

able man. I prescribed the acid tonic, with the effect that, in December, he presented himself quite convalescent.

TEMPORARY PARALYSIS OF THE RADIAL NERVE IN THE INITIAL STAGE OF LOCOMOTOR ATAXIA.—Prof. A. Strumpell (*Berl. klin. Woch.*) reports an interesting case of this nature. Briefly the history of the case is as follows: B., æt. 55, a waiter, was suddenly seized with paralysis of the left hand. On a Sunday afternoon he was reading a newspaper which he held in his left hand; all of a sudden the paper dropped from his hand and he then learned that he had lost power in it. He had never experienced any pains or abnormal sensations. On examination, it was found that all the muscles supplied by the radial nerve were paralyzed, the sensibility of the forearm and hand was intact, and the electrical excitability of the paralyzed muscles, with both currents, was quite normal. The author found some difficulty in accounting for the paralysis; the most plausible theory was that it was due to alcohol, but its sudden appearance and the absence of pains and other signs of alcoholism strongly opposes that theory. On further examination, however, it was found that the patient had the Argyll-Robertson pupil, the sensibility of the feet and legs was somewhat diminished, and there was absence of the knee-jerk on both sides. On repeated questioning, the patient confessed to having had for some time past "tearing pains" in the legs and a weakness of the bladder. A history of syphilis could not be obtained. Under four weeks' treatment with electricity the paralysis disappeared, without any change, however, in the other tabetic symptoms. [The case is of considerable interest, as bearing upon the recent pathological researches of Pitres and Vaillard on the condition of the peripheral nerves in tabes. In our last report on General Medicine, we gave an abstract of their work in this direction, and we would advise our readers to compare it with the clinical history of Strumpell's case.]—*N. Y. Med. Journal*.

WHAT PROFESSOR HUXLEY THINKS OF MATERIALISM.—Before launching the three torpedoes which have so sadly exploded on board his own ship, Mr. Lilly says that with whatever "rhetorical ornaments I may gild my teaching," it is "materialism." Let me observe, in passing, that rhetorical ornament is not in my way, and that gilding refined gold would, to my mind, be less objectionable than varnishing the fair face of truth with that pestilent cosmetic, rhetoric. If I believed that I had any claim to the title of "materialist," as that term is understood in the language of philosophy and not in that of abuse, I should not attempt to hide it by any sort of gilding. I have not found reason to care much for hard names in the course

of the last thirty years, and I am too old to develop a new sensitiveness. But, to repeat what I have more than once taken pains to say in the most unadorned of plain language, I repudiate, as a philosophical error, the doctrine of materialism as I understand it, just as I repudiate the doctrine of spiritualism as Mr. Lilly presents it, and my reason for thus doing is, in both cases, the same; namely, that, whatever their differences, materialists and spiritualists agree in making very positive assertions about matters of which I am certain I know nothing, and about which I believe they are, in truth, just as ignorant. And further, that, even when their assertions are confined to topics which lie within the range of my faculties, they often appear to me to be in the wrong. And there is yet another reason for objecting to be identified with either of these sects; and that is that each is extremely fond of attributing to the other, by way of reproach, conclusions which are the property of neither, though they infallibly flow from the logical development of the first principles of both. Surely a prudent man is not to be reproached because he keeps clear of the squabbles of these philosophical Bianchi and Neri, by refusing to have anything to do with either?—*Popular Science Monthly*.

THE CONTAGIUM OF DIPHTHERIA.—From a number of incidents and cases cited by Dr. Lancry, in a recent thesis on the subject, one fact becomes very evident, and that is, that the spontaneous diffusive power, or what might properly be called the infectiousness of the toxic principle is very feeble. Dumez reports that in a certain communal school under his medical care there were two groups of children studying and playing in the same hall, but separated by an open area a few yards wide, on one side of which were seated the girls and on the other the boys. One of the girls took diphtheria and the disease was communicated to eight of her companions, though not a case occurred among the boys, right across the open aisle. In another school there were nineteen children, seven of whom were in a building in immediate contact with one infected with diphtheria. The balance of the children, twelve in number, were located a few metres away. All of the first group contracted the disease, while all of the second escaped. This fact simplifies the prophylaxis of the disease very materially, and points to the value of rigorous quarantine—a hint emphasized, by the way, by another incident drawn from M. Lancry's thesis, viz.: In one of the hospitals of Paris, the ward for children suffering from porigo had a playground that adjoined the enclosure in which was the building for the isolation of diphtheritics. While cases of diphtheria became quite frequent among the children who used the playground, scarcely a case occurred in the balance of