

On the Simulation of Hysteria by Organic Disease of the Nervous System. By THOMAS BUZZARD, M.D., F.R.C.P. J. and A. Churchill. 1891.

In a small volume of about 100 pages, Dr. Buzzard treats of the above subject from an essentially clinical point of view. The substance of the work is based upon the presidential address delivered by him before the Neurological Society in 1890. Very special consideration is given to the subject of disseminated sclerosis, more particularly in regard to its simulation of hysteria. On p. 96 the author says: "There can be but little doubt that of all organic diseases of the nervous system, disseminated sclerosis in its early stages is that which is most commonly mistaken for hysteria." Truly this must undoubtedly be so when we learn that the shifting about of a state of powerlessness from one limb to another is not characteristic of hysteria, but rather of disseminated sclerosis, and that a like shifting about of a numbness, or sense of pins-and-needles, points also "with considerable distinctness to disseminated sclerosis." The difficulty of diagnosis becomes yet more increased when we consider what the author says on p. 52, viz., that the characteristic symptoms of disseminated sclerosis, *e.g.*, the tremor on voluntary movement; the spasticity of muscles, the nystagmus, the scanning articulation and the so-called apoplectiform seizures, may all be absent. A recent case which has come under our observation brings home to us the force of these remarks, yet at the same moment we are tempted to ask, must we not review our definition of organic disease, if instability of symptom is to be a mark of it? The book is well worth studying by alienists and others.

PART III.—PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT.

1. *English Retrospect.*

Asylum Reports for 1890.

(Continued from Vol. XXXVII., p. 590.)

Isle of Man.—Various structural improvements have been effected. These include the construction of a billiard room. It is mentioned in Dr. Richardson's satisfactory report that an imbecile boy has been taught to plough and do other agricultural work, and is now working for his own living.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne.—A limited outbreak of typhoid fever