Les Encéphalites Psychosiques. By Dr. L. Marchand and Dr. A. Courtois.

By the term 'psychotic encephalitis' is meant an inflammation of the brain that reveals itself solely by mental symptoms. These generally take the form of acute confusion, delirium, hallucinosis, and other features of a toxic psychosis; neurological symptoms are lacking. Pathologically, the lesions are partly degenerative, partly inflammatory; they are in no way specific, yet they are quite definite. There is no perivascular demyelination, and little glial reaction. The mesoderm, however, reacts, while the parenchyma is damaged. On the clinical side the authors draw particular attention to the blood urea, which in acute cases always rises and is regarded by them as constant and characteristic—so much so that they use the term 'encephalite psychosique aiguë azotémique.' Subacute and chronic cases are also known; their syndromes can be schizoid, paranoid, manic-depressive, hebephrenocatatic, etc.

The authors rely on pathological anatomy to show the foundation of the symptoms, but since they admit causation is multiple it is evident that any correlation of syndromes and lesions is impossible; the various mental symptoms they describe as occurring in subacute and chronic cases can also develop in cases where the lesions specified are not found. They have done well, however, in directing attention to the fact that some forms of encephalitis are accompanied by symptoms of the psychical series alone. The explanation of this interesting peculiarity is still obscure.


Among the various fine articles that enrich this fourth volume of the Nouveau Traité de Psychologie we may allude in particular to that on Memory, by Henri Piéron, whose work on the borderland of brain and mind is known to all neurologists; on Symbolisation, by the editor; on Psychological Tension, by Pierre Janet; and on Sleeping and Waking, by Ed. Claparède. The last of these discusses the different theories of sleep now in vogue, and enlarges on the biological theory of its writer, according to which sleep is an
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active, not a passive, state; we do not sleep because we are exhausted, or ‘toxic,’ but we sleep in order not to be exhausted, toxic, etc. Sleep is related to fatigue, but is not ordered by fatigue. An active function, sleep cannot be ascribed to a simple anabolic neurosympathetic process, accompanied by cortical inhibition; it is much more complex, being a function of the entire organism. The biological theory accounts for partial sleep and for seasonal variation more readily than others. Sleep is virtually an ‘instinct.’ The article on symbolization is graphically written and deeply interesting, especially perhaps when it deals with the language of passion and of mysticism. The style is lucid, the matter fascinating, the attitude of the writer philosophic and critical.


On previous occasions we have reviewed this book, whose third edition has now appeared after an interval of four years. In his preface Dr. Wechsler says that ‘hardly a page has been left untouched’—a fact that bears witness to the strides that are being taken by present-day neurology. Apart from a variety of improvements and alterations as compared with earlier editions, this volume is enriched by a chapter on the history of neurology, some 40 pages long. Not only is it very well done, but perusal of it must convince many who have given little thought to the matter that numerous disease-states and syndromes received proper description long before the ‘original’ contribution of this or that ‘modern’—as a single instance, acromegaly was described in detail by de la Touche in 1772. We have noticed one or two minor inaccuracies which in no way detract from the general value of this chapter. For the purpose in view, the book can once more be heartily recommended.


The latest neurosurgical monograph by Professor Dandy is devoted to the study of encapsulated tumours of the lateral ventricles, which, as he says, come from ‘the last secret abodes’ of tumours in the brain. The work of some 15 years is represented in this slim volume, and its author specifies the technical advances of that period as comprising the electrocautery, avertin anaesthesia, and continuous suction. Clinically, the work is based on material derived from 40 cases (the author’s own 15, and the remaining 25 from the
The symptoms are various, but hardly helpful to a localizing diagnosis, with the exception perhaps of hemiplegia and hemianesthesia. The observer has to rely on the positive evidence furnished by ventriculography more than on anything else; ordinary X-ray films are valueless except when calcification is present. In not one of the 40 cases was a correct clinical diagnosis made from the examination of the nervous system. Dr. Dandy describes at length the way to interpret the dislocation and deformation produced in the ventricular system by the tumours. The operative mortality has been 20 per cent. Pathologically the new growths have belonged to different classes (adenoma, fibroma, angioma, papilloma, and others whose histological status is uncertain).


The doctrine of the conditioned reflex, as conceived and elaborated by Bechterev, Pavlov and their pupils and others, has already been extended from the physiological to the psychological field. There is now in being a psychology of reactions which naturally enough has been as much disputed as accepted, if not more so. This psychology claims to interpret behaviouristic phenomena without reference to introspection and analogy; and whether it be legitimate or not, Professor Dumas (who contributes an introduction to this work) is right in saying that the new direction given to psychology is full of promise, inasmuch as use is made of objective observations, and this brings the study into line with the controlled experiments that are common to physiology, physics, and chemistry.

