

There is telephonic communication between it and the main building.

The total cost of the building was £17,750, but it should be mentioned in this connection that the administrative central block will not need any extension when the hospital is enlarged, as is contemplated, so as to accommodate fifty more cases.

Stress.—By CHAS. MERCIER, M.B.

IN his paper on "Wages, Lunacy, and Crime in South Wales," Dr. R. S. Stewart asks how such a state of things as he describes is "to be reconciled with the lately expressed opinion that 'insanity is, and ever will be, the product of two factors, stress and heredity?'" These words he puts in quotation marks, but I am unable to trace them to any other source. The doctrine that insanity is a function of two variables, heredity and stress, was first enunciated by me some thirteen years ago, and can scarcely therefore be regarded as a novelty now; but, as it is clear, from Dr. Stewart's question and other remarks that he has a very erroneous notion of the doctrine, and as, moreover, it has been misapprehended and therefore misrepresented by others, perhaps you would allow me space to re-state it; although I think that any one who does me the honour to read it in its original form, as set forth in *Sanity and Insanity*, would scarcely fall into the errors that I have alluded to.

My view is that insanity is a function of the two variables, heredity and stress. That is to say, that its occurrence is due to a certain stress acting on a certain organisation. According as the organisation is stable and firmly compacted, the stress necessary to produce disorder is the greater; and according as the organisation is faulty, the less stress is needed to impair its action. So, the stronger a girder, the more weight will it bear without breaking; the weaker it is, the less force is needed to deflect or sheer. As organisation results from heredity, the two necessary and only factors are heredity and stress.

It is obvious that, in this exposition of the doctrine, the word stress is used with a very wide connotation, to include every

influence that can act upon the highest cerebral regions in such a way as to disorder their mode of working. This extended meaning of the word is emphasised, explained and justified in subsequent chapters, which enumerate and classify all, or the great majority, of the influences alluded to ; all of which, direct, indirect internal, and indirect external, are specifically included and classified under the genus " stress."

According to this scheme, alcohol circulating in the blood is a stress. Cerebral hæmorrhage is a stress. The advent of puberty is a stress. Child-bearing is a stress. Excessive exertion is a stress. Precariousness of employment is a stress. Loss of fortune is a stress. Accession to fortune is a stress. Attendance at a religious " revival " meeting is a stress.

It has happened, unfortunately as I think, that the term " stress," imported from the terminology of engineering into the terminology of psychiatry with a definite and wide meaning attached, has since been adopted and used by other writers in a very different sense, and with a meaning at once less definite and more restricted. It has been used to express the effect of use and of fatigue, as when ataxy is said to be localised in the legs of the postman, or the arms of the hammerman, by " stress." It is apparently used by Dr. Stewart, in the article which has elicited this protest, to mean " distress." I submit that it is inconvenient and unfortunate that a word, imported with a definite and specific meaning into a branch of science in which it has not been used before, should be appropriated, in that branch, to meanings inconsistent with the meaning originally attached to it. As long as we think in words ; as long as we use words for the purpose of communicating with each other ; so long it is of the very utmost importance that the words that we use should carry the same meaning, both to ourselves at all times, and to others ; so long it is most desirable that each word should be restricted to one definite, specific, precise meaning.

I have no patent for this particular word. I have no bigotted attachment for the use to which I put it on its importation into our specialty. If it is undesirable so to use it, no doubt another can be found for that use ; but I desire to raise a respectful protest against the practice of using in a new sense, without notice that it is so used, a word which is already current and stamped with a specific value. It would be incon-

venient if some people called that coin a shilling which other people call half-a-crown.

Taking the word "stress" in its original sense, Dr. Stewart's question, which elicited this communication, admits of a ready answer. He asks why a rising wage-rate, diminished labour, and increase of leisure are associated with increase of drunkenness, crime, and lunacy; and how such a state of things is to be reconciled with the "lately expressed" opinion that insanity is the product of the two factors, stress and heredity. If we take the term "stress" as Dr. Stewart appears to take it, to mean "distress," then of course the state of things that he describes cannot be reconciled with the doctrine. But if we take "stress" to mean what it was defined to mean in the statement of the doctrine, the difficulty disappears. I am not a Glamorganshire miner, nor am I familiar with the habits of that class of workers; but I gather from Dr. Stewart's statement that they resemble the miners of other districts in the fact that when they have more to spend, they spend more; and that a considerable proportion of the increase is spent in drink. Now, alcohol circulating in the blood is an insanity-producing stress, and one of the most potent that we know of; so that if insanity increases under the state of things described by Dr. Stewart, the occurrence is not an exception to, but a corroboration of, the doctrine that insanity is the product of two factors—heredity and stress.

Clinical Notes and Cases.

Clinical Notes on a Case of Acute Mania; bearing upon the Effect of Acute Intercurrent Disease as it affects the Mental State. By LEWIS BRUCE, M.D., Edin.

THE following case is of interest as it shows that repeated attacks of acute intercurrent disease may finally produce recovery in patients suffering from mania which has taken on a chronic phase.

The patient, a male æt. 24, was admitted on May 26th, 1903, suffering from acute mania, which had lasted for a few days. There was a