

District Asylums decreased by 12s. 9d., in Youghal Asylum it rose by £2 3s. 11d., which looks as if the administration in that rather anomalous institution were inclined to be a little more liberal in their treatment of the inmates. The Inspectors comment on the great improvement in the physical appearance and mental condition of the patients since being transferred there from workhouses.

As to these latter institutions, improvements in the arrangements of some of them for their insane inmates are noted; but the sooner these institutions are emptied of all feeble-minded patients the better. The workhouse lunatic is, or should be, regarded as an anachronism in this enlightened age; such a blot on civilisation should be wiped out, relegated to the limbo of a buried and unsavoury past.

The comparatively early demise of Doctor Conolly Norman is recorded by the Inspectors with great regret, who speak in appreciative terms of his distinguished career. As a touching tribute to the memory and worth of our late friend and colleague in an obituary notice from an able hand appeared in the April number of the *Journal*, we will only remark here that while the Association at large has had reason to deplore the removal from its midst of one of its most eminent members, the Irish division in particular, of which he was, it may be truthfully said, for many years the mainstay and chief moving spirit, has suffered an irreparable loss. His interest in its work and prosperity was unflagging—he rarely missed a meeting even when held in some distant part of the provinces—his contributions were numerous, for, however busy he was, he was always ready to fill a gap if the secretary's programme was short of material. Combining in his many-sided character the qualities of an able administrator, clinician, psychopathic expert, teacher, writer, conversationalist, genial host and friend, his was a unique personality not to be easily forgotten, and which it will hardly be within the bounds of possibility to replace:

" He was a man, take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again."

O, si sic omnes!

There is nothing calling for special comment in the reports on private asylums. The number of admissions in 1907 was the highest on record, and is remarkable so far in that while the male admissions decreased by 11, the female increased by 30. The probable cause of the increase of patients in private asylums in Ireland in latter years was touched on in last year's review, and there is nothing further to add to the remarks then made.

Heredity, Variation and Genius, with Essay on Shakespeare and Address on Medicine. By HENRY MAUDSLEY, M.D. London: Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd. 8vo, 1908. Price 5s. net.

We gladly welcome yet another book from Dr. Maudsley. It is characteristic in clear reasoning and pellucid English which never fail. There has been so much of theoretical imaginings regarding the operations of embryology, first and last, so much of suggestions which have been only too readily assumed as facts by those who would fain be learned in the latest findings of science, that this searching examina-

tion of the position by an experienced physician, competent to think out the propositions of the day and masterful in presentation of the results of his conclusions, cannot fail to clear the air and induce a clarity of opinion which will be of service to Dr. Maudsley's readers. That his readers will be many and his book popular in the best sense is a consideration which restrains us from the temptation to convey the characteristic *obiter dicta* scattered on page after page to our columns for the immediate gratification of those who glance at these reviews—*e.g.*, "Morality owns no immaculate conception; its experimental foundations are laid concretely on earth, and can be laid open in detail by exposition of the positive stages of human progress." We prefer to give a brief account of the general tendency of these disquisitions, so that Dr. Maudsley's present position may be generally indicated—a mere note in this Journal which may suffice to afford a permanent reference to the book itself.

What, then, does Dr. Maudsley mean in addressing men of science on heredity? We gather that he does not accept all of Darwin or Weissmann or Mendel. "Happy is he who, looking back on a sound ancestry, can rest in quiet confidence of a good descent," is the opening note, and the study concludes with reference to the authority of the Psalmist on the wise conduct of life, which prevents a man from falling, and leaves an organic inheritance to his children's children by his own well-doings.

It is evident to Dr. Maudsley that the whence and whither of things cannot be ascertained by any rational method of inquiry; but that the mighty stream of organic plasm is intent to make new channels on the least occasion, and only seldom succeeds. The good quality of variation finds good in bad surroundings and profits by it, while the bad quality chooses bad in good surroundings and feeds its growth thereby. When the variation amounts to genius he regards the individual as having burst the formidable fetters of custom—always so potent to keep men what they are and what they are likely to be. These sudden sports are not the product of a long course of natural selection, but the origin of species is rather to be regarded as a specific mutation started on its independent career before natural selection comes into action, than in accordance with the original suggestion of Darwin, which no longer holds its commanding position. Variations are not always the new things they seem; they are sometimes returns to ancestral characters, bodily as well as mental, yet the law of adaptive response to the environment rules more or less evidently. The real question is whether ancestral practice ever produces the smallest imaginable modification of the germ in the acquired direction, and Dr. Maudsley concludes that there is in the germ-plasm, with its many possible combinations of millions of constituent atoms and their memories of past structural dispositions, conceivable room for combinations determined by intrinsic affinities or external impulses. Touching the theory of the immortality of the germ-plasm, he finds it used to buttress that of the non-inheritance of acquired characters; these cannot be inherited, because it would be contrary to the sacred truth that the germ-plasm lives secluded in the body, and contrariwise the germ-plasm cannot be affected by the changes and chances of mortal life, because that would be

contrary to the truth that acquired characters are not transmissible. All this in spite of the fact that neither theory yet rests on a solid basis of proof, that it is assumed that the stream of life-plasm is neither polluted nor purified in its passage, that it means a rigid exclusion of outside influence, but on the contrary an inexhaustible fund of variation possibilities. It is more natural to regard the forming germ as susceptible to its modified bodily environment, exhibiting the effects in variations which, informed by the parental constitution, witness to parental acquisitions of structure. The tailless cat is not to the purpose, for it has suffered a deprivation rather than acquired a character.

The terrestrial mortal must imbibe the wholesome material spirit of the earth to sustain the virile strength of the race. Dr. Maudsley would make matter spiritual in the body and bring down the higher from its metaphysical height and exalt the physics of the lower, for man is a product and part of nature, and lives in, for, and by it.

The Mendelian theory has clarified our notions of heredity. Certainly the ripe fruits of maturity will be invaluable if the budding promise is fulfilled.

Before yielding consent to the doctrine that the person who consistently develops or debases his nature by the practice of virtue or vice does not affect the constitutional inclination of his offspring, one must consider all the pertinent facts of experience, the degeneration of offspring proceeding from those who develop a particular strain of character and starve other qualities, from those who are wanting in order, balance, and harmony. The result will be a finding that it is not unreasonable to expect that the errors and evil-doings of fathers are visited upon the natures of their children.

This close reasoning sums up in favour of what has been, throughout the ages, generally accepted as true in experience. When Herbert Spencer replied to Weissmann in two small pamphlets his position commanded our approval, but much has been written on the subject of heredity since that time. In the light of experimental observations Dr. Maudsley returns to the discussion, and we hope that our readers will study this little work of his with the precise care which it commands.

The essay on Shakespeare, "testimonied in his own bringings forth," was printed privately as the result of a study made during Dr. Maudsley's Australian visit. It fitly succeeds the former part of the book, forming a concrete example of genius in expression. It does not evade disreputable events, which were just as essential as Shakespeare's industry and imaginative fertility. Needless to say, it is untainted by the Baconian heresy. We are glad to have this essay in an accessible form.

The last section is a reprint of Dr. Maudsley's address on medicine delivered at the Leicester meeting of the British Medical Association in 1905. We assume that it is familiar to our readers. In the end it sums up the discussion by Dr. Maudsley's declaration that it is the moral or affective nature—the tone of feeling infused into the forming germ—which counts most in human heredity, and he endorses the saying of Descartes that if mankind is to be perfected the means of perfecting it must be sought in the medical sciences. That saying is an incitement and an encouragement.