

*Einfluss der Rasse auf die Häufigkeit und die Formen der Geistes und Nervenkrankheiten.* By Dr. med. et phil. GEORG BUSCHAN. Reprint from the *Allgemeine Med. Central-Zeitung*, 1897, No. 9 u. ff., pp. 21.

Dr. Buschan has brought his great anthropological learning to investigate the forms of nervous diseases prevalent amongst different races. Though the influence of race is difficult to disentangle from that of climate and the forms of civilisation, he has collected many interesting observations. He tells us that of all peoples the Swedes and Norwegians yield most readily to the attacks of malaria, and that the black race has an absolute immunity. This latter statement is scarcely correct. I have been assured by a trustworthy authority that in Guiana the negro is as much liable to be attacked by malarial fever as the white man, though he seems better able to resist the fevers of tropical Africa. Dr. Buschan tells us that in Norway and Denmark the prevalent form of insanity is melancholia, and amongst the Celtic races it is mania. The most striking passage in this pamphlet is where Dr. Buschan brings out in clearness and detail the great frequency of insanity amongst the Jews. From all the information which he can gather from Germany, Great Britain, Denmark, Italy, Russia, America, Siberia, and other countries, it appears that with the Jewish population mental derangement is from four to six times as common as with the Gentiles. Even in Palestine this proclivity holds good. According to Tobler almost all the Jewish women are hysterical. Diabetes is also very common amongst the Jews; but it is doubtful whether epilepsy is more common. As Ziemssen has observed, there is a neurotic strain through the whole race of Israel. Dr. Buschan does not favour the idea that this extraordinary proclivity to nervous diseases is due to heightened mental exertion, for in many parts, for example in Hungary and Poland, the Jews lead a quiet life, and yet the tendency to neuroses is still marked. May we not seek the cause in the long continued persecution which has followed this people through so many generations? Everyone knows something of the history of the Jews, but one requires to read a connected history like that of Professor Graefe to have a proper idea of the frightful sufferings and struggles which the Jews had, to maintain their existence during the middle ages. Altogether Dr. Buschan has entered upon an interesting enquiry, and we should advise him to go on making further studies.