

committee of conference appointed last year to act with a like committee from the New York State Medical Association looking to the union of the two bodies. The report was an able review of the year's work, including an account of the permissive act which was passed by the general assembly, and approved by the governor, to overcome the legal difficulties in the way of union. The report concluded by recommending the adoption of the complete plan of organization of the American Medical Association for the government of the joint body, with only such changes as may be found to be necessary to adapt it to local conditions. Dr. Bristow had made an earnest plea for unification in his address, and after able addresses of endorsement by Drs. Jacobi, Roosa, Potter, McDonald and Park, and without a word in opposition, the report of the committee was adopted with much enthusiasm. Representatives of the association are here in cordial co-operation with the society people, and it apparently only remains for that body to act for the union to be completed.

Correspondence.

Sugar Metabolism and Diabetes—A Question of Priority.

CHICAGO, Jan. 22, 1904.

To the Editor:—In an able editorial published in a recent issue of *THE JOURNAL* (1903, p. 1480) you call attention to Cohnheim's discovery that the pancreas mixed with muscle tissue possesses the power of destroying sugar, and you properly emphasize the fundamental importance of this finding inasmuch as it aids in interpreting the rôle of the pancreas in sugar metabolism and diabetes. You also say, "Of course this does not preclude the possibility of a similar combined effect with substances in other tissues of the body where sugar is burned." As a matter of fact, another investigator, working simultaneously with Cohnheim, discovered that pancreas and liver combined also possessed sugar-destroying powers. You lay particular stress in this editorial on the fact that the pancreas alone, or the different tissues of the body alone, can not destroy sugar, whereas the addition of pancreas to different organs probably bestows this power on them, and you say: "Why it had not occurred to any one that it might be the work of the two together is the chief mystery."

I wish to call your attention to two reports of experimental work that I published in 1902. In these I showed conclusively that a mixture of pancreas extract and hemoglobin possesses the power to a marked degree of destroying sugar (and that incidentally in this process the hemoglobin is converted into bile acids and bile pigments, a conversion that takes place only in the presence of sugar). Commenting on this discovery, I say in one of these articles ("Some Experiments on the Formation of Bile Acids and Bile Pigments," *Phila. Med. Jour.*, 1902, p. 143), "A considerable proportion—of the pancreatic ferments—is secreted internally and is poured into the blood and lymph-stream to perform an important function in intracellular digestion—viz., proteolysis and glycolysis." In the other paper ("An Experimental Investigation into the Causes and Treatment of Diabetes," *Am. Jour. Med. Sci.*, 1902, p. 669), I say in referring to these experiments, "a determination of the sugar before and after showed that a considerable quantity of the sugar had been destroyed; in other words, trypsin (I use this term for an alcoholic precipitate of pancreas extract) in the presence of hemoglobin, possesses glycolytic powers."

The principle, therefore, of the combined action of pancreas and an albuminoid body in promoting sugar destruction was established at that time; and until proof to the contrary is forthcoming, I do not consider it at all improbable that the hemoglobin contained in the muscle and liver tissues employed by the investigators mentioned is the substance that is destroyed by pancreas, while at the same time some sugar is burned up in the process.

I am writing you this, anent another very able and very true editorial that you published some months ago, in which you decry the tendency on the part of certain European writers to

ignore American contributions to science, and in which you charge them with unpardonable ignorance of our American literature.

ALFRED C. CROFTAN.

Depressant Drugs and Sudden Death.

GREENVILLE, OHIO, Jan. 22, 1904.

To the Editor:—I believe that the reasoning in your editorial on "Depressant Drugs and Sudden Deaths" (*THE JOURNAL*, Jan. 16, p. 177), is at fault when you say that "a portion of the decrease in the number of sudden deaths from heart disease to population, has been ascribed definitely—and with considerable plausibility—to a certain cause," which, in substance, you say is that, owing to steps taken by the Board of Health of New York City to prove that a certain coal-tar product was being adulterated by the addition or substitution of acetanilid, and owing to threatened exposure and prosecution the substitution had abated to the extent of reducing the death rate from heart disease from the ratio of 1.34 in a thousand in 1902 to 1.28 per thousand in 1903. It seems more plausible to ascribe this decrease in mortality to the awakening of the public generally, and of physicians especially, to the fact that all of the coal-tar products are dangerous to life and a menace to health when used indiscriminately as heretofore.

Substitution is held in abhorrence by the medical profession, which, ever ready to encourage any legitimate means to suppress sophistication in medicine, should not stop in its research when it has found one adulterated article, but should search with renewed vigor for everything that is likely to be adulterated with anything injurious to health.

It occurs to me that it would be interesting to have the statistics of other cities so that we could study the comparison. In a paper read at the meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association at Mackinac Island, last August, G. M. Beringer gives us the analyses of 182 samples of this coal-tar product, obtained from seven cities in the United States, and of nine samples obtained from Newark, N. J., not one was adulterated, while of the sixty samples obtained in New York City, 50 were pure, 7 grossly adulterated and 3 contained traces of adulterants. Baltimore shows the largest per cent. of adulteration, for out of 45 samples 18 were adulterated, so that accordingly we should find the death rate from heart trouble to be greater in Baltimore than in New York, and in the latter city greater than in Newark. If, as the manufacturers assert, more than five thousand druggists of the United States are stocked with a spurious product, how is it possible for any physician who prescribes this article to have any assurance that his prescription will be filled properly?

It would be better for the public if our profession would teach it to look on proprietary medicines generally as being protected by a wilful perversion of law, and an attempt to substitute for the old patent and trademark system, a system of unlimited monopoly, preventing competition, instead of inducing manufacturers to improve methods of manufacture for the purpose of excelling one another in producing the same article of a better quality or at a lower price.

PHILIP DICKES, M.D.

Firm Desires to Purchase Fraudulent Testimonials.

FLINT, MICH., Jan. 23, 1904.

To the Editor:—I received this morning a letter, of which the following is a copy:

CHICAGO, Jan. 22, 1904.

Dr. C. B. Burr, Flint, Mich.

Dear Doctor:—Your name has been handed us with a few other thoroughly reliable physicians in the United States, and referred to as well known throughout your part of country, and for this reason we are making you the following splendid proposition:

We are now ready to furnish to the medical profession a new electric medical bath machine on which we secured patents Sept. 30, 1903. This new therapeutic (sic) instrument is admitted by medical experts to be the best physician's medical battery ever put on the market. It was invented by an electric genius, and is no doubt considered the most perfect instrument of its kind ever placed on the market, and we guarantee it in every respect.

We are just printing a new catalogue and in it we would like to have a few testimonials from some reliable physicians throughout the United States. As we have got but five days before this book goes to press we have decided to give each of these physicians one of these outfits, as per enclosed illustration, absolutely free, on