

elements that have become actually or apparently detached in consequence of regressive changes. The fact that the regressive changes in the vessels of the cortex in general paralysis have been preceded by much proliferation of the cells of their walls, and by increase of capillaries, may help to explain why in this disease rod-cells are so numerous. In all Noda's paralytic cases they abounded. They were especially abundant in the pyramidal and ganglion cell layers of the frontal region and cornu Ammonis. In his case of tuberculous meningitis he says he observed migration of rod-cells into the outer layer of the cortex from the pia, but only where there was a pronounced pial infiltration. In his cases of senile dementia, epilepsy and delirium tremens few rod-cells were found.

He hazards guesses at the functions of these cells, and why they take this shape.

SYDNEY J. COLE.

The Ætiology of Bacillary Dysentery in Asylums. (Lancet, July 30th 1921.) Dawson, W. S., and Moody, W.

Dysentery is shown to cause about 3 *per cent.* of asylum deaths and much ill-health. The authors studied a series of cases of clinical dysentery and diarrhœa at Claybury Mental Hospital, from a number of which they cultivated a bacillus of the Flexner type of *B. dysenteria*. Swabs were taken from fœces or rectal wall, and the specimens plated on McConkey's medium of exactly + 4 acidity, incubated twenty-four hours, and for twelve on Russell's double sugar agar, then agglutinated for fifteen seconds with Flexner's serum. No results positive by this rapid method failed of confirmation by various more detailed tests used.

Contrary to some observers the authors found that agglutinins did not appear in the blood till after the fourth week, nor in any case with bacteriologically negative fœces.

At Claybury incidence of dysentery has been greatest in winter, suggesting direct contagion. The authors found the organism to reappear in the fœces after apparent cure in several cases of mild, transitory relapse, and therefore advocate permanent isolation of bacteriologically positive subjects.

MARJORIE E. FRANKLIN.

A Study of Some Peculiar Changes Found in the Axons and Dendrites of the Purkinje Cells. (Arch. of Neur. and Psychiat., March, 1921.) Uyematsu, S.

Peculiar balloon-like swellings of the dendrites of Purkinje cells were first described by Schaffer and others, who believed them to be pathognomic of amaurotic family idiocy. Later Strüssler found swellings on the axons and dendrites in a case of psychosis with cerebellar symptoms, and later still in juvenile general paralysis. Other observers noted the same phenomenon in other conditions, some considering it as a symptom of degeneration, others as a regenerative effort on the part of the cell.

The author used brains hardened in 14 *per cent.* formaldehyde solution, of which frozen sections were stained by the Bielschowsky

method. He investigated the changes in senile dementia, arteriosclerotic brain disease, general paralysis, congenital brain disease, dementia præcox, manic-depressive insanity, alcoholic and toxic psychoses, brain tumours and myxœdematous psychosis. Of these, swellings on the axons were found in 100 *per. cent.* excepting in dementia præcox and manic-depressive insanity, in which the condition was not found at all. Swellings on the dendrites were found in a varying but smaller percentage in all except dementia præcox, manic-depressive insanity, brain tumours and myxœdema, in which the swellings appeared to be absent. He describes various forms of these swellings, *e.g.*, spindle, pedunculated, bulb-like, etc., and he attempted to discover the contents by means of the staining reactions. Most stained diffusely, and contained some homogeneous argentophilic substance, some showed liquid content, a few had thickening of neurofibrils and whirl-like structures suggesting Alzheimer degeneration.

He concludes that these changes can no longer be considered as specific, but are encountered in cerebella wherever there is a chronic degenerative process. He discusses the question whether they are regenerative or degenerative, and believes that both the axonal and dendritic swellings are a feeble attempt at regeneration.

L. H. WOOTTON.

6. Sociology.

Kleptomania from the Medico-Legal Point of View [*De la Kleptomanie au point de vue médico-legal*]. (*Ann. Méd.-psychol.* No. 3, March, 1921). Wimmer, A.

The author mentions the conclusion of Marc that the more carefully cases of kleptomania are examined the more one is convinced that true kleptomania—*i.e.*, an irresistible impulse towards theft for the sake of theft—is, if it exists, a pathological rarity. This the author thinks may be true in medico-legal practice, but in the psychiatric clinic it is common, and is one of the numerous mental stigmata of degenerates. He mentions the theory that the theft is a symptom of a repressed sexual wish symbolically satisfied, but considers this is only true probably for a small number of cases. He believes that in some cases it is due to an impulse of an organic nature latent behind the kleptomania, and which under the influence of certain disturbances—*e.g.*, drunkenness, menstruation, pregnancy—is translated into action; he mentions the case of a young girl, æt. 18, “bonne et bonnête fille,” who had violent fits of hunger accompanying her impulses to thieve, and at these times she would steal eatables—cakes, chocolate, fruit, etc. If this patient’s troubles had been reviewed in the court of law rather than in the consulting room, he believes it could have been maintained that she was the victim of a morbid impulse to theft due to an unconscious organic change in her mental state. Many authors have noted the connection between sex and theft, and a distinction has to be drawn between those who thieve articles which give them sexual pleasure—fetichists, not true kleptomaniacs—and those in whom the theft itself produces a sexual orgasm. Of the latter, some recognise the nature of the pleasure, in others the sexual motive appears com-

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