

our cities would adopt this maxim as a guiding principle. Sewage contamination of our rivers, which are the chief source of domestic water supply, is increasing year by year. The increasing prevalence of typhoid fever would seem to point to this unwise and pernicious practice as the cause. Foreign countries have learned by disastrous experience the unwisdom of this practice. Shall we profit by this experience, and, without waiting for the inevitable, prevent that which it will be infinitely more difficult to remedy in the future?—*Medical Progress.*

### THE SUSPENSION TREATMENT OF LOCOMOTOR ATAXIA.

Dr. Paul Blocq has recently read a paper at the Société Médico-Pratique (*Rev. Gén. de Clinique*, Feb. 14, 1889) on the results of Dr. Motchonkowsky's treatment of locomotor ataxia by suspension, as carried out for the last few months at the Salpêtrière. The treatment was suggested to Dr. Motchonkowsky, of Odessa, by observing the benefit which an ataxic patient, also suffering from spinal curvature, derived from the suspension required in applying a plaster jacket. On suspending other ataxics in a similar manner, he found that very marked improvement in the lightning pains and the motor incoördination followed, and vesical and sexual power was restored.

At the Salpêtrière fifteen patients have been submitted to 900 suspensions since last October, with marked benefit in many cases. The most usual signs of improvement were the reëstablishment of sexual function, the disappearance of bladder troubles, diminution and disappearance of the lightning pains, with improvement in motor coördination, so that patients who had only been able to walk with the help of an attendant on one side and a staff on the other, could leave the hospital after treatment without help of any kind.

Dr. Paul Blocq has also applied suspension with benefit in Friedreich's disease. The suspension was applied two or three times a week for periods varying from thirty seconds to three minutes each time. Improvement in walking began in the case of a girl, aged fourteen, in the second week of treatment. Later, a spoon could be carried to the mouth with the eyes closed, and she now learns the piano, writes with little tremulousness, can walk better, can stand with the eyes closed, and the catamenia have become established. The tendon reflexes are, however, still wanting, and scansion and nystagmus remain.

As Professor Charcot remarked, these results in a disease which has always been slowly progressive and almost invariably fatal, are worthy of attention. He suggests that the suspension may act by modifying the circulation of the spinal cord, or by stretching the nerves as they

leave it. Whatever its *modus operandi* may be, it is certain that suspension is an agent of considerable power, since serious accidents have occasionally happened during the application of a Sayre's jacket, and it is, therefore, to be used with discretion and care.

We understand, also, that a number of patients suffering from various forms of chronic degeneration of the nervous system are being treated by suspension in various London hospitals. It is, of course, too early to form any definite opinion of the value of this treatment; but, so far, the results have been encouraging. A patient at present in St. Mary's Hospital was "suspended" on January 22nd, and at intervals from that day, by Dr. de Watteville, physician in charge of the electro-therapeutical department, who has reported the case as progressing satisfactorily. The most apparent improvement consists in the increase of gait and equilibration, as manifested by the ease with which the patient can turn around when ordered to do so. Dr. Althaus informs us that he has found it beneficial in two cases of tabes; lightning pains in the one case, and in the other gastric crises, have ceased. In a case of severe paralysis agitans the tremor ceased for thirty-six hours after the first suspension.—*British Medical Journal*, February 23, 1889.

The *Berliner klin. Wochens.*, No. 8, reports that the suspension treatment has been tried in the clinics of Professors Eulenberg and Mendel with equally favorable results, the suspensions, which took place three times a week, being at first of one minute's duration, increasing by half a minute up to three minutes. About twenty patients have thus been treated; and although, of course, the time is too short to announce any very positive results, two facts have been found to follow the treatment, viz: 1. A certain number of patients have, immediately after the suspension, a readier and freer gait, less staggering, and complain less of lancinating pains (in some, also, improvement was noted in visual symptoms). 2. No ill effects have followed the practice. Our contemporary warns physicians and the public from hasty and exaggerated hopes in its efficacy.—*Lancet*, March 2, 1889.

### MACEWEN'S OPERATION FOR RADICAL CURE OF HERNIA.

Dr. H. L. Burrell, in a paper read before the Suffolk County Medical Society, and published in the *Medical and Surgical Reporter*, said that:

He had operated in eight cases, all of which had been successful so far as heard from. In two of them scrotal abscesses formed. In the others union was by first intention. They have been in adults and in children; complicated and simple. As to permanency of cure, suffi-