

the clinical aspects of the diseases of children. This is much assisted by well-chosen illustrations, of which there are 160. In unfolding the resources of medicine he only presents such pathological details as bear directly upon treatment. The neurologist will read with interest the chapters upon the symptoms of nervous diseases, and on paralysis and meningitis. Dr. Thomson's observations on the first signs of mental feebleness in infancy form a real addition to our knowledge. He advises the medical attendant not to be too ready in telling the parents that their child is mentally defective, because a large proportion of imbecile babies die early, and the parents are thus spared a most unpleasant piece of information. If a sudden intimation of this kind be made, they either refuse to accept it, or it causes such discouragement as to paralyse their efforts for the child's improvement. "It is by trying to make him do things better that they will come to see the true state of the case." In his description of Mongolism, Dr. Thomson tells us that the characteristic transverse fissures of the tongue do not appear before the third or fourth year. He does not mention the very decided liability of Mongolian idiots to fall victims to tubercular disease. The most cheering pages about the treatment of feeble-mindedness in children are those which record the thyroid administration in sporadic cretinism. The increase of growth and bodily health arouse hopes of corresponding mental improvement which are not always fulfilled. Dr. Thomson gives the caution that, if the thyroid treatment be commenced as late as the age of puberty, it has a tendency to cause softening of the shafts of the long bones, so that, if the patient be kept much on his feet, marked bow-leg will develop.

WILLIAM W. IRELAND.

---

### Part III.—Epitome of Current Literature.

[This Epitome is mainly a record of psychiatric and allied work published in the exchange journals, chiefly foreign. Abstracts are not, as a rule, made from the more widely-read journals published in the United Kingdom. The Editors would be obliged if members of the Association, who are willing to assist with the translation of the various foreign articles, would communicate with the Assistant Editor, Horton Asylum, Epsom.]

#### 1. Anthropology.

*The Brains of Distinguished Men* ("A Study of the Brains of Six Eminent Scientists and Scholars"). (*Trans. Am. Phil. Soc.*, vol. xxi., 1907.) Spitzka, E. A.

For some years past Prof. Spitzka has devoted himself with admirable energy and ability to the task of securing and investigating the brains of men of high intellectual distinction. He has been so successful that at

a comparatively early period in life he occupies with Retzias the leading position in this very special field. The present substantial monograph, copiously and beautifully illustrated, is so far his most important study in this direction.

The six eminent men whose brains are here studied are Prof. Cope (whose skull is also described and figured), the brothers Joseph and Philip Leidy, Dr. Pepper, Prof. Harrison Allen, and Dr. A. J. Parker, all men of high ability, and two, at least, of great distinction and fame. Spitzka's style is lucid, and his descriptions, though comprehensive, are not over-elaborate. A special feature of his inquiry, as in previous studies, is the attempt to correlate the relative development of the various regions of the brain with the special character of the possessor's mind; this attempt may not always lead to convincing conclusions, but it is on the right lines.

A very interesting and valuable part of the paper is the list of the brains of eminent men (and women) previously examined, with their weights and some other data when available. This list contains 137 items, and seems to be complete up to the date of its publication, although at a few minor points the details might be improved, mainly because of the author's difficulty in reaching in every case the original authority. He is unable to follow Broca in accepting the very heavy brain assigned to Oliver Cromwell, and he also rejects Byron's brain, although Byron's autopsy appears to have been conducted in a fairly thorough manner.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

## 2. Neurology.

*Recent Studies of the Histogenesis of the Neuroglia.* [*Studi recenti sull'istogenesi della neuroglia*]. (*Riv. Speriment. di Freniat.*, vol. xxxiii, Fasc. 4.) Cerletti, U.

This critical review by Dr. Cerletti is a result of the recent active renewal of the controversy between the many followers of the primitive doctrine of His. On the one hand those who hold that the neuroglia is of exclusively ectodermal or epiblastic origin, and on the other those who assign to it a double origin—both epiblastic and mesoblastic. Dr. Cerletti concludes that in spite of numerous researches the question still remains unsettled, although he inclines, with the majority of writers, to a single origin of the neuroglia. His himself, it is pointed out, has oscillated in his opinion. At first he enunciated an exclusively ectodermal origin of the neuroglia; later he admitted that at a determined period of embryonal life a secondary formation of neuroglia arose from the connective-tissue cells of the blood-vessels, and joined the primary ectodermal neuroglia; while somewhat recently he has reverted to his original view.

The several writers who support the theory of a double origin of the neuroglia are criticised by Cerletti, and, taking them in chronological order, he refers first to the "mesoglia" cells of Dr. Ford Robertson, which he suggests are probably due to defective reaction in the platinum impregnation method used, and that the author is not justified in holding that these cells are of mesoblastic origin because other tissues of mesoblastic origin take a similar staining reaction under like circum-