

absurd to talk of puerperal insanities, it is nevertheless convenient in the present state of our knowledge, and in the absence of a satisfactory classification of insanity, to discuss in a treatise on mental diseases the relation of pregnancy, the puerperium and lactation to insanity. So also should mention be made of the insanities of development, the relation of phthisis to insanity, etc., etc.

Dementia might well have had a chapter devoted to it.

In fact, beyond a fair account of paranoia and general paralysis of the insane (paralytic dementia), there is very little to be recommended in this part of the book. We believe we have said enough to show that, taken as a whole, this treatise is decidedly of unequal merit. Much of it is excellent, and it is generally sound—in the sense of its matter being generally accepted—an important point in a work addressed to students and general practitioners.

For the rest, the publishers are to be praised for their share in the production of the book; the text is well printed, and on good paper; the illustrations are clear; there are, however, a certain number of "clerical errors."

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*Dr. Pascal.* By ZOLA.

This is a novel written "for a purpose," the purpose being the exposition of heredity. We are suspicious of such productions for the reason that it is impossible to blend dry scientific facts with the ordinary attributes of popular reading in such a way as to prevent imagination overcoming accuracy. This work, though interesting in many ways, cannot be said to successfully dress science in a popular garb, while it contains many elements of danger to ordinary novel-readers. As to *technique*, we need hardly say that word-structure and word-painting are masterly. The plot may be described as a weaving of horrors, psychological, moral, and physical, into a tale of rural and domestic life, the latter being just of that easy and natural character which does so much to promote, whether for good or evil, the intaking of the more active incidents.

The general idea is that of an ultra-scientific doctor patiently working out his family history. He constructs a tree on which are shown the characteristics of five generations, he himself being of the third. The theory which he evolves as a result of his studies is such as is generally ac-

cepted. Parents hand down to their offspring tendencies to departure from the normal—fathers more to sons, and mothers more to daughters—prepotency, and so on. He reckons as varieties direct, indirect, reverting, and influence heredity, the latter being the influence of a deceased husband over the produce of his relict when she has been blessed with another mate. As to the first three, we cannot follow the author in giving such importance to mere clinical accidents, and the fourth form is too shadowy for discussion here. The attributes of a new being he divides into two portions—*heredity* or imitation, and *innateness* or diversity. We cannot accept such a division. A scientific term is essentially one that must be, so to speak, self-containing; it must have a basis of fact. Here *innateness* (in itself a most misleading term) has its basis on a negative failure to establish imitation. As is very usual in the discussion of this problem, the word heredity is used in many senses, leading to confusion of ideas. Heredity may mean the laws of inheritance, the actual incidence of inheritance, the inheritance of good points as well as of bad, the inheritance of physical attributes or defects, the inheritance of disease, neurotic and other, and especially of insanity.

The application of theory is carried out in very thorough fashion, and we read of all forms of transmission in abundant instances—too abundant, in fact. The taint starts, for the purposes of the story, from a very old lady, who is said to supply the neurosis. She was married to a healthy man, by whom she has descendants to the fourth generation. The few instances of neurosis in this branch seem to be as much due to importation as to direct transmission. After the death of her husband she cohabits with a “smuggler, addicted to drink and half-crazed.” From this illicit union a much greater amount of neurosis descends. Then the old lady becomes mad at the respectable age of 83. Is it right, therefore, to put the chief fault on her? Has not her lover quite as much to do with the bitter fruit on the family tree? We think so, and insist on this point because we conceive the working out of the tree to be founded on a wrong view of heredity. M. Zola places far too great value on the occurrence of insanity in a particular person. He seems to look on it as a positive evil which must have its way sooner or later, while, in truth, inherited insanity is a manifestation of a negative—a failure in the reproduction of a normal being. He is quite right in believing, and bringing home to the

reader his belief, that hereditary tendency to insanity is a thing not to be disregarded, but we consider that one of the serious failures in this book, as an agent of instruction, is in not giving equally full prominence to the fact that, unless the deterioration has gone too far, that which is wanting may eventually be put back by happy combination of the sound with the unsound. It is true that incidentally he does show that it is not absolutely necessary for the offspring of an insane person to be insane. Had he not done so the scene of his story would have been laid inside an asylum. But if, as we suppose, he wishes to convey a moral, he would have, in our opinion, best done his duty in helping humanity to repair its misfortunes by using his powerful pen to write also of the brighter side of the question.

