

its own interests against the criminal, to use every measure for the prophylaxis of crime."

A glance at Dr. Morel's statistics shows not only that delinquency is most frequent between the ages of eighteen and thirty years, but also that the majority of the criminals examined by him had got little or no primary instruction, that more than half of them were of alcoholic parentage, that more than half were themselves addicted to alcoholic excesses, that more than a third were the children of criminal parents, that a quarter of them had degenerative taint, hereditary or acquired, and, lastly, that amongst the 10 to 22 *per cent.* who were apparently free from hereditary taint, a large number were vitiated by injurious conditions of life (*e. g.*, in reformatories), diseases in childhood, such as typhoid fever, etc.

It follows, therefore, according to Dr. Morel, that the treatment of the degenerate, the future candidates for crime, should begin in their youth. He formulates these conclusions :

1. As a measure of social hygiene, the authorities should supervise backward children and children living in corrupt environments, in order to withdraw them from the control of their parents and remove them to healthy and honest surroundings.

2. In the case of backward or degenerate subjects who, through the irregularity or eccentricity of their conduct, come under the notice of the authorities, an administrative report should be made, and if required, a medico-psychological examination, the result of which should be communicated to the administrative and, if necessary, to the judicial authorities.

3. In case of necessity, in the interests both of society and of the backward and degenerate individuals themselves, they should be sent to a medico-pedagogic institution fulfilling all the conditions which can contribute to the regeneration of those presenting unquestionable signs of degeneracy.

4. Parents whose children, by their conduct or intelligence, inspire fears for the future, should have the right to ask for their committal to a medico-pedagogic institution, or to some special asylum until they have attained an age to be subsequently determined.

5. The motive of retaliation, being inapplicable in the case of the degenerate, should be replaced by the idea of reformation and education. The penal responsibility of degenerates being suppressed, they will be committed to the care of the State for an indefinite period.

It is obvious from Dr. Morel's statistics that the recognition of the right of detaining juvenile criminals until they can be regarded as *seriously* qualified to fill a useful place in society, would in a few years reduce crime to a half or even a quarter of its present amount.

DENMARK.

By Dr. A. FRIIS.

During the past year there has been a change in the directorship at three of the State Asylums. Dr. Helweg at Oringe died, and Dr. Pontoppidan at Aarhus was appointed to the University of Copen

XLVIII.

9

hagen as Professor of Medical Jurisprudence and Hygiene. At Aarhus, Dr. Pontoppidan was succeeded by Dr. Hallager, Director of the Viborg Asylum; and Dr. Helweg by Dr. Willerup, his former medical assistant.

No steps have been taken, either by building new asylums or enlarging old ones, to meet the demands for more accommodation, and the directors have to refuse patients they ought to admit. It is especially accommodation for incurable patients which is wanted, and admissions are refused by hundreds for asylum treatment of this class of patient, the claims increasing year by year. In a former number of this JOURNAL (1898), I mentioned the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the question of accommodation, and in its report it stated that the only practicable way of dealing with the difficulty was an enlargement of the Viborg Asylum and its adaptation for receiving both recent and chronic cases, its present population being restricted to the latter. With reference to this proposal, a bill was promoted in Parliament, but did not pass. Dr. Pontoppidan, who was not a member of the said Commission, in a paper entitled "Considerations on the Care of Lunatics," amongst other reforms suggests a different way of relieving this pressure. He maintains that the State Asylums, except Viborg, are planned as asylums for recent cases, and therefore ought to continue as such, and not be encumbered with incurable patients. The latter class can be well housed in cheaper institutions—workhouses and agricultural colonies. He advocates the boarding out in private families, and special asylums for epileptics—the whole to be under Government supervision. This paper was published quite recently, and it is sure to have a great influence on the legislation of the future. Dr. Pontoppidan lays stress on the recent cases as claiming greater care and treatment.

This year Parliament has enacted that the maintenance of epileptics at public expense is not to be considered as parish relief, nor is this the case with lunatics and the feeble-minded. This will enable many to be admitted hitherto uncared for.

As regards imbeciles, there has been no change this year. The Keller asylums in Jutland have been finished and are in use.

At the meeting of the Danish Association of Criminalists in Copenhagen (September, 1900), the care of criminal lunatics was discussed. Dr. Pontoppidan read a paper on the subject from the alienist side. He doubted very much, in a little country like Denmark, the need for special asylums, and his views were shared by Director Lange, Middelfart; while Dr. Geill, physician to the Copenhagen prisons, and Director Helweg, Oringe, were of the opinion that special establishments ought to be provided, either connected with a prison or with an asylum. It transpired during the discussion that in all the Danish asylums there were only about one hundred criminal lunatics under treatment.

The year under review has been rich in psychological literature. Dr. Friedenreich has published a text-book on psychiatry; Dr. Pontoppidan has brought out his experiences while medical superintendent; Dr. Tryde has written on *Insanity and Guilt and the Danish Tribunal*; and Dr. Würtzen *Personal Responsibility (Psychological and Criminal)*.