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FRANCIS BACON, *Proleg. Instaurat. Mag.*

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"IN adopting our title of the *Journal of Mental Science*, published by authority of the Association of Medical Officers of Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane, we profess that we cultivate in our pages mental science of a particular kind, namely, such mental science as appertains to medical men who are engaged in the treatment of the insane. But it has been objected that the term mental science is inapplicable, and that the terms, mental physiology, or mental pathology, or psychology, or psychiatry (a term much affected by our German brethren), would have been more correct and appropriate; and that, moreover, we do not deal in mental science, which is properly the sphere of the aspiring metaphysical intellect. If mental science is strictly synonymous with metaphysics, these objections are certainly valid, for although we do not eschew metaphysical discussion, the aim of this Journal is certainly bent upon more attainable objects than the pursuit of those recondite inquiries which have occupied the most ambitious intellects from the time of Plato to the present, with so much labour and so little result. But while we admit that metaphysics may be called one department of mental science, we maintain that mental physiology and mental pathology are also mental science under a different aspect. While metaphysics may be called speculative mental science, mental physiology and pathology, with their vast range of inquiry into insanity, education, crime, and all things which tend to preserve mental health, or to produce mental disease, are not less questions of mental science in its practical, that is, in its sociological, point of view. If it were not unjust to high mathematics to compare it in any way with abstruse metaphysics, it would illustrate our meaning to say, that our practical mental science would fairly bear the same relation to the mental science of the metaphysicians as applied mathematics bears to the pure science. In both instances the aim of the pure science is the attainment of abstract truth; its utility, however, frequently going no further than to serve as a gymnasium for the intellect. In both instances the mixed science aims at, and, to a certain extent, attains, immediate practical results of the greatest utility to the welfare of mankind; we therefore maintain that our Journal is not inaptly called the *Journal of Mental Science*, although the science may only attempt to deal with sociological and medical inquiries, relating either to the preservation of the health of the mind or to the amelioration or cure of its diseases; and although not soaring to the height of abstruse metaphysics, we only aim at such metaphysical knowledge as may be available to our purposes, as the mechanic uses the formularies of mathematics. This is our view of the kind of mental science which physicians engaged in the grave responsibility of caring for the mental health of their fellow-men may, in all modesty, pretend to cultivate; and while we cannot doubt that all additions to our certain knowledge in the speculative department of the science will be great gain, the necessities of duty and of danger must ever compel us to pursue that knowledge which is to be obtained in the practical departments of science, with the earnestness of real workmen. The captain of a ship would be none the worse for being well acquainted with the higher branches of astronomical science, but it is the practical part of that science as it is applicable to navigation which he is compelled to study."

J. C. BUCKNILL.

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CONTENTS.

PART I.—ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

	PAGE
J. Bruce Thomson, L.R.C.S. Edin.—The Criminal Lunatics of Scotland	1
T. B. Belgrave, M.D. Edin.—The Asylums for the Insane in St. Petersburg and Copenhagen	7
Dr. Edmund Neuschler.—A Visit to Gheel. A Letter to the Editors of the 'Journal of Mental Science.' Translated by JOHN SIBBALD, M.D. Edin., Medical Superintendent of the Argyll District Asylum	20
Recent Contributions to the Pathology of Nervous Diseases	44
Henry Mandaley, M.D. Lond.— <i>Clinical Cases.</i> Acute Mania and Acute Maniacal Delirium	59
Edgar Sheppard, M.D.—On the Treatment of a certain class of Destructive Patients	65

PART II.—REVIEWS.

Professor Griesinger's Treatise on Mental Pathology and Therapeutics	75
Die Pathologie und Therapie der Psychischen Krankheiten für Aerzte und Studierende von Dr. W. GRIESINGER, Professor der Medicin und Director der medicinischen Klinik an der Universität Zürich, Zweite, umgearbeitete und sehr vermehrte Auflage. Stuttgart, 1861, pp. 538	ib.
Modern Culture: its true aims and requirements. A series of Addresses and Arguments on the Claims of Scientific Education. Edited by EDWARD L. YOUNG, M.D. Macmillan and Co., 1867	85

PART III.—QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE.

1. *German Psychological Literature.* By JOHN SIBBALD, M.D. Edin.—*Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie*, vols. xxi, xxii.—On the Influence of Intermittent Fever on Insanity. By Dr. NASSE.—The Retention of Memory in different Forms of Insanity. By Dr. C. PELMAM.—On the Results of Treatment at Gheel as regards the Cure of Patients. By Dr. F. WIEDEMEISTER.—Contribution to our knowledge of Morbid Condi-

	PAGE
tions of the Mind. By Dr. WILLE.—On Cold Bathing as a Remedy in Mental Disease.—Mental Derangement produced by the Development of Echinococci in the Brain. By Dr. J. KNOCH.—Tabes dorsalis and Paralysis universalis progressiva. By Dr. WESTPHAL.—On the Treatment of Melancholia with Opium. By Dr. TIGGES.—An Instrument for determining difference in the size of the Pupils. Dr. F. OBERNIER.—On the Development of Grey Cerebral Substance as a new Formation in the Walls of the Lateral Ventricles. By Dr. MESCHÉDE.—Hereditary Tendency in Insanity. By Dr. W. JUNG.—Typhus among the Insane. By Dr. WILLE.—A new System of Measuring the Head. By Dr. F. OBERNIER.—A Contribution to the Subject of diminished Responsibility. By Dr. FLEMMING.—Insanity in connection with Hydrocephalus. By Prof. ALBERS.—Cretaceous Tumours (Sandgeschwulst) in the Insane. By Dr. RIPPING.—Statistics of the Provincial Asylum for Curables and Incurables at Halle. By Dr. DAMEROW.—The Prevailing Prejudice against the Insane. By Professor JESSEN	88—113
2. <i>English Psychological Literature.</i> By S.W. D. WILLIAMS, M.D., L.R.C.P.L.—Notes of Lectures on Insanity, delivered at St. George's Hospital, by GEO. FIELDING BLANDFORD, M.B. OXON.—An Account of a Second Case in which the Corpus Callosum was defective. By J. LANGDON H. DOWN, M.D. Lond.—Marriages of Consanguinity in relation to Degeneration of Race. By J. LANGDON H. DOWN, M.D. Lond.—Observations on an Ethnic Classification of Idiots. By J. LANGDON H. DOWN, M.D. Lond.—St. Mary's Hospital. Case of a peculiar Delirium after Fever; with Clinical Remarks. By HANDFIELD JONES, F.R.S.—Mania after Fever. (Letter from C. LOCKHART ROBERTSON, M.D.)—On Insanity and the Criminal Responsibility of the Insane. By THOMAS MORE MADDEN, M.R.I.A., &c. &c.—On the Two Types of Ancient British Skulls. By JOHN THURNAM, M.D.	114—127
PART IV.—NOTES AND NEWS.	
The Lunacy Commissioners and the Surgical Home for Women.—Dr. KITCHING on the Gheel Question.—The Metropolitan Poor Bill.—The Supervision of Lunatics in Private Dwellings.—Medico-Psychological Association.—Publications Received, 1867.—Appointments.—Obituary	129—140
Notice to Correspondents	140
List of Members of the Medico-Psychological Association	i

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