

agent, *e.g.*, infective embolus of a terminal artery of the cerebrum, are not uncommon. Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether an inflammatory process is primary and due to an infective-toxic agent or secondary and developed, *e.g.*, in connection with an ischaemic softening. Much discussion has taken place in connection with the thrombosis of the sinuses and veins of the pia-mater and the associated encephalites and softenings. The researches of the author's colleague, Therman, go to prove that in the majority of cases the thrombi are secondary, and caused by the same toxic process which has determined the meningo-encephalitis. The author expresses his belief that the interpretation of many lesions is aided by an exact differentiation of the various cells found in the focus under the microscope. He is convinced that the majority of the large cells, especially the so-called epithelioid cells of Friedmann, and the granular bodies, are not, as many think, derived from the neuroglia, nor from fixed mesodermal cells (adventitial and endothelial), nor from typical plasmatic cells, but are polyblasts in the sense of Maximow, or derived from these, that is to say, derived from lymphocytes. We would not be justified in speaking of primary inflammation in the case of processes, where at the initiation, and as an essential factor, we find only degenerations, thromboses, or embolisms and hæmorrhages. The presence, however, of a certain number of polyblasts in a primary focus would prove its inflammatory character.

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7. Sociology.

Automatism in crime [*L'automatisme dans la criminalité*]. (Rev. *Philosoph.*, Feb., 1910.) Marro.

In the cerebral processes involved in the commission of a homicidal crime Marro proposes to distinguish two main factors, *viz.*, on the one hand, the exaltation of irritability in the affective centres expressed in the condition which he terms "psychic hyperæsthesia," and on the other hand, the presence of the pre-formed excito-motor mechanisms requisite for executing the homicidal act. It is the second of these factors that is mainly considered in the present paper. These special mechanisms have been organised in the evolution of the race in connection with the primary functions of self-preservation and reproduction, and though civilised man normally restrains them by the influence of the later developed moral and social feelings, they are readily brought into action under appropriate emotional conditions. In relation to the sexual function these mechanisms have been developed predominantly in the male in the struggle with other males for the possession of the female, and this, in Marro's view, is the reason of the greater prevalence of homicidal crime among men. The motor images which constitute this combative mechanism are most readily excited to activity when the integration of the personality is imperfect, and when, to adopt Janet's conception, there is a loss or restriction of the power to form new and complete syntheses adequate to the particular occasion, so that a condition of automatism ensues in which acts of a criminal character may be committed. Marro refers to recorded instances of such acts in the

state intermediate between sleep and waking, in somnambulism and in the epileptic dream phase, and then discusses at greater length the automatism of alcoholic intoxication. In this connection he emphasises the importance of emotional stimuli in initiating the activity of the aggressive mechanism, which, when started in these conditions, often works with an explosive violence ending in exhaustion. Military training, designed as it is to cultivate the aptitude for attacking a hypothetical enemy, renders this atavistic mechanism of aggression particularly prone to activity, and for this reason homicidal crimes in alcoholic automatism are specially frequent amongst soldiers. A number of interesting observations are briefly cited to illustrate this point. The tendency to automatism is more pronounced in individuals of defective brain and also in the uneducated. Marro has found, for instance, that the proportion of illiterates is nearly twice as large amongst homicidal criminals as compared with other classes of offenders. In general, the influences which place the mental organism in a state of inferiority, the influences which produce what Janet terms "la misère psychologique," favour the development of criminal automatism.

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8. Asylum Reports, 1909.

Some English County and Borough Asylums.

Buckinghamshire.—Comparisons of asylum population at various times in the last forty years show some curious results. During that period the numbers in workhouses and with friends has increased by 193, and those in asylum by 253, the chief increase in both cases being between 1895 and 1905. The population of the county between 1870 and 1880 increased by 1,000 and the increase in the insane was 37. But in the next decade the population went up by 9,000 while the insane only increased by 11. Such vagaries must increase the difficulty of estimating requirements when new buildings are called for.

Cumberland and Westmoreland.—We note that *post-mortem* examinations were made in every one of the seventy-three deaths. The Commissioners, in noting an excellent dinner, make the suggestion that the patients' dietary should be shifted every month, so that patients should not always know what they are going to have for dinner from day to day. Among the financial tables we find one that is interesting and probably instructive to those who can follow the various factors which temporarily influence maintenance expenditure. The average cost for each of the items in the statutory expenditure returns is given for each year from the commencement of the Asylum's life in 1862. The prominent factor is that the cost of provisions has progressively decreased until now it stands at 2s. 10d. per week as against 5s. 1d. in the first complete year. Salaries and wages cost about threepence, or 10 *per cent.* more than they did. Necessaries run a shade higher, while the dispensary charge is half what it was, and wine, etc., which stood at over a penny and three-quarters, and sometimes over two-, and even threepence, is