During the last five years, of 300 prisoners who were certified during the currency of their sentences, 145 were probably insane on their reception and 93 were certified within 21 days.

As regards more general matters, the futile and indefensible system of short sentences of imprisonment still persists. A special director of prison industries has been appointed. Attempts are being made to extend the hours of associated labour, and thus to lesson the time spent in cellular isolation. The prison newspaper, the *Weekly News*, has proved to be a great success and its circulation has been extended. An operation theatre is to be made available at a prison in the London area. M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

Diffuse Sclerosis. By L. BOUMAN. Bristol: John Wright. London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1934. Pp. 160. 15*s*.

Dr. Bouman published a valuable paper on diffuse sclerosis as far back as 1924. In the present monograph, he gives the case-histories and pathological findings from six new cases, including four children and two adults. In addition to his own material, he has drawn on all available recorded observations for a description of the symptoms, diagnosis, differential diagnosis, prognosis and post-mortem appearances of this disease. He discusses all debatable points, both clinical and pathological. Only a few interesting points of his summary can be mentioned here. In children the clinical picture is rather characteristic, and makes accurate diagnosis possible. Disorders of gait, convulsions, or psychic symptoms without tangible cause should arouse the suspicion of diffuse sclerosis. Cerebral blindness or deafness appear as the first signs in only a proportion of the cases. In the course of the disease, intellectual disturbances progress and variable motor symptoms appear. In the final stage the "attitude of adoration" (Collier and Greenfield) is very typical. Sometimes a rise of temperature is reported. Changes in the cerebro-spinal fluid are uncommon. In adults the diagnosis is much more difficult than in children. In particular, cerebral tumour must be excluded. Bouman thinks the psychic symptoms of great importance, especially change of character and conduct, combined with forgetfulness and dullness. Furthermore, the development of bilateral motor disturbance with spasticity is very suggestive.

With regard to the pathological anatomy, it is mentioned as an important fact that apart from the usual single patch of demyelinization, similar foci of smaller size are found, not only in the hemispheres, but also in the brain-stem, the cerebellum and the spinal cord. The axis-cylinders are not intact. All types of glia cells show progressive changes. The question whether the changes are inflammatory or degenerative does not admit of a general solution; there are cases which are certainly inflammatory, and also degenerative ones, but there are others which cannot be classified from this standpoint. The notion that a breakdown of glia function is the pathogenetic factor for the anatomical picture is discussed very reservedly.

The value of this monograph consists in the completeness of its collection of cases recorded in the literature and of the various hypotheses that have been put forward, together with the addition of new and interesting material as a basis for the discussion and future solution of the problems which diffuse sclerosis presents. E. GUTTMANN.

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