

of relatives or, where these failed, of authorities. When performed in a properly fitted hospital or clinic the operation is only a trifling one.

He also concludes that the cytological examination of the cerebrospinal fluid may give valuable information in doubtful cases of general paralysis, but van der Kolk cannot share the enthusiasm of Joffroy and Nageotte.

A royal decree has been issued regulating the care of lunatics who are boarded out in private dwellings. The inspectors in lunacy shall previously examine and approve of the dwelling before lunatics, inmates of an asylum, shall be received. These dwellings shall not be at too great a distance from the asylum. Inspectors in lunacy shall decide how many inmates shall be boarded in one house. No changes are to be made in the arrangements in the rooms unless such changes be approved of by these inspectors. The inspectors, judicial authorities, and the burgomaster shall have access at all times. Clause 6 orders that the Board of Governors shall regulate the boarding out, and shall decide whether boarders shall return to the asylum or not, etc., unless they delegate this power to the physician. This is a very weak point in these regulations. Experience has repeatedly shown that when a person becomes a member of a Board of Governors he, as a rule, develops delusions of grandeur, and within a very short time he is firmly convinced that he is a first-rate alienist and has nothing more to learn of mental science. I remember being once asked whether the governors of a certain asylum were elected from among the inmates. Now, as neither governors nor lunatics can be reasoned out of a delusion, a clause has been inserted giving the physician right of appeal to the inspectors; this will prove an endless source of quarrel and dissent, and might have been avoided by placing this purely medical matter in the hands of the medical man.

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#### ITALY.

By Dr. G. C. FERRARI.

Italian psychiatry has made noteworthy progress during the year 1905, if not in the scientific field—and this for reasons which will be appreciated before long—in the practical field, which is no less interesting.

Of the practical questions the most interesting has been the publication, on March 5th, 1905, of the regulations for the application of the Law on Asylums and the Insane, mentioned in a previous letter to the *Journal of Mental Science*. These regulations have a special interest in that they define the law and bring it into force in all its parts.

It may be of interest to know the more general provisions made for governing the asylums, giving a *résumé* of the different sections in order.

The law first establishes that all asylums, public or private—it matters not what their size is, or under what name they exist—are considered as asylums, and are under this law.

It orders that all asylums, public or private, shall have a place, absolutely independent of the rest of the asylum, with a separate staff of attendants, for the reception of new cases. They are to have work-rooms, and, if possible, a farm for those patients who will employ themselves, also places for the isolation of the dangerous cases, those suffering from infectious diseases, and for those charged with some offence at law the investigation of which is proceeding. Water is to be of good quality and in sufficient quantity and the sanitation rational. There is to be a laboratory for clinical research, microscopic and photographic rooms, etc. There is also to be a separate section for criminals pardoned by reason of their mental state and those who become insane during their term of imprisonment.

The regulations, however, permit a patient to be cared for in a private house, but the medical director of the public asylum is made responsible for the treatment adopted. In all cases these houses are under the supervision of the provincial commission of vigilance, nominated by the Minister of the Interior, and constituted by the Prefect of the department, the provincial medical officer, and an alienist who has nothing to do with the asylums in that department.

All directors of asylums are requested to establish a school for the teaching of attendants and those who aspire to these posts. After two years no one can become an attendant who is not in possession of a certificate of efficiency after an examination by a commission of medical men not attached to the asylum. The course of instruction must be of at least six months' duration.

Among the rules for the care of the insane it is commanded that no person is allowed to resort to any means of restraint without an express order written and signed by a medical officer of the asylum. The penalty for contravention of this is a fine of 100 lire at least. A notice stating the penalties under the penal code relative to the responsibilities of those in charge of the insane is to be posted in common rooms of the attendants.

The regulations do not define exactly the ratio of doctors and attendants to the number of patients, which is supervised by the commission of vigilance.

There are a large number of precautionary measures against the possibility of arbitrary sequestration. The provisional admission of a patient to any asylum is authorised by a special order of the "pretore" or the local authority of public surety, or at the request of the parents, and after the declaration of a doctor who has no connection with the family nor the asylum to which the patient is going.

Those cases who have recovered are to remain under observation in the special part of the asylum for one month. As soon as the director of the asylum is satisfied that the individual, after a period of observation of not more than fifteen days' duration, is insane, he has to demand of the tribunal a definite order for the detention of the patient in the asylum proper. The penalty for infringement of this regulation is a fine of from 300 to 1000 lire.

In those cases where the patient has recovered and is not claimed by any friends, the medical director obtains an order for the discharge of the patient from the tribunal. If, on the other hand, the patient is

only improved and is able to rejoin his family, the medical director on his own responsibility can discharge the patient to their care, but he has to notify the tribunal and the authority for public safety. The mayors of the localities where the ameliorated insane reside have to send every four months a medical certificate regarding the mental and physical condition of the patient to the medical director of the asylum until recovery occurs.

