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MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, THE MOST PERMANENT INSTITUTION IN THE STATE OF ROME, AND
CHIEF AMONG THE FACTORS WHICH GOVERNED ITS HISTORY.



In the earliest period the king was the sole ruler of Rome; he imposed taxes, distributed land, erected buildings, he was the supreme judge with power of life and death over his subjects, he appointed all officials, led his people to war, and was head of all religious institutions. He appointed, to aid him, the Senate or council of elders, consisting of men chosen on account of their experience and assumed prudence and wisdom. At first the king convened this council when it suited his convenience, and it was little more than the ruler's instrument. With time it acquired power and became the chief authority. Other institutions arose and played a part in the government, but for many centuries and especially those in which danger threatened the expanding state—as during the Punic wars—the conduct of affairs lay entirely in the hands of the Senate. In its best days the Senate was composed of men of fine calibre, drawn mostly from patrician families whose members had served the state from generation to generation, but it included also plebeians who had rendered conspicuous public service—from these two sources a high level of capacity was secured. The representations of Senators here reproduced from a monument of the first century B.C. may be looked upon as typical leaders of the Roman people.



DATE: From c. 750 B.C.

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ETIOLOGY OF MENTAL DISEASE.

"F. O. S." asks what is the best and latest work on insanity as showing that insanity and other abnormal mental conditions are due to structural alterations in the brain caused by disease or injury or other defect?

* * That insanity and other abnormal mental conditions are due to structural alterations in the brain is a thesis now seldom advanced in psychiatric textbooks. The proposition, as it stands, is, in our present state of knowledge, unproven. Most observers, however, firmly believe that in all such conditions there is some functional disorder of the brain, presumably of a biochemical nature; and that there may, of course, be simultaneous functional derangements of the endocrine organs and the vegetative nervous system, which are possibly causative. There is no gainsaying the unsatisfactory nature or the theory of the psychogenesis of certain mental disorder, of which Bleuler is perhaps the leading exponent; for where there is a psychogenesis there must indubitably be physiological reasons why the brain should be vulnerable. The late Sir Frederick Mott was perhaps the leading exponent of a purely materialistic interpretation. His views are to be found in his many lectures and addresses, most of them published in our columns during the last few years. Dr. J. S. Bolton, in *The Brain in Health and Disease*, and in many recent writings, is a vigorous advocate of similar views. Almost all recent textbooks (for instance, that of Craig and Beaton, reviewed in our issue of June 26th, 1926, p. 1088) consider all theories, and the necessary arguments may be abstracted therefrom. Tanzi's *Textbook of Mental Diseases*, which was translated into English in 1909, would still answer our correspondent's purposes very well. So far as we can ascertain, there has been no more recent edition of the English translation.

INCOME TAX.

"MEDICUS IN A BRITISH COLONY" proposes to spend rather more than a year in England and on the Continent in doing some post-graduate work. He inquires whether he will be liable to income tax in the United Kingdom in respect of income derived from colonial investments.

* * No—provided that he does not spend six months in this country in any one financial year. (N.B.—The financial year commences on April 5th.)

"J. D. B." inquires why relief in respect of wear and tear and upkeep of a motor car is allowed to a private practitioner and not to an army medical officer who uses a car in his professional work.

* * The former's earnings fall under Schedule D and the latter's under Schedule E, and, as different rules apply to the two schedules, seeming anomalies occur sometimes. If "J. D. B." uses his car "wholly, exclusively, and necessarily in the performance of the duties of his office," he should be allowed to deduct the running cost. Judicial decisions have excluded the expense of travelling between the residence and the place of work from the allowance.

"T. C. L." replaced his car in 1925, the replacement cost being £290; the inspector of taxes proposes to allow this sum as a professional expense of the year 1925, but assumes that that will affect the 1926-27 assessment only.

* * Presumably the inspector is assuming that the three years' average will cease to operate for 1927-28; that is the existing intention, but it is perhaps not certain that the change will then be made, and in any event the accompanying provisions for relieving hard cases might assist "T. C. L." As regards the depreciation (20 per cent.) allowance on the new car, we are of opinion that an allowance of £87 should be given as for 1926-27; the ground for withholding it is no doubt that depreciation and replacement allowances cannot be given simultaneously, which is correct, but may be met by pointing out that the claim to deduct the £290 may be regarded as made under the statutory provision for an "obsolescence" allowance.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

POST-GRADUATE HOSTEL.

MR. A. P. BERTWISTLE, F.R.C.S. Ed. (honorary secretary of the Hostel), writes: The Post-Graduate Hostel, Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, W.C.1, is arranging for a series of discussions on anatomical and physiological topics, in order that a graduate may have the opportunity of hearing the views of teachers from schools other than his own. Their purpose will be to show the practical value of these subjects, and they should therefore interest the body of the profession, besides making the subject more interesting to the graduate studying them. The first of these will be on Tuesday next, September 21st, when Professor F. R. S. Frazer (St. Mary's) will open the discussion on "Some clinical bearings of embryology."

