

sclerosis is to be held accountable for the muscular atrophy. Although the Rontgen rays have done much to facilitate diagnosis under these conditions, it cannot be said that they have in any way robbed the reflexes of the value that attached to them before the rays were put to such use. It may be safely said that the rays have supplemented, not supplanted, the reflexes in this sphere of their usefulness, for while they may reveal an accessory rib, caries or other disease of the cervical vertebræ to account for the muscular atrophy, in the absence of these conditions they cannot tell us whether the atrophy is of central or of peripheral origin, nor can they further give us the good idea the reflexes can as to which of the several affections of the spinal cord is likely to be responsible for the condition.

Two affections that may easily be confounded, and that present considerable difficulty of diagnosis at times, although at other times the clinical pictures are so widely different that there is no possibility of confounding them, are cerebellar tumor and disseminate sclerosis. A proper appreciation of the different behavior of the reflexes in the two conditions will go far towards clearing up the question that is in doubt; indeed, the diagnosis may largely, if not entirely, depend on what, if any, alterations are determined in the reflexes. While various alterations of the tendon-jerks obtain in tumor of the cerebellum which may accord with what is found in disseminate sclerosis, the superficial reflexes prove of distinct service in differential diagnosis, for the plantar reflex commonly assumes the extensor type at an early stage of disseminate sclerosis, while it only does so as a late event in a case of tumor of the cerebellum, and is then to be ascribed to some complication rather than to the morbid condition of the cerebellum itself.

The reservation that has had to be made in regard to the plantar reflex does not apply to the other superficial reflexes on which a diagnosis may be based, for, assuming that the local conditions of the abdominal walls be such as to permit the abdominal reflexes to be obtained, their absence may be regarded of considerable importance in diagnosis, for, while they are unaffected in cases of tumor of the cerebellum, they are absent in a large proportion of cases of disseminate sclerosis. The reflexes may thus serve to determine whether we are in the presence of an affection in which operative intervention may be expected to bring relief, or whether the morbid condition is one in which operation would not only be useless, but actually harmful.

It is impossible to leave this part of our subject without referring to the value that attaches to the extensor plantar reflex in the