

but it suggests to my mind something like this: The thalami and corpora striata are 'subconscious' centres for habits, cravings and impulses that are not so 'saturated' with experience as to have become fatally automatic, like those in the cord. They normally act in coöperation with the fully conscious cortex and its associations of ideas. But they may become the seat of irritable weakness, and the associative cortical processes may be pathologically blocked or twisted from what is normal. In such cases the *poussée* from below is either excessive or ill-timed, and it may also fall on wrong ideas and the normally controlling ones be thrown out of gear. All sorts of obsessions, phobias, depravities of appetite, morbid impulses characteristic of the discordant self, which we find in the so-called degenerates, may be thus explained. In the 'inferior' class the cortex is most at fault; in the 'superiors' it is the basal ganglia.

*Entartung und Genie, Neue Studien.* CESARE LOMBROSO, gesammelt und unter Mitwirkung des Verfassers deutsch herausgegeben von Hans Kurella. Leipzig, Wigand, 1894. 12°, pp. 308.

A collection of essays and fragments, not published as a volume in Italian. The author first replies to some objections to his theory that genius is a degenerative neurosis allied to epilepsy and moral insanity. Dante, Michelangelo, and Guido had been thrown at him as examples of men of genius who were normal. He proves minutely their strongly eccentric and neurotic constitution. Dante in particular must have been frankly epileptic, for no less than eleven times in the divine comedy he speaks of himself as swooning or falling unconscious. That the weakness of genius cannot be due to secondary strains and fatigues incidental to the ardent sort of life which the possession of genius imposes, is proved by the fact that out of 313 symptoms of fatigue which Lombroso has counted, only six are commonly found among geniuses. Genius and sex is discussed in a chapter, full of anecdotes, on the conditions productive of genius. In Chapter III. is shown the frequency of degenerative anomalies in geniuses. For example, they vary from their national type, as is proved by portraits. Longfellow, Bellamy, Tennyson, Coleridge look like men of Latin race. Darwin and Bryant, Coleridge and Burns, George Eliot and Bulwer form mutually resembling pairs. "The cause of these resemblances is to be sought in the degeneration common to them all." Prof. Lombroso has compared the field of view of twelve geniuses of his acquaintance with that of eight unusually gifted young men who were not geniuses, and has found a shrinkage of the inner upper quadrant in nine of

the geniuses—in none of them was the field symmetrical. The non-geniuses were much more normal; so that an abnormal field of view seems to characterize genius. On the other hand, genius would seem to have, if anything, a slower reaction-time than usual. Amongst the *bizarceries* of genius, playing with orthography is mentioned, and a dog-latin letter of Swift to Stella is quoted. "One is tempted," Lombroso remarks, "to find in this tendency to fabricate a jargon, a trait connecting genius with criminality." The most valuable part of the book is constituted by biographical details concerning certain 'borderland' cases, calculating geniuses, thought readers, artists, and political and religious 'mattoids.' The author's curiosity and information, frankness, good-humor and vivacity are beyond praise, but his incapacity for accurate reasoning is apparently incurable; and this book, were it not for the biographic material which it contains, could only be regarded as one of the oddities of scientific literature.

*Degeneration.* MAX NORDAU. Translated from the second edition of the German work. New York, Appleton, 1895. 8vo., pp. 560.

A pathological book on a pathological subject. If one were to apply Herr Nordau's method to the description of his own person, one could hardly help writing him down as a degenerate of the worst sort. He is a 'graphomaniac'; a misanthrope and a 'miso-neist'; a 'coprolalic' ('idiot,' 'imbecile' are his mildest terms of endearment); an 'erotomaniac' of the prudish sort, haunted by horror of other people's sexuality; an *obsédé*, pursued without respite by images of odious works of art; a 'megalomaniac' of the arrogant and insulting type; and, finally, a victim of insane delusions about a conspiracy of hysterics and degenerates menacing the moral world with destruction unless the sound-minded speedily arm and organize in its defence. Add to this equipment the earnestness of the gloomily insane, and their complete inability to see a joke (pages of heavy invective against Oscar Wilde's epigrams!) and one gets a not altogether consoling diagnosis of Herr Nordau's case. On the other side, it must be admitted that he is really learned, not only in contemporary German, French and English *belles lettres*, but in the literature of neurological medicine as well, and that many of the objects by whose odiousness his imagination is afflicted, Parisian 'pornographic' novels, for example, are loathsome indeed. When, however, hardly a contemporary name, however great, escapes his abuse, and the course over which he runs-a-muck lies through Wagner, Tolstoi, Ruskin, Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Zola, Ibsen, and Niet-