

retiring allowance of the alienist, his wife and children; grants in case of accidents; lowest salary 3,600 marks [£176] per annum, rising to 7,200 marks [£352] in twenty-one years, free lodging for family, with fire, lighting, and garden produce, medicine and medical treatment; for medical superintendents, 6,000 marks, rising to 9,000 marks [£294 to £491] in asylums with 700 or less patients; 9,000 marks to 12,000 marks [£491 to £688] in asylums with more than 700 patients, with the same emoluments). Dr. Birnbaum (Herzberge) read a paper on "Fleeting Delusions in Degenerate Persons."

The Provincial Board of Brandenburg opened a new asylum at Teupitz, near Berlin, for 1,050 patients of the third and fourth class, and for 150 patients of the first and second class. The cost was 6,769,000 marks (£338,450), including accommodation for seventy-six employees and married attendants. The houses for the attendants are arranged so that they can be used for the boarding-out of patients (family care). A description of this asylum, with plans and views, is published in the *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift*, Nos. 40 and 41, vol. x, December, 1908.

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## ITALY

By Dr. LUIGI BARONCINI.

THE scientific activity of Italian alienists is directed more and more as time goes on to neurological subjects. One finds a mass of work in the proceedings of the first Congress of the Society of Neurology, which was held at Naples in the month of April, 1908. The following is a *resumé* of the more interesting papers presented at this Congress:

Mingazzini (Roma) discussed the new theories of Professor Marie on aphasia, and demonstrated that it was impossible to detach the motor speech functions from Broca's convolution, and that the verbo-motor and verbo-acoustic centres are represented in both hemispheres, but greatly predominate in the left. He discussed the association fibres between the different speech centres, and arrived at the conclusion that a lesion of Broca's convolution and one affecting the fibres anterior to the *putamen* (outer third of the lenticular nucleus) produce the same clinical features, both being the outcome of a mechanism almost identical.

Bianchi (Naples) stated the results of his recent experimental researches, in which he stimulated and excised the frontal lobes of monkeys. Electrical stimulation caused movements of the eyes, alteration in the size of the pupils, movements of the ears—phenomena which he accounted for by the presence there of sensory functions. By extensive excision of both frontal lobes, he produced both transitory and permanent defect of cerebral activity, affecting above all the memory, attention, association of ideas, and affectivity. These experiments pointed to the frontal lobes being the association centre for all the sensory images arising in the different centres of the cerebral cortex. He finally showed that certain pathological cases in man support the conclusions arrived at experimentally.

Fragnito (Sassari) spoke of the structure of nerve-cells, with regard to which had already been demonstrated the existence of an endo-cellular network of a nervous nature, and of long fibrils which traverse the cell only, without making any connections with the endo-cellular network. A nerve-cell takes its origin from several neuro-blasts, since the fibrils differentiate themselves in the cell protoplasm relatively late. The endo-cellular network presents a marked resistance to certain injurious agents (in contra-distinction to the chromatic matter) but is very vulnerable to pathological influences.

Rossi (Firenze) read a splendid report on arterio-sclerosis in the nervous system. He believes that hypertension, angio-spasm, and arterio-sclerosis are three different morbid entities. In speaking of the latter, he gave a description of its anatomical changes and pathogenesis, and of experimental arterio-sclerosis, which he concluded was very different to the clinical variety. He spoke also of arterio-sclerosis affecting the endo-cranial vessels, and the anatomo-pathological results and morbid symptoms. Of the latter, he noted two great categories according as to whether mental, or sensory and motor disorders prevailed. Belonging to the former were arterio-sclerotic dementia and arterio-sclerotic progressive pseudo-paralysis. The first of these was identical with senile dementia, which is ordinarily the outcome of arterio-sclerosis. The second category comprised arterio-sclerotic epilepsy, "la syndrome lacunaire" and senile astasia-abasia. Besides cerebral arterio-sclerosis, there was a spinal form with simple and spasmodic paralyses.

De Sanctis (Roma) brought a recent contribution to the study of infantilism. He pointed out that infantilism might be a dystrophy due to functional insufficiency of the glands with internal secretions, such as the thyroid in myxoedematous infantilism. There existed also partial infantilism, among which De Sanctis noted pseudo-infantilism, which ought to be distinguished from puerilism, paroxysmal puerilism and the puerilism of adults.

Ceni (Reggio Emilia), who has for some time interested himself in the functional relationships between the brain and testicles, related the results of his latest researches which were designed to establish the mechanism of the involution of the sexual organs in animals (poulets) which had undergone operations of the brain. The testicles underwent atrophy affecting primarily and principally the glandular elements, the changes in the interstitial tissue being secondary.

Cerletti (Roma) found in the most superficial layer of the cerebral cortex in man and other vertebrates (fixation in alcohol, stained with pironine—*vert de méthyle*), immediately under the pia mater, special elements, "anniles," semilunar or more precisely navicular in form, of a vacuolated structure which he called navicular bodies. They have characters in common with the corpuscles that Cerletti found around the blood-vessels of the brain in man and other vertebrates in both normal and pathological conditions. There is not sufficient evidence to say whether they are different forms of the same element or of a different character entirely. Cerletti brought forward the hypothesis that these navicular bodies might be confounded with certain prolongations of neuroglia which he has noted at the periphery of the cerebral tissue.

