

several occasions. Dr. Jordan regarded the prisoner as lacking in the finer sentiments, and considered that he had not the normal appreciation of the act which he had committed. Dr. V. G. Maitland, of Dudley, had known the prisoner for some years, had examined him since the crime, and did not think that he knew his act was wrong.

Rebutting evidence was called by the prosecution. Dr. M. Hamblin Smith, medical officer of Birmingham Prison, had kept the prisoner under observation for three months. He considered that the prisoner's intelligence was fairly good, and did not regard him as coming within the legal definition of insanity, although his emotional reactions were not normal. Dr. W. R. K. Watson, of Brixton Prison, had examined the prisoner and regarded him as sane, but as somewhat lacking in intelligence, although not certifiable as a mental defective. Dr. A. C. Pearson, of Wandsworth Prison, had also examined the prisoner and gave similar evidence.

The judge summed up in terms of the McNaughton rules, and said that even if the prisoner's intelligence were that of a boy of 14 years of age, he would still be responsible for his actions. The jury found the prisoner guilty, and he was sentenced to death.

The case was taken to the Court of Criminal Appeal. It was argued, on behalf of the prisoner, that recent events, including the report of the Atkin Committee, indicated that the McNaughton criteria must now be regarded as insufficient. It was pleaded that the case was not one for punishment, but for permanent care. The Court, however, dismissed the appeal, stating that the law must still be administered in accordance with the McNaughton rules.

The death sentence was not carried out. The Home Secretary advised His Majesty the King to exercise his prerogative of mercy, and the prisoner's death sentence was commuted.

Occasional Notes.

Philippe Pinel (1745-1826).

ON October 25 of this year falls the centenary of the death of Philippe Pinel, and we feel that we cannot let the occasion pass without paying a tribute to the fine character and great achievements of this illustrious physician and philosopher whose name is written indelibly in the annals of psychological medicine.

His glorious work in Paris, which emancipated the mentally afflicted from probably the most appalling conditions to which

human beings had ever been subjected—conditions perhaps the most brutal and degrading ever known, even worse than the lot of the Spanish galley-slave—has made itself felt throughout the civilized world, and every modern mental hospital or psychiatric institution is a temple erected to his honour. Well might Marx in his *Akesios* (1844) eulogize him in the following words :

“ He who walks in an odoriferous flower-garden, which has formerly been a pestilential swamp, will best be able to appreciate what you effected in madhouses. Formerly an atmosphere almost stifling, damp rooms, the clank of chains, the cries of those under the lash, the hoarse growl of the rough attendants, the desperate frenzy of the ill-used patients ; these succeeded by clean apartments, the greatest humanity in personal attentions, and an atmosphere of peace and confidence throughout the whole establishment.

“ As you were to the sick a guardian angel, so to learners you were an intelligent teacher, and to your contemporary medical brethren a model of spotless morality.

“ Such a man lived long enough even had his life been short ; his labours are not to be reckoned by hours ; the heroic death of him who has convinced others, even if it comes early, is the noblest that a man can wish for.”

Esquirol, upon whom Pinel's mantle fell, says of him :

“ He had the genius of a great man and the virtues of a good man. He illuminated his century by his writings, by his teaching and by his moral qualities” (*Memories*, tome I, p. 231).

Long ages ago man defied Nature and took his fate in his own hands ; yet, despite his attempts to mould his environment to his own purposes, from time to time great movements occur in which his instrumentality is unwitting and in whose grasp he is more or less helpless. The progress of mankind has mainly been the history of such movements, and their effects have been far more profound than the schemes he has of himself deliberately initiated. The renaissance of psychiatry was one of these movements, and, like most of them, arose simultaneously in widely scattered centres. The reason why, how and where they originate is often difficult, even impossible, to state. There is no doubt, however, in this case that Pinel played a dominant part, as subsequent history shows.

Without pausing now to discuss the nature of the particular teleological factor involved, it may be stated that the instruments of these movements have been selected from all sorts and conditions of men. In not a few instances some of those whose instrumentality has had the most profound effect have been of humble, even insignificant origin. Again, the factor, incident or circumstance which has set in motion activities which may have ultimately revolutionized human character, conduct and aspirations have been trivial in comparison with the momentous outcome.

