BILATERAL SUPRARENAL HEMORRHAGE AS A CAUSE OF SUDDEN DEATH IN EPILEPSY

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Bilateral suprarenal hemorrhage in the adult occurs so infrequently that the report of the following cases is warranted. In 2,075 autopsies on epileptics performed at the Craig Colony, the condition has twice been observed. In 1907 Munson reported the other case. In view of the fact that Pearl and Brunn in 1928, after an exhaustive search of the literature of the past 20 years, could find only 20 reported cases, it would appear that epileptics are possibly more prone to this extensive type of suprarenal hemorrhage than non-epileptics. With this in mind I have carefully reviewed the available histories of the cases reported to date. There was a definite history of epilepsy in three, i.e., Ogle, Armand, Munson. There may possibly have been more as in most reports only the post mortem findings were given and not the previous personal history. However, even this comparatively high percentage is sufficient to place epilepsy as one of the predisposing causes of this unusual condition. In fact, Lavenson in 1908 stated that the condition often resulted from phenomenon tending to increase the blood pressure and that the convulsions so often noted in these cases might be the cause rather than the result of the hemorrhage. F. Armand in speaking of the etiology gives among nine other factors, the following: "In both acute and chronic lung and cardiac diseases, and in convulsions; in fact, any disease which is known to produce stagnation of the blood in the veins or a marked increase of blood pressure may be associated with adrenal hemorrhage."

CASE HISTORY

No. 3887. F. G. Male, white, single, admitted to Craig Colony, October, 1913. Died January 6, 1932.

Father was alcoholic and feebleminded. Mother was feebleminded, died at 21 years, after childbirth. Maternal grandmother was epileptic. A paternal aunt was a sex offender.

Patient was of normal birth, and was artificially fed. He had whooping cough at the age of five years, measles at an unknown
Plate 1. Kidneys and suprarenal glands before section

Plate 2. Section view of kidneys and suprarenal glands