

between the varieties of chorea—Huntington's hereditary chorea, hysterical chorea, the choreic motor disturbances which occur in insanity and maniacal chorea—as the history, onset, course, and favourable result in the above case limit us to a diagnosis between the last two varieties.

L. Meyer (*Dict. Psychol. Med.*, Art. "Chorea and Insanity" says, "The choreic motor disturbances which occur in insanity nearly always bear a less significant character than typical chorea. Many of the distorted movements, which sometimes occur at the highest stage of maniacal excitement, and which were thought to be choreic by Griesinger and Schüle, have been proved to be quite voluntary."

The irregular movements in this case were entirely of the choreic type, and we think that we may fairly put this group of cases on one side. "Maniacal chorea" is therefore alone left to us.

There are a few points of interest in the case.

- (a) Its occurrence in a male adolescent.
- (b) The precedence of the chorea by the mental disturbance by a considerable interval.
- (c) The acuteness of the chorea, but without pyrexia.
- (d) The decline of the mental excitement as the choreic movements rose in severity.
- (e) The dull apathy from exhaustion of the nervous centres after the cessation of the motor storm.
- (f) Rapid recovery in so short a time as a month after the movements had ceased.

We have ventured to record this case as one of considerable rarity, at all events to us, and more especially as it has occurred in a male patient, which, to judge from the descriptions published, is a very unusual event.

## OCCASIONAL NOTES OF THE QUARTER.

### *The Criminal Lunatics Acts.*

We observe with pleasure that the statement which has appeared in most of the organs of public opinion within the past few weeks that the Government propose at last to consolidate the law applicable to criminal lunatics, not only remains uncontradicted, but has received an appreciable—though cautious—measure of official countenance. Since

Sir William Harcourt's Departmental Commission reported in 1882 (par. 12, 7th Report), "That the existing laws relating to criminal lunatics in England and Wales are very complicated and perplexing, and that it is most desirable to consolidate and amend them," we have had two contributions towards the attainment of this end. First came the Criminal Lunatics Act, 1884, a useful, though most imperfect instalment of consolidation and amendment. And then after an interval of twelve years the Legislature actually took courage to provide (in the Short Titles Act, 1896) a general name, "The Criminal Lunatics Acts, 1880-1884," for all the statutes in which the law on this subject is embodied. The work is, however, to all intents and purposes still undone. It would be ludicrous, if it were not positively mischievous, that a person wishing to discover the state of the criminal lunacy law should have to consult first two sections in a half repealed Act of Geo. III., then an Act of 1838, then another of 1840, next a statute of 1851, after that an Act of 1860, and finish up his investigations by a study of the Trial of Lunatics Act, 1883, and the Criminal Lunatics Act, 1884. Moreover, much of the machinery in the earlier Acts is quite archaic. Look at the provisions for the protection of the Sovereign's person in Sec. 4 of 39 and 40 Geo. III., c. 94. Or take the cumbrous description of the procedure to be adopted in Scotland and Ireland under the Lunatics Removal (India) Act, 1851. It is simply disgraceful that such lumber should be allowed to overload the statute book. All the really vital operative provisions in the Criminal Lunatics Acts, 1880-1884, could be comprised in a Bill of 50 sections. In the present stage of legal and medical opinion on the subject, any attempt to incorporate the law of criminal responsibility in the Bill would wreck its chances of passing. But we should at least be glad to see some check imposed upon the power, too frequently exercised of late years, of the Home Secretary to remit prisoners becoming lunatic before arraignment direct to a criminal lunatic asylum without judicial inquiry.

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*The Asylum News.*

The new Journal of the Association of Asylum Workers has commenced its existence with a January number for the present year. In welcoming the new-comer we may reiterate our