

Suggestion," etc.) we find only 32 entered under the head of hysteria; but Babinski points out, and apparently with very good reason, that many cases included in the groups traumatic neuroses, neuropathic affections, neuroses, dynamic paralysis, neurasthenia, organic affections of the nervous system, are purely and simply hysterical. And he adds: "Can we accept the statements that lateral sclerosis and cerebellar tumour are cured by hypnotism, or by the application of a magnet, without the evidence of a post-mortem examination?"

With regard to the treatment of mental diseases by hypnotism, many competent observers—Magnan, Forel of Zürich, Briand—are not sanguine about it; Percy Smith and others in England, we might add, are of the same opinion.

Dr. Babinski's monographs are well worthy of perusal by all who are interested in the question of hypnotism. Further researches are needed to place the subject on a surer basis, and, considering the wide divergence in the views of such observers as Charcot and Bernheim, the only attitude of the unbiassed scientific student must be one of expectancy and research.

*Les suggestions hypnotiques au point de vue médico-légal.*  
Par GILBERT BALLET. Paris: G. Masson. 1891.

The main purpose of this pamphlet is to show that the dangers of hypnotism, the fear of crimes arising through suggestion—much spoken of in novels and in the press—have been enormously exaggerated. While admitting that attempts have been made upon the person of subjects in the state of lethargy, or catalepsy, and somnambulism, the author fails to see in the annals of crime any genuine instance of a person committing a crime suggested during the hypnotic state by another person. The cases of La Roncière, Benoît, Jacquemin, etc., analyzed by Liégeois (*De la Suggestion et du Somnambulisme*, etc.), he points out are not examples of suggestion.

"But as regards the future," Ballet remarks, "are suggested crimes possible? And, if so, can they be done with ease or with impunity?" From the experience of the laboratory we might reply in the affirmative; but the conditions here, we must remember, are different; moreover, the patients are never purely passive automata; most of them retain some individuality. Only one in twenty of hypnotizable subjects, Liébault observes, will faithfully carry out

post-hypnotic suggestions; and, to quote Bernheim, "education constitutes in itself a primitive suggestion capable of neutralizing ulterior ones." Certain subjects, when criminal suggestions are made to them, refuse to, or do not, wake; some fall into the lethargic state; others get a hysterical attack. The criminal must, therefore, choose a suitable subject for his purpose and train him. This in itself may lead to exposure; and, in addition, the passive criminal (the suggested person) would be more easily detected than an ordinary being.

With regard to the signing of cheques, of wills, the giving of false testimony by persons acting under hypnotic suggestion, here, again, Ballet thinks the dangers are more imaginary than real.

He questions the advisability of hypnotizing a criminal suspected of having acted under suggestion, to ascertain the truth. Can we be sure of the results? Many subjects are known to mislead and even deliberately lie under the circumstances.

When Bernheim says "la suggestion est dans tout," he alters, as Ballet remarks, the standpoint of discussion. If Troppmann, Gabrielle Fenayrou, Gabrielle Bompard, etc., are all irresponsible, where are we to draw the line?

One can imagine a clever criminal, familiar with the subject of hypnotism, making use of another person to accomplish a criminal act by suggestion, but the chances of eluding detection are only slight, and common sense will often come to the rescue in these cases in tracing the true culprit.

As a corrective to the credulity of many who see in hypnotic suggestion a new scourge to society, and as a clear and brief exposure of the medico-legal aspect of the question, Dr. Ballet's pamphlet is well worth perusing.

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*Uric Acid as a Factor in the Causation of Disease.* By  
ALEXANDER HAIG, M.A., M.D.Oxon., F.R.C.P. London:  
Churchill. 1892. Pp. 272.

Nine years ago Dr. Haig set himself to investigate the causation and treatment of a headache from which he suffered periodically. But his investigations led him farther than he expected; the horizon gradually expanded until now it seems to him that if his conclusions are correct he has revolutionized a large part of the field of medicine, including epilepsy, mental depression, gout, rheumatism, diabetes, Bright's disease, high

arterial tension, etc. He received his first stimulus from suggestions in the works of Sir A. Garrod and Dr. Liveing, and he has carried on a number of investigations which have been published in various medical journals, and have attracted considerable attention and criticism. This volume the author regards merely as a preliminary statement of his results.

