

Hypnotics and Pre-anæsthetic Sedatives. (*Irish Journ. Med. Sci.*, sixth series, No. 91, p. 304, July, 1933.) *Parsons, A. R.*

Opium and its alkaloids are briefly described under the heading of "natural hypnotics", while the synthetic hypnotics are described at great length. It is pointed out that the latter were non-existent before the middle of last century, and are now innumerable. An interesting account is given of the chemical structure and uses of chloral hydrate, paraldehyde, sulphonal, trional and tetronal. The important group of barbiturates is fully described, and a recent member, "prominal", as the best anti-epileptic drug is brought to notice. In describing "dial", the author states that he has seen no unpleasant results with this drug, yet cases of acute ataxia after a single dose of dial have been seen by psychiatrists.

The pre-operative sedatives, soneryl, pernocton, amytal and nembital, are well described. Examples are given of the use of nembital. It is noted that the barbiturates require a degree of alkalinity higher than that of the blood to keep them in solution, and thus they may be precipitated in a colloidal form and act as a foreign body in the blood-stream.

F. H. HEALEY.

The Hypnotic Action of Ketones Containing Different Types of Aromatic Nuclei. (*Rec. Trav. Chim.*, vol. lii, p. 395, 1933.) *Gilman, H., Roive, L. W., and Dickey, J. B.*

The paper deals with the hypnotic properties of ketones containing the different aromatic nuclei, and it is shown that the phenol and pyrrol nuclei inhibit hypnotic action. The peculiar action of both these nuclei is ascribed to the super-aromatic properties of furan and thiophene. Lethal doses were determined in mice by intraperitoneal injections of olive-oil solutions. The ketones used were 2-furyl-2-pyrrol-ketone and 2-furyl-2-thienyl-ketone.

C. F. VAN DUIN (Chem. Abstr.).

The Storing of an Antisyphilitic Drug (Tellurium) in Cerebral Matter. (*Naturwissenschaften*, vol. xxi, p. 416, 1933.) *Jahnel, F., Page, T. H., and Müller.*

The authors treated rabbits with injections of oily suspensions of tellurium, resulting in a blue-grey discoloration of the grey substance of the brain; the white matter and the cerebro-spinal fluid were tellurium-free. The discoloration is due to storing of tellurium in the grey matter up to as much as 1 mgrm. per 2.3 gm. of fresh substance.

B. J. C. VAN DER HOEVEN (Chem. Abstr.).

6. Pathology and Biochemistry.

Infection of the Nasal Sinuses and Tonsils in the Psychoses. (*Lancet*, p. 853, Oct. 14, 1933.) *McCowan, P. K.*

During the years 1930-32 the 807 consecutive admissions to Cardiff City Mental Hospital were examined specially as to the conditions of the sinuses in every case which gave any indication of sinus trouble, and in all cases where the mental state suggested a possible toxic causal factor. Definite evidence of sinusitis was found in 24 patients. The clearing-up of the sinusitis resulted in improvement in 50% of these patients, including all the (6) toxic-exhaustives. In 25 cases the tonsils were found to be hypertrophied, cryptic or septic, and tonsillectomy was performed. In 15 of these cases the physical health improved after operation, accompanied by an improvement in the mental state in 9 (including 5 with sinusitis). It is held that infection of the nasal sinuses and tonsils is an important causal factor in a small minority of psychotics. Especial emphasis should be laid upon the importance of these conditions in the toxic-exhaustive psychoses, since here they seem to be comparatively common and frequently causal. At Birmingham sinusitis has been found in over 80% of the patients. The cause of this great discrepancy