

PSYCHIATRY

Youth Is Made Well After 17 Years of Epilepsy

**"Eugene" Will Have To Take Dilantin All His Life
But Need Not Fear Fits; Brain Is Not Deteriorated**

AN "EPOCH MAKING" case which revolutionizes the medical profession's idea of mental deterioration in epilepsy stirred the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Cincinnati. The case is of "Eugene," reported by Dr. Howard Fabing, Cincinnati.

Eugene is a twenty-three-year-old youth who spent seventeen years of his life in an almost continuous epileptic fit. He is now completely well and normal, thanks to the new epilepsy remedy, dilantin. Fully as remarkable as his escape from the imprisonment of the disease has been his remarkable mental achievement.

On Nov. 29, 1939, his mental age according to the Stanford Binet test was 6.7 years. By the same test now his mental age is 10.2 years, a gain of nearly four years in five months.

The phrase "epoch making" was applied to this case report by Dr. Tracy J. Putnam, of New York City, one of the originators of the new epilepsy remedy, dilantin. This is a chemical which Eugene and other epileptics take every day in the form of a capsule to be swallowed like a pill.

Eugene will probably have to go on taking dilantin for the rest of his life. Otherwise he will be able to live normally and Dr. Fabing said that he expects Eugene will soon be able to return home and start living the life of any twenty-three-year-old young man.

Until he was six and one-half years old, Eugene was a perfectly normal child. Then he began having epileptic seizures of every kind, from the little lapses of consciousness known as Petit Mal epilepsy to the terrifying mouth-frothing fits of Grand Mal epilepsy. They were so frequent and so severe that for the next seventeen years the boy lived in almost one continual fit, Dr. Fabing said. During this time he learned nothing.

He got his first dose of dilantin on November 8, 1939, and has not had a fit since. During this time, of course, he has continued to take the medicine daily.

Since January 20 of this year he has been living in the home of Dr. Doris Twitchell-Allen in Glendale, a small

town a few miles north of Cincinnati. On that date he began his tutoring under Mrs. Richard B. Freeman. Dr. Fabing emphasized that a great share of the credit for Eugene's progress belongs to Dr. Twitchell-Allen who took him into her home regardless of how it upset her own household and who by daily care and guidance helped transform him from a six-year-old personality who could hardly feed himself into a well-mannered, socially mature young man.

The remarkable progress Eugene made under Mrs. Freeman's tutoring, shown by his increased ability and performance on the mental test, shows that the brain does not deteriorate in epilepsy, as formerly believed. Dr. Fabing believes that Eugene's brain grew anatomically, that is, in structure, to keep up with the growth of his body, but it could not develop as a thinking organ until it was released from the thrall of the epileptic condition by the dilantin treatment. His brain is now growing physiologically. This, Dr. Fabing said, raises the question of what is educability.

Keeping pace with his mental learning has been Eugene's learning to live as a social person. He appeared on the moving picture screen as a normal, if somewhat slow-moving, person able to play ball or badminton, conducting himself with ease and suavity at a formal dinner party, and picking up a year-old baby and playing with him as gently and competently as any adult.

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Scientists Would Like To Bring Peace to World

OVER 500 American scientists have joined in a declaration in support "of all reasonable programs which seek a better understanding of the causes of war and which will preserve peace for the United States and bring peace to the world."

Sponsored by the American Association for Scientific Workers and transmitted by its president, Dr. Anton J.



PLAYING WITH LIGHTNING

This fiery tornado, spiralling to earth, is really a stroke of lightning over Lake Maggiore, Switzerland. The photograph was made from a boat, which was rocking and drifting while the exposure was made. Thus came the widening of the flash. (From "Playing with Lightning," by K. B. McEachron and K. G. Patrick.)

Carlson, eminent University of Chicago physiologist, to President Roosevelt, this peace resolution was prepared and circulated before the Nazi invasion of Holland and Belgium and penetration into France. A similar resolution was adopted by the Psychologists League at their recent meeting in New York.

It gives voice to the wish of almost all thinking men and women that war should cease destroying the more constructive aspects of civilization.

It calls war wasteful, futile, out of harmony with science.

It warns that democracy and freedom of thought are endangered by the emotional turmoil which accompanies war.

It declares that "the continuance of progress now largely depends upon the scientists of neutral nations."

Almost unanimous assent will be found for such expressions. But to the statement that "American scientists can best fulfill their share of this responsibility if the United States remains at peace" there is some opposition.

Is this not a categorical conclusion

based on premises which are still in the making? asks Dr. Peyton Rous, of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. He questions whether scientists, as scientists, should endorse such a conclusion, which attempts crystallization of their attitudes toward a conflict, while all is in flux.

Many people are convinced, in Dr.

