

SOME PHASES OF KATATONIA.*

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It was in 1874 that Kahlbaum described a special form of mental disease whose characteristics were those now elaborated by Kraepelin under the head of the Katatonic form of Dementia Præcox. The original sketch still holds good in the main, Kahlbaum emphasizing those features which writers since his time have only been able to slightly modify—the symptom-complex—a progressive cycle showing first depression, then excitement and later stupor, with intellectual enfeeblement finally intervening; and these accompanied by motor disturbances characterized by spasticity make up the disease picture to which the author gave the name *Spannungs-Iressein*. It will, perhaps, be as well just here to very briefly make one or two statements in regard to the question as to whether the Katatonic syndrome is ever found in any other clinical condition than that which we designate Katatonic Dementia Præcox. I cannot do better than to quote Régis, a prominent psychiatrist of the French School, whose views are not entirely out of sympathy with those of Kraepelin. He says: "To-day there is a general tendency to admit that the Katatonia of Kahlbaum is of two varieties—that which appears as Dementia Præcox, when it constitutes one of the chief clinical forms; the Katatonic, the other variety, where it appears only as a Katatonic or cataleptoid symptom (the symptom of catalepsy of Brissaud), and may possibly be observed in a number of the neuroses or psychoses, particularly in hysteria, in depression, in paranoia, in the toxic psychoses and in various psycho-neuroses." His next statement does much to clarify his conception of the Katatonic form of Dementia Præcox. He continues: "The Katatonic form of Dementia Præcox, following the description of Kraepelin, is characterized by the particular states of stupor and excitement ending usually in dementia and accompanied by negativism, suggestibility and stereotypy;" to which I subscribe with the exception, that I cannot agree that all of these patients show stupor in the true sense. I will have occasion to speak further of this later on.

Now that we have a clear idea of the case which may be classed as Katatonic precocious dement, it is only fair to say that the term Dementia Præcox itself, and the term from which it

*Read as a part of the symposium on Dementia Præcox before the Toronto Academy of Medicine, January 14th, 1908.