

GERMANY.

By Dr. J. BRESLER.

The last year has borne some good fruit for our speciality. After all the hostility and all the calumnies which German alienists have had to endure from all sides in recent times, and which no repulse or refutation seemed to check, their services have at last received an acknowledgment from an authoritative quarter, and from a person whose experience cannot be controverted in lunacy matters. The 30th of March, 1898, on which Count Posadowsky broke a lance in defence of our speciality in the German Parliament, should be a memorable day in the chronicles of psychiatry in the empire. A member, Dr. Kruse, asked the Secretary whether the Government were aware of any facts in proof of the charges which had been uttered in Parliament against the administration of the asylums. Posadowsky replied: "No facts have come to the knowledge of the Imperial Chancellor showing that the accusations made in this honourable house against a large body of physicians are justified, and I am glad to have this opportunity of bearing testimony in favour of this section of the medical profession. In my former official capacity (as Lord-lieutenant of the province of Posen) I often came into close contact with physicians practising in this speciality who were attached to the asylums in my department. I have become acquainted with the greater number of the asylums throughout the various portions of Germany, and have come to know a great number of alienists. I can only say that these men devote themselves to their duties in the highest spirit of self-sacrifice and amidst difficulties which can hardly be conceived. He who from his own knowledge never learned the working of a great asylum and experienced the difficult task which the alienist has in such a situation, can scarcely fancy how large a measure is needed of self-command, of self-devotion, of self-renunciation; or what a measure of love of one's kind if a man is to faithfully fulfil such an employment. When it has been said here in the open meeting of this house, that the alienist is often 'nervous,' he who understands these officers' lives can hardly wonder if that condition should arise as a consequence of their work. The man who has studied the literature of lunacy, or has scientifically explored that subject, must know that all the improvements which have been effected in the treatment of lunacy have been effected, not through pressure from the laity, but in consequence of the humane sentiments of alienists. To alienists are due all the humane modern improvements in practical psychiatry, such as the treatment of lunatics as sick persons (patients) and not as criminals, as persons suffering from a somatic affection and not merely as individuals to be shut up in barracks; the system of family care (boarding out); and the method of giving all patients the utmost possible personal liberty, and of only isolating them from other patients in transitory conditions of irritation. It is incontestable that in an asylum containing 600 or even 1000 lunatics and a great staff of attendants, persons usually of the uncultivated class, acts of violence and roughness must occasionally take place. But the alienist cannot be

responsible for these. He can only be blamed when the offending official is not subjected to disciplinary punishment, such as summary dismissal. I am in a position to say, from my own experience, that alienists are men devoted to humane ideas, and that sometimes their opinion of the claims of humanity in the treatment of the insane go so far that a layman feels that perhaps the safety of the other patients or of the staff may be thus endangered. I am glad that Dr. Kruse has touched upon this matter so that I can testify in favour of this very honourable branch of the medical profession."

A friendly report has been presented to the Saxon Parliament by a committee appointed on a motion for the Improvement of the Lunacy Law. After a very long statement come these words:—"From all this it is evident that in Saxony the care of the insane in asylums is provided for in the most minute detail. There is an entire absence of the least evidence to justify the charges of illegal detention, of recovery followed by several years' prolongation of confinement, and so forth, which have caused public alarm."

Some time later, when the accusations brought against a private asylum in the Saxon Parliament had been proved to be pure inventions, the minister, von Metzsch, took occasion to say that he felt compelled to state that the Government had every reason to be satisfied with the work done by the asylum physicians, who have to carry out the most difficult task that can be imagined.

From various quarters in the course of the past year, announcement was made of the establishment of new and the enlargement of old asylums. A new asylum is about to be built in the Grand Duchy of Mecklenberg-Strehlitz, for 180 patients, at a cost of £36,000. Bremen is also building a new asylum on a property of 267 acres. A psychiatric clinic is being built at Kiel, and the clinic at Halle a. S. is being enlarged. In Saxony a new asylum is being built at Löbau for 600 patients, costing £160,900, and an asylum for epileptics at Hochweitzschen. Pomerania is building a new asylum at Treptow; in Berlin a third asylum is under consideration.

The principal prisons continue the work of providing wards for criminals who become insane.

In Saxony and Westphalia the salaries of the attendants have been increased.

The Prussian Government continues to enforce psychiatric instruction for public medical officers.

Scientific psychiatry in the year 1898 ran along the usual lines, taking no new direction. No important influence was exercised upon practical lunacy work.

The *study of the nerve cell* remained the focus of the endeavours of investigators. A report of the result of these studies (as well as of their own investigations) is given by Goldscheider and Flatau in their book, *Normal and Pathological Anatomy of the Nerve Cell*, Berlin, 1898.

Mention should not be omitted of a very important literary effort produced during the last year, the *Annual Report of Neurology and Psychiatry*, edited by Mendel, Jacobson, and Flatau, containing a complete review of these branches. The first volume, reviewing 1897, contains about 1500 pages, the second, for 1898, is in course of preparation.

The lamented loss of two eminent alienists is to be recorded, Dr. Jean Paul Hasse, Director of the Brunswick Asylum at Königsutter, who died on the 6th of February, 1898, and Dr. Ferdinand Wahrendorff, who died on the 21st of March, 1898. Hasse was Director of the Königsutter Asylum from the time of its establishment in 1865 until 1896. The success of the institution was the task of his life, and he fulfilled it. Wahrendorff was the founder and the director of a private asylum at Ilten, where he was the first in Germany to establish and carry out the system of domestic care (boarding out).

BELGIAN RETROSPECT.

By Dr. JULES MOREL.

Psychical Hallucinations, by Professor X. FRANCOLTE. While Baillarger believed that in psychical hallucinations the patient thought that his communications come from outside of himself, but without any palpable medium, and Léghes that they are verbal psycho-motor hallucinations, Dr. Francotte believes that they are really delirious interpretations. In any hallucinations there are two elements; the real hallucinatory element being an image with all the characters of an external one, and the delirious element being composed of the external parts of the hallucinatory image. This second element is absent in the usual hallucinations. Now in the phenomena of the psychical hallucination nothing proves the existence of the hallucinatory element; the delirious element, the false interpretation only exists. There is an analogy between the phenomenon in which the subject pretends that movements, words, or thoughts are imposed from outside, and the phenomenon in which the patient pretends that he is hindered in his movements, words, or thoughts. In these latter there is only a delirious interpretation. Dr. Francotte mentions a case which had no falsely interpreted verbal psycho-motor phenomenon, proving thereby that only a psychical hallucination of a real verbal nature was present. In psychical visions, according to Francotte, the patient thinks he sees more or less distinctly one or more objects external to him; consequently this is a delirious interpretation. In the category of delirious interpretations there can be included a class of "objectivation or delirious exteriorisation of internal phenomena," which can be divided into two groups: first, delirious objectivation of physiological phenomena, as, for instance, in the case in which menstruation was abolished for six months by the influence of her persecutors; second, delirious objectivation of psychical phenomena, which (as images, ideas) are falsely imputed to an external influence. It is to this group that psychical hallucinations belong.

Injection of Artificial Serum in the Insane, by Dr. DE BOECK. Every alienist knows how difficult it is to feed the sitiophobic insane. Dr. de Boeck recommends, on physiological grounds, the injection of a solution of chloride of sodium. These operations are simple, and there