non-Western cultures. Anorexia nervosa has been widely reported in Japan (Suematsu *et al*, 1985), but very wide diagnostic criteria appear to have been used. Ong *et al* (1982) reported seven female cases of anorexia nervosa in Singapore, six of whom admitted to the desire for a thin body image.

Our retrospective study (which meant that disturbance of body image may not have always been enquired into) found that 9 out of 15 cases had body-image disturbance similar to that found in the Western population.

It appears that more cases of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are coming to the attention of psychiatrists working in developing countries and with ethnic minorities in Western countries. Further studies of the sociocultural factors and attitudes towards slimness as a desirable body shape may help to contribute to a better understanding of the role of these factors in the aetiology of anorexia nervosa.

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Journal, December 1992, **161**, 877. The price of *Psychoanalysis: Clinical Theory and Practice*, by J. A. Arlow, should be US$55.00 not £55.00.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The treatment of habitual criminals

The "Mitheilungen", or "Bulletin" (it is, as usual, partly in German, partly in French), of the International Association of Criminal Law for April, 1892, is devoted to the meeting of the Association at Christiania in 1891. Perhaps the most interesting discussion was that regarding the habitual criminal and his treatment. In a report on this subject, chiefly founded on the statistics of France, Germany, and Italy, Prof. van Hamel, the well-known criminologist of Amsterdam, points out that the increase of criminality in recent years is mainly, if not solely, due to the increase of recidivism. The number of criminals is increasing, especially in France, but it is the number of punishable acts committed by each criminal which is especially increasing. In France during thirty years the number of recidivists has increased 116 per cent., the number of first offenders only 18 per cent. Similar results are found in England, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere. Van Hamel proposes that every habitual criminal – a certain number of offences being fixed to prove recidivism – should be placed for observation during a period of twelve months in a special establishment. He should then be brought before a special court established for the purpose, which would hear the evidence of doctors, officials, etc., and determine the method of treatment to be applied to him. Uppström, of Stockholm, then took up the question. He brought forward further evidence as to recidivism in various countries, and insisted on the importance of never liberating recidivists until there is a reasonable assurance that they will adopt an honest life. He also dwelt on the importance of educating the will, and expressed agreement with van Hamel. A resolution in the sense of van Hamel's report was unanimously passed. It was an interesting indication that lawyers are gradually tending to fall into line with doctors where the criminal is concerned, especially when taken in connection with the recent Congress of Criminal Anthropology, when the lawyers mustered in unusual strength, and on the whole rallied to the medical side.

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