

BOOK REVIEWS.

Bidrag till Kännedom om den Progressiva Paralysis Etiologi med Särskild Hänsyn till Syphilis. Akademisk Afhandling. Af EMIL HOUGBERG, Vnder-täkare vid Lappviks Sjukhus. (Memoir on the Etiology of Progressive Paralysis, with Special Reference to Syphilis.) Helsingfors: 1892.

This is an academic thesis of some one hundred and forty pages by the assistant physician of the Imperial Lappvik Asylum at Helsingfors. It deserves special mention from the fact that it treats its subject thoroughly and gives the data from which its conclusions are drawn much more fully than is usually the case.

After an introduction and historical sketch of the literature of the subject of the relations of syphilis and general paralysis or paresis, which fill nearly forty-nine pages, and is most complete as regards European contributions, the author gives condensed hospital notes of exactly one hundred cases of paresis, the total number on the asylum records, ninety-one males and nine females, that were admitted and treated in the Lappvik Asylum, in the seventeen years from 1875 to 1891 inclusive. The whole number of patients during that period was 1,451; the percentage of paretics was therefore 6.89.

Of these one hundred paretics, seventy-four, including four females, had unquestionably had syphilis. In twelve others, nine males and three females, the evidence pointed strongly to syphilis but was not positive,—they could be safely said to have been in all probability syphilitic. In fourteen cases, twelve men and three women, evidence was wanting, but eleven of these had been dead for over ten years, which may serve to account, to some extent, for the lack of evidence. Of the other three one was a woman, 63 years old, which fact may justify a question as to whether her case might not have been more senile than paretic. The other two cases were wandering workmen whose antecedents could not be satisfactorily traced in all respects. The author remarks that any of the fourteen might have had venereal disease, but a history of it was lacking.

His methods of investigating this question seem to have been thorough,—besides questioning the patient and his friends, he searched hospital records, consulted family physicians, etc., and his diagnoses seem to have been carefully determined.

The conclusions of the memoir are stated as follows:

1. Progressive paralysis, which attacks males much oftener than females, is a disorder especially of urban populations, but does not there occur among women of the higher classes?
 2. Syphilis has a very great part in the etiology of progressive paralysis, while it does not play any important rôle in other psychoses.
 3. The outbreak of progressive paralysis, usually between the thirtieth and forty-fifth year of life, does not commonly occur until four or five years after the syphilitic infection.
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4. The symptoms of the specific disorder preceding progressive paralysis are commonly relatively mild.

5. In comparison with syphilis, hereditary predisposition, psychic causes, alcoholic excesses, sexual excesses, and traumatism, have only a subordinate part in producing paresis.

6. Of the different forms of the disorder the maniacal type was most frequent, next the demented, and lastly the melancholic.

7. The prognosis is unfavorable. The duration of the disease was under four years in 82.9 per cent., and under two years in 43.6 per cent. Remissions occur.

8. In cases preceded by syphilis there are no symptoms specially characteristic of specific disease.

9. No improvement was observed from auto-syphilitic treatment.

10. At the autopsy no appearances of specially specific character were found.

The memoir is an especially valuable contribution to the literature of the subject and, while the author is conservative, as is seen in the above conclusions, it strongly supports the views of those who attribute nearly all cases of general paresis to specific disease.

H. M. B.

- I. *Le Progrès de la Réforme du Traitement des Aliénés en France.* Par le Dr. VICTOR PARANT. (The Progress of Reform in the Treatment of the Insane in France).
- II. *La Folie est une Maladie non de l'Esprit mais du Corps.* Par le Dr. VICTOR PARANT, Directeur-Médecin de la Maison de Santé de Toulouse. Extract de *les Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences, etc.*: de Toulouse, 1893. (Insanity is a Disorder not of the Mind, but of the Body).
- III. *Les Troubles Intellectuels dans la Paralyse Agitante.* Par le Dr. VICTOR PARANT. (The Mental Disorders of Paralysis Agitans). Extract from the *Bull. de la Société de Médecine de Toulouse*, 1893.

Of these three papers by Dr. Victor Parant, the esteemed French correspondent of the JOURNAL, the first is a very interesting historical sketch of the progress made in the treatment of the insane in France, together with a statement of the present status and methods, and the legislation now pending to amend the law of 1838 which is the basis of all legal regulation of the insane in France. It would seem to have been in the main a very ably conceived law, as under it everything has worked so satisfactorily, and the changes now proposed are only minor modifications that experience has shown to be desirable.

The showing here made is a good one, and there are some things that could be adopted elsewhere with advantage, such, for example, as the societies of patronage to aid needy patients on their recovery.

The second paper is not as might perhaps be inferred from its title, merely a statement of the somatic theory of mental alienation and the arguments in its behalf, but is rather a philosophical discussion on the nature of insanity, following the lines of the author's well known work in *La Raison dans la Folie*. Dr. Parant is apparently a dualist and therefore will find a certain class of modern thinkers not in full accordance with some of his views. Ac-