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AN OFF-HAND STUDY OF THE SALTS OF BARIUM.

BY SAMUEL A. JONES, M. D.

(Concluded from Vol. V, page 254.)

There is no recorded instance wherein any of these salts have been used for the purpose of suicide, and the reported cases of accidental poisoning are few. These, however, are unequivocal and significant. They teach very evidently that toxic doses do not bring out the finer features of the physiological action of the drug, and they demonstrate, with equal clearness, that the resulting symptoms depend upon the size of the dose. The rule, with the salts of Barium, seems to be paralysis of the voluntary muscles from large doses and clonic spasms from small. Boehm says that in cold-blooded animals the paralysis is preceded by a peculiar state of rudimentary, clonic spasms: this order has not been observed in the human being.

There is, however, one poisoning which is an exception to the seeming rule of dose-quantity. A man swallowed, by accident, seventy or eighty drops of a solution of the chloride of Barium. "He had soon after profuse purging without tormina, then vomiting, and half hour after swallowing the salt excessive muscular debility, amounting to absolute paraplegia of the limbs. This state lasted about twenty-four hours, and then went off gradually." [1.]

"A woman, aged 42, for pains in the stomach, took one morning a solution of half an ounce of chloride of Barium by mistake for sulphate of soda. She was soon seized with nausea, retching, convulsive twitches of the face, hands and feet, vomiting of clear mucus, great anxiety compelling her to cower together, restlessness, and loss of voice; and she died under constant efforts to vomit, and violent convulsive movements, but with her faculties entire." [2.]

"A healthy barmaid, aged 22, took a teaspoonful of the chloride of Barium at 12:30 p. m. In half an hour she became