M. Zola must have devoted a considerable amount of attention to medical books. Ataxy, phthisis, hæmatophilia, congestion of the brain, spontaneous combustion, Dr. Brown-Séquard's injections of "vital" fluids, even the lately discussed idea of injecting a decoction of sheep's brains, all find their place here, and add an interest which surely must be unhealthy to the ordinary lay mind. Nor has he stopped at pathology. In three instances he minutely describes the act and struggle of death, while in the case of spontaneous combustion he gives all the results that are said, on the authority of Marryat and Charles Dickens, to be usually found on such occasions. If he can bring himself thus far to war against tender feelings, why should he not have gone further, even to the post-mortem table, in search of materials for writing up death? What a scene could be drawn over the "sclerosis" and the "valves that give way" in the heart of the departed hero!

Speaking as alienists we protest against yet another unwarrantable strain being put on emotion; speaking again as alienists we protest even still more strongly against the subtle attack made by M. Zola on morality—that morality which is one of the conspicuous weapons needed for the fight against hereditary tendency to insanity. Plainly put, the motive of the tale is the seduction of a girl, in whose growing character the reader must, thanks to the author's art, needs take the deepest interest, by her own uncle—this famous and aged philosopher, Dr. Pascal—to whose care poor Clotilde had been confided. He rears her from childhood, forms her character, fights with her, masters her soul

by brutal violence, and then allows himself, with a few inward protestations, to take her away from a legitimate suitor. He might have married her (as is lawful in France) without in the least disarranging the "purpose" of the book, but then to be sure the book would have lost great part of its piquancy. We can hardly believe that M. Zola has been inartistic enough to have created such a vulgar crime as an instance of the power of heredity. We know that there are many Fausts among us, we hope that there are few Dr. Pascals, but whether there be few or many, we say that such an unblushing exposition of immorality is unpardonable. It is not even rendered useful. It may be old-fashioned, but we have an impression that a lesson taught us in our nurseries was a good one, viz., that sin brings more or less punishment or suffering in its wake. Here certainly the malefactor dies a painful death, but he dies in a halo of angina pectoris. He cares less for his sin than for the pathological condition of his heart. The girl, who certainly was content to live in sin, in spite of knowledge of what her sin was, is left nursing her love-child with every prospect of comfort before her. Nowhere does the author go out of his way to repair or offer atonement for the wrong he does to those of his readers who may happen to have pure minds. We close the book with a feeling that under a pretence of psychology the author has beguiled us into reading a story that we had better not have read.

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*Verlag van het Staatstzozicht op Krankzinnigen en Krankzinnigengestichten en over den staat dier Gestichten in de Jaren, 1888, 1889, en 1890, aan den Minister van Binnenlandsche zaken opgemaakt door de Inspecteurs voor het Staatstzozicht op de Krankzinnigen en de Krankzinnigengestichten in Nederland.*

The triennial Report of the Inspectors in Lunacy in Holland has recently been published, and though the returns bear a date not later than 1890, a vast amount of most useful information as to the condition of the insane in the Netherlands has been crowded into its pages. The minuteness of detail is no doubt the reason for the delay in publication. This triennial method of issuing their Lunacy Report has been in vogue with the inspectors since 1878, and the system, though open to some objection, cannot certainly be disapproved of altogether when such excellent material as we find embodied in these pages is laid before us. It bears on the

whole favourable comparison with our own official reports, for it enters into matters of real interest to every alienist, and its style is one certainly more of honest and friendly criticism than of that carping *ex cathedra* censure we are so very much used to. The number of insane, and consequently the number of institutions containing these, it is true, falls far below that with which our Commissioners have to deal, and hence a more detailed review is possible, but it would be a most gratifying and refreshing change could we see a more comprehensive retrospect of the state of the insane in our midst than the stereotyped reports which are issued annually.

After dealing shortly with the working of the Lunacy Act, from which it appears that much difficulty is found in obtaining proper returns from private individuals who accept the charge of lunatics, a record is given of the cases reported to the inspectors of such patients who, being boarded out or being in private care, have been neglected, and of such who, though not certified, have been noted as being dangerous to or subversive of the public peace, and the list is a lamentably long one. The remark at the end of this section, "It is certainly painful to reflect that, though the reception of these patients into asylums in some cases has been, perhaps, hurried, and that financial pressure has been made to weigh somewhat heavily on certain parishes, the transference of these insane individuals for their own benefit and the benefit of the community has only been accomplished in most instances by enforcing the extreme letter of the law," is certainly regrettable, for it shows a lack of concern on the part of local authorities for the proper protection of their insane and themselves. The erection of a new asylum for South Holland appears to have involved the inspectors in manifold difficulties, which they detail at length, but from which they appear to have emerged successfully, the result being that a building is in course of erection capable of accommodating 200 patients, with facilities for enlargement to hold 500, and that another for the province of Groningen for from 200 to 250 patients is also in process of construction. The inspectors, moreover, show a praiseworthy keenness in keeping the various lukewarm provinces such as Friesland, Drenthe (for which plans of an asylum are under consideration), Zeeland, Limburg, Overijssel, Amsterdam (for a special Jewish asylum), and Leiden alive to the needs of their respective communities by advocating the erection of asylums for each. They give a detailed account of the structural and sanitary condition of existing asylums, the plans they propose for improvement and alteration, and their reasons for these last-named suggestions; the investigation of complaints by patients, and escapes form the subjects of special sections. During the three years eleven instances of suicide were reported in asylums, one by burning, four by hanging, four, by drowning, one from cut throat, and one after escape by throwing

