synaptic junctions, an action that is brought about in all probability as a result of the influence of some product of general metabolism circulating in the body. The present trend of physiological opinion is that nerves produce their effects through the intermediary of chemical agents. The researches on acetylcholine and histamine would appear to substantiate this contention, and to show a close connexion between nerve action and chemical stimuli. That the product postulated has a chemical action akin to that of the classes of drugs examined is a hypothesis that would appear to have some foundation in experimental fact.

C. S. R.

PSYCHOPATHOLOGY.


There are three orders of phenomena, bearing on hallucinosis, in the course of which the organism functions as a whole, and these may thus be summarized: (1) Certain drugs can produce visual hallucinations, and it is known that their point of attack is the organo-vegetative system. (2) In all hallucinated persons a particular state of consciousness exists, analogous to but not identical with half-sleep, which the author describes as ‘depersonalization.’ (3) The characteristic phenomenon of projection or exteriorization in reference to the self of the subject concerned is always in evidence.

The theory here suggested is that the sphere of orientation is always invaded, under certain circumstances, by that of the instincts. The state of depersonalization is not specific, but spatial projection is; the apparatus for projection is deranged by the invasion mentioned. At any level in the organo-vegetative system the trouble may have its starting-point.

J. S. P.


The description of the symptomatology of puerperal insanity dates only from 1875. An investigation of 54,000 cases of labour at the Rotunda Hospital revealed 81 cases of insanity, i.e., 0.17 per cent. At Grangegorman Asylum the percentage-rate for all cases of insanity was nearly 5. The ratio of cases of insanity to the number of births registered in the Irish Free State in the three years 1928, 1929, and 1930 was 162 to 175,780, i.e., 0.9 per cent. Toxæmia, sepsis and chorea are probably the chief predisposing factors in puerperal insanity.

C. S. R.
AbSTrACTS


Mental deficiency seems to be consistently more common in the male sex. This is most strikingly shown in opposite-sex twins. It appears in a similar consistent way that girls make a slightly better showing than boys in intelligence tests and in scholastic record. These facts suggest that gene factors of intelligence may in some cases be carried in the X-chromosomes and not only in the autosomes; or, in other words, that there may be a sex-linked factor in some cases in the genetic history of mental deficiency and of general intelligence. In order to make the simplest provision in biological symbols and formulas for a sex-linked factor, it is necessary to assume the existence of six possible types of males, nine types of females, and 54 types of mating. Theoretically, from 38 of these types of mating only normal offspring can result. The mentally deficient offspring that may result from eight other types of mating may be expected to be equally distributed in the two sexes, as far as the possible influence of any sex-linked factor is concerned. Only male mentally deficient offspring can result from the remaining eight types of mating. Among phenotypes it is impossible to distinguish the various genotypes represented in the symbols and formulas listed here. However, it may be readily deduced from the formulas that when both parents are mentally deficient or when the father alone is, an equal distribution of mental deficiency in the two sexes of offspring may be expected. When both parents are normal or when the mother alone is mentally deficient, then, too, mentally deficient offspring of both sexes may result; but their distribution will not be equal in the two sexes, for the cases in which a sex-linked factor may be operative will be included in this part of the material. Here, according to theory, any relative excess of mental deficiency in the male sex must be, at least in part, attributed to a sex-linked factor. A re-investigation of Goddard's published material bears out the assumption of a sex-linked factor in the genetic history of mental deficiency. The general relative excess in the male is, however, greater than can be accounted for by this factor; to some extent it must be attributed to some other factor or factors.

C. S. R.


The authors failed throughout these investigations to find any reasonable grounds for concluding that among the insane there occurs either a digestion
leucocytosis or a digestion leucopenia. Variation in a succession of blood-counts developed in a large number of patients, whether the latter had been given milk or were fasting, and there was no definite evidence that the taking of food had any effect on the leucocytic curve. It is possible that the hourly and daily rhythm of the white corpuscles, described by Sabin and Shaw, may not be exactly the same in the mentally deranged as among normal individuals; but this must be a matter for future research, and has nothing to do with the subject of haemoclasia.

C. S. R.


Both the polynuclear count and the Schilling index show the presence, in acute and chronic cases of insanity, of an infected condition in a considerable proportion. Tuberculosis, although it is responsible for a certain small number of cases, is not the chief factor at work. Obscure sources of infection such as the gall-bladder, nasal sinuses and intestine, are probably the cause of the shifts to the left and low polynuclear counts which have been observed.

C. S. R.

PROGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.


Twenty patients suffering from schizophrenia were treated with sulfosin, of whom two recovered, one became much worse, and 15 showed no change. Heredity and sex appeared to have little bearing on the result of the treatment of patients in this series. The treatment appeared to be perfectly safe and without any serious risks. During the pyrexial period unpleasant symptoms in the form of pain, sickness, loss of appetite and headache were common, but after the injections had been discontinued definite improvement in the physical state occurred. Some degree of tolerance appeared to be produced, as shown by the diminished pyrexial reactions with successive doses of sulfosin. Blood-sugar levels on the whole appeared to be raised, with a tendency to delay in the return to normal of the blood-sugar.

C. S. R.