could not do better than adopt this scheme. We are, however, of opinion that general adhesion is much more likely to be given to a scheme sanctioned by a committee of competent pathologists appointed by an authoritative body to draw up such, than to any individual scheme emanating from a single asylum, however efficient. We cannot forget that individual efforts in this direction have failed before, though meriting, in our view, a better fate.

The appointment of an authoritative committee to draw up a working scheme would in itself be indicative of a dawning desire for collective work in asylums, which, alike in clinical and pathological fields, is a consummation to be wished.

Hysteria as a Psychosis.(1) By Dr. DONALD FRASER.

The Presidential Address to the Glasgow Pathological and Clinical Society was devoted to this interesting question. Dr. Fraser makes a very depreciatory statement as to the powers of observation of his fellow-countrymen by asserting his belief that "we do not see many of the typical, and I may say developed forms of the disease, because we do not look for them."

This would seem to imply that these disorders were produced by the act of looking for them; this can scarcely be the case, for many physicians look sedulously without success, and would be greatly pleased to find marked examples of the disorder.

The style of cases so commonly described by French writers would, however, force themselves on the observation of the most inattentive, and surely such observers as Buzzard, Gowers, and many others cannot be so classed.

Speaking of their prominence in France, he uses the phrase "granting their over-development," which seems to imply that their degree of development depends upon the attention of the physician, which would be a strong condemnation of the modes of treatment which produced such developmental results.

Dr. Fraser quotes Sollier, who says "there is not an hysterical disease in the cerebral mechanism which is hysterical;" also the definition of Charcot and Marie in regard to its being a "peculiarly constituted mode of feeling and reaction;" the view of Myers that "hysteria is essentially characterised by an unreasonable auto-suggestion, ... and is a disease of the hypnoid stratum," and speaks of the *rôle* of fixed ideas in the production and maintenance of the hysterical condition.

The author alludes to the alterations of personality described by Binet, and says that the first of Binet's propositions in regard to the development of them is the one we are concerned with as hysteria, viz. that it is to the disaggregation of the consciousness that many of its more striking phenomena are due. This, he says, is a "condition which permits the memories lost to the eye, though still subsisting in the subliminal consciousness, to assert themselves in bodily manifesta-

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tions." An important factor in this, he asserts, is the fixed idea, often depending on shock, &c. The memory, too, is essentially affected.

The author quotes at length cases illustrative of these views, and concludes his instructive and suggestive paper by the statement that, while considering hysteria as a psychosis, he accepts Janet's (2) views as a working hypothesis.

(1) *Glasgow Medical Journal*, December, 1897. (2) État mental des hystériques; les stigmates mentaux.

Part III.—Psychological Retrospect.

FRENCH RETROSPECT.

By Dr. MACEVOY.

The Self-immured (*voluntary entombment*).—Under this heading in *Revue Scientifique* (1898, No. 10) M. Michel Delines resumes a study of social psycho-pathology which Prof. Sikorski, of Kieff, has published in *Questions de médecine névro-psychique* concerning an epidemic of suicide which took place at Ternovo, in Southern Russia. Most of the details were obtained from the sole survivor of this tragedy, one Feodor Kovalev, who helped his co-religionists to bury themselves alive.

The Kovalev family, belonging to the old Russian faith, owned some property at Ternovo, where they extended hospitality to their fellow-sectarians, so that in time a kind of convent (*skit*) was established, where men and women led an ascetic life. Two individuals were predominant in the establishment, Mme. Kovalev, Feodor's mother, and a certain woman called Vitalie,—the former a good, industrious, sweet woman; the latter a spinster of thirty-five years, full of energy and decision. Vitalie very soon became the leading spirit of the convent; she administered the place and superintended everything (said mass, preached, laid down laws, &c.), although she made show of consulting Mother Kovalev. To a certain Pauline the younger, another inmate, Sikorski believes, however, must be assigned an important share in the elaboration of plans, and the psychological preparation for the terrible events which occurred at Ternovo, for Vitalie never decided upon anything before consulting her. Vitalie fasted, prayed, and read out from the old church works, but she knew very little concerning every-day occurrences as related in newspapers and modern works. Pauline, on the contrary, was more up-to-date, commented upon the events of the day, and stimulated the zeal of her companion.

In the autumn of 1896 Vitalie and Pauline began to talk of persecutions which they foresaw against their sect; they told their companions that they were to be sent to Siberia or imprisoned. The habitual feelings of the inmates of the convent—exasperation, suspicion, and cause-

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