mean the imitation of reflex acts, of emotional states, of voluntary movements, of ideas, of beliefs, thus including all the manifestations of the activity of the cerebro-spinal axis. This imitation must always be involuntary; he who imparts the contagion is unconscious of the influence he exerts, and he who is affected by the contagion is unconscious of the influence he receives. Mental contagion is thus distinct from suggestion. The deliberate "I will" is always absent, even when voluntary actions are affected; the yawn of the person who sees another person yawning is the typical act of mental contagion.

Imitation is so very wide and often so very vague a subject that its discussion is apt to be unprofitable, and, notwithstanding the care with which they have sought to delimit their subject, it can scarcely be said that the present authors have altogether succeeded in wrestling successfully with the inherent difficulties of the theme which Dr. Toulouse has set before them. In the first part of the book they deal with the contagion of normal phenomena, of movements and acts, of emotional states, and of ideas. In the second part they describe the contagion of abnormal phenomena, of acquired habits (alcohol, tobacco, etc.), of morbid fears and anger (including insanity), of suicide, and of sexual perversions. A fairly large number of illustrative facts are brought together, and a number of lengthy quotations are introduced, nearly all from French authors. One of the few original observations brought forward concerns the alleged influence of contagion in the propagation of insanity; this the authors believe to be very rare, and then only operative in predisposed subjects. In a large asylum near Paris nearly 2000 *employés* have lived during the past thirty-five years; only four have become insane, and only two committed suicide, and in nearly all these cases adequate causes for the mental disturbance could be assigned.

The book concludes with a short chapter on what the authors consider the contagion of pathological manifestations of the æsthetic sentiment. This deals exclusively with some French poets, whose writings the authors do not seem to be familiar with, and whose names they cannot always spell correctly.

On the whole, it can scarcely be said that this is one of the most brilliant volumes in Dr. Toulouse's excellent series. This is in part, though not altogether, due to the difficulties of the task. By narrowing the field the late Dr. Aubry was able to produce a very careful and thorough study in his *Contagion du Meutre.* HAVELOCK ELLIS.

Part III.—Epitome.

Progress of Psychiatry in 1904.

AMERICA.

By Dr. WILLIAM MCDONALD, Jun.

After spending some months in visiting numerous psychiatric clinics in Europe, an American writer should have found inspiration and

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material for a letter conveying some sort of a comparative estimate of the state of psychiatric affairs there and in his own land. If, moreover, he has been privileged to hear frank foreign opinions concerning American psychiatric work, he may welcome the opportunity of responding to such criticisms as he may deem in need of response. So it is with no unwilling pen that the present writer addresses the annual letter to *The British Journal of Mental Science*. But let it not be assumed that the writer, in a spirit of pique, is hinting at the prevalence in Europe of a belittled opinion as to American work; on the contrary there has been found everywhere a liberal willingness to "give the devil his due"; nor, on the other hand, is there any desire to magnify our few virtues by eulogistic advertisement. What follows is meant as a brief reference to, and interpretation of, conditions, good and bad, which seem not always to be viewed in perfect focus from across the water.

Among observations of a sort not entirely flattering, and uttered by men whose conclusions are worthy of attention, the following were perhaps most often heard. They are here repeated with different wording, though in every case with strict adherence to the significance intended to be conveyed by the original critic, and are in effect:

That America has not produced her fair share of really notable psychiatrists.

That we have *no psychiatry of our own*, and that the product carelessly referred to as *American psychiatry* is but the appropriated and conglomerated output of modern European clinics, mixed heterogeneously with the out-of-date relics bequeathed by former generations.

That we are so handicapped by evil political restrictions as to suffer a nullification or perversion of many of our good efforts and intentions, and that the control of a considerable proportion of our institutions is in the hands of unscrupulous politicians with itching palms.

That an American medical diploma is frequently acquired with undue ease and after insufficient study.

That as a result of the lax regulations relating to practitioners' licences our institutions are supplied with officers of inferior medical knowledge and insufficient psychiatric experience.

