

—either hypnotic suggestion or indirect suggestion—by the administration of some drug. That ergot, for instance, acts in this way is illustrated by the case of a man whose polyuria improved rapidly when this drug was administered. On a subsequent occasion, when the polyuria relapsed, ergot was prescribed again, but a little bicarbonate of soda given instead. The same improvement took place as before.

H. J. MACEVOY.

*Treatment of the Insane [Les divers modes d'assistance des aliénés devant la commission d'études au Conseil-Général de la Seine]. (Rev. de Psychiat., No. 3, 1900.) Marie, A.*

This paper contains the pith of the suggestions made by a commission appointed by the General Council of the Seine to study and report upon the questions of treatment of the insane. This commission had to consider and report upon such points as observation hospitals for acute cases; over-crowding of chronic cases, and means of relieving it; treatment of vicious and criminal insane; treatment of epileptics; isolation of alcoholics, etc., etc. They recommend, among other things, the creation of a hospital for the observation and treatment of acute cases; for chronic cases chronic blocks, farms, home treatment, etc.; there are suggestions for the treatment of the various classes of alcoholics, etc., etc. Embodying the results of their visits to asylums at home and abroad, this report is a very important document, and will, no doubt, lead to decided steps in the direction of improving the conditions and treatment of cases of mental disease in the Department of the Seine. It is a most comprehensive report.

H. J. MACEVOY.

*An Address on the Insane and their Treatment. (Brit. Med. Journ., Jan. 20th, 1900.) Spence, J. B.*

The address, delivered before the Staffordshire branch of the British Medical Association, gives an interesting historical sketch of the treatment of the insane from remote periods up to the present. But small advance was made up to the eighteenth century, at the end of which the labours of Pinel and Tuke, followed later in this country by the efforts of Lord Ashley (subsequently Lord Shaftesbury), initiated a new departure. The advances of late years are then dwelt upon—and they are undoubted, but leave something to be desired; and Dr. Spence does not fail to comment on the fact that in 1845, when the office of Commissioner in Lunacy was first instituted, the visiting staff of the Commission was of exactly the same numerical strength as at the present moment, though the number of the officially insane in 1845—viz. 20,893—has in January, 1900, advanced to 81,258 in asylums alone. On the importance of the attachment of pathological departments to the larger asylums, now being recognised, Dr. Spence lays stress, as also upon the establishment of clinics at asylums adjacent to large towns and at all the larger general hospitals. Finally, Dr. Spence urges that the influence of members of the profession should be enlisted in order to facilitate the passing of the Act to amend the Lunacy Laws, introduced by the Lord Chancellor in the last session of Parliament. One clause

in this Act he is specially desirous of securing, viz. that which would legalise the placing of single patients for six months under the care of medical practitioners without certification, though with notification to the Commissioners. The clause is designed to meet those early cases of mental disturbance which may never develop, and avoid for them the stigma of the certificate.

HARRINGTON SAINSBURY.

*Balneological Treatment of Nervous Diseases: Discussion at the British Balneological Society. (Brit. Med. Journ., Feb. 10th, 1900.)*

Dr. Risien Russell laid stress on the value of baths in certain troublesome symptoms of some chronic spinal cord affections. In acute nervous troubles he instanced peripheral neuritis as specially amenable. In neurasthenia he drew attention to the two forms of this disease, in the one of which stimulating baths, in the other indifferent baths were called for.

Dr. Karl Grube, of Neuemahr, was struck by the relatively small attention paid in England to the bath treatment of nervous affections, neuritis in particular being strikingly benefited by such. He urged the importance of avoiding extreme temperatures, indifferent baths—*i. e.* of a temperature of about blood-heat—being most beneficial. The nature of the chemical constituents of the bath waters was of very secondary importance.

HARRINGTON SAINSBURY.

*The Treatment of Neurasthenia. (Glas. Med. Journ., Oct., 1899.) Somerville, W. F.*

The usual essentials of the treatment of the neurasthenic by isolation, rest in bed, massage, and careful dieting are insisted upon. Dr. Somerville judges it a mistake to over-feed the patients; but when he says that, "speaking generally, it is found that the patient can soon be induced to take six to eight good meals a day, together with three or four pints of milk," it will be admitted that the scale is liberal enough. Massage is begun first as effleurage, and then is made more forcible and the *séance* prolonged.

As a detail of some importance, it is advised that the patient should proceed to take a holiday in the country, at the end of the cure, before returning to the home circle.

HARRINGTON SAINSBURY.

*Treatment of Epilepsy by Bromides and Hypochlorisation [Traitement de l'épilepsie par les bromures et l'hypochloruration]. (Rev. de Psychiat., Jan., 1900.) Toulouse, E.*

This represents essentially a new departure in therapeutics: it is based first upon the chemical relationship between bromides and chlorides, which is such that the former appear to be capable of replacing the latter to a certain extent in the tissues; and next it is based upon the well-known fact that the organism can adapt itself to a diet with a minimum or maximum of sodium chloride. The diet which demands much salt is the vegetable one, whilst an animal diet, and more particularly a milk diet, makes much less call for sodium