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THE CARE OF THE INSANE AND THE STUDY OF PSYCHI-
ATRY IN GERMANY.

BY STEWART PATON.

To attempt to compare the methods employed in Germany for the care of the insane and in the study of psychiatry, with the methods prevailing in America involves certain difficulties of a fundamental character which cannot be easily set aside. In entering upon discussion of this matter, however, obvious truths present themselves which are worthy of remark and careful consideration.

The written and verbal opinions of German physicians and public-spirited laymen who are interested in such practical questions as the housing and care of the insane, as well as in the solution of the problems relating to the investigation of the course, termination and prevention of insanity, are stamped by a spirit of optimism.

This feeling of hopefulness which is justified by the favorable conditions under which German alienists are working to-day is accentuated by their appreciation of the fact that in no other department of medicine is a more carefully planned and determined effort being made to solve important scientific problems than in the field of psychiatry. Abundant evidence in confirmation of this statement is afforded when attention is called to the large sums appropriated in Germany for the erection and equipment of clinics, hospitals, asylums and laboratories and the liberal provisions made for the prosecution of scientific investigation. An enlightened public spirit realizes the fact that the simultaneous development of the practical and scientific departments is absolutely essential to secure the greatest and best results. Bavaria, with a population considerably less than that of New York State, affords

a striking example of what has actually been accomplished. At Erlangen and at Wurzburg there are psychiatric clinics and hospitals and at Munich the latest and, beyond doubt, the best hospital of its kind in the world has been erected at a cost to the city for buildings alone of over \$500,000.*

To be classed with the institutions above named is the receiving ward for cases of mental diseases connected with the Nuremberg General Hospital. Two other asylums are approaching completion, one at Haar near Munich (at a cost of \$2,000,000) and one at Ansbach with accommodations for about 300 patients.

Entrance Hall to New Psychiatric Clinic at Munich.

When careful consideration is given to the construction and organization of these institutions, the apothegm, "Science is but organized common sense," is emphasized in the most striking manner. Even casual observers will be convinced of the wise extravagance exhibited in providing for the accommodation of patients.

* A bill has been passed by the New York State Legislature appropriating \$300,000 for the erection of a reception hospital in New York City to accommodate 200 patients. When allowance is made for the greater cheapness of labor in Munich, it will be seen that in round numbers practically twice the sum has been expended in furnishing and equipping the Bavarian institution which has accommodations for only 110 patients.

More impressive, however, than the testimony of bricks and mortar is that fact that the movement, having for its objects the care of those already afflicted with mental disorders and attempting to limit the spread of insanity is part of a carefully considered plan dominated by the idea that a great deal more can be done for the insane than by merely increasing hospital or asylum accommodations.

The most impressive feature of the general plan referred to is the liberal, not to say lavish, expenditure of money for the con-

Library in New Psychiatric Clinic at Munich.

struction of psychiatric clinics. These institutions fulfill the double purpose of fostering the spirit of scientific investigation and make possible a solution of many practical questions connected with the actual care and treatment of patients. Important testimony as to the good that may be accomplished by such agencies is contained in the last annual report of the New York State Charities-Aid Association from which the following passage is quoted:

"The supreme advantage of the proposed reception or psychopathic hospitals, will consist not alone in their superior scientific equipment, their eminent consulting physicians and surgeons and their staff of trained internes, but also in what they will stand for to the public."

Authorities in Germany are agreed that, in order to save expense to the State, clinics should be built before complete provision is made for the care of patients in asylums; as an experience of forty years has shown that the presence of these clinics in a community changes the types of cases that apply for admission to an asylum. As the asylums receive a large number of patients from the clinics, the phases of disease admitted to the former have become radically different since the psychopathic hospitals were first established. Asylums in countries where no Psychiatric Clinics exist must be constructed and equipped to meet different

Ward in Clinic.

conditions from those existing where this type of hospital is found. In Germany there is a marked tendency to facilitate in every possible way the admission of patients to the clinics, and through them into asylums. Prof. Fürstner in referring to this subject has redirected attention to the fact that the most humane laws in regard to the commitment of the insane are to be found in those districts where formerly the old French statutes (the logical outcome of Pinel's teaching) serve as models for present-day legislation. In spite of occasional misstatements by the press which too often distorts facts and seeks to excite public sentiment against the retention of patients, cases of individuals wrong-

fully deprived of liberty do not occur. At the clinics, patients may be held in the discretion of the medical director for a sufficient time in which to make a complete examination of their mental status, then should they still continue to object to being confined they can appeal to the court which appoints an independent committee of investigation whose decision is final.

