Book Reviews.

LEHRBUCH DER NERVENKRANKHEITEN FÜR ARZTE UND
STUDIRENDE, von Prof. Dr. H. Oppenheim, Berlin,
1894. S. Karger, Publisher.

Our first feeling on reading the text-book of Oppenheim is one of distinct disappointment, and although this feeling is somewhat effaced after closer examination it still remains to a considerable degree. From a fairly intimate knowledge of the author's contributions to the department of medical science in which he has labored, we were led to expect that the proposed book by him would differ materially from the ordinary text-book in that it would give a fairly good summary of the pathology and pathological anatomy of nervous diseases as they are conceived of to-day by those who are sometimes wrongly termed advanced pathologists, that is, pathologists of the school of Pasteur and Metchnikoff. It does not, and it is this that is most disappointing in the volume before us. This may be a fault of our own, however, rather than of the author, as he disclaims in the preface to his book any attempt to enter into the pathology of nervous diseases; simply a desire to state the pathological anatomy with sufficient clearness that the clinical entity may be readily comprehended and the *raison d'être* of the symptoms easily understood.

We have had, however, such a very large number of comparatively new text-books on nervous diseases during the last few years built on the same plan that one is led to the question: Wherefore, another of the same kind? But, again, this, perhaps, is not a pertinent question to authors.

The book before us is divided into two parts, the first of which comprises the general manner of investigation or examination of the patient and general symptomatology. The second part, which is comprised in seven sections, is taken up with a description of organic and functional nervous diseases in great detail. We have nothing but words of praise for the first part. It is a plain, straightforward exemplification of the method of examining the patient, told with detail and exactness, laying stress on the important things and quickly dismissing the unnecessary or over-complicated. The student or beginner who makes these chapters his own will be well prepared to begin learning the art of examination.

Part II. is lead off by a discussion of the diseases of the spinal cord, to which is prefixed a few remarks on the anatomy, physiology and experimental pathology of the spinal cord. As in other parts of the book, here the author has shown his discrimination in the use of illus-

trations. They are well selected and well executed. The diseases of the spinal cord are not classified as inflammatory, degenerative and functional, but as to whether the disease is confined to tracts or are systemic. The chapter on *Tabes dorsalis* is a lucid statement of the disease as it is understood to-day. Erb's opinion as to the astounding frequency of syphilis as a causative factor of this disease is apparently concurred in, although the author remarks emphatically that tabes is nevertheless not a syphilitic disease from a pathological point of view.

Some symptoms which other writers lay stress on as of importance in early diagnosis of the disease, such as *Signe d'escalier*, swaying on sudden halting, Romberg's symptoms, etc., are not mentioned. The author considers the four symptoms of Westphal's sign, the loss of power of contraction of the pupils to light, the lancinating pains and the analgesia as the especial ones in making the early diagnosis.

A noteworthy fact is, the author's apparent antipathy to eponyms, especially when the name is not a Teutonic one, and is seen here in the absolute absence of the application of the term Argyll-Robertson pupil.

The treatment of the disease is handled with thoroughness, and especially to be commended is the manner in which the author recapitulates the plan of treatment. Especially is it important and useful to beginners. The mode of treating tabic patients is of greater importance than the use of drugs. The benefit which the author believes to be derived from electricity will probably strike an unsympathetic chord in the mind of many neurologists. The efficacy of suspension—very slight—is judiciously stated. Although the author is not a follower of Erb in the use of mercury in tabes, he believes in its use in the early stages of the disease, especially when it can be clearly traced to syphilis or when it runs an irregular course. In the description of this disease, as in many others, we remark the absence of a lucid definition at the beginning of the chapter which we believe would facilitate the student in remembering and comprehending the disease.

Throughout the volume, and even in this chapter, the activity of infection in producing nervous diseases is emphasized very particularly. This is seen in the statement of the etiology of acute anterior poliomyelitis, where the disease is considered, and rightfully we believe as the result of infection entirely. The clinical descriptions of anterior poliomyelitis, both acute and chronic, and the directions for treatment are in keeping with other writers.

In the consideration of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis the author follows Charcot, both in his clinical description and statement of the pathological anatomy, who taught the disease to be a sclerosis of the lateral columns with a secondary involvement of the gray matter, a position recently fortified by Strumpell.

The position taken by Leyden and supported by Senator and other of the author's *confreres* in Berlin, that amyotrophic lateral sclerosis cannot be separated from progressive bulbar palsy and that the clinical picture of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis can exist without a lesion in the lateral columns, is not referred to.

