

graphic method. It is hoped that in time a series of systematic and accurate scientific records of the mental state of a number of individuals at successive periods of time will be collected, and valuable scientific results may also be hoped for by the association of these records with the morbid changes found in the brain of such cases as subsequently prove fatal. Some apparatus to equip this department was purchased when the laboratory was founded, and, out of a grant of £50 made by the Committee, further purchases have been made."

#### THE PATHOLOGY OF GENIUS.

In the July number of the *Popular Science Monthly* Mr. Havelock Ellis has an article upon the pathology of genius. Out of 322 cases where he has been able to ascertain accurately, or nearly accurately, the cause of death, lesions of the brain occurred thirty-five times, pulmonary tuberculosis thirty times, and asthma nine times. Gout is mentioned thirty-eight times, and the gouty geniuses were very remarkable, including Milton, Harvey, Sydenham, Newton, Johnson, Savage Landor, W. R. Hamilton, and Darwin. Mr. Havelock Ellis suggests that the gouty man views the world with, as it were, two different brains. When uric acid is circulating in his blood he is gloomy and introspective. When the acid is deposited in his joints his brain becomes abnormally clear. He thus exhibits well-marked mental periodicity. Gout, however, must not be considered the cause of genius, but given a highly endowed organism the gouty poison acts as a stimulus. As for insanity, of 902 eminent persons some 5 per cent. were insane. Epilepsy is mentioned as having occurred in only two cases—Lord Herbert of Chisbury and Sir W. R. Hamilton. Other nervous or neurotic conditions are, however, fairly common. Many men of genius stuttered, many were singularly awkward in performing actions requiring muscular co-ordination, and many were "neurasthenic." In fact, Mr. Havelock Ellis's researches go to show that genius exists in persons highly charged with nervous energy, but that the energy is ill-balanced and not equably distributed throughout the organism.

#### THE CERTIFYING OF THE INSANE.

Consequent upon recent scandals the following circular has been issued from the Home Office to clerks to county and borough justices, stipendiary magistrates, and the metropolitan police magistrates, under date May 31st, 1901:

"I am directed by the Secretary of State to acquaint you that he has had before him cases which have occurred in certain Poor Law unions in which the relieving officers have received payments from the district medical officers and proprietors of licensed houses in connection with the certifying of lunatics and their admission into these houses. Mr. Ritchie feels sure that he may count upon your active assistance to discover and put an end to these reprehensible practices, and with a view to preventing their repetition in the future he thinks it desirable to call the attention of magistrates to several points connected with the certifying of lunatics.

"(1) Section 16 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, which prescribes the steps to be taken when a pauper alleged to be a lunatic, or an alleged lunatic wandering at large, is brought before a justice, directs, amongst other things, that the justice shall call in a medical practitioner, and it is only when this practitioner has signed a medical certificate with regard to the lunatic that an order for his removal to an institution for lunatics can be made. In some cases the relieving officer has, it is found, often selected or influenced the selection of the medical practitioner who should examine the alleged lunatic; but it appears to the Secretary of State that the section requires that on each occasion the justice should himself call in such medical practitioner as he may think fit, and that the relieving officer should in no way be concerned in the selection.

"(2) A justice should not sign the reception order until the medical practitioner has signed the medical certificate. It appears that justices sometimes do not wait until the certificate has been signed by the medical practitioner and the statement of particulars filled in and signed by the relieving officer.