CANCER IN FAMILIES.

DR. ALFRED PACKMAN (Rochester) writes: Probably many other practitioners come across cases of cancer affecting members of the same family, but the following cases in two families particularly are worthy of note:

Family 1.			
Edward B., 76	...	...	Cancer of stomach.
Emma, 74	...	...	Ditto.
Emma, 45 (her daughter)	...	...	Cancer of breast.
Charles, 56	...	...	Cancer of liver.
James, 52	...	...	Cancer of bowel.
Family 2.			
Mrs. B., 76	...	...	Cancer of breast.
Mrs. P., 73	...	...	Cancer of bowel.
Mr. P., 74	...	...	Cancer of right cheek, mouth, and throat.
Mrs. W., 72	...	...	Cancer of breast.
Mr. P., 55	...	...	Cancer of right eye.

In addition, I have records of mother and two daughters—all cancer of stomach; two sisters—cancer of uterus; also brother and sister—cancer of liver.

HERPES ZOSTER AND VARICELLA.

DR. W. P. LE FEUVRE (M.O.H. Knysna, South Africa) writes: With reference to the case reported by Drs. L. E. Green de Woolfson and W. H. Smith in the JOURNAL of May 29th (p. 902), may I point out that the appearance of the herpetic and varicellar eruptions in an infant of 8 months is probably a record as regards age only, as numerous similar cases have been reported in the JOURNAL and elsewhere, both in children and adults. An early case is to be found (at first mistaken for small-pox) in the Sydenham Society's *Transactions* for 1867. A recent case was also described in this JOURNAL on March 6th (female, aged 42), and in children aged 4 and 7 years respectively on December 6th, 1924, and August 22nd, 1925. The 8-months infant apparently inherited a very sensitive nervous system from her mother, as evidenced by the latter's attack of shingles three months previously, necessitating hospital treatment—an unusual event in the case of a comparatively young subject, such as I presume the mother to have been. As far as one can judge, it is this sensitiveness, either inherited or acquired, that decides what form the eruption shall take—herpetic, varicellar, or both—in those who have been in contact with either shingles or chicken-pox. The incubation stage seems to be practically the same in all reported cases. I am still wondering how long it will be before the two eruptions come to be recognized as part and parcel of one disease, which, as I suggested some years ago, might not unfitly be termed "varicella herpetica." In the case of a boy, aged 6 years, who came under my care about three years ago, the mother was intensely musical and highly strung, and the youngster seemed to inherit these same characteristics. After a short contact with chicken-pox he developed first an attack of shingles, necessitating morphine for the extreme pain and sleeplessness, and four days later (the usual interval) was covered with an ordinary chicken-pox rash. His elder sister, less nervous, was satisfied to take the disease in the shape of the varicellar eruption only.

AN ANCIENT NEEDLE.

DR. G. VARIAN (Watford) writes to record the case of a spinster, aged 74, who consulted him for a large extravasation and ecchymosis over the lower third of Hunter's canal and the adductors. As she had a high blood pressure the haemorrhage was attributed to this and its attendant pathological degenerations. "I saw her," Dr. Varian continues, "about a month later. She still complained of pain under the area affected, and on applying some pressure to the deep tissues a sudden little cone of skin appeared, on the point of which I pricked my finger. I removed a needle, of a type which has not been seen or made in this country for many years. It is a hand-made black steel needle, with a roughly squared eye end and a simple hole punched through for the thread. My patient never saw such a needle before and has no memory of its painful entry. I suggest that she sat on her mother's needle in early childhood."

ARSENIC IN APPLES.

IN his annual report Dr. W. J. Howarth, medical officer of health for the City of London, states the results of investigations into the presence of arsenic in apples brought from America. The only apples with indications of arsenical deposits were "Jonathans"; it was with apples from America corresponding to these that prosecution was instituted in another area. The fruit contained 1-700 grain of arsenious oxide per pound. As the quantity of arsenic was so small Dr. Howarth did not consider it necessary to restrict the sale of these apples, but he considers that fruit should be exported entirely free from arsenic, since, if small quantities of poison are disregarded in one food, other poisonous substances, also in small quantities, might be added to other foods, and the aggregate consumed might be considerable.

FOR the convenience of residents in the London area a showroom has been opened by Messrs. Boulton and Paul, at 135-37, Queen Victoria Street, E.C., where specimens of their motor houses, shelters, etc., may be seen.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 37, 38, 39, 42, and 43 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 40 and 41.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the Supplement at page 152.