

of which are described, and the final lectures deal with the subjects of multiple neuritis and infectious myelitis, in which are embodied the most recent researches in the pathology of these diseases. While we do not dwell more fully here on the subject of these concluding lectures, they are certainly most attractive to all students of nervous pathology. After perusal of Dr. Ballet's volume one cannot resist feeling that one more name should be added to the already long list of French medical writers who excel in the art of clinical exposition.

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*Results of Thyroid Feeding in Insanity.* By ROBERT CROSS, M.B., C.M., Assistant Medical Officer, Midlothian and Peebles Asylum. (Reprinted from the *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, Nov., 1897.)

The literature on thyroid feeding in the insane seems to increase *pari passu* with the growing scepticism as to its efficacy. Although the method was initiated on very loose empirical grounds, it was so well written up that many thought that in it we had a panacea for all diseases the mind was heir to. Experience has shown otherwise; and while in no hands has it had the same measure of success as in those of its originator, in most instances its results have been practically *nil*. Usually one finds much useless repetition in these communications upon thyroid treatment, and this suggested the scheme for collective investigation published in a previous number.

These reflections are suggested by a perusal of a reprint we have before us on the "Results of Thyroid Feeding in Insanity," by Dr. Robert Cross. It is a record of 20 cases of various types of insanity, in which thyroid extract was exhibited. The cases seem carefully recorded, and show evidence of painstaking enquiry. On applying these cases to Dr. Lord's scheme\* we find that out of the 20 cases, one recovered, one was improved, seven were affected prejudicially, and 11 showed no improvement. These figures fully bear out the statistics already published, and the addition of these cases to the latter yields the following figures:—

Out of 78 cases of various forms of insanity 18 recovered, of which 15 were permanent; 14 improved, of which four

\* "A Scheme for the Registration of the Results of Thyroid Treatment Mental Disorders," by John R. Lord, M.B., C.M., *Journal of Mental Science*, July, 1897.

were permanent; 34 did not improve; 12 were affected prejudicially.

Dr. Cross is of the opinion that this method of treatment should receive a fair trial before any patient is considered as hopelessly incurable. Unfortunately, the available experience does not justify the hope that an unfavourable prognosis is likely to be modified by the use of thyroid; on the other hand, one need not abandon hope because of comparative failure in these results.

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*La Confusion Mentale Primitive : Stupidité, Demence Aigue, Stupeur Primitive.* Par le Dr. PH. CHASLAIN, etc. Paris : Asselin et Houzeau, 1895. 16mo, pp. 264. (Primary Mental Confusion : Stupidity, Acute Dementia, Primary Stupor, etc.)

The second title of this work shows to some degree the position in which the author would place the form of mental disease with which he deals. Before laying forth his own views, however, he deals at some length with the contributions of previous authors. Two incidental remarks will be sympathetically received by English readers. Chaslain observes that though Morel's conception of degeneration was an advance, it has done harm by the exaggeration with which it has been pressed in France. On the other hand, in Germany, a language which is not very clear, a terminology too profuse and often contradictory, and a profusion of anatomical and psychological hypotheses have contributed to confuse our subject not a little, so that it is frequently not easy to understand precisely what thought the authors wish to express. But our satisfaction is dashed by the remark that on this particular topic Italy and England but reflect the views of Germany!

Not to delay over scattered and fragmentary observations of earlier writers, it seems clear, as Dr. Chaslain points out, that Delasiauve was the first author who recognised fully the existence of this form of mental disease: "it is to him that we owe the first good description of mental confusion, to which but little has since been added. It was he who grouped under this name facts which were scanty up to his time and which we shall find scanty after his time." Delasiauve recognised that hallucinations and delusions occurred, but pointed out that confusion was the basis of all.