

Pathological Findings in the Sympathetic Nervous System in the Psychoses.
(*American Journal of Insanity*, April, 1916.) Myerson, A.

This research is based upon the minute examination of the semilunar ganglia in fifty consecutive autopsies performed at the Taunton State Hospital. The following outstanding variations were found: (1) Axonal reaction, a frequent phenomenon in many cases, and prominent in five; (2) emigration of the nucleolus, a rare change, prominent in one case; (3) neurathrepsia, a term used to cover a number of changes of a chronic type, e.g., pigmentation, oxyphilic granules; (4) nuclear changes; (5) capsular changes; (6) increase of interstitial connective tissue.

The findings are thus summarised. First, the semilunar ganglion is apparently often acutely injured in general infection and in enteritis. Second, it is the seat of degenerative processes probably greater in extent than cord, brain, or Gasserian ganglion. These changes probably represent an early and marked senility. Third, there is a decided absence of marked reactive changes (lymphocytes, plasma-cells, etc.), such as are prominent in the central nervous system, Gasserian ganglion, and the related organ or adrenal. Fourth, there is a curious, though not prominent, increase of eosinophilic connective tissue cells which seemed, in one case, to have a phagocytic attraction for injured nerve-cells. The writer emphasises that these findings apply, in his opinion, only to the psychoses. He concludes that in so far as the sympathetic system controls the vascular and glandular system, which plays such a large part in all the great vital processes as well as in the creation and modification of the emotions, a more comprehensive study of this system may throw light on the problems of old age as well as on the psychoses. Also the interpretation of morbid phenomenon needs to take into account the presence of nerve-cells in the organs, such as in the aorta, the heart, the intestines, stomach, genitalia, etc. Symptoms may well arise because of injury to these peripheral cells, either as an antecedent or as a consequent of the disease process. We have, as recent experiments show, drugs that have a peculiar and selective power on the nerve-cells of the autonomic and sympathetic systems. These should be experimentally, as well as therapeutically, used in conditions where the symptoms are even in part vasomotor and glandular.

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The Medico-legal Aspect of Dementia Præcox [*La Medicina legale della Demenza precoce*]. (*Archivio Antropologia Criminale Psichiatria e Medicina Legale*, February, 1916.) Ottolenghi, Prof. Salvatore.

In his opening paragraph the author remarks that dementia præcox is interesting from a medico-legal point of view on account of the following circumstances:

- (1) As its name expresses, it attacks the individual at an early age, at the epoch, that is to say, the most favourable for criminal actions.
- (2) The behaviour of the patient, especially at the commencement, may be such as to mask the existence of mental disease.
- (3) It is a very serious malady, causing the decay of all the mental