

the frontal region works in another direction, establishing relations with the auditory zone. No doubt the frontal lobes have the power of direction over the other parts of the nervous system; but nervous activity is one. There is no special apparatus for inhibition in the brain.

W. W. IRELAND.

Acuteness of Sensation in Children in Relation to Age and Sex [*La sensibilità nei fanciulli in rapporto al sesso ed all'età*]. (*Arch. di Psichiat.*, vol. xxii, fasc. iii, 1901.) *Di Mattei*.

The author has examined tactile, olfactory, and gustatory sensibility in 160 children of both sexes, aged from four to twelve years, and has further investigated in a number of Jewish children the condition of tactile and general sensibility, and sensibility to pain, comparing the acuteness of these forms of sensibility with the extent of mental capacity and with the degree of degeneracy (as measured by the number of stigmata) in the individual subjects.

The sexes were nearly equally represented in the series, and two groups were distinguished, those aged from four to eight, and those from eight to twelve. The ordinary methods of examination were employed, and the results are given in detailed tables.

The author arrives at the following conclusions:

(1) As compared with boys, girls show a larger proportion of individuals with acute tactile and olfactory sensibility; in regard to gustatory sensibility, the proportion of the acutely sensitive is higher in girls for sweet tastes, lower for bitter, and equal for saline.

(2) In Jewish children tactile and general sensibility were acute in a larger proportion of girls, sensibility to pain in a larger number of boys.

(3) Comparing the two age-groups, the younger boys showed a lower ratio of acutely sensitive subjects in all forms of sensibility, except that to saline tastes, where the proportion was equal, and that to bitter tastes, where it was superior to that in the group of older boys. The results were similar with girls, except in regard of sensibility to bitter and saline tastes, where the conditions were reversed.

(4) In Jewish subjects of both sexes the younger children presented a higher proportion of individuals with acute general sensibility, and a lower proportion with acute sensibility to pain.

(5) No definite relation could be made out between the number of stigmata of degeneracy in an individual, and the acuteness of his tactile sensibility.

The author's general conclusions are that, as a rule, sensibility is more acute in girls than in boys, and that in children of both sexes it increases with the progress of age.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

On the Mental Fatigue of Children in Health and Disease [*Ueber geistige Ermüdung der Kinder im gesunden und kranken Zustande*]. (*Psychiatr. Wochenschr.*, Nos. 20, 21, Aug., 1900.) *Anton, G.*

Dr. Anton draws attention to the greater liability of the nervous system to disturbances during its stage of development, and in particu-

lar to the serious perturbations which the period of puberty, as a developmental process, may bring with it. As signs of fatigue we have loss of power of continued attention, and variability, inconstancy of mood, the latter often attended by a complete change in the temper of the child. Dr. Anton further insists on a periodic oscillation in the activity of the nervous system as specially manifest in the life of the child, this periodicity showing itself at times in a very pronounced form, particularly among children of neurotic family history. These tendencies in the developmental life of the young call for special watchfulness in their bringing up. HARRINGTON SAINSBURY.

4. Ætiology of Insanity.

Influence of Heredity and Degeneracy in the Development of Secondary Dementia, and in that of the Stereotyped Movements that occur in it. Should Secondary Dementia be regarded as a Nosological Entity? [Eredità e degenerazione nello sviluppo della demenza consecutiva, ed in quello delle stereotipie riscontrate in essa. Merita la demenza consecutiva un capitolo a sè in nosografia mentale?] (Riv. mens. di Neuropat. e Psichiat., Oct. to Nov., 1900.) Mondio.

This paper is based on the clinical study of sixty cases of secondary dementia. The antecedent psychosis was in 19 mania, in 15 melancholia, in 14 paranoia, in 7 epileptic insanity; 3 cases were paralytic dement, and 2 senile dement.

The questions specially considered by the author are--(a) Hereditary taint in acute insanity as a predisposition to termination in dementia; (b) the relation of the antecedent psychosis to the form of the secondary dementia; (c) the nosological position of secondary dementia.

He arrives at the following conclusions:

(1) The development of mental diseases is almost always dependent on predisposition, that is on a hereditary or degenerative state of nervous instability, and on this predisposition also depends the issue of each case.

(2) The more numerous the neuro-pathological elements in the ancestry in a given case, the more rapidly the case will pass into dementia, and the deeper will be the dementia.

(3) Secondary dementia assumes different forms, according to the nature of the antecedent psychosis. Hence from the dement's somatic symptoms, especially from the study of his stereotyped movements, it is possible to infer the form of the primary psychosis.

(4) The stereotyped movements, accordingly, whether they be automatic, or due to hereditary transformation, or to atavism, while they reveal the congenitally unstable condition of the brain in which they originate, are also valuable as indications of associated delirious ideas belonging to the preceding psychosis.

(5) If the secondary dementia always reveals the form of the psychosis from which it is derived, it ought not to rank as a separate disease form.