master, when he proposed to suppress it, gave as a reason that after what had occurred no physician of self-respect would take the place of superintendent. An endeavour to obtain an inquiry into the state of matters was resisted by one of the aldermen, the architect of the single room I mentioned above, formerly one of the governors, who thought an inquiry would be a proof of distrust in these worthy persons. It is a sad thing that the law which was considered too stringent by several people should be impotent to stop such proceedings, and sad it is that the Psychological Society did not raise a single protest against a state of things which it must disapprove of. As it is, the society now appears to agree with the governors, and to approve their line of action.

A new asylum has been built near Leyden; it is built on the cottage system; the grounds were formerly a country seat, and are finely wooded.

DENMARK.

By Dr. A. Friis.

During the last year there has been no change of importance in the care of the insane of Denmark. In this country there are five large asylums, viz. the St. Hans' Hospital for the city of Copenhagen, and the four State asylums at Vordingborg, Middelfart, Aarhus, and Viborg. The last mentioned is only for incurables; the others both for curable and incurable patients. Besides these there are a few small provincial asylums designed only for provisional care and for the incurable. At the beginning of the year there were, according to the Asylum Reports for 1896, 2939 lunatics under care in the large asylums, viz. in St. Hans' Hospital, 1019; in the asylums at Vordingborg, Middelfart, and Aarhus respectively 470, 572, and 539; in the Viborg Asylum, 339. During 1896, 802 cases were admitted, 653 discharged or died. Of those admitted, 25 per cent. were suffering from melancholia, 20 per cent. from mania, 17 per cent. from paranoia, 36 per cent. from dementia, and 2 per cent. from idiocy. In the State asylums there has for some time been need for room, especially for incurables; and the Department of Justice, which has the supervision of the lunatic asylums, has therefore appointed a commission, consisting of the medical superintendents of the above-named asylums and the Dean of the Royal College of Health, to inquire into this and other questions concerning the insane.

The low number of idiots in the lunatic asylums of the State is owing to the fact that these patients are not admitted. In Denmark there are, therefore, two special asylums for idiots and imbeciles of all kinds, adults and children, viz. the Keller Asylums

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.44.185.426 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Gamle Bakkehus—Ebberoedgaard, each with about 600 patients, of whom about 200 are children undergoing school training. The asylums are situate in and near to Copenhagen (the schools in the city), and are private institutions subsidised by the Government. Though the asylum of Ebberoedgaard is only about six years old, and has more than 400 patients, there is already a great need for places, especially for the helpless. It is therefore in contemplation to enlarge one of the asylums; at the same time that the Keller asylums, which now are spread over a great extent, are to be congregated in a new asylum, built in the province of Jylland.

For the care of the epileptics no special provision has hitherto been made in Denmark. Those of them who are insane or feeble-minded, and therefore dangerous or very troublesome, have been admitted into the asylums for lunatics or idiots; while the rest, to the detriment of themselves and others, when they have not been under private care, have been obliged to drag out their existence in poor- or work-houses. In 1896 the committee for the lunatic asylum at Viborg, therefore, made a proposal to the Justiciary Department for enlarging this asylum, and at the same time uniting it with an asylum for epileptics. In spite of the reasons in favour of establishing such an institution, and in spite of the fact that the project was recommended by the highest medical authority in this country (the Royal College of Health), the matter made no progress, the Minister of Justice resolving that the establishment of asylums for epileptics, at all events for a long time, could not be regarded as a duty of the State. Yet it is to be hoped that the commission for the care of lunatics will take also this matter up, and that the minister will change his mind. For the present it has been tried by private means to start two small colonies, and the medical superintendent of the Viborg Asylum, Dr. Hallager, has brought out a popular, well-written book *On the Treatment of Epilepsy and Epileptics*, with the intention of instructing the public in the matter.

It has, however, already caused a collection of statistical data concerning epileptics. Dr. Hallager has made a careful enumeration of epileptics in the district in which his asylum is situated, and by comparing it with the statistics of the number of young men who are found incapable of being soldiers by reason of epilepsy, and with the few existing statistics of epileptics from other countries, he has found out that there must be about 3000 epileptics in Denmark, or about 1·4 per mille of the population, the number of the inhabitants being about 2,200,000. How many of these require care in an asylum it is, of course, difficult to say, but it will surely be a rather large proportion if all claims are to be met. For instance, about seven hundred are under public care, but only between four and five hundred under constant medical supervision in asylums or hospitals.

In his book, *De la Nature de l'Epilepsie*, published in Paris, 1897,

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.44.185.426 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Dr. Hallager, who has specially studied epilepsy, communicates his views on the morbid physiology of epileptics. He concludes that the fits are owing to a sudden anæmia of the brain, and this anæmia is always the result of a reflex constriction of the vessels through the vaso-motor centre, which is irritated either from the cortex cerebri or the peripheral parts of the body; only when the irritation is owing to physiological processes (or latent lesions) we call the epilepsy idiopathic. The form of the fit is determined by the degree of irritability of other centres put in activity, so that the same anæmia which in one individual only causes "petit mal," in another with irritable motor centres will be the cause of a fit of "grand mal." In the same manner the aura and the post-epileptic phenomena depend on the condition of the different centres or organs; the post-epileptic mental condition depends partly on the form and intensity of the fit, partly on the predisposition of the individual (*i. e.* his cortical centres).

Dr. D. E. Jacobson has published his observations on *The Pathogenesis of Delirium Tremens*. He seems inclined to regard this mental state as the result of an autotoxic infection in a chronic alcoholic. The reasons he gives for his theory, which is based on a careful investigation of about 250 cases, seem to be very convincing. He denies, on the contrary, the existence of the so-called delirium tremens traumaticum, and supposes that the traumatic lesion as a rule is consequent to the delirium, and not the reverse.

NORWAY.

By Dr. Holmboe, translated by Dr. Lindell.

Dr. Lindell in 1890 sent an account of the provision for the insane in Norway to Dr. Hack Tuke's *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*. Since that time our Lunacy law of 1848 has been amended by the law of 1891. According to this law, four-tenths of the expenses for the maintenance of the insane poor, which expenses were formerly charged entirely upon the respective towns and counties, are now to be refunded by the Government, but only in the case of pauper lunatics in need of special treatment. The necessity for this special treatment is to be decided by the county physicians ("Amtslæge") of whom there is one for each county. This Government grant applies to pauper lunatics in asylums, and also to those who are cared for in private houses. The law, therefore, has compelled the ministry of justice to increase the general control of the insane in private houses, and to order the district physicians to carefully supervise these patients.

A comparison between the census of 1891 and of 1865 shows

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