

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.

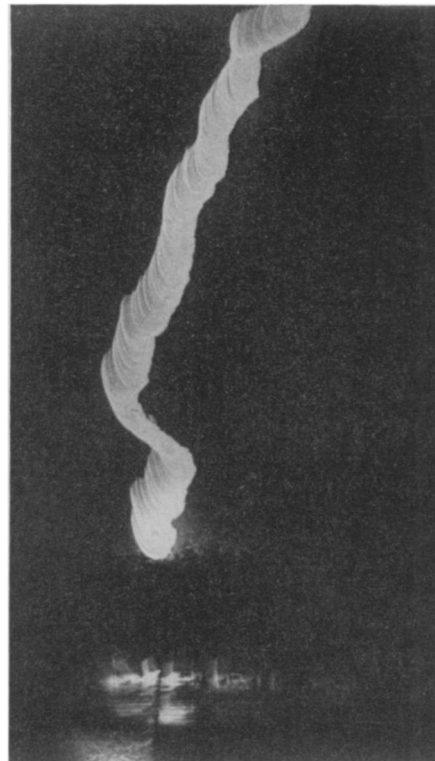
Science News Letter, June 1, 1940

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