

*The Psycho-galvanic Reflex: A Review.* (*Brain*, vol. *xliii*, Part 1, May, 1920.) *Prideaux, E.*

For further investigations into the psychological study of the psycho-galvanic reflex a very good case has been made out. It would seem that we have in this reflex a valuable objective sign, which may help in the elucidation of many unsolved problems in psychological medicine, and which we cannot afford to disregard. As a good general introduction to the subject, and as a useful survey of the history and present position of knowledge concerning it, this paper of twenty-four pages may be commended. The headings of its sections may be quoted: "Apparatus Employed," "Phenomena of the Reflex," "Nature of the Reflex as a Physical Problem," "Physiological Processes concerned in the Causation of the Reflex," "Clinical and Psychological Study of the Reflex." Its use as a "complex" indicator, and its behaviour in hysterical anæsthesia, in the hypnotic state, and in certain psychoses, are discussed. A bibliography giving fifty-three references is appended.

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*A Psychological Interpretation of Essential Epilepsy.* (*Brain*, vol. *xliii*, Part 1, May, 1920.) *Clark, L. Pierce.*

This interpretation of essential (genuine, idiopathic) epilepsy presupposes a characteristic mental constitution, independent of any deterioration that may result from fits. In all epileptics, sane or insane, there is an affective disorder—an inherent deficiency in the mental make-up. That it is from this that the emotional and intellectual deterioration gradually proceeds is observable long before the first fit. The convulsive stage is but a further unfolding of the original make-up.

This make-up is revealed in the defects of adjustment at the several epochs of stress. In infancy the potential epileptic is, from birth, fretful and irritable. As time goes on, he proves disobedient and unmanageable. With these behaviour defects there is a hyperactivity of physical and intellectual development. His mood is highly changeable—one moment contented, the next irritable beyond appeasement. Continuity of purpose is lacking in his play, and he cannot for long be amused. At school he is little amenable to discipline. His interest and attention vary. Brilliant in some subjects, he is grossly backward in others. His adjustment to his environment being incomplete and unsatisfying, he becomes self-important and sensitive. Childhood is thus a period fruitful in stresses, and fits often begin then.

At puberty, adjustment to work and to social demands becomes increasingly burdensome. The potential epileptic will not take a proper attitude of apprenticeship. The requirements of interdependence and subordination to a main purpose irritate him beyond endurance. He is selfish, moody, irascible, and inclined to think he is persecuted. Now begins a habit deterioration, partly protective; he eases the stress by evading the exactions of strict behaviour. So we see, not fits as yet, but various dissipations. Having no intimate friends he is a free-lance, eager to work his will upon the world and largely able to do so. Social