

surprised that English physicians seem generally agreed in putting down the results obtained by Charcot to expectant attention, or other mental influences. Dr. Müller himself visited for three months the Salpêtrière, and was able to ascertain that the application of plates, made of non-metallic substances, was followed by no result. He has seen patients successfully treated for hemia-anæsthesia blind-folded, and without knowing the nature and object of the treatment. He has found that the action of magnets is more efficacious than that of plates of metal. Dr. Müller has carried on independent experiments in the hospital at Gratz, with the same results as at Paris. This article is a valuable contribution to the subject.

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2. *American Retrospect (continued).*

By D. HACK TUKE, M.D., F.R.C.P.

Passing from the "Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease," we notice several separate pamphlets and reports.

*The Curability of Insanity.* By Pliny Earle, A.M., M.D.

Having referred to the original article in the "American Journal of Insanity" in our Retrospect, October, 1878, we need do little more than repeat here, in regard to this pamphlet, which is published by the New England Psychological Society, of which Dr. Earle was President, that the views put forth by the author, and the statistical facts collected together, deserve the serious consideration of all concerned in the preparation of asylum reports in all countries.

Were we to take exception to any part of this paper, it would be to the too discouraging effect possibly left on the mind of the young alienist, in regard to the utility of drugs, when Dr. Earle says—"The years of a generation have passed since the time of Pinel and Esquirol, and in the course of their progress, remedy after remedy, before untried, have come up, viz., with the word of promise to the hope, but essentially breaking it to experience. Hashish was experimentally tried, proved a failure, and is now nearly forgotten. Chloroform and ether have become convenient and useful to a certain extent, but they have no curative power previously unknown to other remedies. The same may be said of chloral and the bromides. Electro-magnetism, upon which great hopes were placed, is very beneficial in a few cases of abnormal nervous action, but hitherto has proved itself powerless to correct those cerebral functions, the abnormal operations of which constitute insanity."

That Pinel, who despised drugs in the treatment of insanity—nay, more, that Dr. Tyson, the physician to Bethlem Hospital from 1684 to 1703, should appear to have been quite as successful in their cures as the superintendents of the best asylum at the present day, is doubtless a startling and, indeed, a depressing fact. It ought to set us thinking ;

and Dr. Earle will feel confirmed in his conclusion, as regards at least one drug, when he reads Dr. Savage's article on chloral in the April number of this Journal. At the same time we cannot but believe that, assuming—and this is a most important assumption—the *moral* and *hygienic* treatment to be equally good in two asylums, the one in which pharmaceutical and electric remedies are judiciously employed would have a larger percentage of cures than the other in which they are discarded. At any rate, it is so uncertain whether we are comparing like with like, when we are estimating the comparative results obtained in modern asylums and those of a hundred years ago, unless the statistics are compiled with more care than it is probable they were at the Bicêtre and Old Bethlem, that we hesitate to draw a conclusion adverse to the marked influence of drugs in the cure of insanity. Parallel observations should be made in asylums of the present day, admitting the same class of patients. If it should then appear that the no-drug and the drug treatment end in the same percentages of recoveries, we shall have established a very important fact, which, however unpalatable to us, ought to be known.

It must be understood that Dr. Earle is not by any means advocating the disuse of all drugs. This remark is necessary to prevent misconception.

Dr. Earle quotes the results arrived at by Dr. Thurnam "derived from a more thorough investigation of the subject, as presented in the patients treated at the Retreat in York, England, during a period of forty-four years, than has ever been attempted by any other writer. I have long regarded this estimate as the most nearly accurate, and hence the most reliable, of any that has been published." This table is familiar to most English alienists.

Dr. Earle, in conclusion, says—"It appears that it may fairly be asserted that all estimates, based upon the assumption that either 75, or 70, or 60, or even 50 per cent. of the *persons* attacked with insanity can be cured and returned to the class of permanent producers in the sphere of human labour, are necessarily false, and consequently are both 'a delusion and a snare.' . . . Although it has here been shown, beyond cavil or question, that, as a whole, the *cases* of insanity are less curable than has by many heretofore been believed, and that the same is far more emphatically true of insane *persons*; yet by so doing, no argument has been developed against the utility of hospitals, nor has the practical value of those establishments been in the least diminished. False impressions of their value may have been corrected; and to that extent not alone has the cause of truth, which is better than error, been promoted, but a measure of protection has been furnished to the medical officers of the hospitals. The declarations of the earlier superintendents are returning like boomerangs to spend their ultimate force upon their promulgators. It is here demonstrated that there is a proper shield against their offensive assaults. Through the ministrations of hospitals for the insane, *very*

many persons of disordered or perverted intellect have been restored to their homes, their friends, and their spheres of usefulness in society, *permanently* clothed, and in their 'right mind.' Even to the political economist, or the sheerest utilitarian, this is a fact of significant importance; and by the philosopher, the philanthropist, or the Christian, it must be regarded as a blessing above and beyond all estimate or standard of pecuniary value. Nor are the duplicate or the multiplicate recoveries of the persons subject to mental disorders of the recurrent type to be too lightly estimated. A recovery is none the less desirable and none the less valuable to the person, or to society, *so long as the person remains well*, because it is of limited duration. While thus the hospitals continue their progress in the fulfilment of their beneficial mission, it would appear that the better course for the superintendents is to discard, universally, as they have already discarded, to a great extent, the classification of their cases according to duration; but constantly to keep before the people the great truth that, as a rule, having comparatively few exceptions, the sooner the person attacked with insanity is placed under curative treatment, the greater is the prospect of recovery."

