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ON THE SUPPOSED INCREASE OF INSANITY.

✓  
BY EDWARD JARVIS, M. D.

Dorchester, Mass.

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## ON THE SUPPOSED INCREASE OF INSANITY.

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Dr. James C. Prichard, in his Treatise on Insanity, page 236, says, "A very general apprehension has existed, both in this country," Great Britain, "and France, that Insanity has increased in prevalence of late years, to an alarming extent, and that the number of lunatics, when compared with the population, is continually on the increase."

A very similar apprehension exists in America, and the known facts and the public records seem to confirm it. There are certainly more lunatics in public and private establishments; they attract more of popular sympathy; they receive more of the care and protection of the government; more and more hospitals are built; and the numbers of the insane seem to increase in a still more rapid ratio.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to demonstrate, whether lunacy is increasing, stationary, or diminishing, in proportion to the advancement of the population, for want of definite and reliable facts, to show, how many lunatics there are now, and still less to show, how many there have been at any previous period. Wanting these two facts, we cannot mathematically compare the numbers of



the insane or their proportions to the whole people at any two distinct periods of time, and thus determine, whether lunacy increases or retrogrades.

It is but a recent thing, that any *nation* has enumerated its insane. And I cannot discover, that any nation has ascertained and reported this twice, and thus offered us data for the comparison.

Governments, political economists and statisticians have made accurate enumerations of the whole people. Beside this, they have ascertained their ages, employments and even their property, and many other circumstances respecting them. But very few have attempted to determine the degree and quantity of vital force among the people, the numbers that come up to, and the numbers that fall short of, their full development of strength and fulness of health, and enjoy each and all of their days, through their complete term of years. Still less have they enquired into and published to the world the defalcations and depreciations of mental health and power, and shown, how many minds were diseased, and how many were deficient, or idiotic, or demented, in any degree.

Several Governments have ordered this investigation, but none have done it thoroughly and completely. Most have been contented with estimates, or with such general enquiries as were answered entirely or in part by estimates or conjectures. They have not gone from house to house, making diligent and minute enquiry in every family, to know, whether there were any insane, and how many of these there might be, and what were their form and degree of disease.

The Government of the United States, in the decennial enumeration of the people, made this enquiry, in 1840, and again in 1850. But the published report of the first

census contains some of the grossest and most palpable errors in regard to the distribution of insanity. There was such a manifest carelessness and inaccuracy in some of the officers or clerks, who had the management of, or who performed the work of that enumeration and its presentation to the public, as to throw a doubt over the statements of the whole of that document.

The last census, that of 1850, has not yet been published.

We have the census of the insane in Belgium, taken with great apparent accuracy and reliableness; but as we have no other census of that nation of either a previous or subsequent date, it is impossible to make a comparison of the numbers.

A census of the insane at Norway, was taken, by order of the Government in 1825, and published in 1828, by Dr. Holst. Esquirol published an analysis of Dr. Holst's document in the *Annales De Hygiene*, in 1830. But we have no account of any earlier or later enumeration of the Norwegian lunatics, and consequently have no grounds for determining statistically, whether they have increased or diminished.

These are all the nations which are known to have made careful and thorough examinations of the numbers of their lunatics; and as they have done this only once, their single facts give us no ground of comparison, and we are therefore compelled to wait until they shall take and publish another census of their insane before we can determine their comparative condition and progress.

The French Government in 1843 published a large folio volume, the "*Statistique De La France*," respecting the condition of the people of that nation. Seventy pages of this document are devoted to the insane, and their condition, numbers, residence, situation, professions, cost of



support, causes of disease, and mortality during the seven years from 1835 to 1841 inclusive.

This is a State document; it is prepared and published by the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce; it comes with all the authority of the Government; and, without doubt, it contains all the facts that were then known in regard to the lunatics of France. Yet there is an apparent want of completeness in its statements.

