

treatment; and (2) that a number of chronic cases, which tend to recover under the old treatment, make up the apparent successes. He then goes on to say that the antitoxin issued by Tizzoni differs from the others in that it is obtained by precipitation of the serum by means of alcohol; in the other cases the serum is issued either in the usual liquid form, or is reduced to a solid by being dried *in vacuo* over sulphuric acid. All these antitoxins possess a very high immunizing power; this should never be less than 1 to 1,000,000, and Roux has succeeded in getting it much more powerful still.—*Therapeutic Gazette*.

HEREDITY IN RELATION TO INSANITY AND IDIOCY.

The opinion that a neurotic inheritance is the chief predisposing cause to insanity is now very generally held. Some alienists are disposed to go even further, and declare that it is mainly to the original constitution of the brain that we must look for the first and chief cause of mental breakdown, the ordinarily assigned causes being none of them, in themselves, sufficient to bring on insanity. It can scarcely be called into question that what is called rather indefinitely "the neurotic inheritance" does render the brain more liable to be affected by such proximate causes; and the belief is now general that, whether we can discover the fact of such inheritance by outward and visible sign or not, its existence and evil influence are indisputable. Indeed, the opinion has by a recent writer been rather dogmatically expressed in the statement that "the condition common to all mental disturbance is to be sought in inherited and inherent brain-defect." This is exclusive of the forms known as septic or toxic insanity and those instances of aberration of mind symptomatic of cerebral exhaustion, traumatism, and other pathologic lesions.

In view of the present etiologic importance assumed by this neurotic inheritance, or hereditary predisposition, it would be well to define this condition and determine its definite relationship to insanity and idiocy. The views of a distinguished German alienist are pertinent to this consideration, and may be briefly quoted. In the preface to his work on Psychiatry, Prof. Theodor Meynert expresses dissatisfaction with the statistical method, which, in his opinion, has laid inordinate stress upon hereditary predisposition, and which broadly teaches that predisposition itself is a form of disease and not a condition antecedent to it. Nor is he content to accept what he terms the "mystical conception of heredity," but he insists upon certain anatomic peculiarities in patients which constitute this predisposition. The existence of such peculiarities is to be inferred not only from symptoms and external signs, but also from due consideration of all abnormal proportions of the body. The doctrine of heredity,