

2. *Italian Psychological Literature.*

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In the *Archivio* Dr. Porporati communicates two papers on insanity in women connected with the physiological changes of the sexual organs. The most novel part of these are his observations on insanity beginning during pregnancy. In most of his cases this was characterised by hatred of the husband, against whom groundless accusations of cruelty were made. The patient sometimes recovered after delivery, but this was more frequently followed by no benefit.

Dr. Monti gives six interesting observations of *the temperature in the acute diseases of lunatics*. These were cases of pericarditis, erysipelas, tuberculosis, catarrhal and fibrinous pneumonia, and the temperature rose only slightly, if at all, above normal. He connects this apyrexia with the rarity of traumatic inflammation in the insane, ascribing them both to a state of irritation of the sympathetic, which prevents the usual vaso-dilatation.

Dr. Tebaldi gives a detailed account of the "*convulsionnaire*" of *Ampezzo* in the Italian Tyrol: a woman of middle age, who for many years has had a severe attack of hystero-epilepsy every day at the same hour. At 8 a.m. a state of partial stupor begins; at 11.36 there is a sensation of violent-precordial constriction, and she suddenly throws herself out of bed, endeavouring to beat her head on the floor; her eyes rotate wildly, and she utters a guttural cry. At noon there is an interval of comparative quiet, and this is followed by a series of violent rhythmical movements of the whole body, in which she strikes the occiput violently against the wall. After every few blows she pauses for a short time and drinks a little water, cursing and abusing those around her. These are followed by rotatory and other acrobatic movements, which gradually subside; and the whole attack ceases at 1.25. The cervical and dorsal muscles are a good deal hypertrophied in consequence of their excessive use, and the scalp is much thickened at the points which are struck; but she seems to have suffered in no other way.

Dr. Toselli gives the result of his examination of *the religious tendencies of epileptics*, founded on 28 cases. He finds them most strongly marked where the epilepsy has been produced by some moral shock, and more particularly connected with vertigo and petit mal than with the fully developed disease. He ascribes this exaggerated religious sentiment to the unconscious influence of the terror produced by a malady which is still considered by the public to be supernatural and mysterious. Religious delirium is most common in the larvate forms of epilepsy; it is attended with vivid but fleeting hallucinations of sight and hearing.

Professor Albertoni has performed a series of experiments in the physiological laboratory of Sienna, whence it appears that hæmorrhage into the joints (akin to the arthritis of locomotor ataxia) is due to injury of the spinal cord, whereby the vaso-motor centre of the part

is paralysed, and the articular vessels dilate and rupture. It may also be produced by injury to the cerebral cortex (what part is not specified) or peduncle, which acts indirectly through the cord. Quinine will check these articular hæmorrhages as well as those in the stomach which may be produced in the same way.

The following are the chief papers in the *Rivista Sperimentale*:—

Maragliano and Seppilli have been experimenting on *metalloscopy*, with the following main results:—In hemianæsthesia of cerebral origin the sensibility is restored, not merely at the point of application, but over the whole side. The special senses are restored as well as touch. The restoration of sensation is more permanent in cases of organic than in those of functional anæsthesia. They ascribe the action of the various substances employed to the development of electrical currents, which influence the vaso-motor and sensory nerve fibres.

Professors Luciani and Tamburini have made a series of elaborate experiments upon the *cortical motor centres* in the ape, dog, and cat, and come to the following conclusions:—The motor area is subject to considerable variations, not merely in different animals, but in the hemispheres of the same brain. There is no special “epileptogenous area” in the cerebral cortex, epilepsy being produced by irritation of any one of the cortical centres, and beginning usually with spasm of that group of muscles supplied by the centre stimulated.

The movements caused by stimulation of the cortical centres are too uniform and co-ordinated to be due to any reflex action, on the hypothesis that the centres are sensory and not motor.

Dr. Maragliano writes on the same subject, but from the clinical side. The most novel point he makes is that cortical lesions, even if extensive, may be compensated by the sound hemisphere, especially if that one be the left. This compensation is effected by means of certain fibres which go directly from either hemisphere to the same side of the body. He lays down the following symptoms as diagnostic or cortical lesions:—Local convulsions, occasionally spreading to the whole body, without loss of consciousness, followed by local paralysis; aphasia, temporary increase of temperature in the paralysed parts; pain, or tenderness, or percussion in some limited point in the head.

Dr. Luciani has performed a series of experiments, which lead him to infer that *epilepsy* is primarily caused by direct or indirect stimulation of the motor area in the cerebral cortex, and that stimulation of the medulla oblongata is a secondary but necessary link in the chain.

Among the many interesting papers in the *Rivista Clinica* of Bologna there are only two that bear on our specialty, and which I therefore have any excuse for noticing.

From a series of careful observations on “*Cerebral Thermometry*” it appears that the temperature of the left side of the head is slightly but decidedly higher than the right, the frontal region being the warmest on the left side, the parietal region on the right. The tem-

perature is always rather lower in women than in men, and falls as age advances, but is subject to continual fluctuations according to the mental activity of the individual. Further observations on the temperature in disease are in progress.

There is a very interesting review of Professor Severini's essay on *Vaso-motor Dilatation*. I regret exceedingly that I have not had the advantage of seeing the essay itself, but it would appear that he holds the phenomena of vaso-dilatation are not produced by direct nervous action, but by the nutritive changes in the part. He holds that the capillaries are capable of contraction from the movements of Goluben's fusiform nuclei, and that (as Tarchanoff has shown) oxygen causes these nuclei to enlarge, and so contracts the lumen of the capillaries, while carbonic acid has the contrary effect. Some explanation of this kind, he urges, is necessary to account for the local hyperæmia which may be produced by irritating a limb after its removal from the body, or when it is only connected with it by the artery and vein, as well as for the vaso-dilatation produced by touching the surface of an egg, on the fourth day of incubation, with nicotine (Vulpian).

Dr. Herzen has sent two pamphlets for review. In the one on *The Physical Conditions of Consciousness* he interposes in a controversy between Dr. Maudsley and Mr. G. H. Lewes. As is well known, the latter physiologist believes that consciousness always accompanies the activity of every nerve centre, while the former considers it to be only a frequent concomitant of such activity. On a closer analysis of the phenomena, Herzen points out that the molecular action produced by the impressions conveyed by an afferent nerve has two phases, in the former of which nerve elements are disintegrated, while they are re-formed, and energy stored up or transmitted, in the second. He believes that consciousness only accompanies the former of these phases, never the latter, and that its intensity is in constant proportion to the degree of disintegration, which is very variable in different cases.

In his paper on the *Nature of Psychical Activity* he sums up briefly the various experiments made by Helmholtz and others to test the time required for acts of perception, and he more fully describes those performed by Schiff to test the effect of sensory impressions on the temperature of the brain. From these it would appear that the temperature is invariably raised by any sensation, and that it rises in direct proportion to the novelty of the sensation, and to the emotion of fear or pleasure produced. From these two series of experiments he concludes that all mental phenomena are correlated to the other forces of the universe, and, like them are merely a special form of motion.

Professor Lombroso has collected into a handsome volume—*"Pensiero e Meteore"*—the observations on the influence of meteorological conditions on insanity, which I have from time to time noticed in this Retrospect.