ABSTRACTS

therefore kept out, and some are too intelligent or too unintelligent for some work, so there are people temperamentally unsuited for particular conditions, and they should be diverted into occupations suitable for them. C. S. R.

PSYCHOSES.


The author thinks that pathological changes of structure occur in the nervous system from the first days of the illness and that this can be recognized during life by encephalography and examination of the fluid. These changes consist of lesions in the meninges which are inconspicuous and variable, degenerative changes in the vessels, in the nerve-cells, in the glia and in the nerve fibres. The most characteristic changes are the areas of disintegration like bunches of grapes on which the author has done so much work. The lesions are focal and widely disseminated, chiefly in the cortex but also in all parts of the brain. The cortical lesions may occur anywhere but chiefly in the frontal lobe and in the third cortical layer. Regenerative processes also occur.

The nature of the lesions and their irregular distribution account for the irregularity of symptoms. Their predilection for the third stratum accounts for the intellectual-emotional dissociation, and the extracortical lesions for the catatonia.

The author concludes that though still unknown the cause of dementia praecox is a pathological problem and not constitutional.

R. G. G.


After briefly reviewing the main current views of the causation of dementia praecox, the writer states that as a result of his experience of its peculiar prevalence among the Parsis of Bombay, he is convinced that in-breeding is an important factor. Since the Parsis left Persia in the eighth century, the intermarriage of cousins has been not only common but usual. Among the last 150 cases of mental disorder among Parsis the author has met with, no less than 76 were cases of dementia praecox. This singular prevalence is specially noticeable as the disease is comparatively rare among Hindus, who constitute by far the largest section of the population, and rarer still among Mohammedans.
The criticism that this prevalence of schizophrenia among Parsis was probably due to western education is refuted. It is conjectured that the continuous marriage of cousins in some way lessens the power of resistance to the stresses of life, producing the 'lack of vitality' (to use Mott’s phraseology), and the disorders of metabolism, that are the exciting factors in the break-down.

C. S. R.


The author has experimented on animals (apes, cats, mice) with mescalin and been able to produce phenomena of a catatonic kind in definite fashion. He couples with this work the data derived from mescalin intoxication in man, viz., a condition resembling toxic psychosis with hallucinations, together with such sympathetic signs as vomiting, salivation, and mydriasis. On this basis he argues for the possibility of the production of a symptomatological triad closely resembling that of dementia praecox; he believes the approximation to the acute stages of schizophrenia is unmistakable. On the other hand, it is not to be expected that mescalin should be able to reproduce the syndrome of that psychosis in all its details.

S. A. K. W.


A marked decline in first admissions of cases of alcoholic psychosis to the New York State Hospitals has taken place during the past two decades. The lowest admission rate occurred in the fiscal year ending June 1920, viz., 1.9 per cent. Since 1920 there has been a gradual rise in admissions, the peak of the curve being reached in 1927, viz., 7.0 per cent. In 1928 the rate dropped to 5.9 per cent. The reduction in the admission rate has been relatively greater among women than among men. First admissions with alcoholic psychoses came principally from urban districts. These psychoses were most prevalent in the Irish and Slavonic races, and were comparatively rare with the Jews. They, as a rule, occur principally in middle age, following years of intemperate use of alcohol. There has been a general reduction in the intemperate use of alcohol among all first admissions to the New York State Hospitals from 1911 to 1927. Acute hallucinosis is the outstanding type of alcoholic psychosis. There has been observed a change in the symptomatological picture as compared with the pre-war type, in that the patients appear more toxic and prostrated. There is often confusion, disorientation, combined hallucinations and delirious
admixtures during the acute phase. Recovery in the more severe cases is slower than in pre-war days. Korsakow's psychosis has decreased in frequency since the war and the mental symptoms and polyneuritis are much less severe. Permanent mental and physical residua are less common and recoveries more frequent than in the pre-war period.

C. S. R.

**PSYCHOPATHOLOGY.**


An elaborate histopathological study is based on the examination of material from four cases, with the phenomena of delirium tremens and of Korsakow's psychosis respectively in two.

The pathological foundation is one of diffuse, progressive, chronic parenchymatous nervous degeneration affecting a great part of the neuraxis. On this appears evidence of acute or subacute changes in the form of fresh capillary extravasations and glial reactions. In addition, however, must be noted the occurrence of local parenchymatous change, independently of the other, but of the same character, and usually, though not always, associated with vascular alterations. Vessel proliferation is seen with some frequency e.g., in corpora mamillaria, periventricular grey matter, neighbourhood of the aqueduct of Sylvius. It may be taken to represent efforts at tissue-repair. On the other hand, degeneration of vascular endothelium is often particularly prominent.

All the evidence goes to suggest that the noxa penetrates the nervous tissues from the cerebrospinal fluid, yet this in its turn does not clearly explain the involvement of deeper-lying structures; on the other hand, the position and nature of the processes in the vessels do not favour the view of entry by the blood-stream. The author with some diffidence takes refuge in the conception of a constitutionally influenced state of lowered resistance for certain parts of the neuraxis to alcoholigenic toxins, rather than to alcohol itself.

S. A. K. W.


Four chief types of cerebral change can be separated in connexion with the mental symptoms of the period of involution,