juvenile general paralytic from Cane Hill Asylum published by Dr. Wootton (*Journal of Mental Science*, October, 1914). Here the father, mother, and two out of three apparently healthy brothers and sisters all gave positive results to the Wassermann test, although all knowledge of syphilitic infection was denied.

The disastrous results here noted of unsuspected and untreated syphilitic infections, and the impotence of all treatment at the present time in checking the progress of general paralysis, argue strongly in favour of the use of the Wassermann test in all suspected venereal conditions, with a view to their appropriate and early treatment.

In conclusion I must thank Mr. S. Mann, who has helped me with the serum reactions, the technique used being the original Wassermann reaction as employed in the Pathological Laboratory of the London County Asylums, and described by Candler and Mann in the *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, vol. vi, "The Wassermann Reaction in Mental Disorders."

## Occasional Notes.

### *The War and the Journal.*

THE gigantic struggle which is now convulsing the greater part of the continent of Europe—a struggle for existence in the case of at least some of the belligerent Powers engaged—is making itself felt in all departments of life. Politics, business, recreative pursuits, social functions of all kinds, art, science, and literature, all feel the overshadowing influence of the colossal contest. In some spheres of work it has had a stimulating, in others a benumbing effect. In everything connected with our military and naval operations there has been, and is, naturally a prodigious increase of activity. It is imperative that urgent needs should be supplied, and existing organisations, sufficient to meet the demand under ordinary circumstances, must be vastly extended and supplemented. Here all is at high pressure; nothing evident but rush, bustle, and boom. On the other hand, in the quieter paths of human industry, in which may be included scientific pursuits (not those connected with war), with scientific literature as their outcome, an opposite

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.61.254.451 Published online by Cambridge University Press

condition is apt to occur, with more or less stagnation of effort. Mars is an unwelcome visitant, his sword a disquieting element in the groves of Academus. And while in some departments of journalism, such as those of our daily and weekly press and monthly magazines a state of war provides not only an enhanced stimulus to busy pens, and also almost a superabundance of material, an *embarras des richesses*, in the case of scientific literature, during such crises, effort is more or less cramped and impeded, and the fruit of the studies which are the basis of it forms but a meagre crop. Our own Journal cannot hope to escape the experience which is produced by stress of circumstances, and if its dimensions become somewhat attenuated, and its material curtailed, allowance must be made for difficulties which attend its production at the present time. To realise these even in some measure it is only necessary to call attention to the fact, known to most members of the Association, that quite a number of medical men on the staffs of asylums have volunteered for service in both Army and Navy. This has thrown an enormous amount of extra work on the shoulders of many of the senior officers and the remaining members of the staffs. And especially has this been the case where an asylum has been obliged to be converted into a war hospital, and provision has had to be made, hurriedly made, against time, for the accommodation elsewhere of hundreds of insane patients, as well as special preparations and modifications of existing arrangements in such asylums for the reception of our wounded and convalescent soldiers and sailors. These unwonted operations on such a large scale are more than sufficient to absorb the entire time and attention of all those responsible for their accomplishment, and on many of our colleagues the strain has been exceptionally severe, notwithstanding which the ordeal has been willingly accepted and carried through with zeal, enthusiasm, and, best of all, with efficiency and success. But labours such as these are absolutely prohibitive of effort in any other direction, and, consequently, it need not occasion surprise if the Journal suffers from being deprived of the valuable aid of members who are devoting their energies and giving of their best to the service of their country in response to what is perhaps the noblest of all claims—the call of patriotism. This much is offered by way of apology if, during the time while the war continues in

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progress, the Journal in certain respects falls somewhat short of that standard of merit which previous experience may have taught its readers to expect.

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### *Proposed Legislation* re *Cases of Incipient Insanity.*

IT is not necessary to emphasise in these columns the fact that for many years past resentment has been growing with increasing strength against the strictness, one might even say the harshness, of English Lunacy Law in relation to those patients who stand on the threshold of confirmed insanity. This Association, in common with other bodies, has attempted to get that strictness modified, where modification is, in its opinion, justifiable. The want of success in these endeavours is the more galling because in the sister kingdom, which later than England undertook the rescue of the insane from neglect and cruelty, foresight and science combined to effect that for which England still longs. The success which from the first has attended in Scotland a step that was indeed an experiment, in days when public alarm rather than public altruism controlled procedure, is sufficient to support an allegation of denial of justice in England to those whose need for consideration is pressing. That which was deemed good in days when so little was known of the problems surrounding insanity, must surely be not only good, but of essential importance also now that both scientific industry and clinical observation have advanced a long way, and are still advancing, towards the solution of those problems by way of more enlightened treatment. Popular prejudice is a strong opponent, and easily aroused. But that it can be beaten down in time by a successful administration of truth has been recently proved by the passing of the Mental Deficiency Act in the face of strenuous and capable obstruction. It cannot, however, be hoped that success will come until there is something like unanimity among those seeking it. Most unfortunately, on more than one crucial point even the most liberal-minded men differ absolutely. For instance, certification except when the disease is fully confirmed is considered very generally to be undesirable, and most people, whether experts or not, would wish to see it avoidable. But on the controlling factors, such as detention, *locale*, notification, etc., there appears to be great divergence of opinion. Detention has in this matter

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