

should commit suicide? Reese says, as bearing out this suggestion that, "Some have been known to commit murder with the avowed intention of receiving the punishment of death at the hands of the law, instead of inflicting it suicidally upon themselves."

The above considerations form subject matter for grave thought as to the advisability of making all hypnotic experiments illegal.

TREATMENT OF DIPHTHERIA WITH ANTI-TOXINE.

The past experience of the medical profession of this country with the fads of the German and French physicians has made us a little shy of the serum therapy. We have, therefore, avoided commenting on the new treatment until further evidence of its value are forthcoming.

We have long since learned to discredit the statements of the enthusiasts upon any subject, as we are almost always incapable of judging of the real merits of their work. In this instance it still remains for the honest men to determine the value of the anti-toxine treatment, the practical investigation of which presents many difficulties. It is gratifying to know, however, that the serum obtained from the horse, previously injected with pure culture or toxine of diphtheria bacilli, is free from any dangerous or deleterious properties; consisting as it does of serum of the animal, rendered immune by the effect of the most poisonous culture by the slow process of injections. It is quite harmless to the patient, therefore, provided we do not abandon or subordinate the old and successful treatment by well-tried remedies, such as the tincture of chloride of iron, persistently employed; hydrogen peroxide, the calomel treatment; the bichloride; quinine, and stimulants. One or more of these plans of treatment, with close watchfulness of the temperature of the room, absolute rest, good diet, with proper attention to the bowels and bladder, has given excellent results in the vast majority of cases. In fact, many of our most truthful and reliable members of the profession are willing to testify that they rarely lose a case under their favorite plan of treatment, provided they are called in its incipency. When the posterior nares or larynx, or both, are involved,

the mortality has almost invariably been quite large, under any treatment heretofore practiced. If the anti toxine can be shown to be of any great value in such cases, especially in laryngeal cases, and will prevent the death of any considerable per cent. of them, then, and then only, will it be accepted as a valuable addition to our armamentarium of cures for diphtheria.

If the reports be true, or even if the half that is told is true, the anti-toxine treatment has been of considerable service in this disease. Its real value, however, must of necessity be a matter of considerable speculation, inasmuch, as we have already stated, that so many claim to be able to cure diphtheria with ordinary medical treatments. Again, though the blood serum is harmless to the patient, it may be at the same time inert in many cases.

Can we be positive that the animal has been properly treated before the serum is obtained? Will the profession not be liable to the perpetration of fraud by those who may desire to speculate? To our mind there is but one way to be certain that we are procuring anti-toxine in the blood serum that we may demand; that is that the Government take hold of this matter and employ salaried officials to carefully prepare and preserve the serum for use as it may be demanded. The test of the value of the serum now before us is by no means reliable.

It is an established fact that the manifestation of the virulence of the disease varies very much in different seasons and in different localities. The attack of members in the same family varies. It is well known that when diphtheria attacks a large family of children, the first one taken with the disease is usually the one to die, if any; and that it becomes milder as it progresses in the family; whether this is due to the prompt treatment in the later cases, or to an attenuation of the virus, we do not pretend to say.

In epidemics the virulence is much greater at the commencement than towards the close. Another perplexing question, and one that seems difficult of solution, is to ascertain whether certain cases are diphtheria or follicular tonsillitis. The culture test only, in the hands of experts, is capable of determining this matter. With these truths before us, when are we to arrive at a conclusion regarding the efficiency of the anti-toxine treat-