

**HOW TO USE A  
GALVANIC BATTERY IN  
MEDICINE AND  
SURGERY, A DISCOURSE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649399932

How to use a galvanic battery in medicine and surgery, a discourse by Herbert Tibbits

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**HERBERT TIBBITS**

**HOW TO USE A  
GALVANIC BATTERY IN  
MEDICINE AND  
SURGERY, A DISCOURSE**



HOW TO USE  
A  
GALVANIC BATTERY IN MEDICINE  
AND SURGERY

*A Discourse*

DELIVERED BEFORE THE HUNTERIAN SOCIETY.

BY

HERBERT TIBBITS, M.D. F.R.C.P.E.

FOUNDER OF AND SENIOR PHYSICIAN TO THE WEST-END HOSPITAL FOR DISEASES OF THE  
NERVOUS SYSTEM;  
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK SOCIETY OF NEUROLOGY AND ELECTROLOGY;  
FORMERLY MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE NATIONAL HOSPITAL FOR THE  
PARALYSED AND EPILEPTIC; AND  
MEDICAL OFFICER FOR ELECTRICAL TREATMENT TO THE HOSPITAL FOR RICK CHILDREN,  
GREAT ORMOND STREET, ETC. ETC.

*SECOND EDITION,*

REVISED, AND INCORPORATING

THREE LECTURES UPON ELECTRO-THERAPEUTICS

DELIVERED BY THE AUTHOR AT THE WEST-END HOSPITAL.



LONDON:

J. & A. CHURCHILL, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1879.

160. e. 196.



HOW TO USE

^

GALVANIC BATTERY IN MEDICINE  
AND SURGERY.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

---

THE First Edition being out of print, I have entirely rewritten the Second, incorporating with it Three Lectures which I recently delivered at the West-End Hospital; and making also such additions as I believed likely to prove useful to the student as a guide, more especially to the *use* of electrical instruments.

30, NEW CAVENDISH STREET, W.

October, 1879.



HOW TO USE A  
GALVANIC BATTERY IN MEDICINE  
AND SURGERY.

---

LECTURE I.

ELECTRICAL INSTRUMENTS.

GENTLEMEN,

Before asking your attention to the subject Preliminary Remarks. which we have met to consider, I beg leave to take advantage of this our first opportunity—as our Institution is but newly established—and upon behalf of my colleagues and myself, to bid you welcome; and to express the pleasure that we feel in throwing the Hospital practice freely open to students and practitioners. Universally as the principle of the division of labour is accepted in every profession but our own, I fear that I should be too sanguine were I to hope that the whole of you are in favour of the foundation of another Special Hospital, but as it has been founded, I am sure you will all agree with me that—whatever be its merits or demerits—its medical staff

Preliminary Remarks.

should court the criticism of their *confrères*, and should offer to students such facilities as they possess for the study of special diseases, or special modes of treatment; and I cannot but think that an occasional visit to such an Hospital is calculated to render more broad and comprehensive, rather than more contracted, our view of the extended fields of general medicine and surgery.

As it is one of our objects in our practice here to study the scope and the limits of electricity as a remedy in disease, it seemed to us not inappropriate to devote our first Lectures to electro-therapeutics; and the more so, because a theoretical belief in the benefit to be derived from judicious electrization is widely diffused, while comparatively very few medical men have a practical knowledge of the subject; and I fear that the profession generally, through lacking this practical knowledge, are to some extent responsible for the utter and astounding recklessness with which the laity—ever ready to rush in where physicians fear to tread—are prone to apply painful and dangerous electrization, not to themselves, but to their suffering friends; while it is still too common for the medical practitioner (as quoted by Golding Bird upwards of thirty years ago) to consider that when his fiat has gone forth “let the patient be electrified,” he has done all that is necessary, while the patient usually carries out

this mandate by the purchase of a rotary magneto-<sup>Preliminary Re-</sup> electric machine, and by using it according to the <sup>marks.</sup> directions of its maker, who is generally about as well fitted to teach its application in disease as is the maker of an amputating knife to operate with it!\*

Electricity, Gentlemen, is by no means one of those remedies that, failing to do good, is little likely to do harm. On the contrary, in injudicious hands, it is potent for evil, while the benefit to be derived from it is in exact proportion to the judgment and care with which it is administered. Moreover, the results of its

---

\* Since the delivery of these Lectures the Committee of Management of the West-End Hospital for Diseases of the Nervous System have ordered that those medical men who prescribe electricity for their private patients, but who have not the time or suitable apparatus for applying it, may, should they so wish, have treatment carried out in the Electrical Room of the Hospital. *No patient can take advantage of this Rule without producing a letter from a registered medical practitioner, and which should be addressed to the Medical Superintendent.* A contribution of two shillings and sixpence to the Hospital funds is required upon each attendance, and a separate Waiting Room has been set apart for these patients.

The remarks of the late Dr. Anstie (see page 211 of his work on "Neuralgia") are still pertinent to this subject. He writes—"Electricity is a weapon which I seldom employ in the first instance, for many reasons; the principal of which is the costliness of the proceeding to the patient. Either the physician must personally administer the remedy daily, often for a considerable period, or he must make the patient provide himself with an expensive battery; and in the latter case there is, after all, the unsatisfactory consideration that the application (even after the most careful directions have been given) will perhaps be unskillfully and inefficiently made. On the other hand, it is not desirable to delay the employment of galvanism too long, if other remedies have been fairly tried."