and could even play cricket in quite good teams. Men whose sight was very defective because of cataract and who also had marked oscillation still went on getting coal at the coal face, and some of them declared they would not join the compensation group, but intended to continue working until they were operated upon for their cataract. Recently he saw a man with primary optic atrophy in both eyes, whose visual acuity was 1/60, and though he had to place his hand on the shoulder of another man to find his way, on to the cage to descend the mine, he went regularly to the coal face, and earned ordinary wages at it.

Why did men give up? Among the million men engaged in coal-getting, as in any other million men, there were many whose general health was failing and who for other reasons wished to give up work, and those men were particularly liable, when they had nystagmus, to claim compensation for it, because they got more money, and for a longer time in this way than under the National Health Insurance Act. There is among all workers, a definite percentage who are disinclined to work, particularly those having the old-fashioned maladie imaginaire described by Molière. He thought this was the condition which existed in many cases of so-called neurasthenia, which commenced some time after underground work had been stopped. The remedy for it was a return to regular work of some kind.

ANNOTATION

Visual Hallucinations

Visual hallucinations in sane people was the title of an interesting communication by Mr. Ormond read at the last Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association in which he gave instructive details of some patients of his own. Francis Galton in his "Inquiries into Human Faculty" devoted considerable attention to the nature of this phenomenon, and proved that a large number of persons were "visualizers." That is to say, that when they memorize an event they see it. Ormond considers that the sensitization of the visual memory area is in these cases abnormally high, just as in the word-blind it is abnormally low. Of all the senses sight is the one in which we have most confidence, yet even here, the final interpretation of the visual impressions conveyed from the eye as an optical instrument depends entirely on the functional activity of the visual cortex. It can never be proved that the same object produces precisely the same sensation in any two observers,
and, as is constantly being proved in our courts of law, two honest independent witnesses will carry away quite different impressions of the same scene. If this is true even immediately, how much greater must the difference be at a later period, when the varying nature of the visual memory is taken into account? As was well said by this year's Bowman Lecturer: "Increased knowledge of the psychology of perception, in which in man vision plays a predominant part, must depend on increased knowledge of the physiology of the special senses. And, further, that the advance of ophthalmology also depends upon increased knowledge of the physiology of the eye and of vision."

ABSTRACTS

I.—MISCELLANEOUS

(1) Fergus, A. Freeland (Glasgow).—Miners' nystagmus. Lancet, May 23, 1925.

(1) Fergus, who, as a medical referee, has had a large experience of miners' nystagmus, comes to the conclusion, in spite of the great amount of work which has been done upon it by such investigators as the late Mr. Simeon Snell, Mr. Llewellyn and Mr. Robson, that the theory of its aetiology, which attributes the disease to deficient illumination, constrained posture, and inhalation of gases is difficult of acceptance, or, as Fergus says, "the verdict must be one of not proven." In support of the contention that we do not yet understand the aetiology of the disease quite the most important point brought out by Fergus is, in the reviewer's opinion, that miners' nystagmus is almost unknown in America. American literature deals with European, not American, nystagmus. Hoffmann, dealing with an investigation in Illinois, states that five hundred miners working under conditions which would render them liable to nystagmus in this country were carefully examined and not a single case of miners' nystagmus found. Hoffmann says:—"No reasons suggest themselves, however, why this peculiar affliction should be limited to mining districts of European countries and not be found in American coal-mining districts, where, on account of the gaseous nature of the mines, the use of safety lamps is compulsory." Again, from his own experience in the Glasgow Eye Infirmary, Fergus recalls that in his early days miners' nystagmus was but rarely seen. This, one may suggest, is not such a strong point as the one previously given from America, for it will be admitted that if