

One conclusion from these statistics is that the recoveries in British asylums exceed those in American institutions by between eight and nine per cent. Another is the confirmation of Dr. Earle's previous contention, that there are not so many recent cases cured as was formerly alleged; and, further, that unfortunately the percentage of recoveries of all cases diminishes. Dr. Earle attributes this diminution to the admission of a larger proportion of chronic cases and of those which show greater degeneration, as in general paralysis, and to the increasing custom of not reporting as recoveries mere restorations from drunkenness, or forced temporary suspensions from habitual intoxication. The adoption of a higher degree of improvement as the criterion of recovery is mentioned as a possible cause. It is also intimated as just within the limits of possibility that statistics now are prepared "more generally in the spirit of conscientious loyalty to scientific truth."

It should be stated that important improvements were made in the Massachusetts Tables in 1879, and in those of our Association in 1883. It is to be regretted that the former do not give a Table corresponding to our Table II or IIA; and still more regrettable that the American Association does not adopt a series of amended Tables. Why not?

GENERAL PARALYSIS OR BLOOD-POISONING?

An American actor, Mr. McCullough, died recently, insane, in Philadelphia. He had at one time been under the care of Dr. Charles H. Nichols, at the Bloomingdale Asylum, New York, at which time he presented a typical example of general paralysis. A Dr. Engel, who treated him in Philadelphia, diagnosed "blood-poisoning." He died; a post-mortem was made, and the physicians who made it reported that there was disease of the blood-vessels of the brain, due to blood-poisoning. However, seeing that the pia-mater was opaque over a large part of the convexity of the brain, and was adherent, especially in the fronto-parietal region, and that in attempting to strip off the pia-mater small fragments of the cortex came away, the autopsy entirely confirms the diagnosis of the case made at the Bloomingdale Asylum. That a patient with a brain in the condition which is thus described should have been treated in Philadelphia by electricity and massage, is not pleasant to read of. Dr. Spitska, it appears, had seen McCullough act in New York some three years ago, and thought he was in the first stage of general paralysis at that time. Dr. Engel is stated in the papers to be an advertising doctor, who day after day announced the case to the world, and gave out that McCullough would be cured. We can hardly suppose his reputation will be increased by the result, and the post-mortem revelation.

Correspondence.

STATISTICAL TABLES. TABLE V.

TO THE EDITORS of the *Journal of Mental Science*.

GENTLEMEN,—It is now some years since the "British Medical Journal," in commenting upon the Annual Reports of our asylums for the insane, took occasion to refer to the stated causes of death among patients therein given as being, in many instances, loose and unsatisfactory, and urged the necessity for greater care and precision in this direction on the part of asylum physicians. That such criticism was at the time justified can admit of no doubt. Would it equally apply now?

I am aware, of course, that within a recent period the scope of this Table V. has been extended, and its statistical value, in the general opinion, increased in

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