

criminal act it is of course impossible to say. Such a result is, however, one which must be held in view, for the diagnosis is a most unfavourable one, and cure can hardly be anticipated, masked epilepsy generally implying a more advanced condition of degeneration than that which is necessary for the production of ordinary epilepsy; the case of H. S., in addition, is highly significant of serious and irreparable brain disease.

French Maisons de Santé.

In the "Journal of Mental Science" for April, 1863, in the *Occasional Notes of the Quarter* ("English Patients in Foreign Asylums,") we thus referred to a use made of the French *Maisons de Santé* by the Imperial Government:—*That the present French government, in their wild, hopeless efforts to suppress freedom of thought in the most intellectual nation in Europe, occasionally send noisy, political adversaries for temporary treatment in the Bicêtre, has been stated to us on undoubted authority.*

In our number for July 1869 we further noticed this point in another *Occasional Note* on an article in "The Cornhill" entitled *French Maisons de Santé*, where the personal experience of the author confirmed our previous statement. Our distinguished honorary member, M. Brierre de Boismont, favoured us with a letter in reply to this *Occasional Note*, of which we published a translation in the subsequent number of this Journal (October, 1869).

M. Brierre de Boismont says in this letter:—

I have just read in the July number of the *Journal of Mental Science* a passage which has much pained me. This is the beginning and the end of it: "One finds in history that it was in the time of Napoleon I. that *Maisons de Santé* first played an important part in the government as private state prisons Under the Bourbons, up to 1830, it was the turn of the Bonapartists to fill the *Maisons de Santé*; under Louis Philippe, the Republicans and the Legitimists were more or less shut up in them, and since the establishment of the second Empire it has been towards the persecution of political writers in country newspapers, or of too free-thinking students that *Maisons de Santé* have been directed." I have followed up with great care the complaints made by newspaper writers as to arbitrary detentions, but I do not know of a single decision which has gone against the director of any asylum, public or private, for this cause. The Chamber of Deputies contains energetic

opponents of the powers that be, who have not hesitated to say openly before the house, that the 2nd of December was a crime, and they would not have shrunk from bringing before public opinion the detention of a man for political reasons in a *Maison de Santé*. Lastly, three months ago, in the assembly of *Legislation comparée*, composed of magistrates and lawyers, I begged to be informed of a single conviction of an asylum physician for such a thing, and no one could give an instance.

Our reply to M. Brierre de Boismont appended to the translation of his letter was as follows:—

We gladly publish M. Brierre de Boismont's explanatory letter. The facts he refutes were quoted, as will be seen by reference to the "Occasional Note" in question, from a curious paper in the "Cornhill Magazine" for June. We must, however, adhere to our statement (which M. Brierre de Boismont leaves unnoticed, except by implication) that we have been informed on undoubted authority, such as M. Brierre de Boismont could not question, that the second Empire—as did the first, according to the writer in the "Cornhill"—frequently sends noisy political adversaries for temporary treatment in the Bicêtre. Difficulties have arisen, as he can easily inform himself, with the physicians of that asylum and the Minister of the Interior on this very question.

In the *Papiers et Correspondance de la Famille Imperial; Pièces saisies aux Tuileries*, (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1870) M. Brierre de Boismont will find further confirmation of our assertion. "Nos. 10 and 11," says the *Times*,* "relate to the imprisonment of Sandon, the advocate, in a lunatic asylum. An editor's note says, 'Every one will remember the scandal caused by the Sandon affair. *Lettres de cachets* were revived, and the madhouses were turned into so many Bastilles.' Sandon's petition (No. 11) states that a Minister responsible to the Emperor alone had caused him to be arrested 17 times, and had confined him at Charenton 20 months; that an irresponsible Senator had libelled him and been the cause of his mother's death. He has lost mother, fortune, and honour, and calls on the Emperor, and the Emperor alone, to do him justice. The petition is in an imperative tone, as though the writer knew that his oppressors dare not disregard it; and so it seems, for Persigny writes to Conti (No. 10):—'This is a grave affair, which it is of the utmost importance to hush up. M. Billault's conduct is unheard of. The man who has been the

* The Imperial Correspondence, "Times," October 25, 1870.

victim is on the point of falling into the hands of the factions. We may have a frightful scandal. It seems that with twenty or thirty thousand francs, which M. Conneau would see about, everything might be arranged. Besides this there has been a great wrong, which it is necessary to repair. *Mille compliments.* PERSIGNY.'"

Fractured Ribs in Insane Patients.

In addition to Dr. Hearder's paper on this subject, and to the article by Dr. Ormerod, which is reprinted from the "St. Bartholomew Hospital Reports," we may direct attention to a contribution to the "Liverpool Medical and Surgical Reports," vol. iv., by Dr. Rogers, the medical superintendent of the Rainhill Asylum.

Dr. Rogers has availed himself of the assistance of Dr. Campbell Brown, the lecturer on chemistry and toxicology at the Liverpool School of Medicine, to obtain a chemical analysis of the ribs of general paralytics. The result went to prove—

That the ratio of Organic constituents to Earthy matter is much greater, while the ratio of lime to phosphoric acid is distinctly less, in the ribs of paralytics than in those of healthy adults. There are the same differences between the composition of healthy ribs and those of paralytics as between the composition of the adult large bones and those of the fetus. And, generally, the composition in cases of paralysis approaches that observed in cases of osteo-malacia.

The result of the analysis is, as Dr. Rogers remarks, suggestive rather than conclusive, but it is to be hoped that it will lead to further enquiries in the same direction.

The question has been asked me—Why do these cases of fractured ribs never occur in General Hospitals? It is not difficult to answer. Patients in General Hospitals know that they are ill and weak, and take care of themselves accordingly; if by any chance they meet with an accident, they can describe it; if they are unruly or quarrelsome they are turned out; but patients in Asylums seldom realise how ill and weak they are, and therefore do not take care of themselves; their sensibility to pain is generally deadened, and therefore they do not complain; and the weakest and most exhausted are often the most quarrelsome.

But taking into consideration the number of lunatics who are