

nervous system, justifying the assertion to which I have already drawn your attention several times that all medicinal substances may be considered indefinitely as modifiers of the nervous system.

The quality of the metamorphoses, which the material undergoes and the activity of the nutritive mutation may be influenced in an abnormal sense in accordance with a particular disposition of the economy, answering to the old conception of Diathesis which impresses a vicious course on the manner by which these changes are accomplished. It is in all these cases specially that there would be a major interest to interfere with the evolution of the nutritive phenomena in order to bring them back to their normal course. These diatheses result sometimes from a very long subjection of the organism to conditions more or less abnormal which end by realizing a particular adaptation, producing this vicious form of evolution from the nutritive phenomena; but they are indeed more frequently congenital, because the permanent alterations of nutrition may have their principal origin in heredity or an inborn tendency. Each anatomical element, arising from the primordial cells constituted by the ovum and the spermatozoon, contain or reproduce the method of nutritive activity of these elements or their generators. This explains the difficulty that we experience in modifying as well by the means of medicinal substances as by the aid of physical agents, the nutrition, of cells of which the reactions have been firmly established for a long time in a fixed direction.

We almost always ignore the very cause of the trouble in nutrition capable of engendering the diathesis. While observation teaches us that each time that a living organism deviates from its normal functions on account of a morbid influence, it tends to return spontaneously to its normal state, in other words, to health; and one may, with Professor Panchard, consider the malady as being often only the sum total of the oscillations resulting from the antagonistic action which arises from the disturbing and the curing effect, oscillations which at last arrive at a state of equilibrium. In order that a disease which is not necessarily fatal may not go on to a cure, and consequently that it may remain chronic, it is necessary that the disturbing effort should be lasting and maintain the deviation.

In some cases, this deviation producing persistent nutritive alterations will be able to cause paroxysmal accidents, rebellion of the organism which reacts by these violent manifestations; these are then useful maladies, if one may thus speak, and which it is necessary to know and respect. But, in the majority of cases, it is important to correct this deviation from the normal nutritive phenomena, because these troubles