

year, the thoughtful reader cannot help being alarmingly startled at seeing such a record of large percentages of cases of insanity being attributed to these three causes, viz. :—1. Hereditary Taint. 2. Worry from over-work. 3. Intemperance. The hereditary cause may at a low estimate be placed at 45 *per cent.* of the insane population. It is worth while in a Report of this kind to make inquiry into the radical cause of such a dire calamity as that of insanity. Nothing new can be written about it to medical men, but if the public can be made to pause and consider in the midst of the hot pursuits of every-day life, some good may result from a cursory glance at the subject. What is this hideous ogre which is working such woe in our midst? To say that a disease is hereditary means, in the community, that it is incurable, although such is not absolutely the case."

After noticing hereditary diseases, physical forms and features, and mental traits, the Doctor continues :—"The epileptic, the consumptive, the scrofulous, the syphilitic and the insane marry without knowledge or reflection, and, as a result, fill our hospitals, asylums and prisons with their degenerate progeny, or bequeath them a brood of ailments which makes a fruitful soil for a crop of deteriorated constitutions, which to the unhappy victims of parental folly, makes life not worth living for. The lower animals are carefully assorted and mated because it pays to raise superior herds of domestic production, but no pains is taken to elevate, ennoble, and improve physically, mentally, socially and morally the human race by taking rational steps to eradicate this evil. Morality rightly forbids law to interpose its arm in this matter, because of the freedom of choice which must be allowed to the subject, but here is a plague spot to root out, against which moral suasion might be used with good effect. It would be startling to say how much indiscreet marriages lie at the root of our social vices and national sins. The friends of humanity—more especially parents—might by judicious advice and discreet exposure of consequences following rash selection, do more for their children and generations yet unborn, than were they to endow them with the richest legacies." Yes, parents might, if there were some means of instructing them in regard to such matters; few at present know the consequences of "rash selection," &c. "The redeeming feature is," says the doctor, "that when such unions take place judicious living and intelligent obedience to nature's behest may do much to avert untoward results to themselves and their posterity. The vitiated system always makes gallant efforts to recuperate from its fallen condition, if seconded by intelligent conduct and habit."

It is worthy of notice that, in the Asylum, "During the year only five drams of morphia, four ounces of opium, and three and a half ounces of chloral were administered internally among an average of 765 persons (patients and attendants)."

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH OF WISCONSIN.

This is a valuable addition to Sanitary Literature, containing 165 large pages, of useful and practical information for the people. It contains practical papers on "Homes for the People," "Our Public Schools," "Ground air in its relations to health," "The adulteration of foods," and other subjects, together with numerous extracts from special correspondents.

ELECTRICITY IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY, WITH CASES TO ILLUSTRATE, By John J. Caldwell, M.D., Baltimore, Maryland. Practice limited to Diseases of the Nervous System.

Electricity is becoming a therapeutic agent of considerable importance in the treatment of disease, and doubtless ere very long investigation will cause it to be better understood. In this pamphlet of 40 pages, numerous cases are given in order to illustrate the value of the agent.