The contribution under review deals first with the underlying mechanism of conditioned reflexes, i.e. the actual morphological evolution of the neuraxis; next with the organization of conditioned reflexes in the infant; and finally with the application of the doctrine to certain clinical problems of neurosis and psychosis. It embodies much original research, anatomo-physiological, and clinical, and should be read by all who are interested in this new development.


Dr. Marcel Caron has written an able and comprehensive treatise on Pick's cortical atrophy, a morbid state that is expressed clinically by what is often termed a presenile psychosis. He comments on the poverty of articles dealing with Pick's disease in French medical literature, and his own treatise
has helped to fill the gap, except perhaps so far as the pathology of the affection is concerned. Dr. Caron gives a succinct resumé of pathological findings, but is more occupied with the clinical side—as indeed the title of his work implies. He furnishes the reader with a précis of scores of cases from the literature on the subject, in addition to others of his own, and prints a good bibliography. There are a few clinical and pathological illustrations, and a useful synoptic table of all the reported cases, giving the syndromes in accordance with the site of the major lesions.


This clearly written, methodically arranged and well-illustrated monograph is a model of what such contributions to neurology should be. The author has made a complete study of the bulbar olive in all its aspects—anatomical, onto- and phylogenetic, physiological, and physiopathological. He states his conclusions clearly, gives reasons for being undecided in respect of this or that point, and suspends judgment, when there is need, in a cautious and truly scientific way. He shows that the olive is but a part of a 'vast system' that has to do with subcortical sensorimotor integration, and is careful to avoid premature localization within this system or attribution of symptoms to one part of it alone. Thus he is critical of views assigning verbal articulation, and maintenance of the erect posture, to olival function; and will go no further than to allow that the structure seems to play a capital rôle in the pathogenesis of so-called palatal nystagmus, and of the more general group of palato-pharyngo-laryngeal myoclonias.

Dr. Mareschal is to be congratulated on his production, which is a valuable addition to the literature and can be studied with profit by everyone interested in the finer anatomy and physiology of the nervous system. The bibliography at the end of the book extends over nearly 20 pages.


This book, dealing with sexual impotence, comes from the pen of a urologist, who has sought to cover all the complex field of causation, diagnosis, and treatment. Of the importance of the subject most clinicians must be aware; but they may not have realized how many and diverse disorders of the function of the genito-urinary tract can be the cause of impotence. All these are described at length; and a second class, viz. psychical disturbances of one or other kind, also receives a great deal of attention. Little enough, on
the other hand, is said of organic disease of the spinal cord or roots—in fact, the subject is dismissed in a page; the genital symptoms of tabes are described very inadequately, and the occurrence of sexual disorders in other lesions of the cord is merely mentioned. To the neurologist these scant allusions to symptoms of clinical interest and of localizing value are particularly disappointing. The significance of the bulbocavernosus reflex in this connexion is ignored; nothing is said of sexual crises in tabes, of sexual exaltation in general paralysis; and the peculiar cases in which dissociation of sexual function is a symptom do not seem to be noticed.


Recent studies on the vascularization of the pons have made it possible to differentiate a variety of syndromes in accordance with the vascular territory that is affected. Three sets of pontine vessels can be distinguished: the paramedian, the short circumferential, and the long circumferential. Lesions in the territory of the first of these are commonly disclosed by pontine hemiplegia or paraplegia, and, in the second, by cerebellar hemiplegia with or without hemianæsthesia. Complex vascular lesions may induce the syndrome of pseudobulbar palsy, of which a pontocerebellar variant can be described. Vascular lesions in the upper part of the pons, dorsal to the peduncle (the region of the 'calotte') cause sensory disorder, paralyses of lateral deviation, cerebellar disturbance, and possibly myoclonic symptoms; the clinical syndromes are mostly due to lesions of the pontine branches of the superior cerebellar artery.

These and other forms of syndrome are minutely analysed by Dr. Trelles, who bases his conclusions on the clinico-anatomical study of 25 cases. A chapter on the physiopathology of the syndromes explains very well most of the problems that arise in connexion with the relation of pontine symptoms to pontine lesions. The work is illustrated with about 100 figures, and is an excellent contribution to the neurology of the pons. It should find a place on the bookshelf of every practising neurologist.


