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CEREBRAL ARTERIOSCLEROSIS.

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The subject of arteriosclerosis of the cerebral vessels is one which is not taken up to any extent in the usual text-books although a good deal has been written on it in the past few years in the various medical journals. This is probably to be accounted for by the difficulty, especially in the more advanced cases, of differentiating between this condition and the various senile psychoses, and the inability to demonstrate the dependence of all the symptoms on the condition of the diseased vessels.

The etiological factors are those of arteriosclerosis in other parts of the vascular system, age, sex, heredity, excessive muscular exercise, syphilis, over-eating and over-drinking, intoxications and infections, and so on. But the action of trauma as a causative factor seems to be particularly marked on the vessels of the brain and cord, according to Sperking and Kronthal (*Neurolog. Centralblatt*, 1888). And in this connection it is necessary to remember that the cerebral vessels may be extensively sclerosed without corresponding evidence of the condition in the vessels of the periphery. Examination of the fundus oculi will in these cases often give evidence of the condition of the cerebral vessels and should never be neglected in the examination of the patient. Sclerosed vessels have what has been described by Marcus Gunn as a silver-wired appearance, that is, the light reflex is more marked, and where the arteries pass over the veins the latter are indented by the more rigid arteries. Whether trauma acts here as a direct etiological factor by increasing in a reflex way the blood pressure, thus producing thickening of the vessels, or as is more usual gives rise to symptoms of an arteriosclerosis which has been previously present, but in a latent condition.