

Books and Pamphlets.

INSANITY IN ANCIENT AND MODERN LIFE, WITH CHAPTERS ON ITS PREVENTION. By Daniel H. Tuke, M.D., F.R.C.P. Toronto: Willing & Williamson.

To the reader who is versed in the history of modern psychiatry, the mere appearance of the patronyme Tuke can hardly fail to stand as an ample guarantee of the practical soundness of any work on Insanity, coming from the pen of any one bearing that venerated name. That the writer of the above named little treatise is a worthy descendant of the founder of the world-famed "Friends' Retreat" at York, England, every intelligent reader, who has any familiarity with the literature of insanity, will cheerfully admit. For our own part, we feel bound to say, that we have but rarely fallen upon a book which embodies in so few pages (226 octavo) so valuable an amount of condensed practical, and highly interesting matter.

Dr. Tuke's discussion of that most important, and certainly not least beclouded question,—*the causes of insanity*—is handled with discretion, and consequently is free from much of that bold assumption which too often characterizes preposessed or incautious writers. He has very properly considered this part of the work under two distinct heads, the first of which he designates "The prevalence of the causes of Insanity among the nations of antiquity," and the second, "Insanity in relation to modern life."

The first chapter of the former is bestowed upon that *terra incognita* of humanity which has been honored with the respectable title of "Prehistoric Times." How far this period should be carried back in our planet's revolutions, must, so long as "the missing link" remains unfound, continue to be a problem no less perplexing in the inquisition than profitless in the solution. To write or to read the history of the historiless, is an enterprise demanding too severe a tension of the imaginative faculty, to be congenial to the lovers of plain matter-of-fact. We cannot therefore but express our surprise, that our amiable Quaker-enlightener has devoted even the limited space of his first twenty pages, to an exposition of the probable prehistoric causes of insanity. It is however rather comforting, to all who sympathize largely with the

afflictions of remote ancestry, to have from Dr. Tuke the following information as to the unturbed mentality of our cavernous progenitors. "To religious perplexities, commercial speculation, and political excitement, the man of the Drift period was certainly a stranger." We heartily concur in this belief; yet we are by no means prepared to think that the consociates of the cave hyæna, the wolf, and the grizzly bear, were exposed to *perplexities* quite as trying on the nerve centres, as have been in our later days the most angrily disputed problems of theology, the most disastrous commercial crises, or the most sanguinary political contests. At all events, must, for our own part, say, that we much prefer living in the present age of steamships, railway ocean telegraphs, and rifled cannon, even to their unavoidable adjuncts of collisions, storms, knaveries, and territorial robberies. If Dr. Tuke could but assure us that none of the old ladies who were ever burned as witches, we should have a clearer conception of the comparative prevalence of lunacy in the days of stone hatchets and chisels, and our appreciation of the modern status of the peoples would certainly be enhanced; but for the present, our faith in regard is somewhat shaky.

After disposing of the cave factors of lunacy, Dr. Tuke enters upon enquiries of later date, though hardly of more promising elucidation. The annals of the Egyptians and the Jews afford but very meagre material for the guidance of the writer on morbid mentality; but as in modern times, especially in England, the close relation between drunkenness and insanity has become admitted, if not an established fact, and as the Bible tells us that Noah was a pretty deep indulger, it is no very disallowable inference that, among both the *ante* and the *post* diluvians, madness must have been frequently encountered; but although Noah built a very large asylum for the preservation of numerous (both clean and unclean) animals, we have not the smallest scrap of information as to the provision made by either his ancestors or posterity for lunatics. If drunkenness was, must have been, one of the heinous sins which necessitated the destruction of all but eight of the race, it would still appear that Noah had very broken his pledge.

Dr. Tuke treats us to a passage from a very