NEUROLOGY


In a family of 101 persons, twenty-one were affected with peroneal atrophy in five generations. In this family the disease is not transmitted by persons who do not have the disease, either manifest or latent, but it is possible for persons who have not yet shown the disease to procreate offspring to whom they transmit it. If the parent lives long enough he will transmit the disease. Half the offspring of an affected parent are apt to be affected, provided the family is large and lives long enough to develop the disease. This applies both to parents who have the disease manifest at the time of procreation and to those who have the hereditary taint but have not yet developed it.

Males and females exhibit the disease equally and probably transmit it equally. The condition is apparently dominant to the normal and is not sex-linked.

R. M. S.

PROGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.


The patient was a man of 52, who had a severe apoplexy with right hemiplegia and loss of speech. After a stationary period was reached speech re-education was undertaken and persevered with for about eighteen months. Without, apparently, any other factor being in action than that of this re-education, the patient began to show an associated movement in flexion of the hand and forearm towards the mouth during the process of word-finding; at first it appeared solely during the mental effort of word-finding, but at a later stage it came only when the patient failed to find the required word. At the same time certain spasmodic movements of the hemiplegic right arm notably diminished.

Subsequently, following massage and exercises, voluntary control over the right arm improved, and with this the associated movement of the limb during speech reactions disappeared. Autopsy revealed an almost complete destruction of the left speech area, only the occipital part of the lower temporal lobe being left untouched.

The author indulges at great length in an interesting if somewhat hypothetical discussion on the part played by speech re-education in influencing the neighbouring mechanisms of the left hemisphere; apart from vicarious function of the right hemisphere, he argues that its effect was to excite the functional capacity of what of the speech area was left and at the same time eventually to prevent dissipation of physiological stimuli to mechanisms in the vicinity; and he sees in this process analogies with the activation of protoplasm by immune bodies.

S. A. K. W.
ABSTRACTS


Twenty-five cases with a persistently positive Wassermann reaction of the blood were selected for treatment with bismuth (potassium and sodium tartробismuthate). Each patient had had one or more courses of mercury and intravenous injections of arsenic. All were purely 'asymptomatic syphilis' and showed no alterations from the normal in the cerebrospinal fluid in regard to cells, globulin, Wassermann reaction or Lange curve. One to three courses were given of intramuscular injections of bismuth, and in many cases the Wassermann reaction of the blood became negative or was reduced. Of the patients, 13.8 per cent. relapsed after the second or third course of injections. The value of such treatment, however, is modified by the fact that even in syphilis with nervous symptoms, such as tabetics, bismuth may reduce or make the Wassermann reaction negative without any beneficial effect upon the course of the disease.

Bismuth therapy was not found to be more productive of albuminuria than other antisyphilitic preparations.

W. G. W.

Endocrinology.


Many attempts have been made to correlate the physical and mental symptoms of mongolism with disorders of one or other of the ductless glands. The condition can scarcely be set down to mere hypothyroidism. It has been attributed to a pluriglandular disturbance, the thyroid leading the way and others following. The gonads and the thymus are sometimes blamed, and changes in the pituitary have been described. While symptoms referable to dysfunction of endocrine organs are common enough, this cannot explain the whole clinical picture. It is highly probable that pluriglandular insufficiency is only a part of a general insufficiency and underdevelopment, which has led Kraepelin to class the condition with oligophrenia. The absence of progression is an indication that whatever the initial morbid process, it soon comes to a standstill. The Mongol has been described as a 'half-baked' child. In the cerebrum the histological features of Mongolism point clearly to some such incomplete development.

S. A. K. W.


In twenty-four cases of schizophrenia seven showed abnormally low rates of basal metabolism, and minus readings were obtained in eleven others.

The manic-depressive group showed a tendency towards low readings...