

disposing cause, which acts by disturbing the nutrition of the nervous unit, and we can understand the exacerbations of the disease following acute illnesses. Further, the well known fact that when optic atrophy occurs ataxia does not, or if already present does not increase, even tends to improve in many cases, is easy of interpretation. An adult who has become blind is not capable of performing much, and so his nervous system is spared the stress by which ataxia is produced. In the same way the relation of tabes to sex becomes explicable, men being more exposed to those influences which according to this theory we must look upon as etiological factors in the disease.

Again, the relative immunity of certain coloured races is comprehensible as their nature and climate are not likely to permit them to expose themselves overmuch to strain and overwork.

Realizing in this way the origin of tabes the physician has valuable indications for treatment, at least as far as prophylaxis is concerned. Now for the practical application of this theory. One must reckon with the possibilities of exhaustion wherever it has once shown itself. The patient must have rest and be guarded against overexertion, and at the same time his general condition and metabolism improved if possible. Of course, in cases of excessive obesity this should be reduced before the treatment is undertaken.

As a matter of routine the patient is told, and it must be impressed on him, to empty the bladder every three hours at least whether it seems necessary or not. The habit is very quickly acquired and in this way the bladder itself, and the nervous apparatus in connection, are saved from strain and exhaustion. Practically this has been found to save the patient from the distressing incontinence too often seen, thus bearing out the truth of Edinger's theory. The optic nerves also should be guarded against every strain, errors of refraction should be corrected and the eyes shielded from the glare of the sun in summer or winter by coloured glasses,—the patient should be warned against straining the eyes in any way.

During the treatment, where it is possible, these patients are ordered massage and faradic stimulation of the muscles on alternate days, simply to take the place of exercise in stimulating metabolism without the fatigue consequent on a relative amount of exercise.

In the hospital one has often noticed that patients who at first could not bring the index finger accurately to the nose with the eyes closed, after their first surprise at their failure to do such an apparently simple movement, practiced it with excellent results, and one would say, "That is scarcely a fair test because the patient has practiced it." To