

## PSYCHOLOGY OF SLEEP.

**I**T was with pleasure that the faculty and students of the Arts' course listened to a very instructive and pleasing lecture by a former graduate, in the person of Dr. Daniel Phelan, the well-known alienist and criminologist, on the Psychology of Sleep and Some of its Circumstances.

"Many of the delusions of the insane are really dreams, which they have not been able to separate from their waking experience." This statement, interesting as it is, was only one of many made by the Doctor during the evening's discourse.

The periodicity of sleep was first referred to by the lecturer. The human brain as an organic structure followed the laws of periodicity, a pronounced characteristic of all nature. It gave way to sleep as a result of a condition of weariness which was all humanity's daily experience, and was caused by the fatigue of the nerves and muscles of the body, the organs of movement, comprehension, and the higher intellectual faculties, a fatigue which was equally applicable to the organs of digestion, respiration and circulation. The conditions which attend sleep were next developed by Dr. Phelan. Consciousness was the last of the mental powers to succumb, while among the sense faculties, hearing kept watch the longest. The most interesting and fascinating phenomena in connection with sleep were dreams. Formerly considered to be actions of the gods, they were now recognized to be the residue of the activity of a slumbering brain. There was an absence of self-consciousness and judgment in dreams which accounted for their fantastic and disconnected course. It was a well known fact that dreams had been reproduced in reality, those which foretold sickness particularly. For instance, certain bodily ailments made themselves felt to a healthy man in a dream, when they were too slight to do so among the various interests of the day. Dreams were only of the duration of a few seconds or at most of minutes, though to the sleeper they often seemed very much longer.

Speaking of sleeplessness the Doctor said it implied a condition of ill-health in some shape or form. He then brought his lecture to an end after a lengthy analogy on the natural phenomena of dreams and the manifestations of insanity.

His lecture was a real treat to his audience, and the students will eagerly await a return lecture of the learned Doctor on any other phase of the interesting subject of which he has made a specialty.