The public would object to sequestration as arbitrary if left to the directors of asylums or to the authority of public safety. They are obliged to transmit without delay the demand to the tribunal or make pecuniary sacrifice in case of omission or delay.

The cost of maintenance of the lunatics, including idiots, imbeciles, chronic dements, etc., is charged to the department in which they live.

The supervision of all the asylums, both public and private, is placed with the Minister of the Interior, who exercises his control through a commission, of which we have already spoken, and by means of inspectors, who are required to visit the asylums at least once every two years.

The regulations have had, and will have still more, a beneficial effect on the asylums of Italy, because the absolute lack of a regular supervision on the part of the State has led to a sacrifice of the interest of the patients. The asylums have been overcrowded, there has been a want of provision for employing the patients, and an insufficient number of attendants and doctors.

The asylums will either have to be increased in size or new ones built, also working colonies, workshops, etc.

The absolute abolition decreed by the law of all means of mechanical restraint will necessitate a personal supervision more thorough and more efficient on the part of the doctors, who will have less time to give to scientific work in the laboratories, which up to the present has occupied the greater part of their leisure, as is shown by the high standard of Italian scientific psychiatry.

During the year 1905 scientific work has not been less than that of preceding years. The International Congress of Psychology, which met in Rome in April, had a section for pathological psychology, which was attended by a large body of alienists. Their work relating to abnormal infancy proved of great interest to the Congress.

The greater part of the scientific work which is being carried on at present is destined for the two International Congresses now being organised here. The Congress of Criminal Anthropology, which opens in April, 1906, at Turin, will do homage to Lombroso, who celebrates this year his scientific jubilee, and the Congress for "the Care of the Insane" will be held at Milan in September on the occasion of the International Exhibition. The latter Congress has a special importance for alienists (following the celebrated Congress at Anvers in 1902), because it will be organised after a plan giving a clear and complete idea of the state of the different questions relative to the more modern aspects of the care of the insane. The foundation of an International Institute for the prevention of insanity will be proposed, and the plans of the best asylums will be exhibited. It is hoped that the Government will grant facilities for the members of the Congress to visit the

more interesting of the asylums for the insane, criminal and otherwise, in Italy.

Two events especially have interested alienists in 1905—the transformation of the ancient society “Società Freniatica Italiana,” and the nomination of Professor Bianchi, professor of psychiatry at the University of Naples and director of the asylum at Naples, to the post of Minister of Public Instruction. Professor Bianchi has, during the short time he has been minister, complained of the want of the scientific spirit in the world of education. He has endeavoured to enlarge the teaching of experimental psychology at the universities, but the Commission of Concours has limited as much as possible the efforts of Professor Bianchi, although his idea had the support on the Commission of psychologists of such eminence as Professors Morselli and Tanzi.

The saddest event has been the death of Professor Ezio Sciamanna, of Rome, which occurred in May last, a few days after the Congress of Psychology. He was a neurologist of great merit and a conscientious worker. At the Congress he fought against the doctrines of Flechsig and Bianchi relative to the functions of the prefrontal lobes. His place at the University of Rome has been taken by Professor A. Tamburini, professor of psychiatry at the University of Modena and director of the asylum of Reggio Emilia, an asylum which has the reputation of being the premier institute of psychiatry in Italy. The work done at this asylum was published in the *Rivista sperimentale di Freniatria*, which was founded by Professor Tamburini.

To the asylum of Reggio Emilia, the departure of Professor Tamburini will be a great shock, and will be felt throughout the psychiatric world of Italy, for Reggio Emilia has been latterly, so to speak, the nursery of the directors of asylums and professors of psychiatry at the Universities. Professor Tamburini is sure to vastly improve the psychiatric clinic of Rome, the work of which up to now has been performed under unenviable conditions, and it should be a matter for rejoicing that he goes to establish a more perfect system, which will be fruitful for the progress of science and the wellbeing of the insane.

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#### SPAIN.

By Dr. W. COROLEU.

No year has been so poor in phrenopathic work in Spain as 1905. The Vasco-Navarro Asylum in the Nordish Provinces, at Pamplona, was opened in January. There is also a question of building one at Majorca, in Palma, for the Balearic inhabitants. The want of more suitable institutions for transitory and incipient cases continues to be felt.

The *Don Quixote* centenary—whether Cervantes wrote it or not in 1605—has deluged us with a flood of publications on mental pathology. A curious and widely-read article of Dr. Rz. Morini on the subject in the *Phrenopathical Review* has created the greatest interest. The Torrey-Alexander Mission has created a certain amount of interest in the medical world, and resulted in an article in the *Review* above referred to.