

The development of the Laboratory by very considerable additions to its funds is very desirable, and the practical wisdom which has hitherto guided the treatment of insanity in Scotland will no doubt lead to their being rapidly augmented.

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*Psychology—Normal and Morbid.*

We are well pleased to be able to state that Dr. Mercier's forthcoming work is now in the hands of the printers. It has been an open secret that his work for some years past has been nearing completion, and that it has at length assumed definite shape. The germ of Dr. Mercier's thesis has been already made known to us in his earlier writings, and now he is to produce the results of his matured thought and experience. The book is primarily intended as an introduction to the study of insanity, and under the title of *Psychology, Normal and Morbid*, it will constitute a general survey of mental processes with special reference to their bearing upon *Conduct*. The processes of reasoning, usually omitted from psychological works, are dealt with in considerable detail, this part of the book being practically a *New Logic*. Belief, with its morbid variant, Delusion; Truth; the theory of Probability which is extended from the domain of psychology; Will and Desire, in their normal and morbid manifestations; the significance of Pleasure and Pain; and the obscure region of Self-Consciousness are all dealt with from a new point of view, which permits of new conclusions being reached. Dr. Mercier's reputation as a psychologist drew a very large audience to the Royal Institution in May, when he delivered a lecture on Memory. No doubt that is promise of a still larger circle of readers intent to learn and to debate what is soon to be set forth in the systematic style above indicated.

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*The Treatment of Criminals.*

We have reprinted an address lately given to the Society of Comparative Legislation by Mr. Crackenthorpe, K.C., convinced that it will be of interest to our readers. The Lord Chief

Justice stated that he noted a great change as to ideas as to prison treatment during the last few years, and never was the readiness to seek light from all quarters more marked than at present. It is remarkable that the discussion did not deal with responsibility and insanity, a question so often raised in connection with the treatment of criminals. The time is at hand when the present rule must be changed; the inequalities in administration resulting from the judge's answer in the McNaughten case are yearly becoming less marked, and should be swept aside by an authoritative reconsideration of the law in the light of later knowledge.

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*Assault on a Lunacy Commissioner.*

The serious assault on Mr. Urmson, the Commissioner in Lunacy (from the effects of which we hope he has now thoroughly recovered), draws attention again to the dangers which beset those engaged in the supervision of the insane. The casualty list amongst medical superintendents quite recently has included our President-elect Dr. Wiglesworth, Dr. Moody, and many other well-known specialists; and in addition numerous attempts or hair-breadth escapes have passed without notice or record: they are in the day's work and nothing has been said of them.

The dangers thus incurred are borne willingly as a necessary price paid for the advantages in treatment in freeing the patients from restraint, and little is said of such occurrences from fear that they might be used as an argument by retrogressives; yet it is to be desired that some unobtrusive record could be made of these casualties for reference when questions arise of pay and pensions.

A certain amount of danger is unavoidable, but it is a point worthy of consideration whether the special risk which the Commissioners incur on counting the patients at their asylum inspections is not both avoidable and unnecessary. The Commissioner thus engaged has his attention largely occupied, and in this state is exposed to every lunatic who has a hatred of the authority that detains him or is liable to entertain delusions against a man who is apparently making notes against him in a book.