

neuter and weak in themselves, produce no psycho-electric reaction when by their repetition they cease to cause any shock of emotion or surprise. The author also finds that immediate and perceptive impressions more especially find expression in vaso-motor modifications causing changes in conductivity, while imaginative and associative emotions cause secretory modification translated into changes of potential at the surface of the body. Voluntary effort can only to a limited extent inhibit these reactions.

Experiments on forty-six subjects served to show that the variations in reaction are considerable, not only in different individuals, but also in the same individual from time to time. It is also noteworthy that psycho-electric reactivity is not altogether in accordance with general reactivity. Thus persons who are in general very sensitive may not show intense psycho-electric sensitiveness. This Radecki explains by supposing that in sensitive persons the multiple emotions aroused interfere with each other and diminish the final result. It is thus impossible to establish a norm of sensitiveness, though it remains of interest to compare the sensitiveness of special determined types of subject.

An interesting series of experiments was concerned with the use of the galvanometer, and especially the electrometer, in psycho-analysis on Jung's lines. A frequently repeated experiment is for the subject to select mentally a particular playing-card, and for the experimenter to determine which card has been selected by the reaction to the galvanometer as he presents the cards in turn to the subject. This experiment is nearly always successful. Incidentally, Radecki recommends the use of the galvanometer in courts of justice.

The general conclusion is that though the psycho-electric method has serious limitations, it yet has its advantages, more especially since it renders possible the objective registrations of affective processes which are so slight that all the other physiological methods—cardiographic, plethysmographic, dynamometric, etc.—fail to record them.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

Visual Phenomena in Fever [*Ueber Fieberphantasmen im Wachen*].
(*Zt. f. d. gesam. Neurolog. u. Psychiat.*, 1912, Heft 4.) Näcke, P.

The observations of alienists on themselves are always interesting. Professor Näcke here carefully records and discusses some phantasmal experiences of his own during an attack of right broncho-pneumonia with high fever last winter. His age is 61, and he appears to be very little liable to subjective visual phenomena. He mentions that he has never even been able to detect hypnagogic hallucinations. During his recent experience of such phenomena he was fully conscious, and dictated a description to his wife. On the second day of the illness, when lying on his back in a dark room in the evening with closed eyes, he became aware of a crowd of pictures passing before him to the right, at a moderate and equal rate, which was not easy to arrest, on a flat surface, apparently about half a yard from the eye—woods, canals, lakes, groups of women and children, etc.—but the details could not be clearly seen (he is very short-sighted). The visions could also be seen with open eyes, but not so distinctly as with closed eyes. There was some

colour, but for the most part the pictures were in black and white. The next day, in bright day-light, with no fever and normal pulse, similar visions, apparently at the same distance as before, were seen when the eyes were fixed on the dark carpet. They were more distinct than on the previous day, especially when the eyes were closed. It is noteworthy that they tended to disappear when attention was distracted from them. In the evening, with fever, a great variety of figures and landscapes appeared, but not so clearly as before.

In discussing this experience, Näcke supposes that there was increased sensitiveness of the retina due to fever, with hyperæmia, more rapid circulation, changed metabolism, and heightened blood-pressure. In addition to the entoptic manifestations thus caused, Näcke supposes an increased sensitiveness of the visual centres, and perhaps heightened imagination and association. The appearance of the visions on the second day of observation, in the absence of fever, Näcke puts down to commencing exhaustion and changed metabolism. The content of the visions is attributed to entoptic flecks developed, under the influence of attention and fixation, by the pressure of the eyelids. It is added that the visions could not be influenced by the will, and that they had no relation to anything recently seen or read of. The visions differed from illusions, Näcke concludes, by being based on entoptic phenomena developed by attention, and might be called pseudo-hallucinations. He finally sets forth their significance as links in a chain of phenomena, which, on the abnormal side, extend to the true delirium of fever and of insanity, and on the normal side to hypnagogic hallucinations and ordinary dreams. He might have added that the phenomena he has described are still more closely related to the visions—richer and more brilliant, however—produced by certain drugs, notably mescal.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

2. Ætiology of Insanity.

A First Study of Inheritance of Epilepsy. (Jour. Nerv. and Ment. Dis., November, 1911.) Davenport and Weeks.

The term "epilepsy" is here used in a wide sense to cover not only convulsions but temporary loss of consciousness. This study is based on the pedigrees of inmates of the New York State Village for Epileptics, with the help of the Eugenic Record Office. The homes and the relations of patients and their physicians were visited. It is claimed that the pedigrees thus obtained are very different from the ordinary unscientific "family history." The number of separate pedigrees was 177, and they are here analysed by the Mendelian method. A great many pedigree charts are reproduced. These show the high proportion of epileptic offspring to feeble-minded parents. The authors regard ordinary epilepsy as due to the absence of a character in the germ-plasm, epilepsy rarely, if ever, arising from strains devoid of defective germ-plasm. The various forms of epilepsy act from this point of view much in the same way as a "neuropathic taint" may be regarded as an

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Havelock Ellis

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