The full title of Dr. Muskens' monograph is 'The supravestibular system in animals and man, with especial reference to the clinical study of ocular palsies, so-called frontal ataxia, forced postures, and forced movements.' This is a comprehensive subject which has interested the author for many years, and to which he has made a large number of valuable contributions.
The book under review may be said to be the culminating study of his life-time. It covers an immense range. Beginning with an account of the origin of forced movements in three different planes in the experimental animal, depending on lesions of the otolith mechanism and of other parts of the brain, he proceeds to a still more elaborate investigation of forced movements in higher animals and in man, and discusses their relation to lesions above the peripheral organs, i.e. supravestibular. At this point the author examines the rôles alleged to be enacted by cerebellum, inferior olive, primary and secondary vestibular nuclei. Another division of the book is devoted to consideration of ocular palsies, forced movements of the eyes, vestibular nystagmus, skew deviation, paralysis of vertical and lateral deviation, etc., and the relation of all these to supravestibular fibre-systems. He then passes to analyse so-called supratentorial ataxia. Further sections are concerned with the oculogyric spasms of postencephalitic Parkinsonism, optic nystagmus, the central mechanisms for willed ocular and trunk movements, etc. Enough, however, has been said to indicate the remarkably wide limits of the author’s topic. We do not know any single volume dealing with these matters that embodies so much original research and provides so useful a summary of the present state of knowledge in regard to them. The labour of compiling and writing it must have been immense. It is a splendid monument to the author’s ability and industry, which will remain authoritative for a long time.


Two chapters in this text-book of neuropathology, as it might be called—for its central subject and the major part of the book deal with the pathological anatomy of the brain—stand out for a double reason; they put into well-chosen words the underlying conceptions and limitations of morbid anatomy, and at the same time link it to a wider and richer topic, viz. that of the constitution of the body as a whole. They are entitled respectively The Interpretation of Lesions, and Correlation of Lesions with Psychopathological Phenomena. In the reviewer’s opinion, both of these chapters should be read and re-read by everyone who studies the nervous system at the end of a microscope. They say what has been too often left unsaid, that no ‘anatomy of the psychoses’ or ‘pathology of the mind’ exists as yet; that most of what generally goes by the name of neurophysiology is really anatomy; that histological-clinical correlations have to be erected on a much wider basis than is usually thought. Another point made by the authors is that neurohistology needs to come into line with somatohistology, and that cerebral lesions will be better comprehended when they are no longer considered ‘unique’ of their kind, but comparable to those in other organs.

The book has over 100 plates of neuropathological subjects, reproduced
beautifully by the aquatone process. It contains a compendium of neuro-pathology, and opening chapters on post-mortem and histological technique. But it is distinguished from a number of works devoted to the same subject by its manner of looking beyond the lesions to their meaning, to their place in the biological scheme.


The Thèse of Dr. Maurice Deparis is divided into two parts; the first, descriptive, is taken up with the symptoms of trigeminal neuralgia of different types; the second discusses critically the results obtained by two or three of the newer modes of surgical treatment. Among these are the partial retrogasserian neurotomy of Frazier and the juxtapontine neurotomy of the sensory root as performed by Dandy. The material used by the author comprises 31 cases submitted to operation. In his experience the latter technique is preferable to the former, because it is 'never' followed by keratitis and does not entail the postoperative changes in facial sensibility and of face and buccolingual mucosa that the other does. But he hastens to add that one is not the rival of the other, and that the method of Dandy should be reserved for certain selected cases.

The book provides a useful mise-au-point in respect of present-day modes of dealing with trigeminal neuralgia.


This recent addition to the large number of reviews, treatises, and monographs having migraine for their subject is written from an eminently practical standpoint. Its descriptions are succinct, its range comprehensive, its theoretical discussions short, while the chapter on treatment contains much in little space. At the close of each of the eight chapters is a bibliography, and the book also has, what is rare in French medical literature, an index, as well as the customary table of contents. Though containing perhaps little that is altogether novel, it furnishes evidence of wide research on the part of the writers, and serves a useful purpose as a conspectus of modern study on an age-old malady.


Within the limits set by the author, who states that his book is designed for students and practitioners and written with 'special reference to the
problems of neurosurgery’ (which are not, however, specified), he has performed his task with some adequacy. It would be a simple matter to point out how far it comes short of any thoroughgoing exposition of neurological diagnosis; under ophthalmoscopy reference is made to papilledema and primary atrophy alone; oddly enough, the latter is stated to be caused, among other conditions, by ‘inflammatory lesions primarily or secondarily involving the optic pathways.’ Part three of the book deals with X-ray diagnosis, and is rather fuller than some other sections. A claim is made for submitting all epileptics to encephalography, whether they show localizing neurological signs or not; if this is done as a routine ‘many surgical lesions will be demonstrated and many otherwise hopeless cases will be benefited.’ This sanguine estimate of the value of surgical interference in epilepsy hardly agrees with others’ experience.