Practical Hydrotherapy, A Manual For Students And Practitioners

Curran Pope
PRACTICAL
HYDROTHERAPY
A MANUAL
For Students and Practitioners
BY
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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER AND MOTHER
AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF THE
DEEP LOVE AND RESPECT OF THEIR SON
THE AUTHOR
PREFACE.

The author offers no apology for another work upon hydrotherapy, as there are at present very few works in the English language.

It cannot be denied that much prejudice has heretofore existed against "baths" owing to their purely empirical application, but with the advent of instruments of precision and the establishment of their physiological action, scientific hydrotherapy has taken its place among the accepted therapeutic methods of medicine.

It has seemed strange at times why the brilliant clinicians of this country have failed to use hydrotherapy as a curative agent, but of late years this cannot be said save in certain quarters, for the profession is rapidly awakening to the broad field of usefulness possessed by this agent.

The plan adopted has been to ascertain all the facts possible, no matter from what source, the writer’s experience then added, and from the data thus obtained, the different chapters have been written. The aim has been to simplify hydrotherapy and to so plainly and clearly lay before the reader the essential facts as to render them easy of mastery, accessible and useful.

The hydriatist's art has not been magnified nor has the author indulged in a minute and endless subdivision of baths, both general and local, each with their physiological and therapeutic action separate, but has as far as is possible grouped together those procedures whose technique, physiological action and therapy closely resemble one another, thus enabling the student to master the action of "groups" rather than each separate form.

To the student or practitioner who may desire to systematically acquire a knowledge of hydrotherapy, due warning is given that there is no royal road to knowledge, and that this is true of hydrotherapy as well as of all the other departments of science. However, a certain line of procedure may aid in more easily mastering the art. It would not be amiss to cursorily refresh his general knowledge of the anatomy of the nervous system, of the blood and lymph circulations. He should then carefully ground himself in the physiological action of water and its associated applications, such as hot air, electric light baths, etc. A mastery of the general principles of hydrotherapy, its rules and regulations, will make the technique more easy of comprehension and its rationale apparent.

Much information and a clearer insight than mere description can give, is to note the physiological action of hydrotherapy by "putting yourself in his place." One application of a cold jet douche to the
spine gives more realistic information than pages of description. I therefore make the suggestion to "practice on yourself" first. Many experiments herein mentioned have had the author as principal party in interest.

It should never be forgotten that physiological forces so powerful for good may equally work havoc if carelessly and improperly applied. Therefore utility and exactitude of method have been the constant aim.

In the therapeutic section rare diseases have not been considered unless water possesses some curative value in that particular disease. Theories have been avoided as they generally prove a burden and interfere with a clear comprehension of the agent. Physicians nor remedies possess healing powers, but the curative process, as is well known, resides within the body, and it is the body that heals itself. I believe that water is an agent more capable of developing natural healing powers in the system and in resisting the onset, development and extension of disease, than any other known single measure.

Some will doubtless think that the chapters dealing with nervous and mental diseases, drug habits and alcoholism have been needlessly enlarged. The nihilism of therapeutics that pervades these branches, the neglect of a remedial measure so powerful for betterment and "cure," has led to a broad and full consideration of these subjects, with the hope that specialists in these various fields of the therapeutic art may be induced to use this remedy more extensively than is the case at present.

A careful perusal will show that hydrotherapy offers an extensive and useful field to the practitioner in acute and subacute conditions, for there are many cases, especially of acute diseases, that could be treated at home by the family physician with success, and it is believed that a careful study of the possibilities of hydrotherapy will convince many medical men who do not now use hydriatics, that it is a valuable addition and supplement to their other efforts. Chronic cases are best treated in sanatoria because of the facilities, the experience, skill and knowledge required by the physician in charge, assisted by a well-trained staff.

Twenty years as teacher of students and nurses, twenty years at the head of a sanatorium, in active hospital and private practice, has constituted an experience upon which the author has freely drawn.

Thanks are due to the publishers for their uniform courtesy, kind consideration and willingness to make this book represent the author's views.

Louisville, Ky., September, 1909.

The Author.
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