
The Principles and Methods of Therapeutics

Gubler Adolphe

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THE
PRINCIPLES AND METHODS
OF
THERAPEUTICS.

BY ADOLPHE GUBLER, M. D.,

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the Beaujon Hospital, etc.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.



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PREFATORY NOTE.

The work here laid before the medical public differs so widely from other treatises in the language on Therapeutics, that a few words as to its scope will not be out of place.

It is, as its title states, a discussion of the *principles* and the *methods* of therapeutics. It does not take up this branch as an accessory to *Materia Medica*; nor is it concerned, beyond a moderate extent, with the physiological action of drugs; nor yet has it much to say on the treatment of individual diseases. These topics, which figure so prominently in most works on therapeutics, will be found to occupy comparatively little space in the present one.

Professor Gubler chose to approach his subject from quite other directions and with other purposes. He aimed to represent, from the latest acquisitions of science, and by the aid of the most careful instructions, first, the *methods* which can be most effectively employed in the administration of remedial agents, and next the *principles* or *processes* by which their remedial action is exerted on the human economy. It is a study founded on clinical, physiological and chemical observations of the actions of medicines in disease, and the technical artifices for their introduction into the organism.

Approached with this understanding, his lectures will be found most fruitful to the careful student. They will explain many apparent contradictions and obscurities which often puzzle and sometimes dishearten the practitioner. It is true that his style is at times involved, and his reasoning not always easy to follow; but the labor to grasp his thought will certainly be found to be remunerative.

The translation has been made by Dr. M. J. Halloran, a former pupil of the author, and Mr. Charles A. Poizat. The biographical sketch has been furnished by the former.

The metric weights have usually been preserved in the text, as they are now familiar to American physicians. Their proximate values may, however, here be added:

1 milligramme,=	- - - - -	gr. $\frac{1}{100}$.
1 centigramme,=	- - - - -	gr. $\frac{1}{10}$.
1 gramme,=	- - - - -	gr. xvss.
1 kilogramme,=	- - - - -	lbs. ijss.
1 centimetre,=	- - - - -	$\frac{1}{25}$ of an inch.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
PROFESSOR ADOLPHE GUBLER.

M. Gubler, Professor of Therapeutics of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, was one of the most remarkable figures in the modern French school of medicine.

A worthy pupil of Trousseau, he was at once an able clinical teacher and a distinguished botanist and chemist. His works, his teachings, his lectures on therapeutics, admirable as regards the doctrines inculcated and for their scientific value, placed him in the foremost rank among contemporary scientists.

His real name was Goblet, and he was born at Metz, April 5th, 1821. His parents were in very moderate circumstances, and settled in a village near the Belgian frontier, where he attended school, and profited so well from his lessons that at the age of thirteen his masters had no more to teach him.

An attack of pleurisy, brought on by submersion in a frozen pond, retarded his studies for a considerable period. On his recovery he was placed with an uncle, a druggist, at Rocroy.

Here Gubler found, relegated to the topmost shelves of the library and covered with dust, various old books, which he examined with curiosity; they were ancient treatises on botany, and among them he became particularly interested in the venerable "*Traité de la Vertu des Plantes*," by Guy de la Brosse, and the "*Historia Generalis Plantarum*," by Delechamps.

A new life opened before him; his days were passed in the fields, and in the evening he attempted to compare the specimens collected with the descriptions of his books. Soon recognizing their imperfections, he mapped out and created for himself a system of botany which was admired by teachers of eminence. He even wrote a monograph on mosses, which he subsequently destroyed, but which merited preservation for the accuracy in description and the high standard of the general views expressed by a youth of fifteen.

In later years he recalled with grateful recollection the laborious yet happy period of his youth passed in the little village of Rocroy. A year later he was sent to school at Metz, where he terminated brilliantly his studies, and in

1841 set out for Paris, poor in money but rich in hope, and sustained by an indomitable will.

His success was marked and rapid. In 1844 he received the first prize at the Practical School, (dissections,) and in 1845 he was appointed interne in the Paris hospitals. It was at this period of his life that an accident, which nearly proved fatal, rendered his health, already delicate, still more precarious.

