

Erlangen and Würzburg

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Dear S.: ul hours at his house.

One of the men I was most anxious to meet in Erlangen was Professor Strümpell, who has charge of the medical clinic (whose text-book, edited by Shattuck, has made his name well known in America), is one of the most industrious and progressive of the younger generation of German professors. His contributions to neurology have been most important. The medical wards are well arranged, and we were shown a series of instructive cases, several of great rarity. One in particular, of acromegalia, attracted our attention, as it was a most typical instance - a woman, aged twenty-eight, looking over fifty, with large, coarse features, apathetic expression, and enormous hands and feet, which had been, with the face, progressively enlarging for years. The remarkable affection seems rare in Germany, as it is with us. Ever since the publication of Marie's paper I have been on the lookout for cases, and searched in vain the chronic wards at the Philadelphia Hospital. I have known of one case in Toronto for several years, and saw a second in the same town with Dr. Burritt; both of these have recently been described by Dr. I. E. Graham. I see that a special monograph has just been published in Paris on the disease. A case of rhythmical spasm of the psoas muscles in a middle-aged man, which came on after a sudden paraplegia two years ago, was rather a puzzler for diagnosis. The thighs were lifted with each contraction, and there was a slight spastic condition of the legs. There was evidently organic disease, but the case simulated hysterical rhythmical spasm, an instance of which I remember was shown by Dr. George Ross at the Medico-chirurgical Society of Montreal. Speaking of hysteria, Professor Strümpell sent for photographs of a remarkable case which had recently been under his care, in which the girl had produced extensive lesions of the extremities by cauterization, leaving sloughs resembling somewhat those of symmetrical gangrene. In my last letter I referred to the heart disease induced by the combination of heavy drinking and heavy work, and we found here in one of the wards a most characteristic example: A man, aged about thirty-six, employed in a brewery and accustomed for years to drink from twenty to thirty litres of beer daily, began to suffer with shortness of breath, then oedema of the feet, and finally anasarca of the lower part of the body; in this condition he was admitted to hospital. The heart was much dilated and a loud apex systolic murmur was heard. Under treatment and rest the dropsy was subsiding and the heart's impulse was much more distinct, about two inches outside the nipple line. This, Strümpell said, was a common history in the workers in the large Erlangen breweries. At about the age of forty the breakdown occurred, and usually with heart failure, which proved fatal after two or three attacks. We questioned this patient - a most intelligent fellow - as to the quantity of beer consumed daily by the men, and the figures I mention above represent, he assured us, an average allowance. As might have been expected from the good work which has been done here, there was an excellent collection of cases of diseases of the cord, including one of syringomyelia, and of cases of muscular atrophy, and in the clinical laboratory we were shown many beautiful microscopical sections, particularly of the combined scleroses of the cord. Unfortunately, it was not a clinic day, and we did not hear Professor Strümpell lecture (I had had that pleasure in Leipsic in 1884), but after the hospital visit we spent a couple of

delightful hours at his house.

