

Neuro-dynamic medicine ; Neuro-therapeia / by E. Haughton, M.D.

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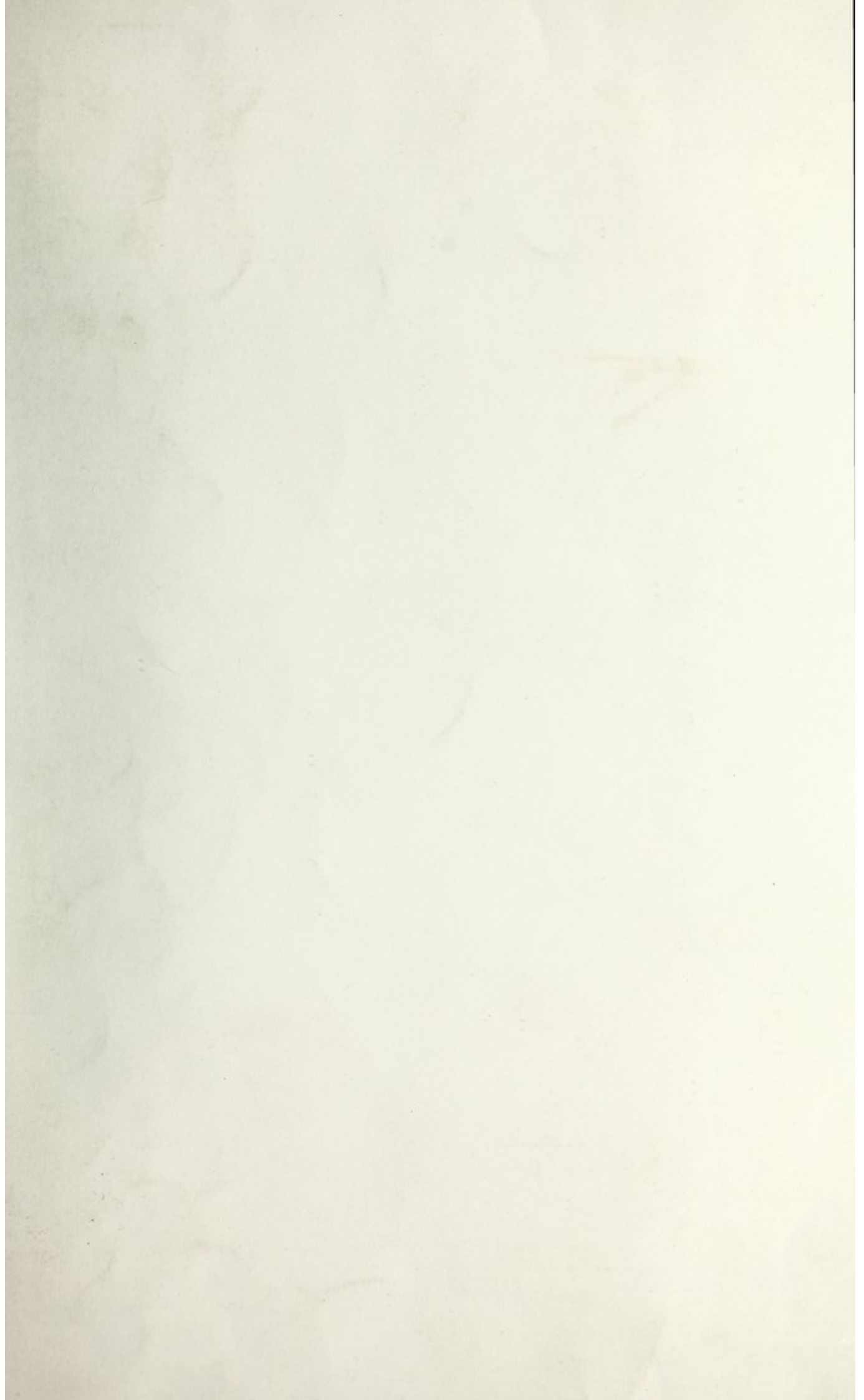
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[From the MEDICAL MIRROR for May, 1866.]

NEURO-DYNAMIC MEDICINE.

BY E. HAUGHTON, M.D., GREAT MALVERN.



DISEASE is a manifestation or phase of life, characterized by excess, diminution, or perversion of vital action; or, in other words, by alteration in the rate of evolution of the vital force, its absolute quantity, or its mode of distribution. A REMEDY may consist of any thing or any power in nature, capable of altering the existing state of the organism without inflicting permanent injury; but nothing is a remedy except it stands in a special relation to the sum total of actual conditions. VITAL RESISTANCE is the reaction of the nervous energy against all agents which tend to alter the present condition of the body, and is one of the most important elements in by far the largest proportion of recoveries which take place. NERVOUS EQUILIBRIUM is that condition of a living creature in which each and every organ receives an amount of vital force from the nervous tissue which supplies it proportionate to its actual necessities, and to the total amount evolved within the organism. The NEURO-DYNAMIC LAW OF HEALING affirms that in order to cure disease it is necessary (1) to increase the amount of vital force continuously evolved; (2) to regulate functional periodic changes; and (3) to restore the equilibrium of the nervous system. There are, therefore, two apparently opposite ways of dealing with disease; viz., (1) that which raises the vitality by removing the symptoms, and (2) that which removes the symptoms by raising the vitality. In like manner, Pathology has three principal aspects:—

- (1) As it affects vital action.
- (2) As it affects the fluids.
- (3) As it affects the solids of the body.

