

of medium size and age were made to inspire carbonic oxide, while on others there were practised injections of aspergillus, and from others the parathyroid glands were removed. Before and after the intoxication blood was taken from the external jugular and then subjected to examination.

It was found that catalytic products were contained in the blood during the acute and potential stages of the intoxication, but their action on oxygenated water was less powerful.

Pighini studied the catalytic power of the blood in sixteen insane patients; two of these were suffering from maniacal depression, five from dementia præcox, five from epilepsy, and one from acute delirium and three from dementia paralytica. The general result was that the catalytic power was found to be notably diminished in the different insane patients examined. It appeared likely that there was some relation between the acute state of the insanity and the dynamic power of the catalysis; but there are many causes which may modify the activity of the blood.

WILLIAM W. IRELAND.

*Contribution to the Study of Auto-intoxication in Mental Confusion*  
[*Contribution à l'Étude de l'Auto-intoxication dans Confusion Mentale*]. (A Thesis.) Prunier, André.

In this thesis, Dr. André Prunier discusses the question of auto-intoxication in confusional insanity by an estimation of the toxicity of the urine. The subject of a toxicity of the urine has been of interest for many years, for Maron in 1868 first injected some subcutaneously, but obtained negative results and declared that it was inoffensive.

In a short review of the literature upon the subject the author refers to the observations of several workers at the Congress of Mental Medicine held at Rochelle in 1893, at which the whole question was discussed.

Gilbert Ballet and Roubinovitch stated that the urine of melancholiacs was hypertoxic, and that of maniacs less so, whilst from "mental degenerates" very variable results were obtained. Lavaure compared the toxicity of serum with the urine, and in two cases of mental confusion found that both were distinctly hypertoxic.

The author then describes how he carried out his experiments in guinea-pigs, taking especial care to correct the general causes of error in the technical details. He selected the urine from six patients who were suffering from mental confusion, and who at the same time showed signs of gastro-intestinal disturbance (constipation, diarrhoea, attacks of vomiting, excessive appetite, etc.), and he describes it as being hypertoxic in each case. He repeated each of his experiments on three different occasions.

He concludes from his own cases and from a review of the literature that there exists in most patients suffering from confusional insanity some gastro-intestinal trouble, as shown by abnormal fermentations, altered secretions, constipation, etc., all tending to exaggerate the production of intestinal toxines. Owing to an excessive production and absorption the kidney is stimulated to further work, so that there appears "a hypertoxicity of the urine." But this "hypertoxicity of deience" is not equal to the amount of toxine absorbed from the

intestinal canal, so that an auto-intoxication of the body is produced which manifests itself by various physical signs and by the appearance of mental confusion. After injection of the hypertoxic urine, all the animals died in convulsions—in opisthotonos with trismus, never in coma; and he attributes this to the presence of a ptomaine in the injected urine.

Although the toxicity of the urine has been determined in several diseases, *i.e.*, general paralysis, epilepsy, etc., yet the value of the method has been seriously disputed, and these results must be accepted with considerable reserve. The author jumps too readily to the conclusion that the hypertoxic urine indicates the body is poisoned with toxins. Moreover it is very difficult to decide whether the observed or alleged disorder is the cause rather than the result of the disease in the central nervous system.

The question of auto-intoxication is most interesting and fascinating, and about which much has been written, but of exact observations there are but very few.

SIDNEY CLARKE.

---

## Part IV.—Notes and News.

### THE MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Association was held at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, on Tuesday, May 19th, 1908, Dr. P. W. MacDonald, President, in the chair.

*Present:* T. S. Adair, C. Aldridge, H. T. S. Aveline, C. H. Bond, A. N. Boycott, J. Chambers, M. Craig, W. R. Dawson, J. F. Dixon, T. O'C. Donelan, A. C. Dove, T. Drapes, F. W. Edridge-Green, F. H. Edwards, F. A. Elkins, J. A. Ewan, C. H. Fennell, N. J. H. Gavin, T. D. Greenlees, H. E. Haynes, J. W. Higginson, H. G. Hill, Robert Jones, N. Lavers, H. Wolseley-Lewis, H. J. MacBryan, J. H. MacDonald, P. W. MacDonald, M. E. Martin, W. F. Menzies, C. A. Mercier, W. J. Mickle, A. Miller, C. S. Morison, D. Orr, H. Rayner, D. Rice, R. G. Rows, G. H. Savage, G. E. Shuttleworth, R. Percy Smith, R. H. Steen, C. T. Street, D. G. Thomson, F. Watson, T. Outtersson Wood.

Apologies for absence were received from: Drs. Bedford Pierce, Clouston, Hamilton Marr, H. H. Newington, Nolan, Turnbull, and Urquhart.

At the Council meeting were present: The President and Drs. Aveline, Hubert Bond, Boycott, James Chambers, Craig, Dawson, Drapes, Ewan, Fennell, Robert Jones, Wolseley-Lewis, Mercier, Miller, Orr, Rayner, and Steen.

#### THE MINUTES.

The minutes of the last meeting having already appeared in the Journal, were taken as read, approved, and signed.

The PRESIDENT said that, arising out of the minutes, a letter had been received from the Commissioners in Lunacy, which he asked the Secretary to read.

The SECRETARY (Dr. Hubert Bond) said members would remember that he was instructed to forward to the Commissioners in Lunacy a resolution passed at the last meeting of the Association in reference to the Factory and Workshops Act, 1908.