

Medico-legal Report on a Case of Shop-Lifting [Vol à l'étalage, Rapport Médico-légal]. (Bull. de la Soc. de Méd. Ment. de Belg., June, 1911.) Lentz.

The interest of this case lies less in its clinical features, which are of a pretty ordinary kind, than in the fact that, on what seems to have been rather slight evidence of morbid causation, it should have been possible to obtain an acquittal on the ground of mental incapacity. Dr. Lentz's patient, whose age is not stated, was detected in the act of stealing some baby-linen from the counter of a large drapery store. She had been to the shop the previous day and had been noticed to act in a suspicious manner, and on the day of the offence she was consequently kept under surveillance; there was reason to think that she was aware of this fact. About two months previously she had stolen some other things from the same shop, and these articles were found unused in her room. These circumstances, in the opinion of the reporter, are of a kind to suggest that the offence was due to a kleptomaniac impulse. And he finds confirmation of this view in the woman's statement that at the moment of taking the things she had, together with palpitation and other symptoms of emotional excitement, a feeling "as if something was urging her on." The family history showed that several relatives had suffered from tuberculosis or from heart disease, or had been alcoholic, and that many of them had presented indications of rather excessive emotional instability. The patient herself was also considered to have shown all through her life an "ultra-nervous temperament," and this had been expressed recently by a general slackness and an incapacity for sustained exertion which had caused her to lose her employment as a shop assistant. There do not seem to have been any more definite indications of disease, nor does it appear that conscious impulses of a morbid sort had occurred on any previous occasion. On the ground, however, of the personal and family history of nervous instability, and in view of the fact that the woman was menstruating at the time of the offence, Dr. Lentz felt justified in concluding that she did not possess normal power of control over her impulses, especially when over-stimulated by the exciting influences which the mammoth shops of our day supply so plentifully. At the same time Dr. Lentz is prepared to admit that the patient was not wholly unaccountable, and he carries his adhesion to the doctrine of partial responsibility so far that he even gives a mathematical expression to his opinion, and asserts that the patient should be regarded as having a responsibility amounting to one-tenth of the normal. The reporter does not say how he arrived at this remarkably precise estimate. The court acquitted the woman.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

The Care of the Insane in the War Field [Über Krankensinnigenfürsorge im Felde]. (Jahrbucher f. Psych. u. Neurol., xxxiii, No. 3.) Albrecht, O.

Suggestions are made for improvements in the methods of caring for the insane in the Austrian army during war. There is at present no special provision for the treatment of the insane on the battle-field, and

Dr. Albrecht, who is an army surgeon, points out the danger of sudden outbreaks of insanity at such times. He advises that neurotic and weak-minded persons should not be allowed to enter the army. He points out that there is a marked increase of insanity among soldiers when they are engaged in war. In the Franco-German war there was an increase during the first half of the year 1870, and during the two following half years, of '37, '54, and '93 respectively. In the American army, during the Spanish-American war, the numbers rose from '8 to 2'7, and in the English army during the Boer war, from 1'5 to 2'6. In the war between Russia and Japan there was no provision made by the Japanese for the insane, and special arrangements had to be made during war to convey insane soldiers home. The numbers of insane were increased by $1\frac{1}{4}$.

In countries where there is conscription the percentage of insane in the army is said to be small as compared with that of countries where enlistment is voluntary, *e.g.*, in 1902 there was '8 of insane soldiers in the armies of Austria and Prussia, while in Great Britain there was 1'2.

To improve the arrangements of the Austrian army, Dr. Albrecht suggests that a special service of motor cars, with attendants, should be provided for conveying the insane from the battle-field, and that some arrangements should be made to provide accommodation for the insane on the west and south coasts of Austria, as the State asylums are for the most part on the north and east coasts.

He suggests that cases of insanity occurring on the battle-field should be treated with injections of hyoscine and placed in straight jackets.

HAMILTON MARR.

6. Asylum Reports.

Some English County and Borough Asylums.

County of London.—The lunacy under the immediate care of this authority does not show a tendency to advance by leaps and bounds as at one time it threatened to do. In fact, the increase for last year, though still a little larger than in the preceding year, is below the average annual increase for the last twenty years. The same is true of the total lunacy of London, that is, that which is contained by the asylums, is residing at home, in workhouses, and the Metropolitan Asylums Board institutions. The county has nearly overtaken the task of providing sufficient accommodation for its patients, but is prepared with the plans of yet an eleventh asylum. Some of the boards of guardians of parishes north of the Thames asked that this asylum should be built in their neighbourhood, but the committee has decided to occupy the land at Horton already hypothecated for the purpose. So Epsom will have yet another grievance and the accompanying pleasure of a further valuable rating basis.

The mental hospital identified with the generosity of Dr. Maudsley is at last under way, the site having been secured at Denmark Hill. The County propose to appropriate another £40,000 in addition to Dr. Maudsley's donation of £30,000. We feel sure that all of us will