

insufficient care taken of the husband, who is coddled up still more for every ache and pain his wife suffers. This statement is opposed to the remark: "In this inquiry the sufferings of the woman may therefore be neglected." I am sorry that I do not possess an indexed Goldsmith, and am unable to refer to the paragraph, but am certain that one or both of these authors mention the impeded convalescence, as I have frequently recited the story when delayed at a confinement. That our Lancashire matrons have not taken kindly to the idea of such a custom I scarcely need remark.

MR. GEORGE FOY (Dublin) writes: The author of the article "couvade" expresses a general dissatisfaction with all existing theories offered as explanations of this peculiar custom. I would like to know what are his objections to the theory of E. Reclus, to wit, that it is a ceremonial act to establish the right of parentage over the newly born child, which, if we accept it, would naturally lead to the conclusion that the custom arose amongst a polyandrous community. In connection with this question there is much information in Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Polyandry*, second edition, 1877, and his *Ceremonial Institutions*, 1883, Williams and Norgate.

. Most of the explanations of the custom given, and amongst others that of Reclus, are unsatisfactory because comparative study of the manners, customs, and modes of thought common to savages shows it to be inconsistent with the mental processes which obtain among them. It is not improbable that when the custom is met with among civilised races it may have some reference to right of parentage over the child. Isolated instances are found where the custom occurs even in England at the present day.

ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE IN CANTON.

DR. C. WENYON (Faitsham, China) writes: Some weeks ago I saw a reference in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL to the proposed establishment of an asylum for the insane in Canton. I have just learned from an American publication that an appeal for funds in aid of this object has already been made in America, and that a similar appeal is about to be made in England. Some persons from whom subscriptions have been received have applied to me for information and, for the benefit of others who may be similarly situated, I give you here the substance of my reply.

Insanity is not nearly so prevalent in China as in Europe and America. Cases of mania are extremely rare. Life generally here is free from the nervous strain which in the West so often destroys the balance of the mind. Cases of melancholia are occasionally met with, and some have been treated in our hospital here, but my experience shows that in confinement these patients go from bad to worse. Mental disease in China most commonly occurs in the form of idiocy or dementia. Owing to the simplicity of life here and the clan system of society, many persons thus afflicted are able to do something for their living, and, if not, they freely and safely go in and out among their relatives, and are, with few exceptions, kindly treated.

reaching, and the Chinese, by their treatment of the lunatic, have shown that the Chinese Asylum for the insane in China should be provided by the Chinese themselves. As a matter of fact taking the hint from the asylum in the British colony of Hong Kong, the Chinese did establish an institution of this kind in the town from which I write six years ago. I have paid several visits to this institution, but have never found a single patient in it. There is room, no doubt, for a lunatic asylum in the large provincial city of Canton, but the need is not of sufficient urgency to justify an appeal for funds to foreigners.

It is especially to be hoped, in the interests of the safety of European and American residents in China, that no foreign missionary society will be deluded into connecting itself with such an institution as that proposed. The prevalence of infanticide, and the possibility of training up the rescued children in the Christian faith, have led self-denying Roman Catholic missionary sisters to establish refuges for orphans and foundlings in many parts of this country, but the inevitably severe mortality among motherless infants has been so fruitful in evil rumours, that almost every anti-foreign riot which has occurred in China has originated in the neighbourhood of these orphanages. For asylums for the insane the same necessity cannot be urged; they, moreover, offer few or no facilities for evangelical instruction, while, on the other hand, they are of all institutions the most exposed to obloquy. Even in England scandals in connection with asylums still sometimes arise. In China the liability to misconception is greater, and the consequences of such misconception are certain to be much more serious. The hospital of which I have charge has been several times the object of destruction at the hands of the friends and neighbours of a maniac catholic patient whom I had for several months under my care, and who then went home to give his friends all sorts of fabulous accounts of our brutality.

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BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

Aix-la-Chapelle Ville D'Eaux. Aix-la-Chapelle: Rudolf Barth. 1891.
 The Practitioner's Vade Mecum. By Edaljee Cawasjee Appu (Tukina),
 L.M. and S. Bombay: Printed at the Imperial Press. 1891.
 Report on Cholera in Europe and India. By Edward O. Shakespeare,
 M.D. Washington: Government Printing Office. 1890.
 The Practice of Hypnotic Suggestion. By George C. Kingsbury, M.A.,
 M.D. Bristol: John Wright and Co. 1891.
 Geburtshülliche Taschen-Phantome. Von Dr. Med. K. Shibata. München.
 J. F. Lehmann. 1891.
 The Care of the Sick. Translated from the German of Professor von
 Esmarch by James Menzies, M.D. Galashiels: John McQueen.
 Seventh International Congress of Hygiene and Demography. Reports of
 the Meetings and Discussions held in London, August 10th to 17th,
 1891. London: E. W. Allen.

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