himself under a passing train. Fifteen instances of patients discharged as not being insane on admission are dealt with *in extenso*. Consideration of the strength of the staff in each asylum is the subject of a table giving the relative proportions of patients per attendant. Dietaries, too, are tabulated, but in a manner which would not enchant the ratepayer in England until that Utopian period shall arrive when private asylums shall be no more, for it gives classified scales of diet according to payments made in each asylum, for in Holland public asylums are largely used by the affluent. Tables are given setting forth the amount of clothing supplied weekly to each class of patients, and the household administration and spiritual care of the insane are also fully considered. Elaborate summaries, too, are furnished of the occurrence of infectious and contagious diseases in asylums, and the transmissible and hereditary diseases found among inmates are arranged for easy reference, while finally a compilation of adventitious diseases is given, from one of which tables it appears that during the triennial period 1887-1890 there were but eight recorded instances in all asylums of the occurrence of hæmatoma auris, a number which is certainly one open to doubt as to the accuracy of the returns in this particular. A review of the attributed causes of insanity in all asylums for the three triennial periods between 1882 and 1890 shows that alcoholic abuse maintains a fairly constant percentage as a causative factor of insanity (7·3), while in the two last periods there has been an increase in the percentage of cases attributable to purely mental causes, such as worries, anxieties, shock, etc. The inspectors deal also at length with the curative treatment adopted in various asylums, especially considering electro-therapeutics and hypnotism, quoting interesting instances of the effective employment of these agencies. Following this we have a host of tables setting forth the employment, recreation, and occupation of patients, tables as to prognosis, seclusion (in which the inspectors make no distinction between day and night isolation), and restraint (from which last we observe that at Meerenberg there has been no restraint employed for many years). The number of cases admitted into asylums during the three years (exclusive of transfers) was 4,227, the number of deaths 1,713, and the total of discharges 2,552 (of which 576 were discharged relieved or not improved, 597 were transfers, and 1,379 were discharged as cured). There remained in the seventeen asylums a total of 6,215 inmates on December 31st, 1890. Tables giving the distribution of patients in asylums according to their classes, setting forth, too, their social status, religion, occupation, degree of education, the varieties of insanity under which they laboured, their ages, duration of treatment, and the percentages of deaths to the number admitted, form an interesting and compendious summary extending over a large portion of this work. The report proper closes with a review of the treatment of idiots in

Holland, for which the inspectors urge that separate institutions should be erected.

From their general remarks we may quote the following:—"The mischief produced by the public exhibition of hypnotism, suggestion, etc., led the Government in 1890 to confer with us as to the advisability of instituting legal enactments prohibiting the employment of these agencies for purposes other than purely scientific . . . and we replied that it would be extremely desirable that measures should be adopted to counteract the evil. We therefore suggested that a law might be promulgated for the purpose of (1) interdicting all public displays pertaining to hypnotism, suggestion, and 'magnetism'; (2) limiting the medical employment of suggestion to therapeutical purposes only, and never without the presence of two witnesses, one of whom was to be a medical man; and (3) enforcing this by the imposition of severe penalties on each and everyone (including medical men) who might employ suggestion for their own individual ends, or to the detriment of others." A few remarks as to the instruction in psychology, wherein the inspectors urge the extension of University teaching in this branch of medicine, are certainly not out of place. This has been already effected in the Universities of Utrecht and Amsterdam, where special chairs for morbid psychology have been founded, but they very properly desire to see this useful work enlarged by the adoption of a similar course of lectures in the Universities of Leyden and Groningen.

The appendix of 86 pages deals with a comparative statistical review of matters relating to the insane from 1844 to 1890. Certain amendments to the Lunacy Laws, whereby various asylums are prohibited from receiving more than a certain number of patients, are quoted, and it would be well could this regulation be in like manner enforced in England. It would, perhaps, tend to rouse local authorities, just as it is at present doing in Holland, to a sense of the requirements of their respective communities. The report also contains a series of plans for a proposed asylum (Veldwijk), which is to be under the supervision of a religious community.

We must compliment the authors on their admirable Report; the safety and comfort of the insane have, to all appearances, received careful attention, and Holland certainly stands in the forefront of European nationalities in the humane and considerate treatment of her mentally afflicted, for the proper observance of which a large meed of praise may be accorded her energetic and able inspectors, Drs. Ruysch and van Andel.

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