

than the ordinary measure of respect and consideration at the hands of the court. It may be concluded therefore that recent agitation concerning evil medico-legal practices has resulted favourably.

In conclusion, the saddest paragraph must be written—that which refers to the death of Dr. George Frederick Jelly. On October 24th, 1911, we lost one of the most competent, as well as most beloved, psychiatrists America has known. He remained at work almost to the day of his death, and rounded out a career crowded full of goodness and wisdom.

FRANCE.

By RENÉ SEMELAINNE.

IN a Paris restaurant on January 2nd, 1911, an alcoholic shot and killed, without provocation, a peaceful diner. Dr. Vallon, the medical expert, concluded that the accused, who had a family history of insanity, was a congenital *deséquilibré*, a chronic inebriate addicted to alcohol and ether; that the murder had been committed in a state of intoxication, and had been forgotten by the prisoner; that he was not insane, and was criminally responsible; that, nevertheless, in consideration of his hereditary and acquired predisposition he might be considered as having been in a state of pathological inebriation at the time when the act alleged against him was committed; and that in consequence his responsibility was modified. The trial took place on August 3rd, and the accused was acquitted and discharged; but the members of the jury in a letter to the *Ministre de la Justice* represented that criminals acquitted as irresponsible, remained a danger to the public safety, and earnestly requested that the competent authority should send such persons to custody in a specially constituted establishment, to be detained until it should be duly certified that they were no longer dangerous.

Dr. Vallon considers that it is a public danger to discharge unconditionally an habitual drunkard who has committed a crime in a state of drunkenness, and that the best protection would be the erection of an *asile de sûreté*, to which any drunkard charged with a crime or minor offence should be committed for care and treatment, his detention being ordered by the competent legal authority.

A special institution of this nature seems to have been in existence before the Revolution, and Dr. Sérieux recently published, as a contribution to his inquiry into the *asiles de sûreté*, a very interesting study of the Bastille and its prisoners.

In historical works, in political studies and in fiction, the Bastille is only described as a representative institution of the old monarchy, with its abuses and errors, and the *lettres de cachet* have been regarded as crimes against the liberty of the subject. But the archives of the Bastille, scattered at the time of the Revolution, have been re-collected, and a more careful study of all the papers, of the letters of *lieutenants de police* and of the officers of the fortress, with an attentive perusal of the letters written by the prisoners, has succeeded in shaking the legend. When

the Bastille was seized, on July 14th, 1789, by the revolutionists, only seven prisoners were found detained in the old gaol: four forgers, two lunatics and a dangerous degenerate.

The histories of five thousand of its prisoners are known, and it is evident that the Bastille was mainly employed as an *asile de sûreté*, where could be detained persons of rank and influence who were suffering from mental disorders which appeared to be curable. Such confinement was not degrading and was preferred to detention in an asylum for the insane. Most generally, where the insanity was chronic, patients not dangerous were discharged and sent back to their families, or were transferred to special establishments.

That the Bastille was also an asylum for unmanageable lunatics is proved by the transfer to that fortress from prisons and other asylums of persons suffering from psychical illnesses or defects, who were especially dangerous or difficult to control, or who had succeeded in escaping from detention.

Now and then the superior of some monastery in Paris or in the country made request for the transfer to the Bastille of a patient who had been committed to his custody, and who was "agitated as a devil." But most generally the mental disorder of the patients imprisoned in the fortress was not understood, and they were incarcerated for some other reason, so that many prisoners confined under charges of sexual offences, intrigue, imposture, villainy, conspiracy, espionage, exhibited after a few months of observation the signs of genuine mental disorders.

In the reports kept on the prisoners one might find all the events which occur in an asylum for the insane, such as attempts at suicide and escape, attacks on attendants, fits of excitement, uncontrollable agitation, acute excitement, destructiveness, periods of mutism, self-accusation, refusal of food, acts of mischief and of planned rebellion, delusions of poisoning, delusions of conspiracy, etc. Even the detailed observations concerning the prisoners, recorded by the officers of the Bastille, recall to mind the notes made in an asylum for the insane, for the frequent occurrences of mental disorders among the prisoners rendered the members of the staff familiar with the various forms of insanity.

In addition to cases of undoubted insanity, there were a great number of anti-social degenerates, or persons who could not adapt themselves to any form of society, and whose mental condition was not secondary to disease, but an abnormality of psychical evolution. The notes on such cases contain the terms "libertine," "rascal," "mischievous," "foolish impostor," "scoundrel of the highest order." Amongst them the alienist can easily identify various classes of degeneracy, such as perverse debility, hysteria, moral insanity, disequibration, mysticism, fanaticism, regicidism, sexual perversion, intellectual insanity, false interpretation, elation, mythomania, etc. Just as now, such constitutionally abnormal people were a social annoyance, and it seemed necessary to protect the public safety. Accordingly the constitutional abnormals and the mischievous *psychopaths*, who could not easily be reached by legal interference, were committed to the Bastille by royal authority.