To deny the existence of any warrant in the above-mentioned assumptions would instantly and justly condemn the writer as one who permits his reason to be biassed by pride of nation, for such judgments are at least partially consistent with evidence necessarily admitted in a truthful portrayal of American psychiatric conditions. Indeed, so great is the appearance of contradiction in the import of these conditions that their historian and interpreter undertakes a task not to be performed by a few clever flourishes of the pen or the scribbling of conservative generalisations. To present indubitable and sufficient evidence of advance worthy of mention and comparison with the psychiatric exploits of other lands one must study intently all the straws in the wind—wisps, in this case resembling more an intricate heap of jack-straws than nicely balanced weather-vanes.

As diverse as are the studies and their results in the great clinics of Europe, there is, nevertheless, a far greater appearance of organisation and of unity in method and purpose than in America. At first glance

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the activity and productivity, as seen, for example, in Germany, seem to far outrun and deeply overshadow our own. Unquestionably the enormous variation in the character and value of the methods pursued in the study of the American insane must be somewhat confusing to one who attempts the fixation of a common denominator for the work as a whole. The dissimilar nature of the activities, interests, and necessities of each individual state of a great land with variegated social constituents, unsettled economic conditions and immature political organisation, is somewhat unfavourable to unity in direction and equivalence of potency of labour of any kind, and undoubtedly the assertion that America has no characteristic psychiatry is fully warranted. One has only to glance at two of last year's Annual Reports from institutions in different States to convince himself that at least in the classification of patients there is sufficient lack of harmony. In one Report the cases are arranged according to the newest foreign classification, while in the other the inventory appears in a form so wonderfully conceived and so grotesquely minute in detail as to risk a provocation of merriment rather than of the pathos which so sad an exhibition of perplexity should arouse; a few hundred patients are divided into classes, the enumeration of which covers several pages on which the modern "*dementia præcox*" jostles the mediæval "*psychoses from disappointment in love and blighted affection*," and there seems to be no case in which there was any doubt as to the accuracy or propriety of the diagnosis. Is it any wonder that foreign colleagues, after reading such flights of phantasy, assume that some of our medical officers are very badly educated and very imperfectly trained?

That the American psychiatrist is open to the charge of depending too largely on his trans-Atlantic neighbours for ammunition may be due to national traits which largely influence affairs *non-psychiatric* as well as those of the alienist; for we have become somewhat hardened to the complaint so often heard that "the American works up at fever-heat the ideas evolved by his slower acting European brother." Perhaps no better example of the wholesale appropriation of trans-Atlantic ideas could be mentioned than the American adoption of the Kraepelinean classification before the innovation had produced hardly more than a ripple on the surface of that profound sea of German psychiatry which it is now so sorely troubling. Indeed, so great was the American enthusiasm as to amount almost to a furor, and so unreserved as to detract from what, if tendered with a more conservative attitude, would have constituted an unusual honour to Professor Kraepelin. The blind precipitancy with which this convenient nomenclature was seized hold of was the damning feature of its reception, and its author must have stood amazed at the sudden unlicensed and unbridled application of identical terms to clinical forms of the most heterogeneous type. American writers began to talk glibly of *dementia præcox*, and, instead of being used as a convenient and perhaps but temporary appellation for a number of seemingly related clinical phenomena, it appeared on every other page of psychiatric literature as though it were sponsor to a long-accepted, definitely defined and completely understood disease, a position to which Kraepelin himself allows it only a possible future eligibility. Likewise the term "*manic-depressive insanity*," though

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perhaps better understood, with nearly the same recklessness, displaced a long list of time-honoured labels and had itself tacked on to clinical pictures never painted by the master hand. One author, thinking to advertise the grand practicability of the new nomenclature, gives a really beautiful description of a number of excited patients, and then with a *sang froid* almost pitiable, gives the differential diagnoses, calling those cases *catatonics* whose symptoms evidently corresponded exactly with Kraepelin's description of manic excitement and, inversely, with a firm hand placards the real catatonics with a capitalised *manic excitement.* It is such hasty desire to rush into print with articles based on insufficient study which has caused American psychiatric literature the pain of being stigmatised here and there as superficial and unsubstantial.

