Epilepsy.—Of all the mentally retarded children which are commonly seen by the neurologist, epileptics are probably the commonest. I do not want to say much about them, but to point out that, as we see them in early life, they do not make up an entity, but are merely a mixed group of a whole number of conditions exhibiting a common symptom. Some will turn out normal in the end, others will be cases of chronic idiopathic epilepsy, others no doubt have cerebral birth lesions of which there are no physical signs. But in early childhood one cannot distinguish these types from one another. The main characteristic of the mental impairment is usually an extreme lack of attention of a particular sort. It is not real apathy, the child is always taking notice of something, but it is impossible to get him to keep his attention on any one thing for any length of time. Consequently many of them seem fairly normal in the pre-school age, but as soon as lessons begin they fall behind their fellows and are always getting into trouble. In my experience the greater number of epileptics showing slight amentia (one is but little concerned with the grosser cases of imbecility) are those who have few definite fits but fairly frequent “absences,” momentary lapses of attention without any muscular relaxation or loss of consciousness. A child of this kind often has a true fit every now and again, perhaps when he is convalescing from a fever or gets unduly excited. This is a type of patient which will often be brought to you, not so much for treatment as for advice about the sort of life he should lead. Though the prognosis is not very good, taking these patients as a whole, yet it is worth doing what you can as long as the amentia is mild, as some of them do improve. The first thing is to get the parents’ attention directed away from the fits, and on to the mental development, which is an aspect of the case that has often escaped them. Make them realize that he will want more teaching, not less, than a normal child, but that it will have to be done quietly and patiently. Get them to keep the child occupied, particularly in such ways as learning to make things, or nature study. Secondly, try to control the fits with the smallest, not the largest dose of drugs that will do it. Finally, see that the child is not prevented unnecessarily from doing things. A few pursuits, such as riding a bicycle, or swimming alone, must obviously be forbidden, but they can do nearly all the things that another child does, and are much the better for it. Watch the result of your treatment for a year or so with an open mind. You will have a fair number of cases whose mental retardation does not turn out to be permanent; on the other hand, when you do find that it is progressive you will do well to recognize that the prognosis is unfavourable, and admit

(To be continued).

THE CANARY ISLANDS AS A HEALTH RESORT.

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It has always been a source of wonder to me that the Canary Islands have not become more popular as a health resort, more especially of late, since I have become more intimately acquainted with them personally in search of health.

I can only think that the bogey of the Bay of Biscay exercises a terrorizing effect upon the travelling public, but, as I will show later, this drawback may be obviated.

The Canary Islands are the nearest resort to the British Isles where one is certain of warmth, sunshine and dryness during the winter months.

The group consists of seven larger islands and several smaller ones. They are distant roughly 1,700 miles from England. They are situated between the latitudes 27° 4' and 29° 3' north and longitudes 13° 2' and
18° 2' west. From the point of view of importance as health resorts only two islands, Teneriffe and Grand Canary, need be considered. These two are centrally placed in the group. To the westward lie Palma, Hierro and Gomera, and to the eastward, 60 to 100 miles from the African coast, are Fuertoventura and Lanzarote.

First, let us consider means of access. There are frequent and regular sailings of steamers from Liverpool, London and Southampton. Vessels up to the size of 16,000 tons are employed in the service. The average length of voyage from Liverpool is six days, and from London or Southampton five to six days. The return fares vary from £20 to £35. For those who wish to avoid the passage of the Bay of Biscay there is a regular bi-weekly service of vessels of over 4,000 tons from Cadiz, taking two and a half days. Also less frequent sailings from Marseilles and Barcelona, taking four and four and a half days. The port of Las Palmas in Grand Canary has the best service of steamers, and in addition to the above list of sailings there are regular services from Italy.

Before dealing with the islands in any detail, it will be well to consider the two islands under review as regards general character and climate. It would be out of place in this article to dwell on the question as to whether the "Fortunate Islands" are a part of the sunken continent of Atlantis or not. Suffice it to say that both Teneriffe and Grand Canary are volcanic. Teneriffe is roughly the shape of a shoulder of mutton, the long axis running from N.E. to S.W., the knuckle being to the N.E. It really is a long mountain range with precipitously-sloping sides, the only flat country being in the neighbourhood of Orotava and on the tableland between La Laguna and Tacaronte. Grand Canary, on the other hand, is roughly circular in shape with a central mountain range, precipitous towards the west but gradually shelving to the north, south and east.

