

psychological. Appended is the summary, which will be read with interest.

“ I. That it is desirable so to classify the inmates of workhouses, that the aged and respectable poor shall not be forced to mix with those whose character or habits are bad or disagreeable.

“ II. That, in order to make room for proper classification, all children, other than infants, be provided for outside, and apart from the workhouse premises.

“ III. That it should be the duty of the county councils to provide suitable accommodation in separate institutions for the proper treatment of all pauper imbeciles and epileptics.

“ IV. That the aged and deserving poor, so far as it is possible, should receive adequate outdoor relief, and that where they are in the workhouse they should constitute a special class and receive special treatment and privileges.

“ V. That guardians should provide special cottage homes within the unions, or other suitable accommodation for married couples and respectable old persons whose poverty is not their own fault, but the result of misfortune.”

Masturbation in Schools.

A well-known and very successful Irish schoolmaster, now retired from business, Maurice C. Hime, LL.D., is one of the last contributors to this difficult subject. Dr. Hime's little pamphlet (*Schoolboys' Special Immorality*) seems to assume that there is generally too much reticence on this topic, and that a little more plain speaking might do good. If good is to come of it, we will not object to any plainness of speech.

It is perhaps natural that a schoolmaster should get into the habit of thinking that argument and precept are the chief guides of human life, and therefore we are not surprised to find that Dr. Hime holds that boys should be particularly warned against self-abuse. He also advocates a much closer surveillance over schoolboys than is at all usual in English schools. Some of his proposals strike us as being flatly absurd, such as that schoolboys' trousers should be made without pockets; and his parenthetic denunciation of tobacco seems almost comic; but the

general issues which he raises, first, whether boys ought to be more closely watched to prevent their indulgence in masturbation, and secondly, whether they ought to be warned against it, are suitable enough subjects for discussion. It does not appear to us that Dr. Hime quite appreciates the dangers of the course he advocates. He truly grasps the advantages of work and organised play, and the ill effects of idleness and slipshod habits. He also lets us see that one of his great aims as a teacher was to produce a manly and self-reliant habit of mind among his pupils. In our judgment the latter ought to be the chief end of education at school, but we do not think this can be well achieved by increased surveillance. Such a habit of mind among the majority of boys in a school, and the healthy public opinion which is associated with it, are the best safeguards against this, as against all other boyish vices. It is, we apprehend, a mistake to suppose that boys are generally ignorant of the wrongfulness of masturbation; quite the reverse is the fact. Curiosity and the excitement of puberty tempt them, and they give way to vice because their minds are not sufficiently virile to enable them to resist; but they know that they are doing wrong. The sense of sin and shame is so closely associated with the sexual feelings that very little instruction on this point is required. At all events, to argue with vice, to demonstrate by the closest reasoning to the vicious that their courses are illogical and unnatural, has never proved of the smallest efficacy in dealing with adults. What reason have we to suppose that the puerile intellect will prove more amenable?

It may become—no doubt from time to time it does become—the duty of the schoolmaster to address corrective remarks to a boy or to boys on sexual subjects, but to his personal influence infinitely more than to his arguments will be due the result. Such remarks, when required, should be brief, dry, and manly. Tom Brown's father in Hughes' famous book, after much heart-searching, comes to the conclusion that an oldster cannot talk on certain subjects to a boy, and dismisses his son with the simple advice to do and say nothing which his mother and sisters would be ashamed to hear of. Dr. Hime's own method shows that he recognises that reserve is desirable, for he tells us of an address to his boys on the subject, and says, "The guilty ones quickly understood what I was speaking about—none of the others did. They only knew that I was speaking about

something awful, and that the less was thought or spoken about it the better." Can anybody with the least knowledge of human nature, whether shown in boys, men, or Bluebeard's wife, believe the latter part of this sentence? or fail to see that the boys both spoke and thought of the incident? The narrator, indeed, goes on with apparent satisfaction—"The boys listened to my address with breathless attention." Sexual topics even among grown-up people, nay, even among elderly scientists are sure of attention, often of more attention than they deserve, and always command "breathless attention" among the young; but we take it that this just shows the danger of such subjects.

There are other considerations which most physicians of experience will endorse. Tissot and his school undoubtedly exaggerated the evils of masturbation. It is, of course, both a filthy and "unnatural" vice, but it is not credible that a habit which is so common among boys that some have held it to be universal can be solely responsible for all the ills which have been laid to its charge. One of the worst things it does is to produce sexual hypochondria, and the tendency to that unfortunate affection is certainly increased by mysterious references to the terrible consequences of "this dread vice," and so forth, as the spermatorrhœa quacks, to whom it is the chief stock-in-trade, have found out long ago.

The influence of school life, by associating boys together in large numbers, may increase the tendency to self-abuse, but it is idle to suppose that the vice does not occur in boys who are brought up at home, or that it is not frequently self-taught. Dr. Hime seems to think that a more constant association of boys with masters than is usual will check the habit. He does not notice the proposal, which has found some favour on the other side of the Atlantic, to educate boys and girls together. We can imagine this plan having disadvantages sufficient to counterbalance its supposed gain. Every individual, boy or girl, who lives so long, must pass through the trying organic change which constitutes puberty, and must battle through the mental struggle which accompanies that change. The best preparations for the fight are a sound mind in a sound body, and with these victory is pretty sure. Occupations and enthusiasms for higher things help much; admonitions, we fear, little. The child, agitated by curiosity, inexperience, and a tempest of new and half-understood passions, wholly fails

to grasp the arguments or appreciate the standpoint of the old, and much which one reads upon this subject seems to show the old have, in some marvellous way, forgotten the time of trial which they passed through in youth. Happily, perchance, there is another side to Elia's touching exclamation, "From what have I not fallen, if the child I remember having been was indeed myself!" But, on the other hand, the ordinary adult has indeed fallen profoundly, if he was ever in a state in which a few guarded words on the wickedness of sin would confer on him an immunity against committing any sin to which his age and physical condition strongly tempted him.

Dr. Hime believes that he succeeded in stamping out self-abuse entirely in his school. If he did we heartily congratulate him, but we believe that the enforced example of his own enthusiasm, high-mindedness, and hard work did more than any dehortations from vice to bring about this most desirable consummation.

Varieties of Mental Disease in their Relation to Crime.

In the Report of the Prison Commissioners for the year ending March, 1899, we note that the Medical Inspector, Dr. Herbert Smalley, has continued the admirable modifications which he introduced the previous year in the statistical tables dealing with the insanity of convicted prisoners.

The variety of mental disease is now specified in accordance with a modernised system of classification; and a table of peculiar interest is appended, showing the forms of criminal conduct related to the various types of alienation.

Seeing that, in the overwhelming majority of these cases, as Dr. Smalley has pointed out in previous reports, the mental state is obviously unsound on reception into prison, and symptoms become sufficiently definite to allow certification in the very early stages of imprisonment, we may safely regard the developing insanity as the cause of the criminal act. These records should, therefore, in a few years offer excellent material for a study of crime as a part of the semeiology of mental disease.

During the last two years 287 convicted prisoners (216 males and 71 females) were certified in the local prisons of England and Wales. This number is, of course, too small to