

1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 5 — Charcot, Jean Martin



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CHARCOT, JEAN MARTIN (1825–1893), French physician, was born in Paris on the 29th of November 1825. In 1853 he graduated as M.D. of Paris University, and three years later was appointed physician of the Central Hospital Bureau. In 1860 he became professor of pathological anatomy in the medical faculty of Paris, and in 1862 began that famous connexion with the Salpêtrière which lasted to the end of his life. He was elected to the Academy of Medicine in 1873, and ten years afterwards became a member of the Institute. His death occurred suddenly on the 16th of August 1893 at Morvan, where he had gone for a holiday. Charcot, who was a good linguist and well acquainted with the literature of his own as well as of other countries, excelled as a clinical observer and a pathologist. His work at the Salpêtrière exerted a great influence on the development of the science of neurology, and his classical *Leçons sur les maladies du système nerveux*, the first series of which was published in 1873, represents an enormous advance in the knowledge and discrimination of nervous diseases. He also devoted much attention to the study of obscure morbid conditions like hysteria, especially in relation to [hypnotism](#) (*q.v.*); indeed, it is in connexion with his investigation into the phenomena and results of the latter that his name is popularly known. In addition to his labours on neurological and even physiological problems he made many contributions to other branches of medicine, his published works dealing, among other topics, with liver and kidney diseases, gout and pulmonary phthisis. As a teacher

he was remarkably successful, and always commanded an enthusiastic band of followers.

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