

**Camillo Golgi.**

CAMILLO GOLGI, Emeritus Professor of General Pathology and Histology in the University of Pavia, and a member of the Italian Senate, was the son of a distinguished medical practitioner. He studied medicine in Pavia and graduated there in 1865. After graduation he devoted himself to nervous diseases and was for some time Resident in a Home for Incurable Cases at Abbiategrasso, a village in the province of Milan. Whilst there he was working assiduously on various subjects connected with the nervous system. He wrote on pellagra, on the etiology of mental diseases, on the lymphatics of the brain, and on the structure of neuroglia. It was here, too, that he invented his first silver chromate method, now universally known as the "Golgi" method, by means of which a nerve-cell with all its processes can be exhibited. This method has revolutionised our ideas on the structure of the nervous system, which was formerly thought to be a mere network of nerve-fibres with nerve-cells scattered about within it. It has led to the conception of the neurone theory which now dominates the whole subject of the structure and functions of the nervous system in all animals. It is curious, however, that in spite of the revelations due to the method, both in his own hands and in those of Ramón y Cajal, who warmly adopted it and introduced many improvements, Golgi himself never fully accepted the neurone theory, but to the last held to the existence of a diffuse nervous network in the central nervous system. The first "Golgi" method was the "slow" silver method. This was described in 1873, and more fully in 1875, the year he became Professor of Histology in the University of Pavia. His bichromate and mercuric method was described in 1878, and his "rapid" silver method in 1880. In 1882-85 he published a large finely illustrated work *Sulla fina anatomia degli organi centrali del sistema nervosa*, in which the methods devised by him were fully described. As already intimated, it is to these methods that we owe our conception of the relations of nerve-cells and fibres in the central nervous system. In the cerebellum he showed that the so-called "granules" are really small nerve-cells, and in the olfactory bulb that the processes of the olfactory cells come into close relation with the mitral cells, which on the other hand transmit impressions received to other parts of the cortex. He elucidated the structure of the cerebral cortex and of the central nervous system generally, including the relationship of the neuroglia to the proper nerve-cells.

But his work on the nervous system, although the most important of his activities, by no means exhausts all we owe to Golgi. He discovered, first in nerve-cells, afterwards in cells in general, the internal reticulum known by his name and now regarded as a fundamental cell structure. He described the endings of sensory nerves in tendons in the organs named after him; the neurofibrils within nerve-cells; the secretory canaliculi in the oxyntic glands of the stomach; and he elucidated the course of the uriniferous tubules. In pathology he added greatly to our knowledge of the malaria parasite and its cyclic development. It may truly be said of him that he studied nothing which he did not illuminate. His name will go down to posterity as one of the foremost microscopic observers of this or any time.

Golgi was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1906, and was the recipient of many academic distinctions. He was elected to the Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1916. He died on 21st February 1926, at the age of 82.

E. A. S.-S.