

recorded by other observers also, suggests that the first attempts at speech represent an inheritance rather than an acquirement.

To the general teaching of the book only praise can be given. There is, possibly, a certain quaintness about the proposition that a baby may be too old at five, but the point made is a good one. In regard to the education of children we are still far from the happy mean, and the influence of fashion on methods of teaching is not helpful. It is certainly much better to let one's pig trot to market rather than to have to haul him there by the hind leg, but he must be supervised sufficiently closely to prevent his bolting down the side streets, and the complacent parent who justifies his neglect by the fatuous excuse that "you can't put old heads on young shoulders," is just as dangerous to a child's mental development as ever was the bigoted pedagogue of the past.

E. B. S.

Part III.—Epitome of Current Literature.

1. Psycho-pathology.

The Psychology of the Normal Woman in Relation to her Crimes and Passions: Her Peculiar Psychoses [*La Psicologia della Donna Normale in relazione ai suoi Delitti e alle Passioni: Psicosi sue peculiari*]. (*Arch. di Antropol. Crim. Psych. e Med. Leg.*, Sept.—Dec., 1917.) Lombroso, G.

It has been frequently observed that crimes committed by women are usually of comparatively small importance, and that murder is rarely committed by them. On the other hand, they have been known to have become suddenly insane or to have committed atrocious crimes from causes which were strangely disproportionate to the results. The writer attributes these particular forms of criminality and insanity to woman's special emotionalism (*passionalità*), and the illogicality, exaggeration, easy vivification of inanimate objects, ideas of the importance of dress, and enormous *amour propre* which are derived from it.

Feminine emotionalism is distinguished from the masculine by the fact that it always has for an object a living, concrete being—a father, husband, lover, child, or even a dog or a cat. A woman is miserable unless she has something to which she can dedicate herself, for which she can make real sacrifices. This feminine altruism is necessary for the preservation of the species. If the female were not provided with it, the species would presently be extinguished. This ardent passion for every living thing, which potential maternity develops in a woman, is the primary cause of her minor criminality. She receives such pleasure from the life around her that she has a profound repugnance to destroy it.

One of the primary consequences, if not the cause, of the special emotionalism of woman is her lack of logic. A woman is devoted to others from instinct and impulse, not from reflection. This want of

logic explains how crimes committed by women are often so absurd and fantastic. A female criminal only exaggerates in crime a character which is hers normally.

Another characteristic derived from the emotionalism of women, and which reveals itself perhaps more in their suicides and psychoses than in their crimes, is exaggeration. It is the cause of a woman's irritability, susceptibility and illusions. When life is tranquil a man simply enjoys it without worrying about the past or future. But a woman does not live in the present; she lives in the past or future, and is continually tormenting herself about what may or may not happen. Before a girl is married she is thinking of the evils which may befall her children. When she is married and has a perfectly healthy child, she torments herself about what would happen if he were to fall ill.

Women are endowed with an imagination which appears to have the power of transforming the inanimate objects around them into living beings, in which they confide, and which they love as real persons. Mrs. Browning, George Sand, Juliette Lambert and Laura Thompson spoke to the trees in their gardens, and in their letters they show that they believed that the trees were sensible of their affection. This power, which a woman has of vivifying the inanimate things around her and of loving them as living beings, explains the passion with which she resists those who would deprive her of them, and one understands how it may lead her to falsehood and theft to preserve them, and even cause her to murder without repugnance those who would take them away from her. This feminine love for inanimate objects led Cesare Lombroso to suggest more than once that the furniture should legally belong to the wife.

The writer says that vanity has but little to do with a woman's love of dress. According to him, dress, ornaments, jewels are for a woman the marks which demonstrate to the public, which does not know her, her social class, her riches, the affection of her husband and relatives. One observes that a middle-class woman displays all her luxury in the street or in the theatre where the public, whose judgment is important to her, looks at her and judges her; while the high-born lady dresses modestly for the street, and reserves her elegant attire for the drawing room or the dining room, where she finds the public whose approbation she desires. A jewel or a beautiful dress is to a woman what a cross is to a chevalier, or a medal to a soldier; they represent her rank. The fact that dress represents so much to a woman explains how she will often steal or commit other crimes in order to possess an ornament or a beautiful garment.

Women attach enormous importance to the judgment of others. This sentiment, improperly called *amour propre*, often induces them to risk personal injury rather than expose themselves to the disapprobation, the sarcasm or the compassion of others. This is the reason for the greater number of infanticides and of many other crimes such as the murder of a lover who abandons or betrays his sweetheart. A woman never kills the husband who betrays or abandons her, but she frequently murders the lover who does so, because the last offends her *amour propre*, and the first offends only her love.

J. BARFIELD ADAMS.

Attempted Suicide among Soldiers [Il Tentato Suicidio nei Militari].
(*Arch. di Antropol. Crim. Psich. e Med. Leg.*, Sept.-Dec., 1917.)
Lattes, L.

