thirteen years of age, when awake and asleep, and with various stimuli (sensitive, sensorial, or psychical). The results are summarised as follows:

(1) The vascular reflexes in man follow the fundamental laws of localisation and irradiation.

(2) The localised vascular reflex is accomplished in a less time than the radiate vascular reflex.

(3) The brain exercises an undoubted influence upon the reflex activity of the cord, even in respect to the reflex movements of blood-vessels.

(4) The time of the vascular reflex in the waking condition, and in response to sensory stimuli, is, for the arm, about three seconds, for the leg about five seconds.

(5) The vascular reflex of the brain for sensorial stimuli has a latency not less than that of the brachial reflex for the same stimulus.

(6) Sleep produces a great retardation in the period of duration of the vascular reflex, which diminishes as one passes from brain to arm, and is inappreciable in the vessels of the leg.

(7) The movement of blood in the brain in sleep, secondary to excitation is, without doubt, reflex.

(8) The vascular reflex in the limbs, secondary to sensorial and psychical stimuli, are accomplished more slowly than is the reflex from sensitive excitation.

(9) There is a period of vascular reaction for each sense stimulated.

(10) Certain sensorial excitations have a greater power of inducing vaso-motor reactions than others.

GERMANY.

By Dr. Bresler.

As in most other countries, our profession and our science does not advance without many struggles. We are engaged with a certain class of calumniators who are dazed by preconceived opinions, ignorance, and even hatred. While their misrepresentations are usually absurdly wrong, and may therefore be borne with patience, the beginning of last year brought forth a very serious question in parliament. One of the deputies, in sustaining a motion to the effect that the regulations regarding the admission of insane patients into asylums are insufficient, said that a number of cases had occurred showing that they had been relegated to inhuman treatment in asylums, by brutal and frivolous removal to these institutions. He also attacked the members of our specialty.

At the annual meeting of the German Alienists held in September, 1897, the following resolution was proposed by Dr. Jolly,

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and unanimously carried by the members present: "That the association regrets to notice that in the session of Parliament held on 16th January, 1897, a criticism, not in accordance with fact, had been made on the conditions existing in German asylums, and that this criticism had remained uncontradicted on the part of the Government. The association formerly recommended, and again thinks it a duty to advise that the most important reform would be the establishment of independent boards directly subordinated to the Ministry, and presided over by an alienist."

In order to improve matters in lunatic asylums, and render such attacks impossible in the future, the association at the same meeting, recognising the necessity for efficient training of attendants, resolved to offer a prize of 500 marks for the best Handbook for Attendants. Unfortunately a motion for proper training of, and granting diplomas to attendants was not carried.

Dr. Hoppe reported on the treatment of the insane without seclusion and drugs. During the last three years, out of 400 male patients, seclusion was only used by him in six incurable cases, and he believes that under more favourable circumstances he could have dispensed with it in those six cases. Drugs he believes to be useless, and he further recommends that alcohol be removed from the diet of the patients, and lemonades, fruits, &c., be substituted, citing the example of English asylums, and especially in London, which in 1890 removed their private brewhouses. His views were upheld by the majority of the members.

Dr. Alt said it was now the general course in Germany to abolish the use of seclusion as far as possible, it being done away with altogether in some asylums.

There have been no acts of any importance referring to lunatics passed during the year now ended. Besides the seven smaller and local associations of alienists and that above mentioned, a new one was founded last year by Flechsig and Hitzig. It is entitled the Association of Alienists of Middle Germany (Saxony and Thuringia). Such societies certainly afford the best means for successfully combating the attacks of ignorance, and for improving the condition of the insane. This must be worked out by ourselves. We must purge the service of existing unsuitable methods. That cannot be done by those who rank themselves as our enemies.

During the past year Professors Schiller and Fisher have published a collection of treatises on pedagogical psychology and physiology in the form of a journal, which will apply the results of physiology of the brain, and of physiological psychology to schools and education.

Another similar journal, edited by Trüper, has been already noticed on page 357 of last volume of *Journal of Mental Science*.

In April, 1897, Dr. Konrad Alt (Uchtspringe) inaugurated *Die Irrenpflege*, a monthly journal for the use of attendants. It is full of general information, and has been largely used. Such a

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journal is worthy of support. It is intended to promote the welfare of attendants by instruction, advice, and encouragement, and it specially deals with freedom of treatment in colonies and private care. As each craft has its own special journal, it is apparent that the attendants on the insane should find a periodical devoted to their best interests. I have now before me the first ten numbers, complete to this date, and there can be no doubt that the *Irrenpflege* has so far accomplished its intention as declared in the opening statement of the editor.

In mentioning that there is a proposal on the part of the provincial authorities to increase the salaries of asylum officials, I am at the end of this letter, for most of the important literary works have been already noticed in the *Journal of Mental Science*, with the exception of the "Atlas of the Brain," by C. Wernicke. It consists of a series of photographic plates of sections of the brain, which have been stained by Pal's modification of Weigert's method, and which are intended to demonstrate the normal anatomy and the pathology of the brain. This standard work is the result of much care and perseverance, and should commend itself to all those desirous of furthering their study in this direction.

In the region of research, Nissl, in an article in *Allg. Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie* entitled "The Hypothesis of the Specific Functions of the Nerve-cells, and Studies in the Anatomy and Histo-pathology of the Nerve-cells," gives the result of his experiments on the effect of toxins on the cortical nerve-cells of animals poisoned with lead, arsenic, phosphorus, silver, morphia, nicotine, trional, strychnine, toxins of tetanus, alcohol, and veratria. He used his own method of fixation and staining of sections, and found that the cells are altered in a determined specific manner by the action of the poison. His experiments have the value of a physiological reaction. He does not compare the pathological with the normal cell, but has introduced a new definition, "the equivalent figure," of the nerve-cell. This is the microscopic figure of the nerve-cell of an animal killed in a certain manner, which regularly takes place under certain conditions. These equivalent figures serve to control the figures of the poisoned cells. Explanatory tables and photographs accompany the paper.

The progress of clinical knowledge has not kept pace with the great labour bestowed upon anatomical studies. It would seem that the favourite problem at present is the anatomical substratum of mental diseases, which is so vigorously searched for in the nerve-cells.

HOLLAND.

By Dr. F. M. Cowan.

Asylums are not popular institutions, and every now and then a virulent article appears in the newspapers, inveighing against gross

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