Correspondence

A Report on the Efficiency and Nontoxicity of Arsenobenzol

In THE JOURNAL, March 18, 1916, p. 867, Ormsby and Mitchell of Chicago reported on the comparison between salvarsan and arsenobenzol. I was one of the first who through Dr. Schamberg's kindness was able to give this drug an extensive trial, and according to his statement have at the present time had perhaps the largest experience with it. Inasmuch as the Philadelphia product is about to be issued to the medical profession at large, it seems proper to supplement the Ormsby-Mitchell report in order to apprise the profession that the remedy may be used with perfect safety. The cases reported herein have been studied with two main considerations in view: first, the possible toxicity of the new drug, and second, its relative therapeutic value as compared with old salvarsan.

During the past six months, 243 cases of syphilis have been treated at the University Hospital with arsenobenzol. These patients have received in all 612 injections. The accompanying table classifies the types of cases treated.

TYPES OF CASES TREATED	
Type	No.
Cases of primary and secondary syphilis.....	98
Cases of gummosis syphilis.....	18
Cases of latent syphilis.....	85
Cases of hereditary syphilis.....	14
Cases of tabes dorsalis.....	14
Cases of acute cerebrospinal syphilis.....	11
Cases of general paresis.....	3

In addition, I have given about sixty intraspinal injections, using the arsenobenzol in a dosage of from 0.00033 + to 0.0005 gm. Patients thus treated were for the most part tabetics and persons with cerebrospinal syphilis.

With regard to the efficiency of the drug, it was noted that the immediate lesions disappeared as promptly as though they had been treated with the older salvarsan preparation. In 116 cases in which there were manifest cutaneous syphilids, there have been but four recurrences. One of these was a malignant pustular syphilid which returned after three injections in four months with a large gumma of the forearm. The other three were in the nature of neurorecidives. At the outset, in order to test out the product, and not being familiar with its properties, I gave the drug in somewhat smaller doses than is my custom with the older preparation. Thus whereas I customarily give 0.3 mg. as an initial dose at the outset, I gave but 0.2 mg., and the succeeding doses were correspondingly smaller. I am inclined to regard the four cases of recurrence, therefore, as due to underdosage, and it is noteworthy in this connection that the four cases occurred among the first ones which I treated. At the present writing I am using the arsenobenzol in repeated doses equivalent to the dosage employed in the use of old salvarsan. In the 612 injections given we can attest to the fact that only three cases showed any reaction. These were in the nature of allergic reactions, dyspnea, slight cyanosis and slight cardiac depression occurring during the third injection. In a few other cases in which many lesions were present, a rather sharp Herxheimer reaction occurred, as of course happens with the older preparation as well.

The intraspinal treatments have all been well borne, have been unattended by any untoward accident, and the therapeutic results have been identical with those produced by similar injections of old salvarsan. The method employed has been a modification of the Ogilvie method, namely, the introduction of the salvarsan solution directly into the spinal fluid.

From my experience with arsenobenzol it may be concluded that:

1. The immediate therapeutic results are fully as good as those following the use of old salvarsan.
2. Given with the proper precautions, the drug has shown itself fully as little toxic as the older preparation.

These two conclusions refer to intraspinal medication as well as to intravenous.

UDO J. WILE, M.D., Ann Arbor, Mich.

Bothriocephalus Latus Infection

To the Editor:—In THE JOURNAL, May 20, 1916, p. 1618, Dr. J. J. Singer reported a case of *Bothriocephalus latus* infection. In view of the comparatively few cases that have occurred in this country, or at any rate have been reported, it might be well to place on record one of which the specimen is in the Army Medical Museum. The specimen was received Feb. 4, 1864, from Dr. Hennell Stevens, U. S. Army, then Medical Storekeeper at Memphis, Tenn. Unfortunately he failed to furnish a history, and none has ever been received. The specimen is in several pieces, in all about 80 feet. Its character as *Bothriocephalus latus* was recognized at once.

D. S. LAMB, M.D., Washington, D. C.

Queries and Minor Notes

ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS and queries on postal cards will not be noticed. Every letter must contain the writer's name and address, but these will be omitted, on request.

SOME CHAUCERIAN MEDICINE

To the Editor:—1. Can you give me any historical essay references based on the middle English literature, especially Chaucer's lines on the doctor in "Canterbury Tales"?

2. What is the significance of (a) "gold potable" and (b) "image making" in those lines?

C. C. HINTON, M.D., Atlanta, Ga.

ANSWER.—1. Norman Moore's Fitzpatrick Lectures for 1905-1906, entitled "Medicine in the British Isles," Oxford University Press, and Walsh's "Old Time Makers of Medicine," Fordham University Press, may be referred to. A good edition of Chaucer for this study is that of W. W. Skeat, in the notes to which practically all the information requested is found.

2. (a) "Gold potable": The reference is probably to "Les remonstrances de nature," by Jean de Meun:

C'est le fin et bon or potable
L'humide radical notable
C'est souverain medecine.

Throughout the middle ages and even much later it was supposed that aurum potable was a sovereign remedy. It is referred to in "Humour Out of Breath," Act 1, Scene 1, in a footnote which calls it "the universal medicine of the alchemist prepared from gold, mercury, etc. The full receipt will be found in the fifth and last part of the 'Last Testament of Friar Basilius Valentin,' London, 1670." See also Thompson's "History of Chemistry," i, 164, and Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," Part 2, Section 4.

(b) "Image Making": The reference here is to the belief that by making images of persons from properly chosen materials and at the right time, effects, favorable or unfavorable, could be produced on the originals. The ascendant is the point of the zodiac which is rising from the horizon at any given moment, and serves as the means of fixing an astrologic epoch. The whole meaning of the passage, therefore, is that the doctor knew well how to choose a fortunate moment for making images to be used as charms to help his patients.

USE OF ANIMAL GELATIN

To the Editor:—1. What is the value of animal gelatin as a food?

2. In case it is desired to use gelatin, are commercial preparations such as "jello" sufficiently pure gelatin to be used? If not how is it best used.

W. R. SMITH, M.D., El Paso, Tex.

ANSWER.—1. Gelatin is an artificial derivative of collagen, the essential basis of white fibrous connective tissue or bone. It is a readily digestible protein substance, long classed as an "albuminoid," and known to be inadequate as the sole source of protein in the dietary. Gelatin contains approximately the same amount of nitrogen as the more typical proteins, and yields most of the amino acids characteristic of this group of nutrients; but it does not contain the tyrosin, cystin or tryptophan groups, all of which are now believed to