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THE COMBINED SCLEROSES.

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THE organic diseases of the nervous system may be divided into four main groups: Those of the meninges; of the great lymph cavities; of the peripheral nerves; and of the central nervous system. The latter two classes are separated chiefly on the grounds that the main supporting tissue of the former is connective tissue proper, and of the latter glia tissue, and, therefore, open to different disease processes; and also because many pathological processes primarily attack and principally affect the peripheral nerves, while, on the contrary, the central nervous system bears the brunt of other morbid changes. Yet it must be added that such a separation is not wholly satisfactory, as it tends to disguise the fact that, in almost all general processes, all parts of the nervous system usually show some evidences of disease.

The primary separation also of definite pathological processes, such for example as hæmorrhage, into classes as cerebral, bulbar, spinal, while of assistance, perhaps, in collecting localizations, is nevertheless open to some criticism, as it tends to blind the student to the individuality of the morbid changes in all parts of the nervous system. The nature of the disease process should probably be the first object of inquiry, and the localization of the condition follow as the next point of importance.

The diseases of the central nervous system may be divided into two main groups: (1) the acute, and (2) the subacute and chronic. The former are characterized by the facts (1) that they are due either to some vascular disease, *e.g.*, hæmorrhage, thrombosis or embolism, or to some form of inflammation, and (2) that all the tissues of the region of the nervous system affected—neurones, glia, and blood vessels—are primarily and simultaneously affected. (Reference may here be added that some authorities claim the blood vessels are first affected in inflammation); (3) the conditions tend rather to be local than general.

The chronic diseases are of two classes: (1) those in which some local cause, such as tumors, and compression by spinal caries, produce local disease, affecting, like the acute diseases, all the tissues of the nervous system, and at times inducing the acute conditions themselves; (2) the great class of the subacute and chronic degenerative diseases of the nervous system, which, in varying degrees, affect the whole cerebrospinal axis throughout its extent, and in which either the neurones, the glia, or the