

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

APYREXIAL PNEUMONIA

The following interesting report by Krisma Iyer appeared in a recent number of the *Indian Medical Gazette*.

"APYREXIAL pneumonia is not an uncommon occurrence in general practice. Some of the sudden deaths after two days' slight fever might be the result of such a condition. Unless every such case is subjected to a postmortem examination, the rate of actual death from the pneumonia cannot be correctly estimated.

"Case No. 1.—A middle-aged man of about 35, previously hale and healthy, was seized at about 3 a. m. one morning with a slight pain in the chest. By 6 a. m. the pain became severe and he was just preparing to start for the out-patient clinic when he got an attack of sudden pain and had to lie down. There followed some convulsive movements of the body with the eye-balls rolling, struggling of arms and legs, foaming at the mouth, and in a few minutes, he was dead. On postmortem examination there were typical signs of pneumonia of one lung, the beginning of grey hepatization. His condition before postmortem examination never gave the slightest clue that he was suffering from pneumonia. The temperature soon after (10 minutes after) death was 100° F. But for the postmortem examination, his death would have been classified under some fit of cerebral origin.

"Case No. 2.—Patient aged about 30 had attended the out-patient clinic, the previous day for slight fever and headache. He was given the routine mixture for fever (diaphoretic) and sent away. He worked that day. Just before meal-time, at about noon, he was going to take his food, but on the way fell down fainting and, before anything could be done, expired. But for the post-mortem examination which revealed definite signs of pneumonia just like the first case, he too would have been considered to have died of heart-failure due to, say 'flu'."

FOOD AND THE EMOTIONS

Walter C. Alvarez, in a most interesting article about "Nervous Indigestion," which appeared recently in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, makes the following remarks about the influence of emotions on digestion:

"Many years ago, as a boy helping my father in his practice, I was struck with the way in which fright and pain can stop both the secretory and the motor functions of the digestive tract. Early one morning a girl fell out of a mango tree and broke her arm. It was a long drive in a buggy to the city, so it was near noon before the parents could bring the child to the office. With the first few whiffs of anæsthesia she vomited, and I have never forgotten my surprise

at seeing the fruit, eaten hours before in the tree, still untouched by digestion, and with the marks of her teeth clearly chiseled on the surfaces.

"In a man (with a fistula) studied by Mantelli, gastric secretion was inhibited not only by psychic strain but also by physical fatigue. For an hour or two after strenuous muscular exertion, little or no psychic juice could be obtained; and only after two hours did the stomach respond normally to the actual presence of food. Similar observations were made by Cohnheim and his associates who studied their own gastric secretion the morning after a severe climb in the Alps; one had normal acids, two were subacid, and one was almost anacid. The failure to secrete may have been due partly to fatigue and partly to sweating, with the resultant dehydration and loss of chlorides.

"These observations interest me because on trips into the mountains I have noticed that the man who comes into camp hungry from an exhausting climb and immediately sits down to a hearty meal will occasionally suffer afterward for several days with abdominal pain, flatulence or diarrhea. Sometimes the food will appear in the stools, decomposed; foul-smelling and undigested, and the most obvious explanation is that fatigue dried up the all-important ferments. I have seen similar failures of digestion with resultant diarrhea when food was eaten under psychic strain as at banquets, at political meetings, or in homes overshadowed by illness and death, and I suspect that many upsets now ascribed to the eating of some unknown spoiled food are really due to this drying up of secretions which accompanies excitement and fatigue.

"Beaumont observed that in a number of conditions, among which he mentioned 'fear, anger, or whatever depressed or disturbs the nervous system, the villous coat on the stomach becomes sometimes red and dry, at other times pale and moist, and loses its smooth and healthy appearance; the secretions become vitiated, greatly diminished, or entirely suppressed, the mucous coat scarcely perceptible; the follicles flat and flaccid, with secretions insufficient to protect the vascular and nervous papillae from irritation.

"On one occasion when Alexis St. Martin became very angry, much bile regurgitated, into the stomach, which makes one wonder if there is not something after all in the ancient association between the ideas of bile (chole) and anger (choler). He who remembers his Homer knows how poorly restrained were the emotions of our early ancestors, and any one who has seen a Mexican woman vomiting bile after a "coraje" or wild debauch or temper can imagine how some such physiologic observations may have influenced the growth of human speech.

"One of the necessary accompaniments or precursors of secretion in the digestive tract appears to be a flow of blood to the part. Many have observed that, when digestion commences, the pale pink mucous membrane becomes engorged and reddened, and Serottenbach found that coincident with the psychic secretion or gastric juice there was a diminution in the flow of blood to the arm and presumably an increase in that to the digestive tract. The close relation between this flow blood of the stomach and the amount of juice secreted has been shown by Ivy and Farrell.

"According to Bennett and Venables, a secretion of psychic juice can be excited in a hypnotized person by telling him that a disaster is impending.

"Studies by Leuders and others on the insane indicate that gastric secretion and motility are depressed during periods of depression and normal or better than normal during periods of exaltation.

"That the vagi have much to do with the flow of psychic juice is indicated by the fact that the phenomenon disappears after section of these nerves. Both the vagi and the splanchnics appear to carry secretory and inhibitory fibers to the pancreas; but as can be seen from Babkin's excellent review, the problem is complicated and some features remain obscure."

SOCIAL SERVICE COURSE

A course in Social Service which aims to give the student a clear idea of social service work in general and provides especially for the study of the technique, methods and underlying principles of "Family Case Work", "Child Welfare Work" and Medical and Psychiatric Social Service will be given at the Summer Session of the University of Porto Rico under the auspices of the Department of Health. The date set for course is from July 1 to August 14, 1929 and the classes will be held from 2 to 3 o'clock p. m.

The lecturers for this course are the Hon. Pedro N. Ortiz, M. D., Commissioner of Health, the Hon. A. Fernós Isern, M. D., Assistant Commissioner of Health and José Rodríguez Pastor, M. D., Chief, Division of Social Medicine. The three major subjects will be introduced by these three lecturers. The course is outlined in the following way: A. Social Work in General. B. Family Case Work. C. Child Welfare. D. Medical and Psychiatric Social Service.

Teachers of this course are Miss Consuelo Delgado, Superintendent Social Service, Department of Health; Miss Ana V. Alfonso, Social Worker Department of Health and Miss Joaquina Rodríguez, Social Worker Department of Health. In addition to the full and interesting program scheduled for the general outline of study, a Field Work program is also presented in which visits to different poor sections of the city of San Juan are to be made by the class in groups. There will also be visits to the Government Charity Schools, Dispensaries of the Health Department, and the Insane Asylum.

Admission to the Social Service Course is given under the following conditions: 1. Students expecting credit for the course must have finished their first year College or be either Normal Graded Teachers or School Principals. 2. Visiting students will be admitted only with the approval of the Director of the Summer School. 3. Students working for credits should have at least twelve hours of field work.

It is of interest to note that this year the course covers six weeks instead of three weeks as in the past two years. The announcement of the course appears in the catalogue of the University as one of their sociology subjects with two full credit hours.