Combined lateral and posterior sclerosis is rather fully described. Oppenheim apparently does not take the view of this disease that some recent writers have, viz., that nearly all cases of this disease are cases of chronic myelitis of the dorsal region with secondary degenerations, or cases of locomotor ataxia with a complicating or secondary degeneration in the lateral column (Dana). For the author the process is most frequently a systemic one, the disease affecting most frequently Goll's and Burdach's columns and the lateral pyramidal and direct cerebellar tracts; or the lateral pyramidal and the direct cerebellar and Goll's column alone.

Regarding the etiology, although he does not agree with Gowers that syphilis rarely can be postulated as a causative factor, yet he does not give to syphilis a very important place. He does, however, attribute to anæmia and cachexia, weighty etiological significance and, we believe, with good reason.

In the description of Friedreich's ataxia we are glad to see that the author coincides with Friedreich and Schultze in his description of the anatomical changes found. The hypothesis recently suggested by Senator (and which is really conceived of from work done by Nonne, Menzel and others) that the primary change in this disease must be sought for in the cerebellum and that the changes in the cord are secondary, really makes one fear that Senator has not discriminated between *heredo ataxie cerebelleuse* and Friedreich's disease—two diseases which we think are separable without great difficulty.

Simple senile paraplegia—a condition to which Gowers called attention in the *Centralbl. f. Nervenheilk.*—a few years ago, is not noticed by Oppenheim. In this he has the support of most neurologists—American and German at least.

The chapters on spondylitis tuberculosa and the affection of the meninges of the spinal cord are excellent, as are the cuts illustrating the latter condition.

The author's views on acute myelitis are clear and his expression of them dogmatic. In the etiology of this disease we are glad to see that he no longer dallys in an uncertain way with such factors as catching cold, sexual excess and the like, but goes at once to the root of the matter and states that infection is the most important cause of acute myelitis. The description of multiple sclerosis is lucid and complete. Although the author does not impress as does Erb, the frequency of occurrence of this disease. A few pages are devoted to the atypical forms of this disease, and neurologists can only be obliged to Oppenheim for stating his opinion with positiveness that the pseudo-sclerosis as described by Westphal, has no dependency on hysteria as was suggested by Charcot and his disciples. As might be expected, considering the immense labor that has been devoted to the subject during the past five years, the chapter on syringomyelia is quite complete.

The part of the book which we believe will be found most instructive to the student and most helpful to the beginner is the part devoted to the affections of the peripheral nerves, both single and multiple.

The introduction to the chapter on diseases of the brain is taken up with a few remarks on the anatomy and physiology of the brain, and then a brief statement of the facts of localization. Mooted points and questions still *sub judice* are not touched upon. The illustrations accompanying this part of the book are well selected and admirably executed.

The chapter devoted to tumors of the brain is not so complete and satisfactory as it might be. In diagnosing cerebral tumors, we do not think much stress should be given to information that can be obtained by percussion. In considering the treatment the percentage of cases benefitted by operation should be stated. The early indication for operation should be emphasized. The rapidity of progress, pointing as it does to the kind of neoplasm and the chances for operation on such a growth and the rules for operation are points that the student and general practitioner want light on.

Considering the alarming extent to which attacks of cerebro-spinal meningitis prevail, the chapter on this disease is of interest to us. Experience in this country does not tend to confirm Oppenheim's opinion that the disease prevails so commonly in winter and spring. The Leipzig epidemic studied by Strumpell was severest in June. "The disease shows no special predilection, so far as one can judge, for particular regions for any season of the year and no one class of people is affected, the apparently robust and the weak suffering alike" (Flexner and Barker).

We are surprised to note that the author says nothing of the *micrococcus lanceolatus* which is believed to have a causative relation to this disease, and which has been isolated by pathologists in almost every epidemic of this disease that has been carefully investigated since Eberth first isolated it in 1880.

Syphilitic disease of the brain is considered in a thorough manner. We are glad to note that the author remarks that it is not uncommon for syphilitic affections of the brain to appear within the first two or three years after infection. In speaking of the treatment, the author is not so pessimistic as Gowers, who solemnly states that there is no evidence that the disease which causes the manifestation of the symptoms ever is or ever has been cured. And again, unlike him, he recommends the most energetic treatment by mercury, and particularly inunctions, and later the iodides in large doses. Gowers tell us that he has found no case of intracranial disease which indicated that mercury had succeeded where iodide had failed.

In the description of dementia paralytica we are disappointed in the inadequate description of the pathological changes, particularly those so commonly found in other parts of the nervous system than the brain.

In the clinical description we remark that the author gives expansive ideas a relatively proper place and weight. They are by no means so frequent, nor should they have the diagnostic significance given to them, which is accorded by the ordinary text-book on mental diseases.

