

*Suicide among Soldiers at the Psychiatric Hospital at Mombello. (Archiv Neur. and Psychiat., September, 1920.) Sacchini, G.*

Suicidal attempts are more frequent among mentally diseased soldiers than civilians. The idea of death is rendered less repugnant and even familiar by the violent reactions of war. In one type of personality suicide is the preferred alternative to suffering.

Fifty cases are analysed: there was only one fatal result. Fourteen had made previous attempts in civil life. Hereditary taint was pronounced—of alcoholism 32 *per cent.*, suicide 30 *per cent.*, psychopathy 16, neuropathy 16. Ten cases were syphilitic, 3 tuberculous and 3 fearful of disease. Six were convalescent from trauma or acute disease; 20 had been neurasthenic following grave illness. Immediate causation was stated thus—"tired of living" 8, hypochondriasis 9, love disappointment 4, and not assignable 6. Definite pathologic causes were—attacks of unconsciousness, complete or partial, 12, gross mental disease 3, and military reasons were fear of censure and fear of return to the front.

The means chosen were—poison 22, precipitation to ground 9, under heavy vehicles 2, hanging 7, "cutting" 5, drowning 5, firearms 4. Two made multiple attempts.

Mental disorders classed mainly as neurasthenia, epilepsy, dementia præcox, and feeble-mindedness. Most had degenerative stigmas, 8 had criminal records, and 7 had previously been rejected for service. The analysis emphasises the frequency of an abnormal basis and the consequences of war on abnormals, whether or not congenitals, and particularly on defectives.

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*Voluntary Sequestrations and Liberty Psychoses [Les Séquestrations volontaires et les psychoses de la liberté]. (Ann. Méd.-Psych., December, 1921.) Courbon, Paul.*

According to Dr. Courbon forcible and illegal incarceration in asylums is a thing of the past in France. The sceptical visitor, expecting to encounter persons unjustly detained, is not only surprised at finding none, but is still further surprised by the discovery of patients pleading, in the most reasonable manner imaginable, to be allowed to remain and not to be given their freedom against their will.

The present article is concerned with those individuals who voluntarily seek admission to, or beg to be allowed to remain in, an asylum, though not presenting any mental trouble actually. The cases are divided into two main groups:

(1) The first or *utilitarian* group comprises those individuals who seek shelter in an asylum as the most convenient way of escaping justice, or of avoiding work. In order to obtain admission they simulate insanity or claim to have had previous psychopathic attacks. Their willingness to remain is but short-lived, for their object is not to escape from their evil impulses, but on the contrary, to be able to indulge them to better advantage. They soon begin to demand their discharge on the pretext that their mental state is normal. The cases belonging to this group are malingerers, and as such are abnormal; but they are not insane, nor does it follow that they become insane when given their liberty.

(2) The individuals belonging to the second group have a sincere