The subject of the relation of clinics to universities and the duties devolving upon professors of psychiatry deserve more than a passing mention. With hardly an exception the psychopathic hospitals are all in university towns or cities and are as closely affiliated with the university as are the medical or surgical clinics.

Pathological Laboratory of Clinic.

As a general rule to which there are but few exceptions, the most advanced and experienced teachers in medicine are found among that class of men who are brought into close contact with the work done in the various departments of the university, and this rule applies with equal force to alienists. It is generally admitted that the view not infrequently expressed, viz.: that it is possible to obtain men skilled as clinicians or as laboratory workers if liberal salaries are paid by the university, needs to be qualified. Unless a department of psychiatry is organized so as to attract men who are engaged in research in other branches of bi-

ology, there will not be sufficient intellectual pleasure in the character of the work to induce men of originality in thought or pains-taking workers in laboratories to devote their lives to the study of psychiatry.

The mere mention of the questions that are constantly asked of the alienist, such as, for example: "What is the nature of a reflex?" "What are the problems of consciousness?" "How are impulses conducted?" have shown our German colleagues the necessity of having the physiological, psychological and biological departments of the university bear more than a nominal relationship to each other, and, indeed, the affiliation of clinics and universities is an essential factor in keeping alive that spirit to which

Ward in Clinic.

Frederick the Great gave expression in a letter to Voltaire: "The keenest pleasure a reasonable man can experience is to discover a new truth." The duties devolving upon professors of psychiatry indicate the importance of the subject as viewed by German university authorities. The alienist is a member of the university faculty and as such is required to devote a very considerable portion of his time to his university duties. It is the rule and not the exception for a professor to devote five or six hours daily to work in the laboratory and hospital wards, and one or two hours in the afternoon to "consultations." It is not difficult to sav

whether the students and the universities are likely to derive more good from such a division of time than they would were the professor to give the best hours of the day to his private practice and the brief remaining time to visiting hospital wards, to occasional visits to the laboratory and to the perfunctory delivery of more or less stereotyped lectures. The fact that the clinic is directed by a single head and that there is no "divided service" makes it possible for the carrying on of investigation extending over a very considerable period of time, a condition for the suc-

View of Buildings of New Psychiatric Clinic at Munich.

cess of which, on account of the nature of the problems to be studied, is even more desirable in psychiatry than in any other clinical branch.

Another very important feature of the German system is that the vacancies occurring on the staff are not necessarily filled by members of the same clinic, but often by the members of the staff of some other university. This constant exchange of men and resultant exchange of ideas that is going on all over Germany is of the greatest importance to the maintenance of the high standard

of productive work done in German clinics. There is little or no "in-breeding" and when a vacancy occurs in the medical staff of one of the clinics, the appointment is generally and of purpose given to the professor or assistant from a different university. Considerable surprised comment was made over a recent appointment where the first assistant in one of the clinics was promoted to full professorship. In this particular instance, however, the promotion was well deserved. "A great danger has always existed," said a recent German critic in referring to the duties devolving upon the occupant of a professorship, "lest the powers conferred be too unrestricted," and certainly this fear is not groundless. In America professors and heads of clinics are not appointed as they are in Germany, by the governing board of the university, the membership of which is constantly changing, but by self-perpetuating boards of trustees, whose chief and only desire, very often, is to have the "wheels of the machine run easily."

Although the German methods of organization may occasionally reflect the disadvantages of constitutional monarchy, the American methods may, if eternal vigilance is not exercised, assume the form of absolutism.

If common-sense business methods, a sense of patriotism and a true feeling of democracy are the guiding principles of those whose duties it shall be to organize the first university psychiatric clinic in America, the future of psychiatry will be bright. To one who seriously considers the national importance of these clinics, there can be little doubt that state authorities as well as private benefactors will soon make it possible to establish in the United States, under university control, a number of institutions whose purposes may be briefly summarized as follows:—

1. The cure of many patients who now become hopelessly insane.
2. The instruction of medical students as well as practicing physicians in psychiatry so that eventually there may be found in the community a greater number of men who are competent to advise whether an individual is capable of standing the mental strain imposed by special forms of education or is able to endure the nervous strain of the environment in which the individual lives.
3. The possibility of keeping under observation a large num-

ber of individuals whose unstable nervous systems may, if occasion presents itself, become sources of danger to the individuals themselves or to the community.

4. The examination of cases in which the question of mental responsibility is under debate and a submission to courts of formal reports based upon observation to supercede the hypothetical "expert evidence" that so frequently is a parody of justice.

5. The study of all problems whose ultimate solution will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the functions of the brain with a view to determining the most efficient methods of increasing the number of individuals in the nation who are capable of rational thought and action.