The main points of Dr. Haig's teaching may be very easily stated. Excess of uric acid in the system is due, not to increased formation, but to retention. It may be present in excess either when in course of excretion in the blood, or in the joints, liver, etc. When uric acid is in course of excretion there is a tendency in susceptible persons to headache, lassitude, and depression, with slow pulse and high arterial tension; when, on the other hand, the uric acid is driven into the joints these symptoms at once disappear, but give place to tingling in the joints, and in susceptible persons to symptoms of gout, rheumatism, etc. Now Dr. Haig finds that either of these two sets of symptoms can be produced at will. By giving acids, morphia, etc., he can at once diminish the excretion of uric acid, and clear up the headache and mental depression, producing instead shooting and pricking pains in the joints; and by giving alkalis, salicylic acid and its compounds, quinine, etc., he can increase the excretion of uric acid, and produce the opposite set of symptoms. Practically, in order to cure his headache, he finds it necessary to follow up a small dose of morphia ( $\frac{1}{8}$  gr.) by a dose of salicylate; for if the uric acid is merely driven into the joints it will come out again next day, and produce the same symptoms again. But he has found prevention more important than treatment, and he achieves prevention by returning to the doctrine of former days, and fighting uric acid by diminishing the income of nitrogen. Since he has excluded butcher's meat from his dietary he has lowered the uric acid consumption and cured his headaches, and he finds that this treatment—the prevention of urates so far as possible and their rapid expulsion from the body—is the key to the treatment of gout and many other disorders. Alcohol he finds in itself harmless, and so far as it is not so its action is merely due to the acidity of most wines and beer, which drives the uric acid into the joints; and even when so acting it is, so far as mental depression is concerned, beneficial. "If my premises are good," Dr. Haig remarks, "and my deductions sound, and if uric acid really influences the circulation to the extent which I have been led to believe that it does, it follows that uric acid really dominates the function,

nutrition, and structure of the human body to an extent which has never yet been dreamed of in our philosophy, and in place of affecting the structure of a few comparatively insignificant fibrous tissues in which it is found after death, it may really direct the development, life-history, and final decay and dissolution of every tissue, from the most important nerve centres and the most active glands to the matrix of the nails and the structure of the skin and hair."

Dr. Haig works out, or suggests, the application of these views in various fields. He points out, for instance, that the phenomena of epilepsy frequently present a close resemblance to those of the uric acid headache. There is the same mental well-being, with scanty excretion of uric acid before the fit, the same excessive excretion of uric acid and mental depression accompanying it, followed by the same subnormal surface temperature, and often slow faltering pulse. Both come on in early life, and recur at more or less regular intervals; both are met with in members of the same family, or even alternate in the same patient; while the action of drugs is parallel in the two disorders, and the treatment—especially by diet—becomes more promising.

Dr. Haig is not able to say in what proportion of cases epilepsy may be due to this cause, nor to speak very positively as to the results of the treatment he suggests. These questions could, however, as he remarks, be speedily settled in an asylum where many epileptics are under observation, and it is to be hoped that someone will investigate the matter.

Dr. Haig also finds that uric acid counts for much in hysteria. Its action here and elsewhere is largely due to its effects on the arteries and capillaries, more especially in the brain. Uric acid in the vascular system produces high arterial tension; clear the blood of uric acid by the use of any of the drugs which produce retention of it, and as the pulse tension is reduced its rate quickened, and the urine increased, the mental condition alters as if by magic.

Dr. Haig makes the interesting suggestion—which he tells us he is endeavouring to work out—that the excess of suicides and of criminality during the summer months is caused by uric acid. During the cold months there is a tendency to the retention of uric acid; with the return of warm weather there is a fall of acidity, and the uric acid held back and stored during the winter begins to be dissolved in the blood. "I believe that the above-mentioned physiological fluctuation in the excretion of uric acid, and the concomitant uric-acidæmia, completely

account for the observed fluctuations in the incidence of mental depression, suicide, and murder." He also believes that alcoholism, morphinism, and cocainism have their starting point in the temporary well-being these drugs produce through driving the uric acid out of the circulation into the liver, spleen, joints, etc., from which it emerges in the "alkaline tide" of the following morning.

Dr. Haig's book is altogether very interesting, and well worth the consideration of the alienist. It is written in a conversational manner, without attention to style. His unflinching earnestness is aptly shown by his solemn treatment of a venerable joke: "Is life worth living?" That depends on uric acid. The orthodox answer is 'That depends on the liver,' but as the liver is only one of the sources of uric acid I cannot regard the answer as sufficient." Some criticism has been directed against Dr. Haig's use of Haycraft's method of estimation by other workers who have arrived at different results, and his conclusions require confirmation. We cannot yet decide if he is like Saul, the son of Kish, who went forth to seek his father's asses and found a kingdom.

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*Die Psychopathischen Minderwertigkeiten.* Von Dr. J. L. A. Koch, Zweite Abtheilung. Ravensburg: Otto Maier. 1892.

Dr. Koch has now concluded his study of the borderlands of insanity, the first part of which we noticed in the Journal for last April. This second volume deals chiefly with acquired psychopathic conditions. He divides and subdivides his subject in what is, perhaps, a somewhat arbitrary way, but deals in an able and suggestive manner with the mental and constitutional characteristics of various morbid conditions, including, among others, morphinism and cocainism, the chronic abuse of coffee (of which, however, he is rather sceptical), and the neurotic conditions accompanying puberty, pregnancy, masturbation, etc. In justification of the title of his work, Dr. Koch criticizes the wide extension sometimes given to the conception of neurasthenia, as a "comfortable pillow of self-satisfaction" which hinders progress. He considers that Beard is largely responsible for this, but, at the same time, does full justice to the American author as a genuine scientific worker, who