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NEUROLOGICAL STAMP

Adam Politzer (1835-1920)

Adam Politzer (a world leader in his specialty) for many years occupied the Chair for Otology in Vienna, to which he had been appointed while still under 30. He taught with equal fluency in German, French, Italian, or English and attracted medical men from all parts of the world. His *Lehrbuch der Ohrenheilkunde* (1878) continued through many editions and became the standard authority for years. Politzer was born in Hungary and acquired his degree in medicine from the University of Vienna. He studied anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the auditory organ in Würzburg, Heidelberg, Paris, and London.

The observation that ossicles vibrate to sound stimuli was made by Politzer. The instrument for measuring hearing in Politzer's time was the pocket watch. Differences in tone and intensity did not allow the watch test to be standardised. Recognising this, Politzer in 1913 constructed the "acoumeter". This instrument made a noise like a watch tick and could be heard at known distances by normal subjects. It also had a feature that allowed the practitioner to compare air and bone conduction. The *Journal of Otology* was founded by Politzer in 1874. His *Text-Book on Otology* was published in 1878 and his *Illustrations of the Tympanum* were both translated into English.

Politzer was honoured philatelically by Austria in 1985 on the 150th year of his birth. (Stanley Gibbons 2066, Scott 1326).

L F HAAS