

inheritable unit. The cases studied as to heredity showed no evidence that any of them were of traumatic origin. Alcoholism was found to cause an excess (20 to 30 *per cent.* beyond expectation) of feeble-minded and epileptic offspring. But it is added that some of the alcoholics may have been actually feeble-minded, and thus have increased the proportion of defective children.

Feeble-minded and epileptic mothers were found to have an average of six children; as, however, the authors found the same rather high average among normal mothers, they conclude that the defective classes have not larger families than the normal classes. But the proportion increases by the tendency to a higher incidence of defectives in the defective families.

The authors advocate thorough segregation of epileptics during the reproductive period.

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### 3. Clinical Neurology and Psychiatry.

*On some Methods for the Diagnosis of Syphilis in Nervous and Mental Diseases [Su alcuni metodi per la diagnosi della sifilide nella malattie nervose e mentali]. (Rass. di Studi Psych., vol. i, Fasc. 5.)*  
Bravetta, E.

The author has sought to establish the comparative value of the various modern tests for the diagnosis of syphilis. He has examined the blood-serum and the cerebro-spinal fluid of 116 patients, of whom 64 were known to be syphilitic and 52 free from luetic taint. The methods employed were those of Wassermann, Nogucci-Moore, Nonne-Apelt, and Porges. He concludes that the presence of the reaction of Wassermann in the blood-serum and cerebro-spinal fluid, the butyric reaction of Nogucci, and the globulin reaction of Nonne, and also increase of the cellular elements in the spinal fluid all testify in favour of pre-existing syphilis. In general paralysis and tabes dorsalis, these reactions are remarkably constant in their occurrence, and the absence of any of them is exceptional. In the functional psychoses, these reactions are generally absent, and the coincidence of syphilis with any of these affections may legitimately be regarded as accidental and not directly related to the mental disturbance. Of all the reactions, that of Wassermann, carried out on both blood-serum and cerebro-spinal fluid, furnishes the most reliable presumptions in favour of pre-existing syphilis. At the same time the reactions of Nogucci and of Nonne enable us to determine the presence of a syphilitic lesion of the central nervous system with a sufficient degree of accuracy, and they have the advantage of being simple and easy of application by those who cannot practise the method of Wassermann. The reaction of Porges with glycocholate of sodium not only gives a percentage inferior to that given by these other methods in cases of known syphilis, but also gives a notable percentage of positive results in normal sera. The positive results of the reactions of Wassermann, Nogucci and Nonne are generally confirmed by cyto-diagnosis.

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