How true is all this of Pinel. The son of a poor and ever-struggling country doctor, as a student at Toulouse he had to teach others in

order to supply his own immediate wants. When, in 1777, having taken his doctorate of medicine on December 22, 1773, at the age of 29 years, he decided to seek his fortunes in Paris, he was so poor that he had to make the journey on foot.

Again, we have it on good authority that it was the tearing to pieces by wolves of a dear friend, who, when suffering from mania, escaped from his home to a neighbouring forest, that turned Pinel's mind definitely towards psychiatry.

Pinel felt from early life that he was destined to do great things, and intuitively he saw the necessity for developing his mind and equipping himself with knowledge of a wide kind. He found faithful friends and both help and consolation in the writings of Hippocrates, Æschylus, Sophocles, Pindar, Plato, Virgil, Horace, Plutarch and Montaigne. He dipped deeply into mathematics, mechanics, geometry, chemistry, botany, zoology, besides his medical and surgical studies. He lost no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the social problems of his day and he learned human nature at its worst and at its best.

During this period of maturation he was unknown except to a small circle of personal friends of great distinction, and for fourteen years abided his time, apparently satisfied with the present and careless regarding the future.

Yet this sensitive, reserved and retiring man, who was tender-hearted, of broad sympathies, who loved beauty, poetry and all sublimity, and was essentially a dreamer and student, had become possessed of such moral courage and indomitable will, that when the time and opportunity came, not only carried through successfully his historic work for the insane, but by his writings, his teaching and his example renewed Hippocratic principles and methods which had for years lain in the dust of the practice of medicine in France, and for which all Europe indeed became his debtor.

The story of his work at the Bicêtre, at the Hôtel Dieu and at Salpêtrière has become an epic, and is so well known that it calls for but little comment here. It struck the popular imagination, and the fame of Pinel and the spirit of his teachings spread far and wide.

Though dramatic in its setting and in the intensity of its effects, it was not undertaken lightly or without due care, but based upon the experience gained during several years of the moral and humane treatment of acute mental illnesses at a new asylum, the *Maison de Santé Belhomme*, which opened its doors about 1785 and in which Pinel placed the first patient admitted.

His influence, however, in the wider sphere of general medicine has not been so well remembered. The conflagration into which France

and all Europe had been thrown in Pinel's times had dealt hardly with medical education, and out of the remains of the shattered schools three were established in France on ambitious lines. In 1794 Pinel was one of those chosen to organize the *École de Paris*, at which he became Professor of Hygiene and Pathology. He was a dominant power in this school, which for a time was known as the *École de Pinel*. He applied the methods of observation, analysis and induction to clinical medicine, and as Pariset in his *éloge* delivered to the members of the *Académie Royale de Médecine* puts it—

“Pinel obtained the singular honour of reforming the practice of his contemporaries; he learned to see, to study, to separate phenomena, to bring them together, to compare them, to measure them in some sort, and, finally, to form his conclusions; but to form these conclusions by cautious inductions, and thereon to regulate the choice and application of medicaments—medicaments which he always preferred should be simple, few, and of well-known effect. In short, by his lessons and his example, he did what Cabanis wished to do—he restored the medicine of observation, the only one which Hippocrates, in his divine works, has bequeathed to posterity.”

Pinel's European reputation received its final crown when he wrote his *Nosographie Philosophique, ou la Méthode de l'Analyse appliquée à la Médecine*, first published in 1798. As edition succeeded edition, each improved upon, its circulation extended throughout Europe, and for twenty years and more was the acknowledged standard work for students and practitioners. He was elected a member of the Institute in 1803, was Consulting Physician to the Emperor Napoleon in 1803 and a member of the Legion of Honour.

No pen has ever yet adequately described the homage rendered to Pinel at his funeral when he was laid to rest in the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise. The immense concourse of people that assembled included the most eminent and the very poor and lowly—even paralytics crawled along to the place of interment. Pariset says: “Men of science, in their discourses, rendered homage to his genius; the poor, by their lamentations, rendered homage to his virtues.” And now after a century his memory is yet green, his fame undimmed, and the spirit that animated him still lives on embodied in modern medicine.

J. R. LORD.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Lunacy and Mental Disorder.

THE lively hope expressed by our President at the Association's Commemoration Dinner on July 15 that the Report of the Royal Commission would recommend the abolition of the many anomalies