It has been observed that the method of suicide generally adopted by men is by fire-arms, that by hanging being the next favourite, while drowning and poison, methods usually preferred by women, are more rarely employed. The 60 cases of attempted suicide among soldiers studied by the writer gave the following results: drowning 15, poison 14, precipitation from a height 11, hanging 9, with cutting weapons 6, with fire-arms 4, suffocation 1.

It may appear strange that soldiers, who are provided with fire-arms, should so rarely make use of them. But the writer points out that a civilian usually attempts to kill himself with a revolver, while a soldier has only at his disposal a rifle, which is not altogether a convenient weapon for self-destruction, especially when it is necessary to elude the observation of numerous comrades. Further, the majority of suicides among soldiers are attempted by men who have already exhibited signs of mental disturbance, are under observation, and have been deprived of dangerous weapons. This latter reason probably accounts for the frequency of such methods as precipitation from a height and drowning, which do not require any instruments, and are easy to accomplish unexpectedly when surveillance has been eluded.

The large percentage of cases of drowning might give rise to the suspicion that some of these attempts were simulated suicides. Drowning is a method which permits the shamming of the intention of committing suicide with the least risk and the least pain. But the writer is of the opinion that the cases under his observation were genuine attempts.

The attempt of suicide was always the prescient manifestation of a permanent or transitory state of depression or delirium. It was attempted without motive, and was the manifestation of automatism in a state of cloudy consciousness. This was verified constantly in cases of hanging, suffocation, precipitation from a height, or the use of fire-arms—modes of self-destruction which do not give rise to the suspicion of simulation. In some cases of drowning and of poisoning there was melancholic depression with a permanent tendency to suicide.

In other cases of all methods one did not meet with permanent psychical symptoms suggesting suicide, although one could not admit mental integrity. These patients were degenerates with a bad heredity, morally insensible, inamenable to discipline, pathologically impulsive, and a prey to passionate crises. In these cases the act had not the deliberate aim of freeing the man from the weight of life. It was the result of impulse—a reaction against provocation, annoyance or fear. Often the attempt was made after a simple reprimand or punishment, or immediately after a man joined his regiment or arrived at the front. Sometimes it was because a man did not obtain a desired reward or a convalescent leave of absence. In one case the cause was a quarrel with a comrade; in two, amorous impulses (one being a case of homosexuality); in one, an unjust imputation of theft; in another a deserter attempted to commit suicide on the arrival of the *carabinieri* to arrest him.

Dr. Lattes' paper includes detailed reports of the sixty cases, which, though very condensed, are remarkably clear pictures of the mental condition of each patient. A few of the cases give rise to suspicions of simulation and malingering, but the majority were evidently genuine attempts at suicide.

J. BARFIELD ADAMS.

2. Ætiology.

Syphilis as an Ætiological Factor in Epilepsy. (*Journ. Missouri State Med. Soc., November, 1919.*) Booth, D. S.

The author prefaces his thesis by defining epilepsy on the basis of entity, though calling attention to the fact that it is but a syndrome resulting from many and various conditions, some known and discoverable by a thorough and complete clinical and laboratory examination, others unknown and not discoverable even *post-mortem* by any means yet known—so-called idiopathic epilepsy.

The author recalls that there is a variation between different observers as to the frequency of syphilis as an ætiological factor in epilepsy, at least to the degree that it is the sole cause—which is often difficult, and at times impossible, to demonstrate. Though generally recognised that epilepsy may be caused by various tangible syphilitic demonstrations, most authors do not mention the possibility of syphilis causing a "basic impairment of the germ-plasm" without pathological findings; however, it appears evident that there must be a peculiar condition of the nervous system, inherited or acquired, that enables an irritant, whether toxic or otherwise, to produce stereotyped attacks in certain individuals and not in all having a similar exciting factor.

Most text-books merely refer to syphilis as one of the causes of epileptic attacks without any reference as to its frequency or the manner in which it acts.

Available statistics give syphilis as infrequent in epileptics—from 5 to 14 *per cent.*—while reports of most serologists give a small percentage of positive Wassermann reactions in both the blood and spinal fluid, with variable and inconstant findings in the latter as to pressure, pleocytosis and globulin content, though frequently there is a considerable deviation from the normal reaction of the Lange colloidal gold test.

If it be possible for syphilis to be present in an epileptic without giving any diagnostic evidence, it may be argued that the disease should at any rate respond to antiluetic treatment, which is untenable, since a disease or condition is not necessarily cured by treatment directed to the cause; hence the fact that symptoms, presumably due to a frank syphilis, do not recover after all clinical and serological evidence of syphilis has disappeared, does not necessarily argue against a syphilitic origin.

Another source of error arises from depending too much upon the laboratory findings and too little upon the findings of a critical clinical examination.

Though some of the author's cases of epilepsy have shown only a two-plus Wassermann and a few but a one-plus reaction, he is treating them as though specific in origin with encouraging results, though it is