

## Medical Matters.

### HYSTERIA IN ANIMALS.



A WELL known Russian physician has recently described two cases which he believes to be due to Hysteria. The first was that of a cat, nine months old, healthy and active, which was one day bitten in the back by a dog, and which immediately fell down, apparently paralysed. Six weeks later, it was found to walk about only with its fore-paws dragging its body and hind legs. There appeared to be complete loss of sensation in the hind legs and posterior third of the body. The tail also seemed to be paralysed. But there was no atrophy of the hind limbs, nor any loss of power over the rectum or bladder. The case was supposed to be a rare instance of inflammation of the spinal cord in the back, due in some manner to the injury received, until one day a servant girl who desired to see whether cats fell upon all fours, threw it from the first-floor of the house on to the outside pavement. The animal alighted on four feet, immediately ran away, and was found to be cured completely of its previous apparent loss of sensation and motion. Without diagnosing the cat as hysterical, we would prefer to regard it as one of those rare cases of complete loss of nerve power, occasioned by a sudden fright, and sometimes cured by an equally sudden fright. We vividly remember such a case which occurred many years ago. A girl was knocked down and nearly run over by a van; she fainted, and next day a large lock of her hair on the side of her head, which was grazed by the wheel of the van, was found to have turned quite white. She was carried home, and some hours afterwards it was found that she had lost absolute power of movement of the lower limbs, and, to some degree, had lost sensation also. After several months passed in this condition, she was taken to a hospital out-patient department for examination, and placed in a dressing room in which there was a low couch, some five feet above which was a strong shelf on which surgical dressings were usually stored, but which at the moment happened to be clear. She was seated in a wheeled chair when a violent uproar was heard in the outer waiting hall, and a student rushed in, stating that a dog had

suddenly gone mad. Immediately afterwards, the dog forced its way into the room, wildly barking. General consternation was naturally felt, but the effect upon the patient was most remarkable. She made one spring from her wheeled chair on to the couch about four feet off, and with one more jump landed herself on to the broad shelf at least five feet up the wall. The dog was secured and removed, the patient descended from the shelf without any assistance, and walked home perfectly cured. There was no question whatever as to her loss of power and sensation previously, nor as to the absolute cure which followed the second severe fright she experienced.

### ARTIFICIAL ALBUMEN.

MUCH excitement has been caused, especially in the lay press, by the announcement that a German scientist has been able, in the laboratory, to manufacture albumen. This compound, physiology teaches us, is an essential element of human diet, being found in a greater or lesser quantity in all the chief foods. The albumen prepared in the laboratory, chiefly out of waste products of the coal tar series, affords another illustration of the marvellous resources of Nature. The discoverer of the new compound, with essentially German instincts, is said to have patented his find, and to intend to make an enormous fortune out of it. We imagine that he is rather counting his chickens before the eggs are laid. The lay press are discussing whether in the future there will be any need for flocks of cows and sheep, and predicting that we shall all come to live upon tabloids of albumen, cunningly dressed up with vegetables. It would, indeed, be possible for our contemporaries to go a step further, because carbon is already easily enough prepared, and so, from a theoretical standpoint, our bodies could be easily nourished by tabloids alone. Cooking is already an unknown art in this country, except amongst the very few, and it is possible that an immense amount of dyspepsia would be prevented by our food being saved from such manipulation as it is at present subjected to. Still, medical men are aware that we are still a long way off the Millennium in which starvation will be rendered impossible by tabloids of albumen, because the new process, even if it proves completely successful, must, in any case, be so expensive as to make it a laboratory experiment, and nothing more.

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