

On the contrary, during the period of excitement the appetite was healthy and gastric juice was secreted normally. Out of nine paranoiacs five refused food during marked mental excitement; there was no particular deviation in the digestive processes. One patient with perverted feelings satisfied her appetite by preparing food; she refused with disgust to eat it, and had to be forcibly fed with a stomach-tube. The action of the gastric juice was very weak.

In the case of paranoiacs who have for long refused food the following takes place. Gastric juice is secreted in the morning at the time of artificial feeding. The juice, if collected from an empty stomach, often has an acidity 0.4 *per cent.* HCl. Considering the fact that the collected fluid consists of gastric juice mixed with saliva and mucus, Dr. Touchenko concludes that the pure gastric juice of a man contains, not .2 *per cent.* of HCl, but as much as .5 *per cent.*, the same proportion that Prof. Pawloff found in dogs. The researches of Dr. Touchenko are of great value. They show the difference between artificial feeding by means of a stomach-tube and when food is taken normally. They also show the value of milk as being the least excitant of the nervous system; and, finally, they give us rational grounds on which to base the treatment of disturbed digestion in mental diseases.

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#### SPAIN.

By DR. W. CAROLEN.

The State Secretary for the Department of Instruction has to some extent been an agent in the progress of mental science by rendering compulsory for students of forensic medicine a course of lunacy in an asylum extending over two months. By an unfortunate imitation of the Italian system, which in a single chain unites subjects of so diverse a character as toxicology, legal medicine, and mental diseases, the best method of freniatic teaching is not obtained. In Spain, a physician at the end of his career knows nothing at all of mental infirmities and affections. The action of the State Secretary is the more surprising when one remembers his order founding and establishing separate and compulsory chairs, both clinical and theoretical, of dermatology, otology, and ophthalmology. Alienists in Spain are disappointed, and regret that so incomplete a step should have been taken in so important a matter, for physicians at present look either dumb or foolish at court when cases of criminal responsibility, civil incapacity, etc., are being tried.

Psychiatric literature has been scarce, owing to the non-existence of special reviews. All the branches of medical learning are represented journalistically in Spain except mental science. The *Medicine and Surgery Practical Review* in Madrid has published an article of Dr. Otsy Esquerdo relating to "Early Dementia" (7th June), and another by Dr. Bonafonte on "Surgical Interventions in Mental Diseases" (28th July). In the same review of 14th September is to be found "Hysterical Insanity," by Dr. Ots. The latter's pen has

also been responsible for "Convulsive Hysterics," in the *Medical Correspondence* of Madrid (24th February), "Infectious Insanities" (8th May), "Lucid Insanity" (24th October), "Hedonal in certain Forms of Mental Diseases," in *North Medical Gazette* (January), and "Fatal Hemicrania" (May).

New asylums have been constructed at Reus (Catalonia) and Pamplona (Nowarra). In Barcelona the Holy Cross Hospital, the most ancient beneficial institution, founded in the year 1400, has now its lunatic asylum at St. Andrew, one of the suburbs of the great capital. It has been provided with some of the most modern improvements, such as dormitories for the bed treatment of the agitated and maniacal cases, and rooms for the *photo-therapeutic* treatment in certain forms of insanity. Dr. Sivilla, head physician, neglects nothing that can conduce to the well-being and health of his patients. He has advocated with great zeal and strength the open-door system, and is gallantly fighting against an administration which desires no improvement on the old system, which dates from 1850.

The Clinical Hospital of Barcelona, now being completed, will be the seat of a psychiatric clinic. Dr. Giné, of Partagas, a most venerable figure of the speciality and *doyen* of the faculty, is appointed professor. If this proves a success, it will be the first serious attempt to teach psychiatry in Spain.

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## Epitome of Current Literature.

### 1. Neurology.

*The Plantar Reflexes* [*Riflesso plantare: fenomeno di Babinski e riflesso antagonistico di Schaefer*]. (*Ann. di neur., fasc. i, 1902.*) Capriati, V.

IN this paper the author discusses at some length the nature and relationships of the various reflexes which have been described in the foot. There are at present very marked differences of opinion among the various authorities as to the value and pathological significance of these reflexes.

The author considers that the normal plantar reflex can be represented by different movements in different subjects, and that the opinion of those who would limit this reflex to the movement of flexion in the toes is sometimes in contrast with the facts.

The method indicated by Schaefer does not produce anything characteristic; normally it does not give rise to a reflex. In morbid conditions, acting as a painful stimulus, it may sometimes produce Babinski's phenomenon, which is a plantar reflex, and which should not be considered as anything different.

J. R. GILMOUR.