Rous' opinion, that the gains of dictators have been made at the expense of nations that chose to remain at peace in the attempt to insure the continuance of progress. The unqualified appeal for the United States to remain at peace may be taken as a message to the dictators: "Do what you choose. We won't raise a finger!"

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MEDICINE

Shaking Palsy Treated With Synthetic Vitamin

Parkinson's Disease, Hitherto Hopeless Responds Within a Few Minutes to Injection of Vitamin B₆

REMARKABLE changes in Parkinson's disease patients treated with vitamin B₆ administered intravenously, effective within a few minutes after the treatment, were reported by Dr. Tom D. Spies of Hillman Hospital, Birmingham, Ala., speaking at the 100th annual meeting of Illinois State Medical Society.

A severe and lingering disease called also paralysis agitans, Parkinson's disease is a shaking palsy, marked by muscular weakness, stiffness and pain. Its treatment has hitherto been considered more or less hopeless.

Dr. Spies and his colleague, Dr. William B. Bean, treated 11 cases of Parkinsonism of at least four years' duration, eight of which were arteriosclerotic and three of which were post-encephalitic. Upon the cases following encephalitis vitamin B₆ produced the most remarkable results. A few minutes after the injection there was marked improvement. Tremor and rigidity decreased. The patients were able to walk without customary stiffness.

Two of the arteriosclerotic patients

showed definite improvement, five were unchanged and one was considerably worse.

Dr. Spies also reported that Dr. Norman Jolliffe of the New York University College of Medicine in a personal communication has stated that he has obtained similar results following administration of vitamin B₆ to patients with Parkinson's disease.

Temporary relief of neuromuscular symptoms, roaring sensations in the ears, anorexia and insomnia in selected persons with malnutrition, obtained through use of another synthetic vitamin, alphatocopherol, or vitamin E, the so-called fertility vitamin, was also reported by Dr. Spies. These patients were badly nourished but gave no evidence of pellagra, beriberi or riboflavin deficiencies.

Last year Dr. Spies reported that vitamin B₆, then newly synthesized, produced dramatic, 24-hour recoveries of patients with pellagra and beriberi that recurred when they lived on their old inadequate diets.

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however. There are only enough to meet the needs of naval training stations and the larger naval hospitals.

More than 3,000 mental casualties of war are expected by naval authorities on the basis of experience during the World War. With an average strength of 500,000 men in the naval forces during those years, there were 711 men discharged in 1917 because of mental ill health, 1,457 during 1918 and 1,437 during 1919.

"In the event of national emergency today, the complement would be about the same as in the two years of the World War," Captain Sutton said. "For that reason, it is felt that we may safely utilize these figures in connection with general planning."

How will officers and men stand the mental strain of long hours of waiting for a major naval battle plus the actual combat itself? Years of rigorous drilling and instruction to such an extent that most of the men are "letter perfect in their reactions" do not give the answer to this important question because, although every effort is made to parallel actual battle conditions, there is no way of injecting the psychological factors of actual battle in these drills.

"For this reason, there is no means of evaluating the possible effects of fear, fatigue, and other allied factors on the individual, or the organization as a whole," Captain Sutton said. "Conditions may be such in advance of an engagement that all hands may have to be at their stations for some hours before actual contact with the enemy is made, and those who should know indicate that a battle between capital ships may last from a few minutes to an hour or more. The general anticipation is that such a battle would be very short."

"One does not have to accentuate the details of such possibilities in order to stress the importance of psychological reactions in connections with the service psychiatric problems."

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PSYCHIATRY

Asks Aid of Psychiatrists In Selecting Men for Navy

THE U. S. Navy has asked the advice of the American Psychiatric Association, meeting in Cincinnati, in selecting mentally sound men for this branch of the national defense.

A trained psychiatrist at every recruit-

ing station, to weed out applicants likely to break under the strain of battle, would be the best way of accomplishing the job, Captain Dallas G. Sutton, M.C., U. S. Navy, said. There are not enough psychiatrists to man every recruiting station,

● Earth Trembles

Information collected by Science Service from seismological observatories resulted in the location by U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Jesuit Seismological Association of the following preliminary epicenters:

Sunday, May 19, 10:17.8 a.m., EST
East of Sakhalin. Latitude, near 50 degrees north. Longitude, 158 degrees east. Depth, 500 km.

Tuesday, May 21, 1:48.9 p.m., EST
Tonga Island Group. Latitude, near 23 degrees south. Longitude, 178 degrees west. Depth, 400 km.

Friday, May 24, 11:38.8 a.m., EST
Off Peruvian coast, near Callao. Latitude 12 degrees south. Longitude 78 degrees west. Strong, destructive shock.

For stations cooperating with Science Service, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Jesuit Seismological Association in reporting earthquakes recorded on their seismographs, see SNL, Feb. 24.