

prior to the onset of the disease. Patients of a phlegmatic temperament may meet with considerable injury and suffer but little, while the mercurial individual may become neurasthenic after a slight injury. The Jews and Slavonians were more susceptible to the disease than other races.

Regarding the pathology, not much had yet been found out. Erichsen, in discussing "railway spine," contended that there was always a certain amount of organic change. That author held that there were not only molecular changes, but also small disseminated scleroses of the spinal cord; or, in some instances, anæmia of the posterior columns, and, in others, punctate hæmorrhages in the meninges, which led subsequently to sclerosis or meningitis. Charcot's opinion was that there were no possible evidences of lesions. In many cases he believed that the psychic disturbance was hysterical. Knapp recently arrived at the conclusion that there must be in every instance a certain organic change of some character, otherwise there could not be any nervous phenomena to appear. He believed that the distinction we draw ordinarily between functional and organic disease is a distinction drawn on account of our ignorance: that the more medical men investigate scientifically, the more they would eliminate functional diseases considered as such; that there must be some organic trouble, although beyond the ken of the best microscope. Experimental studies had been made to elucidate the subject. Dogs had been dropped from a height so as to alight on the coccyx, thus giving a severe shock to the spinal cord. As is to be expected, vertebral fractures and contusions of the cord occurred frequently; but no microscopic changes were discovered. The conclusions reached by means of a test of this character evidently must be, at the best, very unsatisfactory, inasmuch as the psychological element must be eliminated when dealing with the lower animals.

Traumatic neurasthenia rarely, if ever, proves fatal; hence the difficulty in the way of pathological investigation. Hodge conceived the thought that normal fatigue after great physical exertion may bear a close analogy in its resultant microscopic changes to those in the cord and ganglia which may possibly exist in the disease under consideration. Accordingly, he has made minute examinations of the nervous system in the case of those who died suddenly in the midst of excessive bodily effort, and found the following conditions evident: The cells of the spinal marrow and ganglia atrophied, with consequent increase in the pericellular lymphatic spaces: the cell wall shrivelled; the contents manifesting much vacuolization and the nuclei of an irregular shape, instead of evincing the retiform appearance that