

sclerosis is regarded by Marchand as a nutritional affection of the vessel wall resulting from wear and tear. It is therefore essential that any source of added strain upon the vascular system be avoided. Sleep is also added as an important necessity and hypnotics may be indicated for three or four consecutive nights until natural repose is established.

With regard to diet, Romberg treats each case individually according to the state of nutrition and condition of the alimentary canal.

O. K.

PROF. HANS MEYER. "The Theory of Narcosis." *Journal A. M. A.*, January 20th, 1906.

In the first lecture of the Harvey Society course, Prof. Hans Meyer, of Vienna, advances a theory of narcosis which he states as follows: "The narcotizing substance enters into a loose physico-chemical combination with the vitally important lipoids of the cell, perhaps with the lecithin, and in so doing changes their normal relationship to the other cell constituents, through which an inhibition of the entire cell chemism occurs. It also becomes evident that the narcosis immediately disappears as soon as the loose, reversible, tension combination dependent on the solution breaks up. It follows, further, that substances chemically indifferent, as the volatile saturated hydrocarbons, can act as narcotics." It is the distribution relationship, the so-called distribution coefficient, of the narcotics between fatty and watery solutions that is the determining factor of narcotic action, and with the increase in this distribution coefficient there is an almost parallel increase in the narcotic strength, that is, decrease in the molecular concentration necessary for narcosis, as he shows by a table deduced from experience with a number of well-known narcotics. The apparent exceptions to the general rule are readily explainable by the naturally inexact methods of estimation or narcotic power. As all living cells contain lecithin, a lipoid body, this theory explains why all cells capable of stimulation are depressed by these narcotic substances. Narcotic drugs are complex substances and, therefore, that some of them produce other effects, sometimes even masking their narcotic action, is not remarkable. It is not attempted, moreover, to explain every type of narcosis by this theory. It is probable that other disturbances in chemical equilibrium may occur to inhibit the function of the cell, and that substances, such as morphin, are narcotic otherwise than through the "alcohol lipoids," and the same may be true of the very remarkable narcosis from magnesium salts, lately discovered by Meltzer.