It is not surprising that we find peculiar assumptions abroad as to the general improper political management of our institutions for the insane; bad news will not stay at home, and accordingly the few unfortunate examples of maladministration which have caused us shame at home have deeply coloured foreign opinion. Charges of cruelty in the treatment of patients, of misconduct on the part of attendants, of misappropriation of funds, and complaints of various sorts reaching the ever attentive ear of yellow journalism have furnished material for the most startling of red-inked headlines so arranged as to present to the American public, as well as to over-sea observers, pictures absurdly magnified and fantastically distorted. The result has been in at least two instances an abrupt political interference which, while being paraded before a voting public as a praiseworthy act of altruism, has only succeeded in clogging the wheels of psychiatric progress. With sadness, however, we must admit that in at least one investigation of recent years the verdict returned was a just one, and the subsequent "shake-up" timely as well as beneficent.

But there are lighter and more cheerful tints as well as dark and displeasing aspects of the picture we are striving to paint.

If America has no psychiatry of her own, there is at least an enormous activity which goes by that name and which, with the characteristic national energy—even allowing largely for its frequent erratic course—may be expected to result in something worthy of the labour and deserving of the name. That we are unable to point with pride to a long list of notable psychiatrists is no shame, for until the middle of the last century the United States had been too busy carving for itself a permanent name upon the political roll of the world's great nations, and could scarce devote time and energy to the development of philosophy and science. While for centuries Europe has been turning her attention more and more to the great problems revolving about the nervously and mentally ill, it is only during the past two decades that the questions of alienism in America have received scientific regard to any considerable extent beyond the pressing demands of necessity. During this twenty years the number of laboratories devoted solely to the study of physiological psychology has grown till it now many times exceeds the number in Germany, and the accomplishments of psychology form possibly a prelude to a similar onward march of psychiatry.

We must admit the wholesale appropriation of trans-Atlantic ideas. It is true that our men go abroad to garner the good wheat of European

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fields, and every year our workers strive to seize all that foreign *confrères* turn up in the course of scientific excavations; the latest laboratory exploits, changes in German clinical methods, new French studies in functional psychoses, or still other wise moves on the part of the Scotch Lunacy Commission, are all signals for the setting sail of special envoys, bound for foreign clinics and laboratories. Nowhere is the habit of incessant and omniverous reading so universal as in America, and thus all that is new and best is imported wholesale in the form of psychiatric books and journals. Commenting upon the sparsity of psychiatric periodicals on the files of a European clinic, a well-known psychiatrist said, "Reading is not so important—the patients are the best literature." Certainly the American student spends, as a rule, less time at the bedside than the German, and could well afford to copy some of the painstaking methods of observation and practical research of the latter; but unquestionably, allowing for equal attention to independent research, he who has studied the best work of others goes to the bedside with a mind richer and better prepared to make the most of his own labours than his less literary brother, and it is significant that there are to be seen of late, not only the indications of a further American development of European productions, but here and there the lively stirrings of a potent creative force. A glance at the publications of American psychiatrists in the past year will show that some of them are thinking for themselves and developing the products of their own intellectual activities as well as emulating the enviable feats of their neighbours. Unfortunately, the number of our psychiatric journals is so limited that much valuable matter must wait months for its turn in the press, or is perhaps eventually forced to make its appearance in one of the numerous journals devoted to general medicine; that not all of these articles are empty literary productions is evidenced by the solid character of the clinical and laboratory investigations upon which they are based. If a survey of the indices of psychiatric journals fails to convince, a perusal of the "half-yearly summary" of *The American Journal of Insanity* will afford the sceptic some conception of the living and healthy character of the work being carried on among our insane.

Other rainbows of promise are to be seen in the efforts made by our large medical schools to secure the most competent alienists as teachers, in the increase in time and attention given over to the study of mental diseases, and in the care taken to provide opportunities for practical clinical illustration and experience. As a further indication of the endeavour to develop good alienists for the future may be mentioned the plan of supplementing the practical experience of assistants in insane hospitals by courses of lectures and by conferences between members of different hospitals. In New York State, where this excellent practice originated, the results have been encouraging, especially in the development of more scientific methods of examining and studying patients as well as of recording and preserving histories. The work in the hospitals themselves is receiving added impetus from the increasing effort to relieve the superintendent of a part of the double load he has been forced to carry—that of physician to an enormous family and that of business manager of a complicated financial corporation; the appointment of so-called "clinical directors" is an attempt to take from the

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superintendents' shoulders the direct responsibility of supervising the examination and further minute study of the cases.