Negro and Roasenda (Torino) demonstrated that by the mechanical or electro-faradic excitation of the cerebellum in rabbits, he obtained convulsions of a Jacksonian character, and was justified in concluding that the cerebellum is able to produce epileptiform symptoms identical with those arising from the cerebrum. The motor centres in the cerebellum reacted to electro-faradic stimulation after the excitability of the motor centres in the cerebral cortex had been extinguished by stimulation of the same character. This showed that the motor centres in the cerebellum were independent of those in the cerebrum.

The attention of the great majority of our alienists is being more and more directed to the works of Kraepelin, whose clinical conceptions are being more than ever discussed and adopted, though with some modifications. Many authors have occupied themselves with the study of the ætiology, pathology, and clinical features of dementia præcox and manic-depressive insanity. Vedrani (Lucca) was the first in Italy to diffuse the ideas of Dreyfus on involuntional insanity, which he teaches should be considered as a part of the clinical tableau of manic-depressive insanity. Vedrani brings to the support of Dreyfus many instructive clinical histories.

I ought to say a word regarding the good work done by Guidi (Roma) on the pathogenesis of epilepsy. In investigating organic metabolism in epileptics, he arrived at the conclusion that the nitrogenous exchanges are notably altered above all as regards the formation of the urea. There results an acid intoxication of the organism which is probably due to the accumulation of carbamic acid. The epileptic manifestations are the outcome of this accumulation, which can be demonstrated clinically.

The greater part of the researches in the field of anatomo-pathology has been directed to investigating the alterations in the neuro-fibrillar network of the nerve-cells in experimental and pathological conditions, but no definite results have yet been obtained.

The asylums of Italy are continually improving, and many provinces have built or contemplate building new ones to accommodate their insane who are at present housed in the inter-provincial asylums.

Restraint is on the high road to oblivion. In many asylums it has been restricted to exceptional cases, and in others totally abolished. Ruata (Como) and Petrazzani (Reggio Emilia) have questioned the wisdom of the latter course, and have demanded whether there are not cases in which mechanical restraint is preferable to alternative methods such as baths, seclusion, psycho-therapy and clinico-therapy, etc. Ferrari is much opposed to this.

The training of the nursing staff prescribed by the new lunacy law is bearing excellent fruit. At Imola, a school for this purpose has been founded by Ferrari, and has been well attended by young women of the middle classes. They do not enter the services of the asylum proper as in Holland, though they visit the asylum to assist in the nursing and to comfort and amuse the patients by reading, etc.

Also at Imola there has been founded a *Society of Patronage* to assist the insane poor, which has already some 200 members. They propose

to help the insane before they can be taken to the asylum and after they have been discharged ; to keep in touch with their families and to contribute to a diffusion of a proper knowledge of the causes and effects of insanity, and especially to combat the improper use of alcohol. It is to this society that the honour of having first initiated the practice of family care of the insane in Imola belongs. Ferrari presented at the International Congress on the Care of the Insane, held in Vienna, a report on the relationship between this society and family care. According to Ferrari, family care ought to be undertaken, not by the provincial administrations, but by societies of patronage, encouraged and sustained by them. It would lessen the fear the provincial administrations have of incurring heavy charges without certain good result. Family care has also been commenced at Volterra, and thirty-four insane people are lodged with families in the vicinity of the asylum.

Italian psychiatry during the past year has sustained the loss of two eminent savants : Professor Virgilio, Director of the Asylum of Aversa, who scientifically demonstrated the pathological nature of crime and advocated the institution of special asylums for criminals ; and Dr. Marchi, who will always be remembered by the histological method which bears his name.

There has been founded a new psychiatric review under the direction of Professor D'Abundo, of Catania—*La Rivista Italiana di neuropatologia, psichiatria ed elettroterapia*.

In conclusion I repeat what I said at the commencement, that our alienists during the year under review have worked by preference in the field of neurology, where the progress has been truly satisfactory, while in the province of psychiatry proper work has been much more limited. One notes, however, with pleasure a continual progress as regards the care and treatment of the insane in Italy.

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#### SPAIN.

By W. COROLEU.

During the past year, death has been active in the psychiatric world of Spain. Dr. Dolsa, well known as Director of the Phrenopathic Institute of Barcelona, and Dr. Rodrigo Gonzalez, an accomplished and learned asylum physician, died within a short time of each other. Dr. Dolsa excelled in the legal and forensic aspect of insanity, and was an original and profound scholar. Dr. Gonzalez was chiefly famous as the founder of a practical school for the education of hospital friars and nuns, the first of its kind in Spain, where there is so much need for them. He also wrote a modest work on the *Volitional Insanities*.

The faculties of medicine are beginning to appreciate the need for the study of mental diseases, and in Barcelona, a course of somewhat desultory lectures—but better than nothing—have been started in St. Baudilius Asylum. Unfortunately, the want of professors specially trained, minimises the value of this kind of teaching, which is now confined to the physicians of the asylum. The obstinacy in not creating a chair of psychiatry, and the inclusion of the latter with the