

*Ueber den Einfluss febriler Prozesse auf die Ganglienzellen* [*Upon the Influence of Febrile Processes upon the Ganglion Cells*]. Von Dr. O. JULIUSBURGER und Dr. E. MEYER.

In this reprint from the *Berliner Klinische Wochenschrift* the authors have given the result of an inquiry testing the observations of Goldscheider and Flatau, who thought they had ascertained a specific effect of fevers upon the ganglion cells, which consisted in an alteration of the granula. Drs. Juliusburger and Meyer made a careful microscopic examination of the brains and spinal cords of nine patients who died of inflammation or hectic fever following tubercle. In only one of these, a patient suffering from a deep burn and afflicted with melancholia, was any particular change in the nerve-cells observed. In the others the granula seemed to be somewhat less in quantity. They consider these granules to minister to the nutrition of the nerve-cells. They have come to the conclusion that there is no typical alteration of the ganglion cells following a febrile rise of temperature, nor could they detect any specific alteration in the other tissues. WILLIAM W. IRELAND

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*Syphilis des Centralnervensystems* [*Syphilis of the Central Nervous System*]. Von Dr. ERNST MEYER. Gustav Fischer in Jena. Pp. 35, 8vo.

These pages, originally printed in the *Centralblatt für Allgemeine Pathologie*, give a pretty complete account of the literature of the subject. Most authors think that the nervous system is now oftener attacked by syphilis than formerly, and that this is owing to diminished resistance, owing to the greater strain and excitement of life. Those who lead an anxious and dissipated life and who have not had a judicious antisyphilitic treatment are more liable to be so attacked. The nervous affections follow the syphilitic infection, sometimes as early as one month, and generally within the first year. Sometimes they supervene much later, even after six years.

Dr. Meyer describes in detail the pathological lesions in syphilis of the nervous system, and cites a number of cases.

The report gives evidence of much research and diligence.

WILLIAM W. IRELAND.

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*Juridische Briefe*. Von Prof. Dr. MORITZ BENEDIKT. 1. Degeneration und Verbrechen.

*Juristische Briefe*. Von Demselben. 2. Geistesstörungen und Verbrechen. [*Juridical and Juristical Letters on Degeneration, Crime, and Insanity*].

In these papers, reprinted from the *Allgemeinen österreichischen Gerichts-Zeitung*, the learned professor tries to impress upon the legal mind those views upon crime, responsibility, and punishment which he has so long advocated with so much eloquence and acumen. Dr. Benedikt is a well-known and welcome figure at the annual meetings of our Association and of the British Medical, and is well acquainted

with our language and literature. We are therefore all the more pleased at the friendly appreciation which he affords to our country. He remarks that "Shakespeare has portrayed in a masterly manner the thief, the drunkard, the pander, the bravo, the prostitute, and other delinquents. But the poet, for dramatic reasons, has exhibited the picturesque side of the criminal and his social relations. It was left for the scientific investigators of this century to study the outcome of inborn proclivities and neglected or corrupt education."

Science, Benedikt goes on, has made another important conquest, which plays an important part in the administration of justice. She has during the last century enormously advanced our clinical knowledge of mental derangement, and has shown that numerous criminal deeds have been the work of insane persons upon whom numberless judicial murders have been perpetrated. If one thinks how many such enormities have been committed from religious and political grounds, one may cry out that the history of justice is scarcely sadder than the history of injustice. The notion of punishment has altered under the teaching of modern science. Justice is no longer a woman who wields the sword with bound eyes, but a seeing man, alive to the demands of public interest and public conscience. The author commends the Russian law for the punishment of minors, and the method of dealing with the occasional and inveterate criminal in Belgium. For the former the jails are sufficient; from the latter society has the right to protect itself by shutting them up for life.

In his second letter Benedikt tells us that during the last twenty-five years there has been not a single case in which an English judge has not respected the given opinions of physicians. We suppose that this must have happened when there was no diversity of opinion amongst them, which is not always the case.

It is not uninteresting to inquire how this harmony between the English judges and medical science has been attained. The continental education for the law demands that the student should know everything that all his teachers in their different subjects know or pretend to know. The student has his time filled up with juridical dogmatics and dialectical distinctions, after escaping from which they entertain a disgust for further study. They suffer from ignorance of the laws of human intercourse and the ways of the world. They sink into a speciality and are averse to exploring the other fields of knowledge. On the other hand, the English and American training for the legal profession sets out with the idea that too much time should not be spent at the colleges. It is a peculiarity of the English people, he observes, that both amongst the educated and the uncultured there is a desire on questions of general importance to form and revise their views on private and public ethics, and it sometimes happens that, yielding to weighty arguments, not only men of learning but whole classes abandon fundamental opinions and adopt another view. We see that, in political life, the Tories often take up the principles of the Whigs, and *vice versa*. The English jurist always remains in touch with the streams of thought which flow beyond his department, and which may usefully influence him. The professor was happy to observe at the meeting of our Association in Dublin (in 1894) that the members

agreed with him in all principal questions, while his views at home are contested officially and academically when they are not ignored. It may be here observed that the legal profession in Britain has, up to this time, shown sufficient practical sense not to insist upon the unreasonable examinations to which the student of medicine is subjected, for Benedikt's remark will hold good with medicine in this country that each professor expects the students to be master or pretend to be master of the subject on which he spends his whole time, some of which subjects are of no practical importance. Benedikt is far from falling into the error besetting some members of our profession, that insanity excludes responsibility. In some cases, such as weak-minded persons given to fire-rising and other mischief, he thinks the jail the proper deterrent, and he would allow a considerable amount of liberty to paralytics in the disposal of their property. I have, he says, in the case of a pronounced paralytic given the opinion that the patient was quite capable of making a valid testament, because the dispositions of the will were in harmony with the views and sentiments which he entertained when sane. No Austrian colleague would subscribe to the opinion laid down by Benedikt. It was, however, confirmed by a celebrated English physician and respected by an English court. Benedikt mentions another case in which the patient was protected against an accusation on account of an offence against public morality, while in the same week, without the professor's intervention but with his full concurrence, the patient was allowed formally to dispose of property. There are some varieties of general paralysis which may be diagnosed years before any mental derangement is noted. There are also other forms of insanity in which the mental impairment is so gradual, that it is a thorny question to answer when responsibility ceases.

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*Irrenhilfsvereine, ihre Leistungen und Entwicklung* [*Associations for the Help of the Insane*]. Von Dr. BROSIUS, in Sayn.

In these sheets, reprinted from the *Irrenfreund*, Nos. 11, 12, 1898, Dr. Brosius gives us some account of the associations for the assistance of the insane which have been formed in German-speaking lands. The first of these was founded in Nassau, but was given up on the death of Lindpaintner in 1829. There is one in Vienna which has now lasted half a century, and one in Styria founded thirty-two years ago. There are now nine in the different cantons of Switzerland, some of which are well supported. Dr. Brosius mentions as many in Germany. The Westphalian Association of St. John founded in 1881 the institution for idiots at Marsberg, which now gives shelter to 329 inmates. The common object of these associations is to help dismissed lunatics, and to give succour to the families of those who have lost their bread-winners through their being sent to asylums. Some of them also give assistance to epileptics who are not insane. Dr. Brosius mentions that Dr. Jules Morel, the physician of the State asylum at Mons, has exerted himself to found a similar society in Belgium, and Dr. Bourneville has done the same in France. Dr. Brosius observes that, besides the