There is evident a quite general willingness on the part of those in control to enrich the laboratory facilities and encourage among the medical officers a broad spirit of scientific investigation, while the more irksome of routine duties are being lightened by adding to the staff numbers. Higher salaries and improved living quarters are beginning to attract and retain for considerable periods of time men of ability, such as in former times rarely refrained long from a search for more remunerative occupation and a more congenial life.

After all, the final criterion of judgment as to the value of psychiatric work is to be the degree of amelioration which it can afford the mentally ill, and the potency of the measures which it is able to take toward the prevention of insanity and diminution of its prevalence. Judged by its efforts in this direction, there is no need of apology for the American work in general. Nowhere is the hospital spirit more universal than in American institutions. The respect in which person, property, and rights of the patient are held compares quite favourably with the attitude which is at times seen in foreign clinics, and which is occasionally somewhat shocking to the American observer. The eagerness to present a characteristic clinical picture would probably seldom so dominate an American teacher that he would permit a wildly excited young female to remove her clothing and run nude before the wondering eyes of a large congregation of medical students. It cannot be denied that there is occasionally found a medical officer who has a finical fear that the very slightest of his own words or acts may, in some mysterious manner, injure the patient's chances of recovery, and some such phobia has probably more than once resulted in an unjustifiable neglect of proper examination and study. On the other hand, it is questionable if such exhibitions as that just mentioned result in good to the patient, to the students, or to psychiatric progress, and it seems improbable that they tend to engender in the future physician the habit of regarding the erratic individual as a person seriously ill and demanding the most careful attention of skilled medical men. The custom of considering the insane as being the unfortunate subjects of grave illness requiring hospital treatment as well as restraint and protection is steadily advancing in America, and is evinced in a most satisfactory manner by the growing demand for observation and detention wards in all general hospitals, by the establishment of departments for mental diseases in the dispensaries and out-patient clinics, and particularly in the development of high-grade training schools for nurses, where are taught the principles of humane and scientific care and treatment of the insane; such schools are rapidly augmenting in numbers and in efficiency.

Probably it would be difficult to find more beautiful, more thoroughgoing, or more scientific hydro-therapeutic arrangements than may be seen in a number of our private institutions, and the public hospitals will probably be not far behind in the adoption of systems as practical and efficient, if not so elaborate or artistic in construction; in the matter of continuous tub-bathing we are, however, as yet far behind.

The employment, the entertainment, and healthy amusement of

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patients is receiving more careful attention of late, and consistent results are being harvested, with promise of a greater future yield, while the principles of non-restraint, parole, and outdoor care have made such strides that the public mind is being rapidly educated into a more healthy and natural view of insanity. Faith in drugs, excepting those of a stimulating and tonic nature, or as are directly indicated by disordered bodily function is perhaps less universal than in Europe and one finds less general use made of hypnotics and sedatives—even of those numerous and much lauded modern preparations.

But this was to be a letter containing a plain statement of facts and must not be allowed to degenerate into such a listing of virtues as would lay the writer open to the charge of indulging in that "spread eagleism" already too often detected among our American traits. If the above shall have served the purpose of demonstrating an honest attempt on the part of American psychiatrists to develop a science and a profession of psychiatry within the borders of their own big land, and if it shall have justified a modest claim to a verdict of *progress*, the writer will remain content with his humble message to the *confrères* across the sea.

DENMARK.

By Dr. A. Friis.

In Denmark little of note has happened to mark the progress of psychiatry during the year 1904.

The House of Parliament has decided that the Viborg Asylum, for chronic cases, shall be enlarged to accommodate 700 patients, a measure calculated to relieve the congestion at present felt with accommodation for only 350.

There is also under consideration a proposal to build another asylum for the helpless feeble-minded, who require only general care and supervision.

Literature on psychological subjects has been scanty, only one book having appeared. It is entitled *Slägter, Iagttagelser fra en Sindssyge, Anstalt* ("Families: Observations from an Asylum for the Insane"), by Dr. F. Lange, Medical Superintendent of the Middlefart Asylum. It is an excellent work in which the author, in his usual lucid style, puts forward his experiences of degeneration.

FRANCE.

By Dr. René Semelaigne.

Dementia præcox.—An interesting discussion on Dementia præcox took place at the annual meeting of French alienists held at Pau last August. Dr. Deny of Paris, in a Report on that subject, made the following statement: Dementia præcox is a psychosis essentially charac-

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