

galleries and day-rooms pictures and objects of ornaments of an inexpensive kind, which may serve to engage their attention, occupy their thoughts, and exercise them in habits of care and self-control.

“The reasoning that would prescribe and justify in this respect a total absence of everything not strictly necessary, is now very little used. We have much less frequently to reply to the argument that the poor have not carpets and curtains in their homes. It is precisely because their homes too frequently are wanting in them, as well as in the sufficiency of food, that, hardly less than the better and more ample diet, these trifling luxuries are wanted in the asylams.

“We think it important thus publicly to state that the argument” (that the comforts and attractiveness of furniture could not be appreciated by hopeless idiots, who might be apt to break it) “is directly opposed to the wide and various experience acquired by the members of this Commission, during many years of incessant observation of all the asylams in the kingdom. There are individual exceptions, no doubt; but it is not within our experience that, as a class, any portion of the insane are ever reduced so low as to be incapable of some measure of improvement. Nor is it less certain that improvement of any kind will never be effected in the worst patients by associations belonging to the habits which degraded them. Influences directly contrasting with these habits constitute the only chance of redemption. It is upon the endeavour to open to them, in their darkened and deplorable condition, that glimmering prospect of something better from which humanity is never entirely shut out, that the chief expectation must rest of at last arousing in them anything allied to self-respect. *This is the basis of all amendment, and it is for this that increasing effort should be made.*”

II. RECENT FOREIGN STUDY OF MORBID MIND; THE POSITIVE AND THE METAPHYSICAL METHOD.

Die Pathologie und Therapie der Geistes-krankheiten auf Anatomisch-Physiologischer Grundlage. Von J. L. C. SCHROEDER VAN DER KOLK. Braunschweig, 1863, pp. 217.

Histoire Critique de la Folie Instantanée, Temporaire, Instinctive. Par le Dr. J. A. MANDON. Paris, 1862, pp. 212.

M. Auguste Comte, in his remarkable but little-known work on positive philosophy, establishes the law that every branch of knowledge passes in its development through three stages; namely, the supernatural, the metaphysical, and the positive. In the first of these stages events are regarded as the production of supernatural

agents; and men fall down on their knees, as children cry in the dark, from a fear of beings whom the imagination has created. In the metaphysical stage abstractions are personified, and entities inseparable from the phenomena are substituted for the supernatural agents. This is the period in which *essences* are sought after, and the supposition that the human mind cannot transcend the phenomenal is contemptuously rejected. In the positive stage, however, man applies himself to the observation of phenomena, to an investigation of the conditions of their production and the laws of their relations. Positive science, then, supersedes both superstition and metaphysical philosophy; the Sun-God is dethroned by the law of gravitation. This law of development M. Comte proclaimed to be the fundamental law of mental evolution, and his disciples confidently assert that the experience of all sciences and of all nations proves its truth.

Although all sciences pass through the three stages, it must not be supposed that they pass through them in the same time. The science which deals with the most simple and general phenomena will arrive at the positive stage long before that which deals with the most complex phenomena; and hence it is, that while astronomy is now a positive science, biology has not quite passed out of a metaphysical stage, and sociology even remains in the supernatural stage. It happens, too, frequently enough, that long after the most advanced cultivators of the science have arrived at the positive stage, the multitude lingers behind in the supernatural or metaphysical stages; and, instead of the weary, wayworn toiler being greeted with acclamations of welcome when he reaches the goal, he finds himself alone at the end of his labours with the angry revilings of an ungrateful people ringing in his ears. Nay, how often does it happen that the pioneer but leads the way through the wilderness, and never himself attains to the promised land? Like Moses, he lies down to die on Pisgah within sight of Canaan, and others enter into the fruit of his labours. This kind of spectacle appears to be periodically reproduced in the history of the world; and that which happened when astronomy first began to become a positive science has again happened now that there is the foreshadowing of a science of history. Kepler complained bitterly of the discouragements and persecutions which he met with in his pursuit of truth, and Buckle has gone to his early grave without the greatness of his labour having received anything like the appreciation which future ages must award to it.

It seems to be full time that those who devote themselves to the study of psychology should put to themselves the question as to what stage the science which they teach is to occupy. Is mental science to remain in the metaphysical stage, or is it to become a positive science? If Comte's law of evolution be true, the result

cannot be doubtful; and the tendency of recent investigations has certainly been to illustrate the operation of the law. When pure psychology is represented by such works as those of Mr. Herbert Spencer and Mr. A. Bain, and when the physiology of nerve-element is undergoing such development as the labours of Du Bois-Raymond, Pflüger, and Arnold von Bezold exhibit, it does not require great foresight to discern what must be the progress of events.

In the investigation of the phenomena of insanity men are for the most part agreed upon the necessity of observation of all particulars, psychical and physiological, and of the establishment of a science by inductions therefrom. But even those who admit this are often unconsciously influenced by the trammels of an old nomenclature; and instead of simply classifying observations, they must needs refer them to some heading which belongs to psychology as a metaphysical study. Thus it has come to pass that so much has been written in discussing what faculties of the mind might be diseased, when separate faculties of the mind are mere creations of human nomenclature. The French alienists have gone so far as to describe independent diseases of the will, and to talk of a special disease of the faculty called association of ideas. It is obvious that there need be no end to the writing of books if vague terms, which do not express definite ideas, are made the subject matter of a science. It is obvious, too, that no faith can be placed in the trustworthiness of observations which are made with reference to theories implied in the use of such a nomenclature. When one observes how fluently a French alienist talks of "lesions of the will," "of moral liberty," "of free activity," of integrity of the moral conscience, it really might appear as if it were quite unnecessary that there should be definite ideas beneath words.