One of the men I was most anxious to meet in Erlangen was Professor Zenker, the describer of trichinosis in man, the discoverer of fat embolism, and the industrious worker at anthracosis and siderosis. He was busy at a Staats-Examen and could not give us much time, but his son and assistant showed us the Pathological Institute, which, though small, is conveniently arranged for teaching. In the post-mortem room we saw a rare termination of mediastinal sarcoma. A man of about forty, with signs of intrathoracic pressure, had died suddenly in the wards. The entire mediastinum was occupied by a large sarcoma, which completely surrounded the great vessels, covered over the heart, and had perforated the superior vena cava, into which masses of the soft tumor projected. Death was no doubt due to extensive pulmonary embolism. As is common in these mediastinal growths, there was extensive pleural effusion on one side, a condition which often complicates the diagnosis. The new building for the general faculties and the new biological laboratory (in charge of Professor Selenka) have helped largely in the rapid progress which Erlangen has made as an educational center during the past few years. Würzburg is the second largest Bavarian university, and its medical school ranks, in number of students, fourth in the empire. The attendance has increased enormously during the past decade, due in part, no doubt, to the attractive character of the new laboratories which have been provided by the government. The name of Kölliker is not so familiar to English-speaking students of today as it was twenty years ago. The new works on histology have displaced the old text-book upon which we, and indeed the generation before us, were brought up, but the man who, forty-five years ago, with Bowman and Goodsir, stimulated the study of minute anatomy, is still vigorous and at work, thoroughly abreast of the times, and a living illustration of the fact that age, after all, is a relative condition. One who has within a few years brought out an elaborate Entwicklungsgeschichte, and who, within a month or so, has issued the first part of a new edition of his general histology, twenty-five years after the last edition, can not be called old, though his years may be reaching the Psalmist's limit. I have very pleasant recollections of Professor Kölliker in 1872 and 1873, on the occasion of his visits to dear old Dr. Sharpey at University College. He then was an elderly man, with snow-white hair, and naturally eighteen years have left their traces; but he retains a bodily and a mental vigor which many a younger man might envy, and an interest in all departments of anatomy which it was delightful to see. The new anatomical institute is indeed worthy of the distinguished director, and it was with evident pleasure and pride that he showed us the various divisions devoted to human anatomy, histology, embryology, and comparative anatomy. The museums occupy a large space, as the collections are very extensive; but the laboratory and lecture-room accommodation in this building alone equals the entire teaching space of an average American medical school. Ample provision is made for instruction in the specially practical departments - gynaecological, surgical, and medical - and we found one classroom occupied by a teacher of gynaecology who was lecturing to senior men on pelvic anatomy. The general lecture-room seems exceptionally well arranged for the students, and is regarded by Professor Kölliker, and rightly I think, as a model of the kind. In the histological laboratory it was pleasant to see a son of the late Max Schultze, the founder of the Archiv für mikroskopische Anatomie, whose memory will always be held in grateful remembrance by students of microscopy.

The Julius Hospital is an ancient and wealthy foundation dating from the sixteenth century, and is in many parts sadly in need of the renovation which is in progress. The new surgical amphitheatre is the finest which we have seen - very spacious, with tiled floor, glazed walls, iron and oak, open seatings, so that the entire room can be flushed with the hose. The arrangements for patients and assistants seem very perfect in the large suite of rooms opening into the amphitheatre. Hospital authorities in America, particularly those in connection with large medical schools, might consult with advantage the plans of this new building, which apparently combines all the modern antiseptic requirements in a thorough yet plain manner.

In the medical clinic we found Professor Leube with a class of at least three hundred students, who even thronged the arena and the steps of the auditorium. I have already referred to the system of instruction which appears uniform in the German schools. A case of acute yellow atrophy of the liver was shown which had previously been before the class and very unexpectedly had convalesced. Every symptom of the disease had been present, and, in spite of the great improvement, the original diagnosis was maintained, and the professor stated that he had known of one other instance of recovery. The microscopical and chemical examination of the urine was demonstrated by the assistants at very conveniently arranged tables in the arena and without any confusion or disturbance. Upon the next case - haemorrhage from the stomach - two students were thoroughly and patiently drilled, first, on the general aetiology, and then on the probable special conditions existing in the patient; then followed a summing up, a diagnosis, and the treatment (which in this case consisted in complete abstention from food, with the administration of ergot and opium). Professor Leube is a clear, incisive, and most agreeable teacher, and I envied the students who had the privilege of his instruction.

In the pathological Institute we were fortunate enough to see a demonstration in the post-mortem room. One of the assistants was instructing a tyro in the technique of an autopsy, while Professor Rindfleisch, with blackboard and chalks and coarse sections, was explaining the anatomy of stone-workers' phthisis. Instead of passing the entire specimen about, small but characteristic portions were distributed on little platters. The whole question of fibroid induration due to dust inhalation was very thoroughly discussed. The remainder of the hour was occupied in the demonstration of the kidneys in a case of acute nephritis in which macroscopically there were no changes visible in the cortical part, but with the microscope extensive glomerular disease was found. The post-mortem room is oblong in shape, with a large central area, around which are three tiers of seats for about eighty men. A good view can be obtained from almost any part of the room.

Würzburg has had many notable professors in the past three centuries, but, on leaving the Pathological Institute, I could not but think of the young Berlin prosector who in 1849 found it desirable to accept a chair in this university, and who in the succeeding seven (?) years, by a brilliant series of researches, made the name of Virchow imperishable in our annals and gave the glory to the Würzburg school of a majority of those epoch-making works in the Gesammelte Abhandlungen.

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