Baudelocque one day asked Trousseau to select for him a distinguished interne, to accompany on his travels a young man of good family, who was in a state of extreme mental distress, brought on by participation in a duel. Trousseau immediately thought of Gubler, who refused to leave his studies until Trousseau desired it as a personal favor, when he acceded. All went well until they arrived at Milan. By the change of scene the young patient had almost regained his usual spirits. At Milan, however, he again thought himself pursued by his enemies, and desired Gubler to occupy the same room with him. During the night he suffered very much from hallucinations, and Gubler was obliged to leave his bed to calm the patient. This he succeeded in doing, and was in the act of returning to his own bed, when he heard the click of a pistol; he turned towards his patient, and received a bullet full in the chest; he fell, and the maniac threw himself upon him, inflicting wounds of great gravity, with a knife, on the chest, neck and abdomen. Gubler was taken to the Milan hospital, where his recovery, at first very doubtful, was brought about, notwithstanding the penetrating wound of the chest and the development of peritonitis consecutive on the abdominal wounds. The cicatrices in the neck were of such extent that he was accustomed to wear his hair long to conceal them.

He thus lost a year from his studies, for his convalescence was slow. The ball was never extracted, and he attributed to its presence many of the troubles from which he suffered in later years.

In 1848 and 1849 his first memoirs, principally on botanical pathology; on the development of galls; on the tumors observed on apple trees; on the existence of a new form of fungous growth in diseased olives, were presented to the Society of Biology, then newly founded.

These were not isolated observations, without ultimate object; Gubler intended them to form part of a work on comparative pathology, which he always intended to produce; indeed, throughout his works are many evidences how much this subject occupied his attention, as in his papers on the discovery of a growth in the mucus contained in bronchial dilatations; observations on the diseases of fishes; the anomalies observed in a case of hermaphroditism and exaggeration of size (*géantisme*) in the *pistia lenticus*.

In his work on the origin and conditions favorable to the development of the *oidium albicans*, he showed that acidity of the saliva is a necessary condition for the development of thrush (*muguet*), and that when the cryptogamous growth is fully developed, it renders the saliva acid, and also acts as a special ferment, at least for saccharine matters. He demonstrated also that the trans-

mission of this growth is a true transplantation ; that it is not a pathological product, but simply an epiphenomenon in the course of various affections which present in common digestive derangements, in conjunction with an abnormal condition of the buccal secretions.

In a second memoir, Gubler combats, with striking arguments, the idea of indefinite transformation (evolution) put forward by Lamarck and Darwin, and shows himself a partisan of the relative fixity of the various species of animal life.

These researches entered but casually into his projects. He desired especially to be known as a clinician, and he entered upon the study of clinical medicine with such ardor that within a year after receiving his degree he was appointed chief of clinics, and later, physician in the Paris hospitals, although it was his first concours.

Two years later, in a brilliant concours for the *agrégation*, he sustained his "Thesis on Cirrhosis," a work which has remained classic on the subject. In it he established the true theory of the malady ; the genesis of intestinal hemorrhage in diseases of the liver ; the history of the collateral circulation when the organ is profoundly affected and the distinction between the atrophic and hypertrophic forms of cirrhosis.

From this period Gubler commenced to realize the dreams of his youth. In 1852 he was elected Vice President of the Society of Biology ; in 1862 and 1866 the Botanical Society did him the same honor ; in 1865 the Academy of Medicine elected him one of its members, and during the same year he was made chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur, for his services at the Beaujon Hospital during an epidemic of cholera.

Finally, in 1868, he received the supreme reward of a life of scientific labor—he was made Professor of Therapeutics in the Paris Faculty of Medicine.

Chemistry, pharmacy, natural history physiology, pathology, anatomy, all sciences in which he was deeply learned, served to render his lectures extremely interesting and brilliant, and aided much in the new impetus given by him to the science of therapeutics.

Later, when the Academy of Sciences decreed to him the Chaussier prize for his great work, "*Commentaires Therapeutiques sur le Codex*," his friends urged him as candidate for the Institute, and twice in succession the section of medicine and surgery of this learned body presented him at the head of their list of candidates.

The list of M. Gubler's works is very extensive, and many of them have taken rank in science as definitive discoveries : as his inaugural thesis on the functions and pathology of Mery's glands ; his memoirs on the existence of muciparous glands in the gall-bladder, demonstrating the contractility of the veins ; on the presence of sugar in the lymph, which he asserted contained also normally incomplete blood corpuscles—whence the doctrines at present received regarding the part played by the lymphatic system in blood formation.

He studied also the lacteal secretion observed in newly-born children, and