General abnormals were numerous, and one might observe inversion,

sadisme, exhibitionism, etc. The prisoners registered as adventurers and impostors used to come to Paris from different parts of France and Europe in order to find their easy dupes. Amongst them were many *deséquilibrés*, vagabonds, and some that could be catalogued as cases of disorders of interpretation, elation of fabulation, of imagination, etc.

Dr. Sérieux records a great number of observations, and states that the famous prison was in reality the *asile de sûreté* demanded by criminologists and alienists of the twentieth century. If such a conception seems at first to be paradoxical, the fault lies with the pamphleteers, politicians and historians, who with unusual unanimity and during more than a century have misled public opinion.

Historical records prove that the victims of religious persecution or of private vengeance constituted but a small minority of the prisoners of the Bastille.

During several generations sensitive spirits have pitied the fate of vulgar criminals, rascals and sharpers, sodomists and regicides, mischievous degenerates, moral imbeciles and criminal lunatics. For about two centuries the Bastille served the purpose of social defence and protection; any person imperilling the security of the State or of private individuals was detained under lock and key.

At that time an exact division had not been made between prisons and hospitals, and prisoners were sent to Bicêtre and to the Salpêtrière as well as lunatics to the Bastille. To sum up, the Bastille was a prison for anti-social degenerates, and the greater part of the pretended victims of despotism were malefactors, lunatics or dangerous abnormals.

With regard to the *lettres de cachet*, if we exclude religious and political interests it is easy to demonstrate that our modern government has maintained, without any essential modification, these measures of the old monarchy, but under a different name.

There is no great difference between the detention in an asylum by a decision of the *préfet de police*, not only of lunatics, but also of abnormals, and the incarceration of the same people in the Bastille by a *lettre de cachet* of the *lieutenant de police*, the object of both decisions being to protect society against certain individuals who might be dangerous, or might disturb public peace and tranquility.

Do we not find the same analogy in the precautions taken to prevent arbitrary detentions? The periodic visitation of prisoners by the *lieutenant de police* seems to be identical with the visits of *procureur de la République*, paid in accordance with the Lunacy Law. As to the *lettres de cachet*, which were obtained upon a petition presented by parents or relatives, they were similar to our *placements volontaires*. Such petition necessarily contained an allegation or statement of particulars, and the order for detention could not be obtained without a long and circumstantial inquiry made by the commissary and the inspector of police, each of them separately, and their reports included evidence founded on an examination of the accused, of his relatives and neighbours, and of the vicar of the parish. It was only after the reception of such a report that an order could be made by the board presided over by the *lieutenant de police*, or in the Royal Council, and in the presence of the King. On the other hand the prisoners were at once discharged even unrecovered, as soon as the family presented a request. Conse-

quently the *lettres de cachet*, the State prisons and the Bastille have been of the utmost service to society at a time when no well-organised system existed of provision for the insane or of prevention of crime.

Dr. Sérieux observes that the present provision for the insane and the system of penitentiaries mark a new era.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries State prisons received all the anti-social elements without any distinction ; now, on the contrary, there is a tendency to a more exact differentiation. The object aimed at is to substitute for the old method of arranging the classes of the insane in the different wards of the same asylum a more appropriate distribution in different asylums, each one devoted to a particular form of insanity and with an organisation carefully adapted to its special methods. So one looks for hospitals for acute mental diseases, colonies for chronic and convalescent insane, refuges for incurable invalids, separate asylums for the treatment of habitual drunkards, colonies for epileptics, institutions for the treatment and education of mentally defective children, sanatoriums for borderland cases, family colonies for the harmless insane, etc., and especially a separate asylum seems to be required for the various categories of perverts included under the heading of "criminal lunatics."

Dr. Sérieux divides dangerous psychopaths into three categories, requiring three different kinds of establishments.

(1) Convicts becoming of unsound mind while in custody. He requires for these the formation of large separate wards annexed to prisons in the neighbourhood of Universities.

(2) Dangerous and unmanageable lunatics, such category including all lunatics who, before or after their incarceration, have committed a criminal offence, the aggressive delirious insane, the dangerous alcoholics, etc. ; these patients to be detained in separate wards annexed to an asylum.

(3) Congenital abnormals, who, in consideration of their modified responsibility and lucidity of mind, might avoid the prisons as well as the asylums. The mental state of this class is characterised by psychical disequilibrium, intellectual defect, perverse instincts, wickedness, constitutional excitability, and attacks of delirium or of dangerous impulsiveness under the influence of the least alcoholic excess. Unable to live without control, they constitute a permanent social danger. If they happen to be detained for a time in a penitentiary, they are soon discharged, for they have been sentenced to a brief term of imprisonment in consideration of their modified responsibility. If placed in a lunatic asylum they soon become intolerable and a source of annoyance to the other patients ; also they are not acutely excited and easily obtain their discharge. The true place for people of this class is not a hospital appropriated to the treatment of psychoses, but an *asile de sûreté*. While the newspapers, concludes Dr. Sérieux, are demanding every day the capture of some Bastille, we implore the erection of new ones.