

phenol) derive their importance from the fact that they form an excellent index of the degree of intestinal putrefaction and absorption. The authors estimated them by Salkowsky's method in the urine of four epileptics, and in three cases of sitiophobia. The epileptic cases were specially chosen from cases showing clinically gastro-intestinal disorder. With the approach of an epileptic fit or of the disturbance which may replace it, the quantity of the ethereal sulphates was increased, reaching its highest point with the onset of the fit, returning slowly in some cases, immediately in others, to a normal degree of elimination. The cases of sitiophobia were associated with marked hallucinations in one case, with melancholia in another, and in the third with delusions of persecution and poisoning. The authors, taking into consideration the composition of the diet on which they were forcibly fed, come to the conclusion that there is in these cases disturbance of intestinal function and especially putrefaction of the albuminoids, as evidenced by the increase of the sulphates excreted. Whenever food was taken spontaneously, the tables show a marked decrease of these decomposition products.

J. R. GILMOUR.

Alkalinity of the Blood in Certain Mental Diseases [L' alcalinità del sangue in alcune malattie mentali]. (Riv. di Patol. nerv. e ment., July, 1899.) Lambranzi, R.

The writer has examined the blood in several groups of cases. The results obtained were that the alkalinity varied within physiological limits in hypochondria (3 cases), in adolescent insanity (6 cases), in senile insanity (5 cases), in hysteria (3 cases), and in imbecility (10 cases). In alternating cases (9) the alkalinity varied in the two periods, being lower during the state of excitement, especially when accompanied by marked motor signs, but within physiological range. The alkalinity was reduced in seven cases of general paralysis. It was also probably below normal in a case of myxœdema with imbecility. The most interesting cases were the epileptics (10 cases). In them, the author found that the alkalinity of the blood was reduced during the convulsion, and also for a short period both before and after it. He considers that, in epilepsy and general paralysis, the diminution is due to substances in direct relation to the disease, these being periodic in the former class, and permanent in the latter.

J. R. GILMOUR.

Brain of an Epileptic Idiot [Cerveau d'idiote épileptique]. (Journ. de Méd. de Bord., Jan. 7, 1900.) Gentes.

The clinical record of this case is incomplete. The patient, however, had numerous signs of degeneration (malformation of the pinna, arched palate, irregular dentition, etc.), and she suffered from typical epileptic fits.

The brain was asymmetrical, the left half being smaller than the right; the lumen of the cerebral arteries was narrower on the left side than on the right, and there was evidence of premature synostosis of the bones on the left side of the cranial vault. In addition to this there was a subarachnoid cyst, the size of a hen's egg, situated at the postero-superior extremity of the left fissure of Sylvius.

The author discusses the question whether the maldevelopment of the left cerebral hemisphere is due to the left premature synostosis, or to the pressure of the cyst, or to the deficient nutrition consequent on the smallness of the left cerebral arteries. W. H. B. STODDART.

6. Treatment of Insanity.

The Institute of Psychiatry at Reggio [*L'Institut Psychiatrique de Reggio*]. (*Rev. de Psychiat.*, No. 5, 1900.) *Vaschide, N.*

Attention has been especially drawn to this institution recently by the celebration of the centenary of Lazzaro Spallanzani, the illustrious Italian biologist, with whose name it is henceforth to be associated. Vaschide gives a brief account of its interesting history and of its present magnificent scientific equipment. In the thirteenth century, as the Hospital of St. Lazarus, it was founded for lepers and lunatics; it became subsequently for a time a general infirmary, and in 1754 was reserved exclusively for lunatics. In the early part of this century, under Galloni, it was in this asylum that some of the earliest attempts were made to teach the insane on scientific principles—moral treatment. From 1871 onwards, its reputation becomes world-wide; in 1877 Prof. Tamburini became superintendent, and to him and his collaborators we owe numerous valuable contributions on experimental psychology and other subjects dealing with the insane. The laboratories are numerous and well appointed, and among the most interesting buildings are the museum of antiquities, with its collection of appliances which were formerly used for quieting lunatics (chains, collars, "cap of silence" [cuffie del silenzio], etc.), and the museum of psychiatric anthropology, which contains a fine collection of 1250 skulls of the insane. H. J. MACEVOY.

The Payment of Asylum Patients [*Krankenverdienst in der Irrenanstalt*]. (*Psychiat. Wochens.*, No. 48, Feb. 24th, 1900.) *Berze, J.*

Dr. Berze, of the Kierling-Gugging Asylum, discusses the question of the remuneration of patients for work done by them during their detention under treatment. Most of the asylums in Lower Austria follow the practice introduced some thirty years ago in the Landes-Irrenanstalt in Vienna. By the statutes of that institution, it is provided that a record be kept of the nature and duration of each patient's labour, and that the director of the asylum fix the pay due thereto in accordance with a tariff established by the committee; this money is the property of the patient, and part of it may be utilised for the purchase of luxuries, etc., in the asylum, the balance being handed over to the patient or his guardians on his discharge. Dr. Berze describes in detail the application of this principle in Kierling-Gugging Asylum; labour records are kept, and submitted every month to the director, who decides the wage due to each patient and the proportion of that wage which may be at once disposed of by the patient. In the light of