The Diagnosis of Metasyphilitic Diseases by the Demonstration of Brain Antibodies. (*Klin. Woch., vol. xii, p.* 1052, 1933.) *Foerster, R.*

The author confirms the findings of Steinfeld and of Georgi and Fischer that the spinal fluid of paretic patients reacts with an alcoholic extract of brain-tissue (complement-fixation), unlike spinal fluids of other types of neurosyphilis. His results with serum were inconclusive. HARRY EAGLE (Chem. Abstr.).

Changes in the Brain in Carbon Monoxide Poisoning. II : The Lipoid Substance. (*Trans. Japan Path. Soc., vol. xxii, p.* 846, 1932.) *Oba, S.*

Lipoid substances were found histochemically in the intercellular tissue of the brain in the early stages of carbon monoxide poisoning.

I. S. YUN (Chem. Abstr.).

Modification of the Lipoid Content in the Central Nervous System in Convulsions. (*Atti accad. Lincei, vol. xvii, p.* 861, 1933.) *Sangirardi, V.*

The cerebro-spinal axis of the frog was immersed for 4 hours in 2 c.c. each of several convulsants dissolved in oxygenated ·7% sodium chloride solution. The poisons used were strychnine sulphate, picrotoxin, phenol and nicotine. In all cases the lipoid content was diminished after the immersion, the greatest drop being shown by the unsaturated phosphatides, the least by the saturated cerebrosides. A. W. CONTIERI (Chem. Abstr.).

The Determination of Barbituric Acid Derivatives in the Urine and Tissues. (*Arch. Intern. Pharmacodynamie, vol. xlv, p.* 160, 1933.) *Herwick, R. P.*

Amytal and neonal are not excreted in the urine of dogs after oral or intravenous administration, and are presumably destroyed in the body. Pentobarbital is also not excreted as such; but after its administration an unidentified substance with low melting-point and anæsthetic properties appears in the urine.

HARRY EAGLE (Chem. Abstr.).

7. Oligophrenia (Mental Deficiency.)

The Inheritance of Mental Defect. (*Brit. Journ. Med. Psych., vol. xiii, Oct.*, 1933.) *Gates, R. Ruggles.*

The Mendelian laws of inheritance are general in so far as physical characters are concerned. Do they apply equally to mental defects? The same physical defect in man may be consistently dominant in one pedigree and recessive in another. Each defect is assumed to arise at some time as a mutation or germinal change. The relative frequency of inherited and non-inherited feeble-mindedness can be determined only by examining the immediate ancestors and other relatives in every case. As feeble-mindedness is usually recessive in inheritance, it is possible only to place an upper limit to the percentage of the non-inherited type. The great bulk of feeble-mindedness is inherited.

The Mendelian heredity of peroneal atrophy, myoclonic epilepsy, Huntington's chorea, Friedrich's ataxia and juvenile amaurotic idiocy is illustrated. Studies by Sjögren and others of the inheritance of oligophrenia are reviewed, and it is concluded that the inheritance is generally recessive, and that usually a single recessive gene is involved. The insanities appear to show a dominant inheritance much more frequently than does feeble-mindedness. Ultimately all forms of mental defect and aberration will be found to follow definite Mendelian rules of inheritance. JOHN D. W. PEARCE.