I record below a table showing meteorological records from Las Palmas (Grand Canary) during the months of October to May, which are the popular months for visitors, as being typical of the islands generally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Mean daily temperature</th>
<th>Surface temperature</th>
<th>Rainfall</th>
<th>Sunshine in hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Santa Cruz (the port of Teneriffe) shows a mean temperature about two degrees higher than Las Palmas, with a slightly higher rainfall in December and January. Orotava, on the northern side of the Island of Teneriffe, shows a slightly lower temperature (two to three degrees lower than Las Palmas), but the rainfall is higher for the months of October, November, December and January, being 2.64, 2.09, 2.50, 3.10 respectively, while the sunshine record is lower, being 166 hours, 153 hours, 145 hours and 147 hours for the months quoted. The variations between the day and night temperatures is never more than ten degrees, which means a climate which is a very safe one for invalids.

Now to consider the islands in detail. Let us take Teneriffe first. The visitor will disembark at Santa Cruz, which is the principal port of the island. It is at the southern side on the eastern end of the island. The town is built on a plain about a mile in depth from the sea frontage. It is backed by precipitous hills, rising to an altitude of from 1,500 to 2,000 ft. It is thus protected from the north-east trade winds, which are the prevailing winds, blowing practically all the year round. It is well sheltered and warm, and in the summer months, from June to September, it becomes uncomfortably hot, so much so that many
of the English residents move their quarters to villas at La Laguna, which is 5 miles inland, situated on a plateau 1,000 ft. high. At Santa Cruz there are several good hotels where the charges range from 10s. to 20s. a day. There is an English social club and an English lawn tennis club, for both of which visitors are eligible. There is an English church with a resident chaplain. There is no English doctor at Santa Cruz, but there are several English-speaking Spanish practitioners who have attended London hospitals in the course of their training, including one who has taken English degrees. There is an English nursing institute employing four British nurses, who are available for the English residents and visitors, if required, at reasonable rates. At La Laguna the hotels are not suitable for English visitors. There are pleasant walks behind the town of Santa Cruz, on the sides of the hills, with easy gradients for walking.

Distant from Santa Cruz, 25 miles by road, is Orotava, which lies on the north coast towards the western extremity of the island. The Puerto Orotava is a small business settlement on the sea-level, and the Villa Orotava is some 4 miles inland at an altitude of 1,000 ft. The fertile plains stretch for 6 miles to the westward and are almost entirely given up to the cultivation of bananas. The Peak of Teneriffe (12,152 ft.) is to the south of Orotava, immediately behind it. Formerly the cochineal cultivation was the principal industry of this part of the island, but with the introduction of aniline dyes the market for cochineal ceased and banana cultivation was consequently introduced. This requires a liberal water supply, and in consequence an elaborate system of irrigation was established. This has had a considerable effect upon the climate of Orotava. Much evaporation takes place from the banana-clad plains, and the north-east trade winds blowing from the sea towards the peak cause condensation, mostly in the form of cloud. In the early morning the summit of the peak is usually clearly visible, but as the day advances and the trade winds freshen, clouds form and the peak becomes obscured from view behind a heavy pall of clouds which cover the plain, and the sun is obscured from 11 o'clock or thereabouts until about an hour before sunset, when the wind drops and the clouds disperse. This is a distinct disadvantage to those in search of sunshine. Individual seasons vary in this respect, some years being much more cloudy than others, but the average number of hours of sunshine at Orotava is much less than at Santa Cruz on the opposite side of the island.

