

**THE WASSERMANN SERO-
DIAGNOSIS OF SYPHILIS
IN ITS APPLICATION TO
PSYCHIATRY**

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The Wassermann sero-diagnosis of syphilis in its application to psychiatry by Felix Plaut & Smith Ely Jelliffe & Louis Cassamajor

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FELIX PLAUT & SMITH ELY JELLIFFE & LOUIS CASSAMAJOR

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NERVOUS and MENTAL DISEASE MONOGRAPH SERIES No. 5

THE WASSERMANN SERO-DIAGNOSIS OF
SYPHILIS IN ITS APPLICATION TO
PSYCHIATRY

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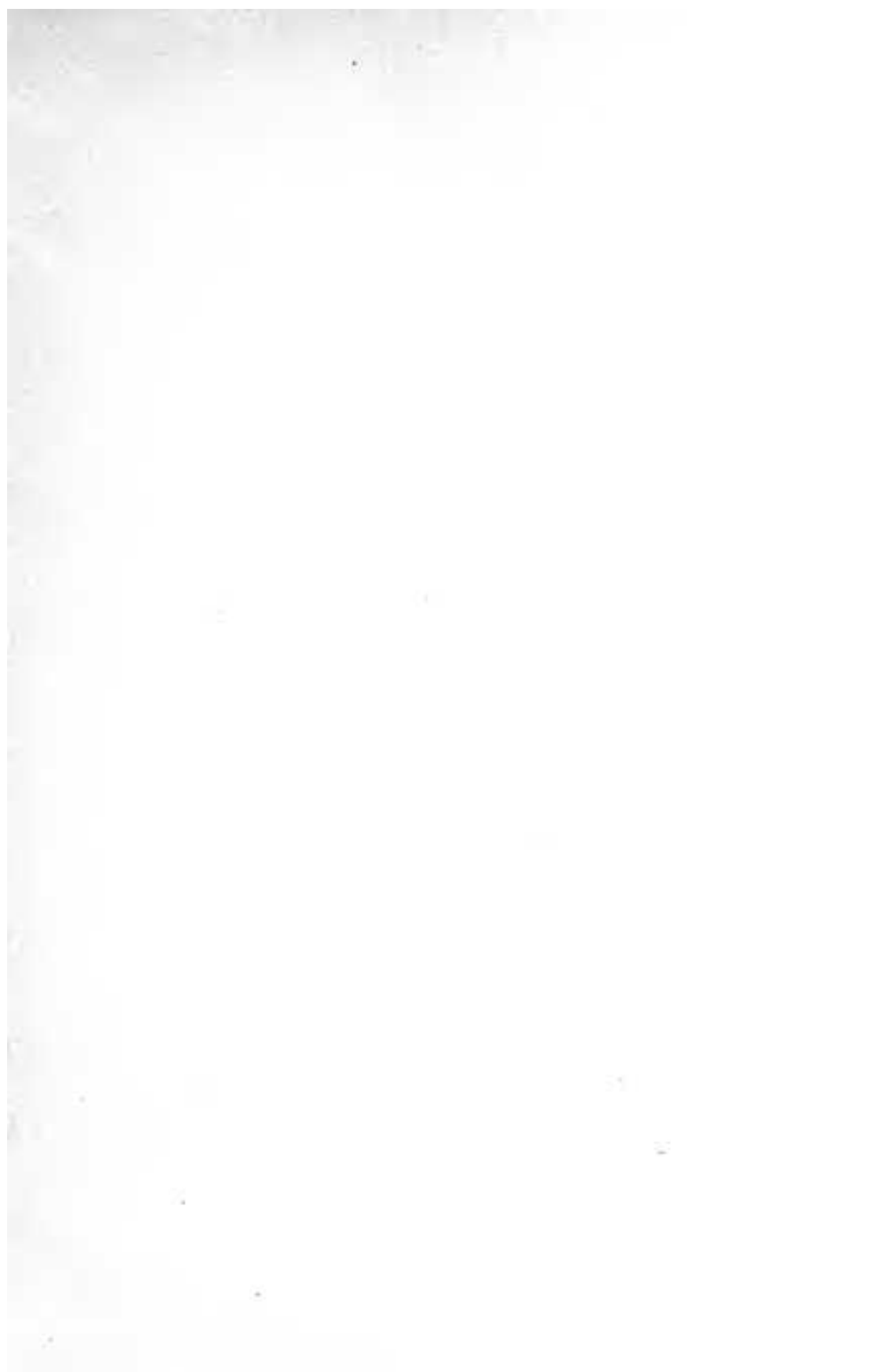
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DEDICATED
TO HIS TEACHER,
PROFESSOR DR. A. WASSERMANN,
IN HONOR AND THANKFULNESS BY
THE AUTHOR.



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CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	vii
I. ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONDITIONS OF THE SERUM DIAGNOSIS OF SYPHILIS	1
II. THE UTILIZATION OF THE DIFFERENT METHODS IN PRACTICE	20
III. OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE TECHNIQUE OF THE WASSERMANN REACTION	27
IV. THE CLINICAL SPECIFICITY OF THE WASSERMANN REACTION	34
V. CLINICAL INVESTIGATIONS, A. CASES OF SYPHILIS WITHOUT COMPLICATIONS IN THE NERVOUS SYSTEM	42
B. GENERAL PARESIS	45
C. CEREBRAL SYPHILIS	88
D. TABES AND TABES PLUS PSYCHOSIS	125
E. FEEBLEMINDEDNESS UPON HEREDITARY SYPHILITIC FOUNDATION	132
VI. INFLUENCE OF DISEASE AND MERCURIAL TREATMENT UPON THE WASSERMANN REACTION	172
VII. COMPARATIVE SEROLOGICAL AND CYTOLOGICAL INVE- STIGATIONS—LITERATURE	177

PREFACE

The Wassermann serodiagnosis of syphilis is based upon a method the technique of which is highly complicated. Further, the nature of the method is such that different biological factors can enter into the reaction and so obscure the clearness and specificity of the result. Finally the nature of this phenomenon of complement fixation, which Wassermann has applied to syphilis, is still very indefinite.

In the short time elapsing since the knowledge of the reaction has been spread abroad by Wassermann, Neisser, and Bruck, there has been an overflow of workers in this field. The pros and cons have been animatedly discussed, and the question has become even more confused, in the course of the debate, by the appearance of a whole series of modifications and simplifications of the method which, in themselves, have given rise to new contentions.

If we wish to be clear ourselves upon this question, in so far as a decision of the matter is possible at this time, we are forced to examine from two different points of view a method which, up till now, has not been used in the field of immunity research. We must, on the one hand, examine the theoretical foundation of the reaction and discuss, quite independently, the practical results of the application of the method at the bedside. We must ever bear in mind the signal fact that, although we are working with a biological reaction about the character of which we know but little, and concerning whose nature we are confused by the different ideas advanced, nevertheless the application of this undetermined phenomenon in practice gives clear uncontradictory results, which at the present time are contested by hardly any earnest worker.

I shall try to give a short survey of the historical development of the method and of the diagnostic opportunities that have been afforded for the serodiagnosis of syphilis in my application of the method in the clinic, especially in the field of psychiatry.

