

normal individuals, children, and several classes of mammals. He finds that in passing from the Monotremata through the various orders up to the Primates, there is a progressive growth of the hallux, reaching its maximum in man. Thus a plane touching the tips of the hallux and second toe looks outwards (distal slope) in man, inwards (proximal slope) constantly in the other mammals, and frequently in some savage tribes, in criminals, in children, and in the fœtus. The author concludes that in criminals there is an incomplete development of the hallux—an atavistic condition.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

*The Anatomical Stigmata of Degeneracy* [*Les stigmates anatomiques de la dégénérescence*]. (*Gaz. des Hôp.*, Jan. 5th and 12th, 1901.) Mayet.

This paper gives an outline of the current ideas regarding the nature of degeneracy, and enumerates some of the chief anatomical conditions considered as characteristic of it.

The author defines degeneracy as "a hereditary state of lessened physical and moral perfection, tending to sterility and the rapid extinction of the degenerate individual and his stock."

The stigmata of degeneracy—isolated or found in syndromes—are divided into (1) anatomical; (2) physiological; (3) psychological; and (4) sociological.

Discussing the anatomical stigmata, the author emphasises their teratological nature; they are due to defective development of the embryo, dependent on one or more of the various causes capable of producing grave disorder in the foetal organism. The number of such causes operative in city life explains the great frequency of these stigmata in the urban population—a frequency which has led some writers to throw doubt on the significance of the stigmata. The author has found from personal observation that they are far less common in country dwellers, particularly in those who are healthy.

The stigmata met with in the different regions of the body are summarily described, with illustrations of the more important. A list of references to the literature of the subject completes the paper.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

*Note on Prints of the Palm of the Hand and of the Sole of the Foot* [*Note sur les empreintes de la paume de la main et de la plante du pied*]. (*Comptes rendus de la Société de Biologie*, June, 1900.) Féré.

This is a short note, illustrated by a figure in the text, on the arrangement of the papillary lines in the regions mentioned. In general the lines on the palm are parallel to the creases of opposition of the thumb, and to the creases of flexion of the fingers; but this arrangement is commonly modified in certain situations, *e. g.*, by loops continuing the transverse ridges of the fingers or (more often) starting from the interdigital spaces, by loops also on the thenar eminence, and by loops or more complex figures on the hypothenar eminence.

These arrangements—and analogous arrangements on the sole of the foot—have been interpreted as representative of prehuman conditions.

The author refers to fuller treatment of this point in articles contributed by him to the *Journal de l'Anatomie et de la Physiologie* (1900).

W. C. SULLIVAN.

*Fliess's Nose-Gospel, or Fliess's Theory of the Relation of Nasal Neuroses in Women to Diseases of the Genital Organs* [*Die Nasen-Messiasde von Fliess*]. (*Wiener med. Wochenschr.*, No. 8, 1901.) Benedikt.

Benedikt discusses in a critical spirit the recent observations of Fliess, confirmed by Schiff, indicating the dependence of certain nasal neuroses on diseased conditions of the female genitalia.

While admitting the accuracy of the observations, Benedikt takes exception to the theories built upon them. The presenting of these theories he regards as an example of a tendency prevalent amongst contemporary writers to—in his graphic phrase—“confuse the results of their mental masturbation with the products of legitimate mental begetting.” He points out that the best corrective of this tendency is to look at the questions at issue under the historical angle of vision, which is apt to make discoveries and theories shrink in importance.

Applying this method to Fliess's observations, the occurrence of hyperæsthesia of the nasal mucous membrane in conditions of genital disease is reduced to an instance of irradiation, of “co-sensibility” (*Mit-Empfindsamkeit*), similar to the phenomena of cutaneous hyperæsthesia in visceral disease described by Head, and to the symptoms formerly spoken of as “spinal irritation.”

Again, the occurrence of nasal congestion at the menstrual periods is, in the same way, taken as a particular instance of a large class of phenomena of “co-affection” (*Mit-Ergriffensein*) of which the “sympathising inflammations” of the older authors are other examples.

The mechanism of these two orders of phenomena is still uncertain. Benedikt suggests that it is involved in the larger problem of the harmony in growth and in nutrition of the different parts of the organism. Some of the factors of that problem—notably the origin of the entire organism from a single fertilised ovum, and the mutual influence of the organs through their internal secretions—can be divined; but at least one unknown factor remains, and is probably to be sought in the nervous system. The author promises an early communication of personal researches on this point.

Finally, the observation that the nasal condition is relieved by treatment directed to the genital disease is to be brought into line with such familiar clinical facts as the action of blisters, the cautery, etc.

Benedikt's general conclusion is that a detailed study of any organ would give similar results to those found by Fliess in the case of the nose.

W. C. SULLIVAN.