

one. The mere suppression of the convulsion is not a cure of the disorder. The disturbance of nutrition and lessened stability of the nervous system, as a result of the bromide treatment, is often a more serious matter than the epilepsy itself.

Henry B. Hurd read an excellent paper before the Johns Hopkins Hospital Medical Society (*Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin*, December, 1898; *Medicine*). He says that within a few years past a new departure has been made in the treatment of epilepsy. The former treatment by medicine alone has been unsatisfactory, and remedy after remedy has been used and discarded. Surgical operations also have been performed, in some cases with good results, but in a great majority of instances with little benefit.

In epilepsy we do not deal with the epileptic paroxysm alone, but with a complexus of symptoms, among which the epileptic convulsion may be regarded as the last of a series of morbid processes.

The majority of epileptics possess an extremely weak nervous system, perhaps inherited, and the individual patient is always unduly susceptible to disturbing influences. It has been known for a long time that the causes of epilepsy varied. In many instances epilepsy has been thought to be due wholly to disturbances of digestion, but it is now pretty evident that we have to deal with a more serious trouble. It is not primary digestion alone but often secondary digestion that is at fault. There is some defect in metabolism, as a result of which the system becomes poisoned. The neurotic organization to which he refers, being unduly responsive to the action of this poison, is overwhelmed by it, and we have an epileptic paroxysm. It was formerly thought that if some remedy could be found to control the paroxysm, epilepsy was cured, but now we know that remedies which merely control the paroxysm do very little to cure the disease. It is like tying the hands of a maniac to cure his excitement. The general effect of the bromides and of similar remedies has not been to prevent the generation of the poison in the system, but merely to restrain its manifestation in an epileptic attack. Such restraint may be effective for a time, but finally the poison becomes so overwhelming that a paroxysm can no longer be restrained, and a furious convulsion follows which probably equals in force the sum of the minor paroxysms which had been prevented by the remedy. It has been found by experience that the condition of such a patient is worse than if he had more frequent but milder convulsions.

Recent observations have indicated the character of the