

during the middle ages, and even into the beginning of the nineteenth century.

That this horrible idea should still flourish in the scene of Christ's teachings twenty centuries later is one of the most grotesquely ironical facts that can be conceived.

The picture of an almost nude lunatic chained for forty days and nights (the period of Christ's temptation?) to the altar of an "orthodox" Christian church is one that should bring a blush of shame to every believer in Christianity, and should stir up an indignant desire to overcome such an anachronistic and antichristian anomaly.

Mahommedans treated insanity, as mentioned in our last issue, in connection with their hospitals, recognising it as disease, and the first hospitals for the insane in Europe were those established in Spain,—due, no doubt, to the influence of Moorish ideas and examples. If the above-mentioned fact were sufficiently widely known, there is little doubt that an effort would be made to remove this reproach from the Christian Mecca.

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*Another Messiah.*

The latest claimant to Messianic dignity is Mr. Piggott, of Clapton, who has been associated with a body known as the Agapemonites, and some members of that body have accepted him in this aspect.

The Clapton public, however, appears to have taken the matter very seriously and excitably, with the result that the new Messiah has received very extensive advertisement in the daily papers. This is to be regretted, since it is exactly what would best further the aims of designing imposition, and would be unkind if it were mere lunacy.

That the press and the public are not better informed of the frequency of the Messianic delusion is also a matter for regret. If the statistics of the number of persons now in our asylums who labour under this special delusion could be publicly announced, it is possible that the appearance of one more claimant would be received with greater equanimity, and lead neither to local commotions nor sensational paragraphs.

The treatment of these unfortunates prior to their qualifying

for admission to asylums should consist in avoidance of anything that could be construed into persecution, whilst their weak-minded dupes should be exposed to nothing more serious than kindly ridicule. This attitude would probably be more easily adopted if the commonness of the delusion in this and all Christian countries was more widely known. It would be therefore of real utility if some *amicus curiæ* would collect and publish the necessary statistics.

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## Part II.—Reviews.

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*Lehrbuch der Nervenkrankheiten für Aerzte und Studierende* [Text-book of Nervous Diseases for Practitioners and Students]. By Prof. Dr. H. OPPENHEIM. 3rd edition, improved and enlarged. Berlin, 1902, S. Karger. Pp. xii, 1220.

The third edition of Prof. Oppenheim's well-known and excellent text-book of nervous diseases requires no lengthy notice. It is considerably enlarged, and the number of the illustrations has been increased from 287 to 369, but the arrangement and general principle of the work remain the same as in former editions, the author rightly considering that the favourable reception accorded to these indicates that in essentials his plan and methods are correct. His efforts, therefore, are still directed to rendering the work practically useful, and for this reason most attention is given to symptomatology, diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment; pathological anatomy being only described so far as it throws light on one or other of these subjects. Many will regret, however, that in order to economise space, he still refrains from giving any bibliography.

The book opens with a short introductory part on methods of examination and general symptomatology. In speaking of vaso-motor disturbances the author maintains the existence of a cortical vaso-motor centre in the motor region, both on experimental and clinical grounds; and to account for trophic disorders he advances the theory that diseases of the spinal cord which interrupt the passage of stimuli from the spinal ganglia lead to an accumulation of stimuli in the cells of these ganglia, and so to a pathological increase in peripheral nutritive processes; while affections of the peripheral nerves which impair but do not altogether interrupt their continuity set up conditions of irritation which, extending to the trophic centre, alter its function so as to cause nutritional disorders in the corresponding peripheral area.

The special part, forming the bulk of the book, deals in order with diseases of the spinal cord, peripheral nerves, brain, the neuroses,