Giving rise to three schools of medical philosophers, viz., the Vitalists, the Humoralists, and the Solidists. Or, as the rival parties are most nearly represented in the present day, the Homœopathists, the Hydropathists, and the Allopathists. The

first of these attach most importance to the combating of present symptoms. The second to the elimination of morbid matter from the system; and the third to the removal of morbid deposits, and the checking of structural changes. It is worthy of note, however, that the Homœopathists besides being Vitalists in theory (in which respect they are perfectly right), have super-added a rule without a reason in the dogma "*similia similibus curantur*," or like things are cured by like. It is highly rational to suppose that changes in the material composition of the blood and solid tissues of the body are almost invariably preceded by some excess, diminution, or perversion of vital action; so that we are justified in regarding Pathological changes of structure as results rather than causes of disease, and which may even be removed without necessarily leaving the patient in a better condition. Nor can we suppose that the blood can be much corrupted without previous imperfection of function on the part of one or more of the principal organs of elimination. It is plain, therefore, that a true and catholic system of medicine must not only include every known remedy in its own proper place; but must recognise the part played by the nervous system both in the supervention and removal of disease. There is, moreover, no one of the forces at work in external nature which has not its counterpart within the body, with the addition of a kind of force, properly denominated "vital," and which differs in some respects from electricity or any other of the physical forces. Nevertheless, this vital force is so closely related to the other forces of nature, that there is reason to believe that it has its source entirely in the affinities which bind together the elements of the food and drink which we take into our bodies, and the action of the oxygen of the atmosphere upon the materials which it meets with in our blood. Whether, therefore, we fix our attention upon the condition of the organs, the blood, or the nervous system, we must be prepared to recognize in every living creature a special organization, whose condition determines the effects of certain stimuli, and which itself depends upon certain conditions for the maintenance of its existence. Moreover, life being a dynamic condition, so also is disease; and everything which is to alter this condition must be either itself a force, or capable of modifying or directing force in some way or other.

[From the MEDICAL MIRROR for October, 1867.]

NEURO-THERAPEIA.

BY E. HAUGHTON, M.D.

ON "VITAL RESISTANCE," "NERVOUS EQUILIBRIUM," AND
"RHYTHMICAL CONTINUITY."

As health has three principal aspects in which it may be viewed, so every living organism, in its relation to morbid agents, is endowed with two remarkable properties, whereby its life is preserved amidst all the varying influences by which it is surrounded. These two properties are respectively named "Vital Resistance," and "Rhythmical Continuity;" and by their mutual antagonism tend towards the maintenance of that healthy condition of the system which has been denominated "Nervous Equilibrium"—a term by which we understand that the nervous currents are properly distributed in proportionate quantities to the various parts of the body, and that the said currents run in proper directions, according to the necessities of the organs. "Vital Resistance" is likewise properly called *reaction*, as it is essentially the rebound of nature against all agents by which the present condition of the living system would otherwise be altered in any respect, either for better or worse.

This it is which forms so useful a safeguard against the effects of variations of temperature, diet, sleep, &c., by preventing any permanent change from being suddenly effected in vital conditions. It is easy to see that without a knowledge of this principle, not one single step can be taken in rational therapeutics. But the antagonism by which sudden alterations are met, is only one element in the maintenance of nervous equilibrium. There is also a principle of conservatism in the body, whose tendency is to continue in operation any action once commenced, just as a series of advancing waves tends to overcome, by a repetition of vibrations, any obstacle which does not rest upon a sufficiently solid foundation.

These rhythmical vibrations may be good or evil in their ultimate effects; and we thus find that disease has its conservatism as well as health; and that the rhythm of its irregularity is oftentimes as perfect as the "healthful music" of the strong man's pulse. To use a political simile, the rightful government has been temporarily deposed, and the nervous system is just as tenacious in adhering to bad habits once acquired, as a country is unwilling to give up a government to which it has been long accustomed, however much it may have resented its establishment in the first instance.

Again, in the human body, as in many a political community, there is often quiet from exhaustion, or degenerated sensibility; as when that state has been produced which is called a *tolerance of the remedy*. There has been vital resistance; but that resistance has been in vain. Any drug, therefore, which is swallowed under such circumstances will fail to produce its accustomed effect—a fact which clearly shows that the living body acts upon the dead drug, and not *vice versa*, as commonly supposed. How otherwise can we account for the fact, that of two grains of opium, equally genuine, one may produce narcotism, the other stimulation; that stimulants may become sedatives, tonics laxatives, and so on to the end of the *materia medica*. Is it not evident that when powerful effects follow the taking of a small quantity of drug, the greater portion (almost the entire) of the force operating in the production of such effects, is at the expense of the living body, and especially of the nervous system.

May it not be that what we call nervous centres are reservoirs of force, which may be called upon in any sudden emergency, to give up some of their store? and may it not also be that a reversal of the direction of the nervous currents may be instantaneously effected by an impression on the nervous centres?

When such reversal has once been effected, the body is (so to speak) negatively electrified; and this state will be maintained by the principle of continuity, until vital resistance is again roused to throw it off, either by accident, or by the systematic efforts of medical science.

In the condition known as chronic disease, we see either a series of reactions against a real *materies morbi*, or continuous vibrations against a cause which was formerly operative, but which has long ceased to have a real and tangible existence. A familiar instance of the principle in question is the sensation as of sand in the eye, after the offending particle has been removed; as is also the common feeling as of pain in the foot, felt by men whose legs have been amputated.

It is by bearing this principle in mind, that such wonderful anti-periodic effects may be accomplished by the simple agencies of heat and cold: by whose means vital resistance can be aroused, morbid continuity broken through, and nervous equilibrium re-established.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

“THE THREEFOLD NATURE OF HEALTH AND DISEASE.”

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