The opinion that temperature of the body in dementia paralytica

is a variable one is not in line with recent investigations (*vide* Peterson, this JOURNAL).

Of the diseases classified under the neuroses, the description of hysteria is a mirror held up to the classic description of Charcot and his school. Neurasthenia is fully described, but the chapter contains nothing new.

The traumatic neuroses to which the author has given so much attention in the past are considered to a considerable extent, and the author has apparently slightly modified some of his views, particularly as regards the objective symptoms of the affection. He is, however, directly opposed to the opinion of Charcot, who places traumatic hysteria in the category of an auto-suggestion. For Oppenheim the pathogenesis of the traumatic neurosis is that it follows a psychical and physical shaking or shock (*Erschütterung*). Both manifest their sinister action mainly on the brain hemispheres, and bring about molecular change, especially in the area concerned with the higher intellectual functions and this in turn dominates the motor, sensory and sensibility functions dependent on it.

In considering the diagnosis the author, speaking of simulation, says that, the continued increase of the reflexes, the mechanical, muscle, and nerve irritability, the fibrillary tremor, or, also, the tremor and clonic contraction in a single muscle, which a healthy person cannot cause to contract by itself, such, for instance, as the triceps, supinator longus, omohyoideus, etc.; the atrophy, the vasomotor phenomena the symptoms of neurasthenia cordis, the pupillary difference, the anomalies of secretion, and other objective signs must be sought for and when found are positive evidence against simulation.

During the last few years the importance and frequency of simulation has been gradually growing less, both in this country and in Europe. A few years ago nearly half the cases coming to neurologists for the symptom complex of traumatic neurosis after injuries were considered to be simulation. Now 10 per cent. would probably more than include the number in this country and 5 per cent. in Germany.

Recent opportunities of seeing a considerable number of cases of this disease in Germany has prompted the reviewer to seriously question the occurrence and diagnosis of such a large percentage of true traumatic neurosis and so few cases of simulation and genuine traumatic hysteria. The system of pensioning so universally prevalent in Germany would seem to me a very potent influence to simulation and the method of treatment employed by many of the clinicians, viz., keeping them in bed and frequent, prolonged and suggestive examinations as rather conducive to the bringing prominently into the foreground any tendency to hysteria. Personally, we think traumatic hysteria plays far more frequently in the guise of the traumatic neurosis than German neurologists are willing to admit.

The space devoted to epilepsy, paralysis agitans, chorea, tetanus Basedow's disease, etc., with which the remainder of the book is taken

up is quite adequate and the clinical descriptions leave nothing to be desired.

In spite of the data that is continually accumulating illustrative of the pathological anatomy of paralysis agitans, the author thinks nevertheless that it is a neurosis. The changes which have been described are, he thinks, a part of the well known senile process of the nervous system. This is not, however, we must say the opinion of other writers. Redlich in a recent contribution says the changes are in no wise comparable to senility, for, in cases of senile cords, such vascular conditions as have been described are not found.

The author's therapeutic suggestions in this disease have the same virtue that Cæsar's renowned message had. They are not weighed down by redundancy and circumlocution. He says, "The physician can much injure and little help."

Speaking of the treatment in other diseases, the author is to be commended for his statement of positive opinion which should be of great help, particularly to the student and general practitioner. For instance, electro-therapy in Basedow's disease, he considers to give the best results and states his conviction in no uncertain terms.

We are disappointed that the surgical handling of this disease has not been discussed in more detail, and that in enumerating the drugs that are of service, aconitia, which has been so highly recommended by Sequin was omitted.

In a general way it may be said that the text-book before us is an excellent resumé of clinical neurology and that its particular value is that it leaves the impress of its author. It is not a suggestive book; the neurologist will not find in it much to help him. Unlike a famous work on the same subject in our own tongue, we are afraid that experience will not show as it does with the latter that the oftener you study or consult it the more you find in it to admire and the more you appreciate its usefulness. At the same time we believe the book will be a satisfactory one to students, particularly because of the clear exposition of diseases from a clinical standpoint and because of the authoritative style of the writer. The general practitioner will likewise find in its pages the solution of such cases that may seem to him obscure and puzzling.

In a previous place we have remarked that the author is not given to the use of eponyms. This is by no means attributing a fault, perhaps a virtue rather. We must, however, remark that the names of American investigators and clinicians are conspicuous by their absence. Oppenheim says in his preface that he cannot give credit for utilization of facts to individual sources or individual discoverers, and he lives up to the letter of this statement when American names or sources are concerned.

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