stirring one second line agent for another if the first loses its effectiveness. Drugs that are most easily managed such as amantadine or selegiline might be the first to be considered. Drugs that must be titrated upward would be reserved for those patients in whom treatment remains unsatisfactory.

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NEUROLOGICAL STAMP

Pierre Fidèle Bretonneau 1778-1862

Pierre Bretonneau established typhoid fever as a specific entity. He used the term “dothienenteritis”, which was later replaced by the simple term typhoid. His more permanent place in history was assured by his observations on diphtheria which he began studying in 1818. The disease became epidemic and in 1821 he gave it its present name. The term was derived from the Greek dipthera, meaning a piece of hide or leather, as the condition was characterised by the formation of a membrane over the mucosa of the throat.

The paralysis associated with diphtheria had been observed by others some 70 years earlier. The classic account of the pathology of diphtheritic neuritis was written later by Meyer in 1881. The finding of conduction block in experimental diphtheritic neuritis had to wait until Professor Ian McDonald's doctoral thesis in 1962, and subsequent publication in Brain in 1963.

Bretonneau performed the first successful tracheostomy in croup and laryngeal diphtheria in 1825. He proposed a germ theory for disease some 20 years before Pasteur.

In 1962 on the centenary of his death, his image appeared on a stamp issued by France (Stanley Gibbons 1561, Scott 1022).

L F HAAS
Pierre Fidèle Bretonneau 1778-1862.

L F Haas

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