The two works which have been placed at the beginning of this notice illustrate very different methods. The book of Schroeder van der Kolk, it is scarce necessary to state, is written in the true spirit of positive science, and furnishes valuable and exact information. The book by Dr. Mandon is a theoretical disquisition, in reply to a theoretical proposition, by a clever writer, who does not appear to think it necessary to have exact ideas. The former illustrates the right method of studying insanity, the latter illustrates what we think is a wrong method.

It is not our intention on this occasion to do more than call attention to the publication of the work of Schroeder van der Kolk. On the 1st of May, 1862, that distinguished physiologist was called to his everlasting rest; but he left behind him an expressed wish that this work, upon which he was engaged at the time of his death, might be given to the world. This has been done, as well as under the circumstances was possible, by his pupil, Dr. F. A. Hartsen, and the German translation is by Dr. Theile, who was also

the translator of the work on the spinal cord and medulla oblongata. From his entrance into medical life until his death, Schroeder van der Kolk was engaged in the treatment of the insane; and his contributions to the elucidation of the structure and functions of the nervous centres raised him to the first rank as a physiologist, and reflected honour upon the speciality which he adorned. It is, therefore, with gratification that we receive this *opus posthumum* in which the distinguished dead yet speaks; and although the book has been in part manufactured out of old papers of his, and will not do much to increase his fame, we shall endeavour on another occasion to give some account of the physiological and pathological information which it contains, and to extract some practical therapeutical suggestions.

The work of Dr. Mandon is a prize essay, the proposed text of which was "to determine, by well-observed and rigorously examined facts, whether disorders of will are independent of those of intelligence, and to establish under what circumstances man is irresponsible for his acts." It will appear rather surprising that the author should have received the prize when it is added that we do not meet in his book with the record of a single fact observed by him. The essay is really a purely theoretical criticism of the opinions of the different French authors who have written on the subject in the 'Annales Médico-psychologiques.' Even as a theoretical essay it is defective; for the author does not appear to know anything of German and of English opinions, except so far as they may happen to have been quoted in the 'Annales Médico-psychologiques.' Had he been acquainted with the present state of knowledge on the physiology of the nervous system, he certainly would have written a better essay, or would not have written at all. And had he observed facts with his own eyes rather than with the eyes of writers in the 'Annales Médico-psychologiques,' he would certainly have written a more practical work.

Having said this much, however, it is only proper to add that the subject of the essay had been proposed in an objectionable form, which must necessitate much theoretical discussion. The question to be decided was, whether there might be an uncontrollable impulse to some act in a person who was quite conscious of the wrongness of the act, whether, in fact, such a state as impulsive or instinctive insanity actually existed; and those who were charged with giving the text could find no better way of putting it than by starting the vain and vague question as to whether disorders of the will may be independent of those of the intelligence. The natural answer to such a question would be a request that the commission would define what they understood by the will. If the term will is used in a wide and vague sense to express, without further discrimination, such different reactions as sensational reaction, ideational reaction,

and volitional reaction properly so called, then it is manifest that there may be a great deal of ingenious word-argument without any one being one whit the wiser at the end of it. But if the term will is confined to volitional action properly so called, then it is obvious that the question is simply an absurd one; for integrity of such volitional reaction necessarily involves the intellectual integrity from which it results.

That the foregoing criticism is correct is shown by the conclusion with regard to the will to which Dr. Mandon comes in his essay. For he decides that the will is the most complex of our faculties; "it is, indeed, thought stretching towards an object; it is the impulse inherent in all phenomena of the mind; it is the movement of reaction which follows every idea, every sentiment, every sensation; it is an intelligent and sensible force, irreducible into its elements." And again, "to will is to think; disorders of the will, therefore, necessarily imply those of thought, and they are identical." If the proposition made in the first quotation is correct, and if words are to have definite meanings beneath them, then the second proposition is certainly not correct. Sensational reaction and volitional reaction are two very different things—and distinct parts of the nervous system minister to their manifestations. To confuse these functions is no less absurd than it would be to confuse hearing and seeing because they are both sensations. Dr. Mandon's essay may be read without any weariness, and not without some pleasure; for it is written in a lively style, and undoubtedly displays ability; its chief fault would seem to be—although this may be a mistaken supposition—that it indicates a want of practical acquaintance with the subject of which it treats. Consequently, if it were demanded of any one, after a perusal of it, what he had been reading, he could scarce reply more fitly than in the words of Hamlet to Polonius:

"Words, words, words."

The essay is, however, a small matter compared with the question of the method to be followed in the study of insanity. If medical science is to convince the public that the so-called impulsive insanity does exist, it will not do so by leaving its own secure ground of facts, and advancing into uncertain metaphysical regions with which it has no concern. Medicine is concerned with man, not as an ideal being, but as a being composed of flesh and bone, and sinew and nerve; and in reply to all theoretical objections to its observations, it should rightly fall back upon the realities, and say, "Such are the facts; and on physiological grounds they appear nowise strange and inexplicable."

H. M.