

*Handbuch der Krankenversorgung und Krankenpflege (Handbook for the Care and Nursing of the Sick)*. Erster Band. I und II Abtheilung., Berlin, 1898. Royal 8vo, pp. 758. Price 20 marks.

In these two parts we have the half of a book which, when completed, will give us a full account of all the methods of caring for and lodging those afflicted with disease or helpless through disabilities. The work is under the charge of three editors—Dr. George Liebe, Dr. Paul Jacobsohn, and Dr. George Meyer—who have employed other contributors known to be acquainted with the special subjects of which they treat. In the first part Dr. Dietrich tells us how the sick and destitute were cared for in the times of long ago. This, though perhaps not the most useful chapter, is the most interesting to the general reader. What little was done for them in ancient times was scarcely done for pity or charity. The wealthy Romans had hospitals for their rural bondsmen and city slaves, and military surgeons followed the legions; but the first hospitals for the treatment of the sick and destitute seem to have been in India and Ceylon. It was Buddhism that first recognised the common brotherhood of man. The care of the sick was from the beginning one of the first duties of pious Christians, and when their religion gained a legal footing, hospitals, xenedochia, and asylums appeared and continued down to our own day. The Mahomedans had also hospitals and asylums. He mentions a hospital in Damascus A.D. 707, one in Egypt 872, another in Bagdad about the same time, all richly endowed. There were also many in Spain, where the Mahomedans erected the first asylums for the insane in Europe.

The author gives an interesting account of the religious brotherhoods which sprang into existence during the Middle Ages. Many of the hospitals and lazar houses were more for the benefit of the healthy than the sick, since they were used more to keep apart those who had infectious diseases than to comfort or even cure them. Dr. Dietrich thinks that the secular clergy, on the whole, did not favour institutions for the sick, and managed to divert them to other uses. The Reformation in Germany made matters worse. The Reformers thought more of saving men's souls than caring for their bodies, and many of the old foundations were seized upon by the nobility or civic corporations. Those that remained were ruined by the Thirty Years War. From the present century comes a flourishing record of unselfish exertions for the benefit of those overtaken by disease, from which all classes have been gainers.

The chapter on asylums is written by Dr. Lewald. While recommending exercise and work, he assigns the first place to rest in bed as the most curative method of treatment, and claims that this was introduced by Dr. Paetz, of Altscherbitz, in 1881. He begins the treatment of every new case with rest in bed, and experience has shown that many cases of acute insanity keep quiet and remain quiet after great excitement when one affords to their brain, even when the disorder is only functional, the rest given to patients with moderate diseases. For quieting patients he recommends a prolonged bath at a temperature of from 35° to 38° C.,

the temperature raised a little towards the end. Dr. Lewald mentions that Professor Meyer, of Göttingen, has still for several years managed to do without forcible feeding. Apparently this method is not followed in any other German asylum. He gives a description of the Anstalt Dziekanka in Posen as a model asylum, and gives a plan of the buildings and grounds. What the Germans call colonies are more or less distant from the central asylum for the boarding of harmless patients, all under the medical superintendent.

In a most instructive chapter Dr. Wildermuth treats of neuropathic patients, epileptics, and idiots. He gives his views upon the cases of functional nervous diseases and the prophylaxis against the neurotic constitution, and the different methods of treatment, dietetic and hydro-pathic, gymnastic and electric, and gives an account of the different institutions and *Heilanstalten* which form a distinctive feature in German-speaking lands.

Dr. Wildermuth observes that the greater the freedom in which treatment is allowed to unfold itself in asylums, the better will they suit the lighter and earlier forms of mental derangement, and the less will be the prejudice which opposes the sending of patients to special institutions. This development is hindered by laws which make entry into an asylum more and more difficult. This is also true of Great Britain. Under the chimera that there is a lurking danger of sane persons being unjustly shut up, although no clear instance of wrong imprisonment has been proved, the freedom of the physicians who minister to the insane has been despotically curtailed. Every new Lunacy Bill means more shackles for the medical superintendent, more senseless returns and insulting regulations. But the welfare of those subject to mental derangement and nervous disabilities will be more promoted by encouraging all initiative, private and public, and the bestowal of skill and capital for their benefit, than by any number of new enactments, the outcome of senseless suspicions. The rest of this second part is filled up with chapters on hospitals for patients with infectious diseases, chest complaints, syphilis and leprosy, and habitual drunkards. There are also special chapters on hospitals for women's and children's diseases, eye diseases, and establishments for the blind, the deaf, and the cripple, houses for the convalescent, and infirmaries for the destitute. We regret that our space does not allow us to give special praise to these useful and able treatises.

We hope that enough has been said to show that this book has been wisely planned and is being worthily executed. When complete, it cannot fail to be a work of wide usefulness.

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