

Ebing places it in the category of the degenerative psychoses.

A careful perusal of Dr. Roubinovitch's book cannot fail to be of interest and instructive to students of mental pathology; the task which he undertook was a difficult and arduous one, and he has dealt with it very well.

---

*Dégénérescence et Criminalité.* Essai Physiologique, par CH. FÉRÉ, Médecin de Bicêtre. 2nd Edition. Paris: Baillière et Cie. 1895.

This series of essays, which M. Féré contributes to the study of criminology, are not only scientifically valuable, but are distinguished by much practical common-sense. While he affords a due meed of praise to the admirable work done by workers of the Italian school in the domain of criminal anthropology, he demurs to many of their conclusions. The introductory chapter is devoted to the consideration of various physiological problems, peripheral excitations, etc., which affect the functioning of the brain, and which have a more or less direct bearing on the psychical characteristics of the criminal. He regards criminality as essentially hereditary, and concludes that it is often associated with physical and psychical signs of degeneracy, and also that criminality and degeneracy have often a common heredity. In these views he agrees with Morel. The author is particularly critical in regard to the alleged connection between atavism and crime, which he thinks is purely hypothetical. He does not lay much store on anatomical configurations, and states that the criminal type is not sufficiently defined nor separated from types which may be regarded as normal. The other chapters deal with the social aspects of crime, and the various methods of treating the criminal. These pages contain much valuable information which will be found useful by all interested in the study of criminality and its relations to mental states.

---

*Periodische Depression Zustände und ihre Pathogenese auf dem Boden der Harnsauren Diathese.* Von Professor C. LANGE. Hamburg und Leipzig: Voss, pp. 55.

This is a translation from the Danish by Dr. Hans Kurella, whose extensive knowledge of different languages has so often been of service to medical science. Dr. Lange gives

a graphic description of a form of mental depression which he has found frequent in Copenhagen. Since his attention has been expressly turned to this condition, the Professor has studied it in from 700 to 800 cases.

The patient is weighed down by a feeling of weariness. He dislikes to commence anything, and takes an interest in nothing. The state of the male patient is more often characterised by a want of initiative; that of the female by apathy. The lowness of spirits is seldom so intense as to bring the subject into a lunatic asylum. The affection is distinct both from hypochondria and neurasthenia. With the latter condition it is often confounded. Though the general health is enfeebled, Dr. Lange considers that in this dyscrasia the mental symptoms are of more consequence than the bodily ones. The mental depression is not readily guessed from the faces of the patients. The sleep is unquiet; there are bad dreams; the feeling of distress is worse in the morning and passes away in the evening. The melancholy is not progressive, and there are no fixed ideas nor hallucinations.

Dr. Lange considers that the most constant and important bodily symptom in this dyscrasia is the tendency to the deposit of a large sediment in the urine. This occurs independently of the occasional causes which favour the deposit of uric acid. An inquiry into the composition of the blood in this disorder is much to be desired. Boucheron observed that in several patients the presence of murexide could be detected in the saliva, whence he inferred the presence of uric acid in the circulating fluid. Dr. Lange found the same reaction in the saliva of his patients. He tells us that thirty or forty years ago oxaluria, as described by Dr. Golding Bird, was a disease much in vogue. The Danish physician regards this as an incomplete and ill-defined generalisation. Oxaluric insanity was one of the forms in Skae's classification. A description of it, along with phosphaturic insanity, will be found in Clouston's *Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases*. Lange refers with more favour to the researches of Haig on the uric acid dyscrasia. The presence of earthy phosphates in an exhausted state of the system is a matter of common observation. The general idea amongst British physicians now is to try to raise the tone of health when the urine assumes its normal appearance without any special attention.

Dr. Lange observes that the dyscrasia is most frequently

met with from the twenty-fifth to the thirty-fourth year of life. The depression of spirits often disappears with pregnancy, sometimes to return after lactation has ceased. In old people thus affected there is a tendency to spontaneous improvement. Treatment should be directed to combat the uric acid diathesis.

The pamphlet is written in an engaging style, and is clearly the result of ripe experience.

---

*Suggestion und Reflex. Eine kritisch-experimentelle Studie über die Reflexphänomene des Hypnotismus.* (Suggestion and Reflex. A critical and experimental Study of the Reflex-Phenomena of Hypnotism). By Dr. KARL SCHAFFER. Jena: Fischer. 1895. Price, 6m. 50; pp. 110; octavo.

In this pamphlet, Dr. Schaffer examines the question whether all the actions of the hypnotised person can be explained by suggestion. According to Bernheim, to hypnotise anyone is simply to provoke a psychical condition in which the sensibility is exalted. On the other side Charcot and his followers have maintained that in some of their experiments results are evolved which cannot be explained through undesigned suggestions. They insist that the precautions that they use are sufficient to exclude the possibility of such suggestions. Although the school of Nancy seems at present to carry most weight, there are still observers who uphold the views of Charcot. They lay much stress upon the reflex contractions which are produced by lightly stroking the skin. Dr. Sigm. Freud, the translator of Bernheim's work into German, has pointed out that, in some cases of hypnotic lethargy, a soft pressure on one muscle, say of the face, or on one of the three muscles of the ear, which so seldom contract during life, is enough to put the muscle into a state of tonic contraction. Dr. Schaffer refers to the important experiments of Högyes and Laufenauer, which have not gained the wide attention which they merited, as they were published in the Magyar language. These experimenters succeeded, in hysterical persons plunged in a deep hypnosis, in producing great rigidity of the muscles in one or both sides through the application of slight stimuli not only to the skin, but also to the special senses, especially to the eye and ear. Sometimes the contracture was on the same side as the stimulus, sometimes it was crossed, sometimes bilateral.