

Another reason, however, for the great frequency of this class of diseases in New York is to be found in the fact, that the average temperature of the city is 51° F., and "the researches of Dickson have shown that places liable to a large proportion of renal disease have an annual mean temperature which is not lower than 46° , nor higher than 57° , and that Bright's disease chiefly abounds where the mean temperature is not far removed from 50° ." A change of residence is, of course, recommended wherever the means of the invalid permit, and as our own country comprises within its limits a great variety of climates, he will rarely be obliged to seek in foreign countries a suitable place of refuge. It is obvious, however, that beneficial as a change of climate will often be found, its good effects will be counteracted by neglect to observe the laws of hygiene. To the large class, who in a city like New York must remain at home, we can only recommend that they should avoid all the known causes of the disease, and perhaps there is none more active in bringing on exacerbations and more easily avoided, than the exposure of the body while perspiring or insufficiently clad to the cold. In this connection Dr. Smith asks the pertinent question, whether it is not as much the duty of the physician to warn those whose occupations render such exposure frequent, of its danger, as it is in the case of those who work in metals. To lead and arsenic, among other causes, is assigned their due share in the production of these diseases.

Dr. Smith has noticed that deafness is not uncommon in those whose urine contains albumen, and is disposed to view this association of renal and nephritic lesions in the same light as we regard the coexistence of ocular and renal symptoms. He recommends that the urine should be examined in all cases in which the cause of deafness is obscure. Of course allusion is not here made to the mere dulness of hearing which frequently attends and is dependent upon uræmia.

The paper bears the evidence of careful preparation and a good deal of research, and we think it a valuable contribution to the study of Bright's disease. The word *Brightian* is frequently used and is certainly convenient; we do not, however, recollect having observed it in any other writer. J. H. H.

ART. XXXIII.—*New Facts and Remarks concerning Idiocy: being a Lecture delivered before the New York Medical Journal Association, October 15, 1869.* By EDWARD SEGUIN, M.D. 8vo. pp. 47. New York: Wm. Wood & Co., 1870.

THE present lecture may be viewed somewhat in the light of an appendix to a much larger work, published in 1866, under the title of "Idiocy, and its Treatment by the Physiological Method." Revised by the son of the author, Dr. E. G. SEGUIN. (8vo. pp. 457.)

The lecturer, after pointing out the necessity of a general recognition by physicians of the minimum of knowledge of the causation, premonitions, and diagnosis of idiocy, required of every practitioner, proceeds to a consideration of the differential diagnosis and prognosis between that form of idiocy which admits of improvement under a proper course of treatment, and the form which is irremediable. He then presents a brief notice of the State and private institutions for the treatment of idiots in this country, their number, and importance, with a special notice of the management pursued in the institutions at Syracuse, N. Y., and that at Barre, Mass. The subject of general and individual training, as pursued in the institutions just mentioned, is next considered.

"The State institution (at Syracuse, N. Y.) is but a school where idiots are received, if improvable, and kept as long as they do improve. In it the physiological treatment is applied mostly to groups; the children, constantly in contact, being raised up from idiocy by the incessant action of the whole on each. The sexes are completely separated, in dormitories and gymnasii—not

always at recess. They take together their meals, lessons, walks, musical exercises, dancing, and other evening entertainments.

"On the other hand: The private school (at Barre, Mass.) is an institution for the young and improvable idiot, and a life long retreat for hopeless cases. In it the physiological method is applied to a pupil by a teacher, who carries him, with strict regard to his individuality, from instinctive to intellectual operations, through personal imitation, etc. The inmates live in separate buildings; boys and girls have their grounds, schools, teachers, matrons, attendants, etc., apart. Some even eat and are taught in their own rooms. The best of them only take their meals with the physician's family and enjoy together evening games."

The lecturer remarks that it is difficult to understand, unless by actual observation, how the same thing—the development of intellect in the idiotic—can be done so well, and yet so differently, as it is accomplished at Syracuse and at Barre.

The topics next considered are "new causes of idiocy. Social evils prolific of nervous degeneracies. The four main causes of deterioration and of depopulation actually at work."

On the different forms of idiocy met with in the offspring of parents in the different ranks or conditions of society, the following remarks of the lecturer will be found interesting:—

"Mrs. Brown," wife of Dr. Brown, the principal of the school for idiots, at Barre, "whose opportunities of observation in respect to children of the more opulent classes have been greater than those of any other person now living, and whose turn of mind admirably qualifies her for clear and correct generalization, remarked to me that the children of endless siestas and satieties, or of moneyed and sensualistic hyperæsthesia, differed materially from those equally incapacitated by local influences, home privations, and mute motherly suffering during pregnancy; the former presenting more variety, the latter more uniformity in their symptoms. If this generalization of hers is verified, and I know of no facts or reasons to the contrary, she is entitled to rank with the ablest thinkers on this subject. To show the importance of her discovery, let us give it a shape and formula:—

"Among the nomadic tribes there are no more idiots than insane. In certain secluded settlements idiocy is a sequel to cretinism. Among the labouring classes, who know of civilization only by its hardships and suffering, idiocy is found in its simplest and most easily recognized forms—sthenic and asthenic.

"Among the wealthier classes, idiocy is not only oftener aggravated by accessory diseases, but also complicated with abnormal semi-capacities or disordered instincts, which produce heterogeneous types to an almost unlimited extent. It is from this class, almost exclusively, that we have musical, mathematical, architectural, and other varieties of the *idiot savant*; the useless protrusion of a single faculty, accompanied by a woful general impotence."

In the concluding portion of the lecture is pointed out the necessity of a school for the comparative study of *idiocy* and normal youth, and of the intellectual and physiological methods of education, with reference to the prevention of idiocy in the predisposed.

D. F. C.

ART. XXXIV.—*Summer Mortality in the Cities of the United States.* Paper read before the New York Academy of Medicine, June 17th, 1869. By STEPHEN ROGERS, M. D. 8vo. pp. 18.

THIS paper recommends itself in the favorable notice of the physicians of all our larger cities, especially those of our Middle and Southern States by the correctness and practical importance of its teachings, so far as these go. From few of the positions laid down by the author in reference to the prominent