PART IV.—NOTES AND NEWS.

THE MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

A quarterly meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association was held in the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, on Tuesday, the 14th of December. Among those present were Drs. Jamieson, Clouston, Fraser, Batty Tuke, Ireland, Frd. Skae, Anderson, Thomas Howden, J. A. Campbell, Laycock, McDowall, Brodie, Grierson, Maclaren, Denholm, Stewart, and Professor Calderwood.

On the motion of Dr. IRELAND, Dr. LAYCOCK was called to the chair.

The minutes of last meeting were held as read.

EXHIBITION OF PATHOLOGICAL SPECIMENS.

Dr. CLOUSTON showed the brain of the epileptic patient, whose case was described in the "Clinical Notes and Cases" of the Journal for October, 1875 (p. 427). Dr. Clouston then showed two microscopic specimens, being sections made by Dr. J. J. Brown, of Morningside. The one showed innumerable small apoplexies in the spinal cord of a kind not previously described, and the other miliary sclerosis affecting the medulla in a case of general paralysis, where the sclerosis followed the peripheral nerve-fibres inwards, and also followed the course of the small arteries.

REFLEX AUTOMATIC AND UNCONSCIOUS CEREBRATION.

The CHAIRMAN then said, an interesting paper on "The Unilateral Phenomena of Mental and Nervous Disorders," by Dr. Archibald Robertson, indicates a field of observation which Asylum Superintendents might very usefully occupy on a systematic plan. Many years ago I worked at these unilateral phenomena, and have a chapter on the subject in my "Treatise on the Nervous Diseases of Women" (p. 199). I venture to suggest a few points of not difficult observation. The physiognomical diagnosis of unilateral diseases might be helped by observing the unilateral development, atrophy, or other conditions of soft parts like the ears and nostrils, or the development and colour of the hair on head and face. It is seldom that the two ears are alike in size or form or development of lobe or helix. Thus there may be a soldered lobe on one side and a "wattle" or unsoldered lobe on the other. When this is so, it is most usual for the cerebral or encephalic disease to be on the same side as the soldered lobe. In the "Medical Times and Gazette" for 22nd March, 1862, I have given illustrations of various kinds of ears. Hæmatoma may also be unilateral. I have observed in cases of encephalic diseases hæmatoma of the ear on the same side as the symptoms. The experiments of Brown Sequard tend to show that there is a spot in the restiform tract which regulates the circulation in the ears of rabbits. The distribution of the hair on the face corresponds obviously to nerve-centres. It is usually thinner on the left than on the right side. So also as to colour and greyness. One whisker may be greyer than the other. A medical friend informs me that he had a neuralgia on both sides of his face, and that his whiskers turned so grey that he shaved them off; his moustache and chin beard being unaffected. Lately attention has been directed in "Nature" to the proportions of the hand and fingers, but more especially of the index to the ring finger. The varying proportions observed have been thought to be due to race, but it is more probable that the special uses of the hands determine these. Here, again, the two sides differ in proportion, size, &c. The easiest and surest plan of observing the proportions of the hands would be to place each hand flat on a piece of stout paper with the palms downwards, and the thumbs placed

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.22.97.157-a Published online by Cambridge University Press