*Provision for Insane Criminals.* By Richard S. Dewey, M.D.

Dr. Dewey, who is the Physician of the State Insane Hospital, Elgin, Illinois, arrives at the conclusions that every community has among its insane a class of "insane criminals," as distinguished from innocent and reputable insane persons, who have committed crimes (the latter generally styled the "criminal insane"); they are in large part convicts, but there are many unconvicted criminals among them; that the number of the former class is large; the proportion among convicts being probably not less than one in 50 or 60; that there is no proper or suitable provision for this class in Illinois; that this lack of provision leads to great injustice and injury to the other classes of insane, and to the community at large; that the establishment of a special asylum for these, wherever practicable, would be a measure of justice, humanity, and economy, and the preferable location for the same, when it cannot be an entirely independent institution, is in connection with the State prison.

Dr. Dewey gives a table showing the prison population in 17 States, and the number of insane convicts in prison or asylums. In Illinois there are 1,857 convicts in prison, and 28 insane.

Dr. Dewey requests that any of his readers who have documents or information relating to the criminal insane or insane criminals, will send them to him.

*Report of the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane for 1878.*  
By Dr. Kirkbride.

The able and experienced Superintendent of this well-known institution here presents us with his 38th Annual Report, and, like all its predecessors, contains much valuable information. The series forms, indeed, an important contribution to the science and literature of

insanity. We heartily congratulate him on the success which has crowned so many years' arduous and conscientious labour, and trust that for not a few years more the institution will still have the benefit of his wise superintendence and mature judgment. The name of Kirkbride will be indelibly engraved on the records and be inseparable from the prosperity and fame of the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane. It is noted that the hospital has come into possession of a statue of Benjamin Franklin, which has been placed on a pedestal in a prominent position in the grounds of the institution. "It would seem only right that honour should be paid to the memory of Franklin, who was one of the representative men of Philadelphia, at the time the Pennsylvania Hospital was founded; a member of the first Board of Managers, active in promoting the objects of its establishment; and the author of many of its official documents, and especially of its appeals for legislative action." We would suggest to those whom it may concern that another statue might well be added to the grounds. It is not only those who found, but those who for a long period carry out the intentions of founders of public institutions, who deserve public honour.

As bearing on Dr. Earle's paper, the observations made by Dr. Kirkbride on the proportion of cures are of interest. "So far as the experience of this institution goes, all subsequent observations tend to confirm the statement made many years since, that if all the recent uncomplicated cases of insanity are promptly placed under proper treatment, and perseveringly kept so, it may fairly be hoped that about 80 per cent. will ultimately recover."

Here it will be observed that one word ("uncomplicated") qualifies the statement in the most vital manner, and when this allowance is made, then the statistics of Dr. Earle are really not contradictory therewith. The numerical statements in Tables given in Asylum Reports do not of course omit or distinguish these complicated and, therefore, more or less hopeless cases; and Dr. Kirkbride admits that when they are included in the statistics of the Pennsylvania Hospital, they "reduce the total percentage (of recovery) much below that indicated above."

Dr. Kirkbride enters into the question of the deleterious effects of tobacco, and observes "there can be no question whatever, but the amount of injury done varies very greatly in different individuals. The earlier in life it is used, the more conspicuously its worst consequences are shown. With growing boys it manifests its evil effects upon the mental faculties very strikingly, as well as on the physical condition. There is generally a great reluctance in any one addicted to the free use of tobacco to acknowledge any prejudicial influence from it, and the growing up of the habit generally requires so strong an effort, and so many hours of real suffering, that there is a natural unwillingness to believe that such a course is necessary or desirable. In addition to all this, the use of tobacco has often seemed to develop a

craving for stimulants. To those who have investigated the subject thoroughly, it is often a matter of wonder that so many who denounce most strongly and most justly the habitual use of stimulants, have so little to say in regard to tobacco and its pernicious effects on the human system. Even if they do not give a practical illustration of their disbelief of any such bad influence, they show an indifference to it by their own use of the article, possessing, as tobacco does, so many principles that are deleterious to the animal economy."

The report contains a great deal of valuable matter in regard to the causation of the attacks of insanity in the patients admitted into the hospital since its opening.

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### 3. *English Retrospect.*

#### *English and Scotch Asylum Reports for 1878.*

One rises from a study of these Reports with feelings closely akin to disappointment. While nearly all are characterised by the carefulness with which the statistical tables are compiled, and bear evidence of considerable harmony existing between the Local Boards and the Superintendents, and again between the latter and the officers under them, there is undoubtedly to be traced, in many instances, a want of freshness and vigour in the Superintendent's remarks, and a tendency to be satisfied with existing circumstances as regards the management of their asylums and the treatment of the insane. The zeal and energy which carried the non-restraint system to its present height seems to have died out, and in its place is to be noticed a too facile contentment with a state of matters, which, though an improvement on the old, is by no means perfection.

It cannot be denied that the present is a critical epoch in Psychological Medicine. The management of asylums can never again show the abuses which were the rule even thirty or forty years ago. The general working of each must of necessity be free from the evils which then disgraced many of them, and in this country and under the Lunacy Acts, it is simply impossible that anything like really bad management could long be kept from exposure.

Is there not, however, a risk that the very excellence of the general management may induce unlooked-for and unfortunate results? As at present conducted, we speak within the mark in saying that, with averagely good officials, the every day work of most asylums is an easy matter for the Superintendent. No doubt there are many small worries, and occasionally considerable anxieties, but even with these there are few professional men who, on the whole, have less hard daily compulsory work than the Superintendent of an asylum for from 250 to 600 patients which has been in existence for some time, and in which the