NEW YORK NEUROLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Stated Meeting, held at the New York Academy of Medicine, Tuesday evening, October 3d, 1893.

Dr. M. ALLEN STARR, President, in the Chair.

MEMORIAL OF PROF. CHARCOT.

This paper was read by the President. The author gave a brief sketch of Charcot's life, and reviewed the work of the great neurologist. Prof. Jean Marie Charcot was born in Paris, on the 29th of November, 1825. He was the son of a wagon maker, a man of such limited means that he was not able to give all his children an education. Jean Marie received his early education at the Lycée St. Louis, at that time the best academy in Paris. After his preliminary education was completed there, the choice of the medical profession was made, not without some hesitation, for the inclination of the young man was for the life of an artist, and it was possibly the lack of means which finally determined him to take up medicine. After passing through the medical school, and serving as an interne in la Salpêtrière—an almshouse for old women, then almost unknown, but later to become famous as the seat of his wonderful activity—he took his doctorate degree in 1853. For the next three years he served as chief of the medical clinic in the medical school, supporting himself meantime by giving private lessons. He was then appointed physician to the Central Bureau of Paris, on a moderate salary. In 1860, after passing a rigid competitive examination, he became entitled to a hospital appointment, and, two years later, he was able to select the service at his old hospital, la Salpêtrière. He found a large number of old people collected together in this poor-house, many of them suffering from chronic incurable diseases. He had the opportunity to watch the progress of disease, both acute and chronic, in old age, and, most important of all, he had unlimited pathological material to com.
plete his clinical observations. It is to this latter fact that he owed the beginning of his reputation, for at that time pathology was just beginning to reveal the true reasons for disease. By the careful study of his cases, by his power to seize upon salient features which gave points for differentiation, by his persistent following of cases from the ward to the autopsy room, and by the exhaustive study of the material collected there, he began to reach conclusions and to arrive at facts which were veritable discoveries in the medical world. The articles written by him between 1860 and 1870, each of which adds a distinct fact, observation or conclusion to the sum of medical science, soon began to attract attention, and the young physician found his rounds beginning to be attended by students who liked to watch his careful study of cases, or see him demonstrate the lesions which he found. In 1866 a small room in the hospital was set aside for the purpose of instruction, and he began to hold clinics and to lecture. The lectures were soon crowded by graduates in medicine, and the next year he was invited to give an open course of lectures at the Ecole Practique of the Medical School. Here he had an opportunity to cultivate the power of teaching, and soon showed that wonderful facility of clear, direct statement, and power of graphic illustration, which later made his lectures the most attractive in the world. His first open course had for its subject cerebral hemorrhage and softening. In subsequent lectures he discussed the clinical and pathological difference between paralysis agitans and multiple sclerosis; the arthropathies, which have since been known as Charcot's joint disease, etc. Thus, within four years he had risen from the position of an unknown teacher, to the position of one of the best lecturers in the Paris school.

In the year 1870 all female epileptics who were not insane were transferred to la Salpêtrière, and this afforded Charcot new material for study, and from 1872 the study of hysteria in its multiform manifestations became one of his duties. The same year he was appointed professor of pathological anatomy in the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, the highest prize in the French medical world. In 1882 a professorship of nervous diseases was founded in the Medical School, and Charcot received the appointment, with the establishment of a public clinic at la Salpêtrière. From that time to the present year his annual courses of lectures have been
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attended by students of medicine from every land, and it may be truly said that few men of eminence at present living and working in neurology have not drawn inspiration from his model clinics.

Charcot's collected works will fill fifteen large volumes. He was also instrumental in founding a number of medical journals. His three volumes of lectures, published from 1872 to 1880, have had an immense sale. Public recognition of Charcot's abilities and eminence was not wanting. He had been president of all the chief medical societies in Paris, was corresponding member of numerous societies abroad, among them being the New York Academy of Medicine and the New York Neurological Society. He was made a Member of the Institute of France in 1883, and Commander of the Legion of Honor in 1892.

Charcot's investigations in hypnotism have attracted much attention, both from the profession and from the laity. It is difficult for any one to enter upon the study of this subject, or to pursue it with any degree of thoroughness, without exposing oneself to adverse criticism and remark. It is difficult to estimate the true value of this department of Charcot's labor, but it cannot be denied that all through the years which he devoted to this study his mind has been imbued with the purest scientific motives, and that facts, not theories, were his aim.

Another criticism which has been offered is that in his scientific zeal he neglected therapeutics; that his interest in patients ceased with the diagnosis. Those who make these statements must surely forget that our best methods of treating functional and hysterical nervous diseases—namely, the electrical and hydrotherapeutic methods—were successively developed and successfully employed by Charcot.

Charcot was a man of great dignity, of calm, even temper, of slow thought and utterance, but of much reserve power. In appearance like Napoleon, and in manner reserved and observant, he was not the type of man to be popular. With patients suffering from trifling affections he showed no sympathy, probably no interest. With patients whose diseases were severe or obscure, or of a rare type, he was kind, attentive, interested, and was ready to spend valuable time in most careful investigation. His relation to his pupils was also one of mutual interest and affection. He was never familiar with them, yet he always respected and sought their
opinions, was never autocratic in the direction of their work, and was always the subject of their devoted admiration and respect. His family life was a delightful one. He was married early in life to a lady of considerable wealth, who was enthusiastic in his work, and by whose aid many scientific undertakings, otherwise impossible, were carried through. He had two children, one a boy, whom it was his fond desire to see succeeding him as a physician, and who gives promise of being worthy of the name. Charcot, like every man of eminence, has his enemies—critics in science—rivals in medicine; yet, after all their criticism is exhausted, we must admit that he remains the greatest French physician since Trousseau, and the greatest ornament of the medical profession of the present age.

At the conclusion of Dr. Starr's address, Dr. E. C. Seguin gave a few personal reminiscences of Prof. Charcot. He referred to the generosity of the great physician, in placing at the disposal of the students his abundant material and the use of his laboratories, and in allowing them to receive the full credit for their labors, instead of appropriating it to himself. Many of Charcot's pupils, Bourneville, Bouchard and others, have been helped by him in every possible way to attain honorable positions. In disposition, he was quite different from the popular idea of the Frenchman. He was not quick, nor hasty, nor mercurial. Every thought was carefully matured, and he collected his material for a long time before reaching or publishing his conclusions. He was averse to theorizing. He was a close analyst and a devoted follower of the induction method in reaching conclusions. Primarily, Charcot was a pathologist, and his reputation will always rest on his achievements in this field of medicine. His work in hypnotism, by which he was greatly fascinated in later years, can only be regarded as a mere fragment—a digression which in the future will count as nothing.

A CASE OF GENERALIZED PARESIS ENDING IN COMPLETE RECOVERY.

By Dr. E. C. Seguin. The history of the case is as follows: The patient was a boy aged 15 years, who was brought to Dr. Seguin in October, 1886, for an opinion as to the nature and prognosis of a singular condition of increasing muscular weakness, which had come on