

composition is enough for us, in a clinical point of view; the subject is indeed of very great importance to men, especially in surgical practice, where this so-called phosphatic diathesis is often encountered from disease of prostate, or diseased mucous membrane of the bladder from stone. A deposit of mucus in the urine will lead to such deposit of phosphates, by the mucous decomposing urea. The prolonged exhibition of alkaline remedies may also induce a deposit of phosphates. It has been even said, and is practically held to be true by surgeons, that the mucous membrane of the bladder itself has the power of forming phosphatic deposits. The surgeon's finger in lithotomy will occasionally feel a coating of phosphates; but I don't know that this point has been sufficiently studied to decide whether this is a phosphatic deposit.

Now, as to this often vexed question or hypothesis of prolonged action of brain or nerve tissues being invariably followed by disintegration of nerve cells and deposits of phosphates in the urine though a very fashionable theory, I think the evidence is not at all decisive one way or the other. It is still a moot point on the confines of psychological science. You will perceive from what I have just stated that many circumstances, such as deranged health, excessive use of alkalis, prostatic disease after fifty years of age, &c., may lead to deposits of phosphates in the urine. Now I need not say that prolonged mental work, or over-exercisement of the brain, will lead to impaired health*; the urine then becomes alkaline. I believe that after severe mental labour, such as that of reading up for University honours, a deposit of earthy phosphates in undue amount appears in the urine. I very much doubt, however, if it be solely from disintegration of nerve or brain tissues, but from the constitution of the urine, as I pointed out a few minutes ago, being altered. In diseases where we have delirium, it is said also that we find excess of phosphoric acid in the urine. These physical or psychological reactions of the mind, over the body are, no doubt, too much neglected at present; the question, in fact, may be said to be still *sub lite*, or "not proven." There is no doubt that emotions of various kinds react also on the nervous system. And it is strongly insisted that in chorea, which is very often the result of simple fright or emotion reacting on particular parts of the brain and nervous system, there you have large deposits of phosphoric acid in the urine. If the fact be really a fact, as it is stated to be, it is one of great interest.

All I can say is, that a very reliable authority, Voegel, has examined the subject in over a thousand cases of this kind and meningitis, with all

* See a Lecture, by Dr. Addison, on this subject, recently in the *CIRCULAR*, where the theory of underworked brain, as a cause of disease, as held by Mr. Dickens in "Household Words," is combated.