

less value in epilepsy than in other diseases. The facts he adduced suggest the conclusion that iron has an influence on the nervous system analogous to that exerted by zinc, silver, and some other metals, and that it is to this rather than to its hæmatinic influence that the beneficial effects of its administration are due.

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*Treatment of Croup.*

Dr. S. OLDOINI relates in the *Annali Universali* for March, five cases of croup observed during the epidemic at Spezzia, in which he successfully employed copaiba and cubebs. His plan was to give to adults, every two hours, a dessert-spoonful of a syrup composed of 14 grammes (about 5 ounces) of balsam of copaiba, 20 grammes (about 7 ounces) of powdered gum, 50 grammes (about 17½ ounces) of water, and 14 drops of essence of mint; and also, every two hours, a table-spoonful of a mixture consisting of 12 grammes (186 grains) of recently powdered cubebs and 240 grammes (8 ounces) of syrup. For children the dose was reduced. The malady disappeared in a period of two or three days, rarely extended to seven.

Four of the five cases were children under four years of age; some affected with simple croup, others with croup complicated with diphtheria. The condition of the patients when first put under treatment was very grave; there was high fever, the submaxillary glands were engorged, the voice and crying were weak, the cough harsh, and there was marked dyspnoea. The beneficial effects of the medicine above described occurred without the use of emetics, mercurials, or any other treatment.—*London Med. Record*, Oct. 15, 1877.

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*The Etiology of Pneumonia.*

In the last part of the seventieth volume of Virchow's *Archiv*, Dr. BERNHARD HEIDENHAIN discusses the question which has lately received much attention, whether pneumonia is to be regarded as an infectious disease or not. A negative conclusion would undoubtedly be arrived at if it could be shown that a non-specific lesion was capable of exciting an attack of true croupous pneumonia, and Dr. Heidenhain set himself to experiment on this point in the Pathological Institute of Breslau, under the guidance of Dr. Cohnheim. After some consideration, the simplest method of affecting the lungs appeared to be to make the animal breathe hot air, and with this object a canula was introduced into the trachea connected with a tube, a portion of which could be heated at will. The experiments lasted fifteen and thirty or more minutes. In the course of three, five, or seven days the animal was killed, but in all instances the lungs were found to be perfectly healthy. In other instances the animals were made to breathe ice-cold air from a tube which passed through a refrigerator. The effects were here, however, also negative, nor was any pneumonic inflammation established when the animal breathed an artificially-heated and cooled atmosphere alternately for periods of about a quarter of an hour each. Some explanation of the absence of all inflammatory reaction in the deeper parts of the lungs is gained, from the fact, which he ascertained by an ingenious arrangement of thermometers, that dry air, if heated rapidly, parts with its heat, or if cooled rapidly, acquires the temperature of the body in passing down the trachea, so that the deeper parts of the lungs are never exposed to very hot or very cold air, however high or low, within, of course, certain limits, the temperature of the air may be, provided it is dry when inspired, a point of some importance in pathology. If the air be moist to begin with, the results are different; for then, if breathed at a temperature above 130° Fahr., the lungs begin to be affected, the condition established resembling that of catarrhal pneumonia. The vapour of acetic acid produced effects similar to