There are many beautiful walks and places of interest to visit in the plain of Orotava. The roads are fair and there are many attractive excursions which may be undertaken by motor car. Hotel accommodation at Puerto Orotava is good, prices being similar to those obtaining at Santa Cruz. There is an attractive open-air club which is a great source of pleasure to visitors. It provides several tennis courts, croquet lawns, bowling greens, and Badminton courts, and is a rendezvous for all comers. There is an English doctor resident at Orotava, but no hospital or nursing facilities. At Villa Orotava there is only one small hotel suitable for visitors. This has a very beautiful garden and the pension rates are somewhat lower than at the larger hotels.

The sea-bathing in Teneriffe is poor in comparison with that at Las Palmas. At Santa Cruz there is a bathing station within the harbour, but it is only advisable to bathe in it on the outgoing tide, as at other times the water is very dirty from the coaling and oiling of ships which takes place within the harbour. At Orotava the bathing is dangerous; the coast is very rocky and there is always a heavy swell coming in from the north and the backwash is strong. There are, however, one or two small pools where bathing is possible.

Grand Canary is separated from Teneriffe by a sea channel forty miles across, the
distance from Santa Cruz to Las Palmas (the capital of Grand Canary) being 56 miles. There is a nightly service of inter-insular steamers of some 1,200 tons each way, and once every week a daily service, whilst twice a week a Spanish mail-boat of about 4,000 tons crosses from Las Palmas to Santa Cruz by day.

The climate of Las Palmas is more bracing than that of Teneriffe, and there is rather more wind. The city of Las Palmas lies on the plain along the sea front, and is connected by tram-lines to the port (Puerto de la Luz), which is about 3 miles distant; the British settlement and principal hotel are half-way between the two. There is much of interest to watch in the Bay, as there is a constant stream of shipping, in and out, both day and night; some ten or twelve large steamers using the port as a coaling and oiling station and port of call daily. The actual number of ships using the port per annum brings it up to the fourth or fifth in point of size in the world. There is excellent sea-bathing to be had, both on the east side of the island, in front of the principal hotel, and at West Bay, which is only five minutes distant by tram car from the hotel. This bay is guarded by a reef, and the water within the reef is smooth and the bathing very safe, and there is no danger of backwash. For the entertainment of visitors there is a good social club, a lawn tennis club, and an 18-hole golf course. There is an English resident doctor and a British hospital with private rooms available for visitors and residents, and staffed by fully-trained English nurses.

The roads in Grand Canary are good and are being improved every year, and there are many interesting drives by motor amongst very beautiful scenery. A change of climate from the littoral is easily obtained by visiting the Monte district, to which motor buses run frequently. There are two comfortable hotels in this district, one at Tafira (1,000 ft.) and another at Santa Brigida (1,300 ft.). From either of these two places beautiful walks either on the hills or on the flat can be taken. The air is more bracing in the Monte district, and during a stay of some months a pleasant change to the country may be made by visiting either Tafira or Santa Brigida.

The food at the principal hotels throughout the islands is on the whole good in quality and variety. There is some difficulty in obtaining any quantity of cow's milk or cream, but goat's milk is plentiful.

As regards the type of case which would benefit from a sojourn in the Canary Islands, the climate is particularly suitable for patients recovering from any acute illness such as pneumonia, rheumatism or nephritis, while sufferers from general debility and anaemia derive much benefit. Diseases of the chest, bronchitis, asthma and emphysema, do well, also pulmonary tuberculosis in the fibroid stage, but the islands are not to be recommended for patients suffering from active pulmonary tuberculosis. The chief attraction, as I have indicated, is the mild climate, with the dry atmosphere and with little variation of temperature between day and night, winter and summer, and a maximum amount of sunshine. In addition to a more equable climate, the Canary Islands have the additional advantage, when compared to the Riviera, in that the infection from colds and influenza which are so troublesome in the winter months in the South of France does not occur. The five to six days' voyage for the sea passage usually dispels any infection which may be hanging about a patient when leaving England.

The so-called "Canary fever," which is commonly met with amongst visitors during the first week or two of their sojourn in the islands, is usually due to excessive indulgence in uncooked fruits. It is a simple enteritis which readily responds to treatment by castor oil and bismuth. Fruits of all sorts grow in profusion in the islands, and, if moderation in partaking of them is exercised, the risk of catching the so-called "Canary fever" is minimized.