical illustrations. *Hope* is a mildly stimulating or tonic passion, which may be beneficially employed in all diseases, and which proves injurious in few, if in any cases. Most patients receive with satisfaction and benefit assurances of the prospect of recovery from their medical attendant. Even in diseases of a mortal character, life may be sometimes prolonged by concealing from the sufferer the fatal nature of his malady.⁶ *Faith* in the beneficial agency of the remedies employed, and *confidence* in the skill of the medical attendant, are important adjuvants in the treatment of most diseases. To them both physician and empiric owe part of their success; and it is, therefore, the duty of the practitioner to encourage these feelings in his patient by every legitimate and honourable

¹ The friction above referred to should be very light and gentle.—Strong or violent friction by the hand or horse hair gloves is used for other purposes; as, for allaying itching and irritation of skin, and promoting cutaneous circulation. Daniell's "Patent improved Electrical Horse-hair Renovators" are, for these purposes, a great improvement over the ordinary horse-hair gloves.—On the subject of Friction as a remedial agent, consult Celsus, lib. ii. cap. 14.

² *Change of Air, or the Pursuit of Health and Recreation; illustrating the beneficial influence of bodily exercise, change of scene, pure air, and temporary relaxation, in sickness and in health.* By James Johnson, M. D. 4th ed. 1838.

³ See Dr. Conolly's Report before referred to, p. 53.—*Bodily coercion* is now no longer resorted to at the Hanwell Lunatic Asylum. Farther experience, however, is still required to establish the propriety or even the humanity of omitting it in all cases.

⁴ Consult Sir W. C. Ellis's *Treatise on the Nature, Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment of Insanity*, 1838; and Dr. Conolly's Report before quoted, p. 51.

⁵ See Dr. Wm. Falconer's *Dissertation on the Influence of the Passions upon Disorders of the Body*. 2d ed. London, 1791.

⁶ For some judicious remarks, by Sir H. Hallford, on the duty of the physician, in withholding from, or communicating to, a patient the probable issue of a disease displaying mortal symptoms, see *London Medical Gazette*, vol. vii. p. 602. I fully agree with the learned President of the College of Physicians, that the first duty of the physician is "to protract the life of his patient by all practical means."

Davies (*Lectures on the Diseases of the Lungs and Heart*, p. 497. Lond. 1835.) tried this plan, and with good effect.

There are several modes of using magnets. For toothach, a *simple straight* or *bar magnet*, sometimes called a *magnetic staff*, is used. It is first made warm, and its north pole applied to the tooth: if the pain be not relieved, the south pole should then be substituted. Or the poles are applied to, or passed over, the gums or cheeks. In neuralgic pains, a *compound magnet*, called a *magnetic battery*, is commonly employed. This consists of several curved (horse-shoe, lyre-shaped, or U-shaped) magnets, placed one over the other, with all their poles similarly disposed, and fastened firmly together. Dr. Schmidt (*Lancet* for 1835-36, vol. i. p. 338.) employed a battery of five magnets of unequal length, the centre one being the longest and thickest. This kind of battery is usually called by workmen a *magnetic magazine*. *Magnetic collars, girdles, bracelets, &c.*, are made of several artificial magnets, with their opposite poles in contact, enclosed in linen or silk. *Magnetized steel plates, (magnetic plates)* of various forms, are fitted to any part of the body. They are applied to the naked skin, and worn by the aid of a bandage.¹

To attempt to explain the *methodus medendi* of an agent whose therapeutical influence is not generally admitted, appears to me somewhat premature. I may remark, however, that should the existence of *electro-vital* or *neuro-electric* currents in the animal body, as announced by Prof. Zantedeschi and Dr. Favio,² be hereafter fully established, we shall have a ready explanation of the medicinal power of magnetism in the well-known influence of a magnet over a voltaic current.³

II. AGENTIA HYGIENICA.—HYGIENIC AGENTS.

(Non-Naturals.)

Under the absurd name of the *Non-Naturals*, (*Non-Naturalia*) the ancients included six things necessary to health, but which, by accident or abuse, often became the cause of disease;—viz: *Air, Aliment, Exercise, Excretions, Sleep, and Affections of the Mind*.⁴ These are now denominated *Hygienic Agents*.⁵

I propose very briefly to consider, as therapeutic agents, *Food, Climate, and Exercise*. *Affections of the Mind* have been already noticed. (See p. 41.)

1. CIBUS.—FOOD.

The substances employed as Food (*Cibus*) may be conveniently arranged in three groups, respectively denominated *Aliments, (Alimenta)* *Drinks, (Potulenta)* and *Condiments (Condimenta)*.

a. Alimenta.—Aliments.

It will be convenient to consider aliments under the two heads of *Alimentary Principles* and *Compound Aliments*.⁶

I. ALIMENTARY PRINCIPLES.

Dr. Prout⁷ has divided the alimentary principles into three great classes or

¹ Figures of the different forms of magnetic instruments here referred to, are given by MM. Andry and Thouret, in their very elaborate and able article on Medical Magnetism, in the *Mémoires de la Société Royale de Médecine*, Année 1779, p. 531.

² Report on the Memoir on Electric Currents in Warm blooded Animals, by Prof. Zantedeschi and Dr. Favio, presented to the Royal Academy of Sciences of Brussels on the 4th April, 1840. By M. Cantraine. In *Lond. Edinb. and Dubl. Mag.* for April, 1841.

³ For farther information respecting Magnetism as a therapeutical agent, I must refer to Andry and Thouret's Memoir before quoted: as also to Dr. Becker's *Der mineralische Magnetismus und seine Anwendung in der Heilkunst*, Mühlhausen, 1829; Dr. Bulmerincq's *Beiträge zur ärztlichen Behandlung mittelst des mineralischen Magnetismus*, Berlin, 1835; and Dr. Schnitzer's *Ueber die rationelle Anwendung des mineralischen Magnetismus*, Berlin, 1837.—Also, Most's *Encyclopädie der gesammten medicinischen und chirurgischen Praxis*; art. *Magnetismus mineralis*, 2^{er} Band, S. 394. Leipzig, 1837.

⁴ For an account of the Non-Naturals, consult Sutherland's *Attempts to revive Ancient Medical Doctrines*, vol. ii. p. 113. Lond. 1763.—Also, Willich's *Lectures on Diet and Regimen*, 3^d edit. Lond. 1800.

⁵ Rostan (*Dict. de Médecine*, art. *Hygiène*) terms them *Matière de l'Hygiène*.—On Hygiène, consult Dunglison, *On the Influence of Atmosphere and Locality; Change of Air and Climate; Seasons; Food; Clothing; Bathing; Exercise; Sleep; Corporeal and Intellectual Pursuits, &c. &c. on Human Health; constituting Elements of Hygiène*. Philadelphia, 1835.

⁶ See Tiedemann's *Untersuchungen über das Nahrungs-Bedürfniss, den Nahrungs-Trieb, und die Nahrungs-Mittel des Menschen*. Darmstadt, 1830.

⁷ *Phil. Trans.* for 1827, p. 355. Also, *On the Nature and Treatment of Stomach and Urinary Diseases*, 3^d edit. Lond. 1840. In the latter work he admits a fourth alimentary principle, which he calls *aqueous*.