

Essai sur le Traitement Chirurgical de l'Epilepsie. Dr. P. RELAY.
Paris : aux Bureaux du Progrès Médical ; Felix Alcan, Boulevard St. Germain 108. Pp. 65, with several illustrations and bibliographical index. 1898. Price 3 fr.

This essay, by a pupil of Dr. Bourneville, gives interesting information with regard to cases met with in the Bicêtre, who had undergone elsewhere the operation of trepanation, otherwise designated craniectomy. The author divides epilepsy into two classes—symptomatic and essential. In the latter he contends that operative procedures (“trepanation”) are of no avail. In localised epilepsy they may occasionally be of temporary advantage. Such amelioration of epilepsy, as has been observed after trepanation, does not necessarily result from a relief of cranial pressure, for temporary amendment has sometimes followed the “revulsion” after operations in other parts of the body. As regards craniectomy undertaken in cases of microcephalic idiocy, the author contends (with Bourneville) that the theory of premature synostosis is absolutely false, and that the operation has no scientific justification and no lasting beneficial effects. As in the case of trepanation for epilepsy, some temporary amelioration may occur, attributable in great measure to the care and attention received by the patient while in hospital ; but the accounts of success published by surgeons at an early date after the operations refer rather to the surgical procedures than to any permanent benefit. They are not usually borne out by the subsequent history.

In the closing chapters Dr. Relay has given detailed observations of five cases, in which either negative results or aggravations of symptoms have followed trepanation for epilepsy ; and the conclusions from these, as well as from pathological appearances noted after craniectomies, are that where such an operation is undertaken the chances are that “the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

De l'Epilepsie au point de vue Clinique et Médico-légal. Par le
Professeur PAUL KOVALEVSKY. Pp. 57.

This is a reprint of Professor Kovalevsky's contributions to the *Annales Médico-psychologiques* (January to June, 1898). The first half deals with an analysis of the symptoms of “grand mal,” specially with a view of showing the means of detecting simulation, the author attaching some importance to such symptoms as the flexion of the thumb (which does not return to its original position, or only very slowly, after forcible extension), the inclination of the head to one side, the dilatation of the pupils, &c., during the attack. He recognises that no one symptom is pathognomonic, and that the diagnosis of epilepsy must be based on the combination of all the symptoms present. A pithy account of psychical epilepsy and the epileptic temper then follows.