

41—first admissions by 22, re-admissions by 18. There are, therefore, no grounds for believing that there is any rapid increase of insanity in Ireland. The recovery-rate has been falling during the past ten years. The death-rate remains practically stationary. Deaths from phthisis constitute 28·8 *per cent.* of the total mortality, those from general paralysis 3·8 *per cent.* Cases of mania (except acute cases) largely preponderate over those of melancholia. The proportion of senile cases continues to increase.

In the course of the past year a special Report on the increase of insanity during the ten years ending December 31st, 1903, was called for from the medical superintendents of all the district asylums. A general report on the subject based on these individual Reports will shortly be issued by the inspectors. We await its publication with interest.

Tics. By Dr. HENRY MEIGE. Paris : Masson, 1905. Pp. 39, large 8vo. Price fr. 1. 25.

In this little volume of the *Monographies Cliniques sur les Questions Nouvelles en Médecine, en Chirurgie, en Biologie*, Dr. Meige presents a clear and methodical statement of a subject with various aspects of which he has often dealt before. What in France is called the "tic" is in England frequently called the "habit spasm." The author insists that it is important to distinguish it from other conditions to which it has a superficial resemblance. He wishes to reserve the name "spasm" for the result of the irritation of one end of a reflex arc, a simple reflex in which the cortical centres take no part. On the other hand, it is necessary to exclude those habitual stereotyped gestures like wrinkling the forehead or twisting the moustache. The tic as thus bounded may be defined as an act, originally directed by an external cause or by an idea and co-ordinated to an end, which by repetition becomes habitual, and is finally reproduced involuntarily, without cause and without aim, with exaggeration of form, intensity, and frequency.

The intimate connection between the tic and abnormal mental states has long been recognised. Charcot stated this very emphatically, and Brissaud declares that every person with a tic presents a special mental condition of eccentricity. Meige considers that while imitation, mental work, (mental laziness also), and especially bad education, may all have a considerable influence, the part played by neuropathic and psychopathic heredity is capital. But the tic is accompanied by no uniform mental state. A lack of harmony in the working of the mental faculties seems most prominent, and there is a certain versatility and instability, a notable imperfection of will. Meige (whose studies of infantilism are well known) considers that persons thus affected show numerous stigmata of mental infantilism. The resemblance of the tic to the obsession is obvious, and there is a real relationship between the two phenomena, which may be found co-existing in members of the same family and sometimes in the same individual.

All the leading varieties of tic are considered in succession, those affecting the muscles of the eyelid taking precedence. As regards

treatment, the author finds that drugs, electricity, and massage are all alike unable to confer any real or permanent benefit, the only methods of treatment likely to prove efficacious being those founded on the methodical regularisation of psychomotor acts, such as rational systems of gymnastics. The little monograph will be found a compact and useful summary of the subject.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

Christianity and Sex Problems. By HUGH NORTHCOTE, M.A.
Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Co. (London: Medical Supply Association), 1906, pp. 257.

Although many books have been published during recent years on the problems of sex, both from the scientific and the popular side, there was certainly room for the book which Mr. Northcote here presents to us. The author writes as a clergyman, not as a scientific man (though his book is issued from a well-known medical publishing house), but he succeeds in avoiding altogether the narrow and dogmatic tone which is usually thought necessary by those who discuss these problems from the standpoint of religion and morality. His work thus stands on quite a different level from the ignorant and foolish pamphlets on sex questions which are nowadays scattered broadcast over the land. But though not himself a physician, Mr. Northcote is in touch with the most recent scientific literature of his subject; he not only has the scientific temper, but during a long residence in distant lands, especially New Zealand, he has made many useful observations; his book may thus be read with interest and instruction even by the scientific student of sex.

It is, however, the reasonable, temperate, and humane tone of this book which leaves the most abiding impression on the reader. The author has no fads to air. His conclusions on most points seem to be fairly orthodox and conservative. But he always recognises the difficulties, and discusses them fairly and squarely. In dealing, for instance, with the question of chastity outside marriage he protests against the attitude of those religious writers who profess to ignore the sufferings and risks that are frequently entailed. He never adopts the tone of authority, but while occupying a broadly Christian standpoint, he believes, with Aquinas, whom he frequently quotes, that the conclusions of theology cannot be at variance with those of reason.

The author discusses, in order, most of the sexual questions which the average individual encounters in the course of life. A wise chapter is devoted to sexuality in childhood. With most writers on the subject, he believes that the growing boy ought to receive a certain amount of instruction and warning as regards the facts of the sexual life; in view of the frequent diffidence of parents in speaking to their children on these matters, he considers that the task can be most fittingly entrusted to the family physician. If a headmaster or chaplain speaks separately to boys at school on these points, the lecture soon becomes a mere matter of routine and of joking to the boys, who compare notes. On the ground of his own experience and observation, the author attaches little value to the co-education of the sexes, and thinks that, as usually