

family environment in particular. "This," writes Mathieu "is a hothouse for neurasthenia as well as hysteria. They (these states) are maintained by the compassion, touching and kind of alarmed sympathizers. The patient, more especially if a woman, becomes, half unconsciously a veritable tyrant to those who surround her. All in the house should subordinate themselves, and do so often to her affliction. Here is a pernicious association the medical man must break up to affect a cure. This is what Weir Mitchell understood thoroughly when he proposed medical *isolation*, and the methodical treatment of rebuilding which we will explain hereafter."

It sometimes occurs, from another reason, that the prolonged contact of a neurasthenic impresses his symptoms in turn on another subject predisposed by his surroundings. [From this contact, unhappily too frequent, between two subjects destined by duty or occupation to pass their entire lives together, will result a particular form of neurasthenia, in our opinion the most dreaded and most obstinate, double, neurasthenia.

(To be continued.)

### THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION AS PRACTICED BY THE HEBREWS OF TO-DAY.

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The writer recently, in his capacity of accoucheur, was invited to attend the circumcision of a Hebrew infant, and as the operation was done and viewed from a religious standpoint, as a rite rather than a surgical undertaking, some account of it may interest the reader who has not had an opportunity of seeing it. The actual removal of the foreskin was so simple an affair as to call for no comment, but the accessories were novel, and calculated to excite reflections both grave and hilarious. The child was brought down from the lying-in room by the grandmother, an hour or two after seven days had elapsed since its birth, arrayed in its best and whitest, lying lengthwise on a pillow. On surrendering it to the relative who was to hold the child, acting probably as his godfather, she incontinently scuttled up-stairs again to the other women, who, in accordance with old tribal notions, remained out of sight, and had no part nor lot in the case. When the boy was brought

into the room by the godfather, who had thrown round his shoulders, after the fashion of the stole, the *talith*, a white silken drape about six feet long and a foot or more in width, with fringed ends, the operator at once began his ceremonial, in the shape of loudly and rudely intoned Hebrew prayers. The operator in these cases, though often, as it seems a rabbi, is not always in holy orders, and in this case was the butcher, who had duly qualified himself for the performance of the rite among the community, by carefully getting up the ritual for the ceremony. He was as poor a type of asepticism as one could find in a day's hunt, a rusty unkempt German Jew, with long hair and beard, and a coat to correspond, and the pervasive insinuating odor of the "great unwashed." His preparations had been made for the arrival of the child. He had drawn up to the window a small table on which the godfather took his seat, holding the child, still lying on the pillow, with its head towards him, and its thighs grasped and held apart, one in each hand. His feet were supported on a kitchen chair set in front of the table. On another chair, within reach, were set the operator's paraphernalia; first, the knife, a short, square-pointed double-edged one, very thin, like a small spatula, evidently accustomed for many generations to its work of making Hebrews, and used of course for nothing else. Then a glass of water, a wine-glass containing a saturated solution of sugar in whisky, in which lay a strip of old linen, a saucerful of coal ashes, a few small squares of old linen for wipes, and a small bag, the size of a marble, filled with sugar and crushed fruit cake.

After the godfather had taken his place on the table, the operator still uttering loud prayers, which sounded all the more barbaric from the combination of Hebrew guttural and a chronic huskiness of voice, undid the diaper and disclosed the child's penis in a state of erection, induced, doubtless, before he was brought into the room, and meant as a safeguard against too close a shearing off of the prepuce. The foreskin was removed by a sweep of the knife, the mucous membrane rapidly torn and pushed back with the fingers, and the bleeding stump promptly taken into the mouth and vigorously sucked, the blood being expectorated into the saucerful of ashes, and the mouth washed with water from the tumbler.

The vigorous yells of the infant were nipped in