This report gives accounts of the lunatics in hospitals and hospices, in poorhouses, and prisons and all other public and private establishments for their cure or custody. It includes those lunatics who were kept at home with their own friends, or were boarded in other private families, and also those who were wanderers, in vagabondage, strolling about the streets of the towns and country.

There are eighty-six departments in France. In sixty-seven departments, there were, in 1843, one hundred and nineteen public and private establishments for the insane, leaving nineteen departments without any provision within themselves for this purpose. All of these nineteen departments sent their lunatics to others, except three which reported no lunatics in any condition belonging to them during these seven years.

Only twenty-one departments are reported to have any lunatics at their houses or in private families, leaving sixty-five departments with all of their insane in public or private establishments especially devoted to them, or in prisons, or in vagabondage.

Only twenty five departments are reported to have any vagabond lunatics, wandering or strolling abroad, leaving sixty-one departments, all of whose patients of this sort are at their houses, or in other families, or in some institutions for their cure or custody.

Fifty-four departments are stated to have all of their lunatics in some public or private institutions, and none at their homes, or in any private families, or in vagabondage.

So important a department as the Seine, which includes the city of Paris, and about a million inhabitants, reports no lunatics at their houses, or in any private families, or as strollers in the streets, while there are stated to be 2,407 in the public and private institutions.

The department of Bouches de Rhone, including the city of Marseilles, according to this report, has all of its insane in public and private institutions.

Eleven departments had no lunatics in either place, or class of places, on the 1st of January, 1841, according to this document.

There seem to be remarkable omissions and imperfections in this report. That eleven departments should have no insane among their population at any moment—that fifty-four departments, including so large cities as Paris and Marseilles, should have none at their homes, or boarding in other private families, or strolling abroad during these seven years, is too improbable to be believed. The best that can be said of these reports, is that they contain the record of all the insane that were then heard of; and we must not infer from the blanks, that no lunatics existed, but that none were reported.

These explanations must be considered in estimating the value of the following table, which is taken from the 369th page of the "Statistique De La France :"—



Year.	Population.	Number of Lunatics.	Number of Lunatics in 100,000 People.
1835. ....	33,540,910	14,486	43
1836. ....	33,540,910	15,314	46
1837. ....	33,540,910	15,870	47
1838. ....	33,540,910	16,892	50
1839. ....	33,540,910	18,113	54
1840. ....	33,540,910	18,716	56
1841. ....	34,213,929	19,738	58

Here is shown an apparent increase of insanity in France, during these seven years. Yet as this document has the appearance of a collection of partial enquiries and estimates from the several departments, rather than the results of careful investigations in all the districts, and towns, and families, this table is to be taken rather as a probable than a certain account of the progress of lunacy in that country.

The British Metropolitan Commission of Lunacy, in 1844, made a most valuable report as to the lunatics and lunatic establishments in Great Britain and Ireland. So far as their report relates to hospitals and to all sorts of public and private institutions for the insane and to the patients contained in them, and to the pauper lunatics in poor houses and elsewhere and to the private self-sustaining lunatics who were under commission, it is doubtless correct, for it is based on record and observation.

They report 20,893 lunatics, of every sort and in every condition in England and Wales; 16,821 of these are paupers, and 4,072 are private or self-supporting patients.—All of these private or self-supporting patients are in asylums or hospitals, or licensed houses especially devoted to them, except two hundred and eighty-two who were under commission. No mention is made of any pay patient who is not in some institution, or under commission, none of any retained at their houses, or boarded elsewhere in private families, and supported by their own property or by that of their friends.

Without doubt, these are all the pauper lunatics, wherever they may be. It is very certain, that here are all the pay-patients who were under commission. But it is not probable, that there were no others,—none supported by their own or their friend's property out of hospitals or licensed houses, and not under commission. Nor is it probable, that there were only two hundred and eighty-two pay or private lunatic-patients in all England and Wales, out of public and private establishments especially devoted to them.

We must therefore conclude, that this is an imperfect census of the insane of England and Wales, especially when the commissioners themselves say, on page 182 of their report, that “of patients who have been under private care, for shorter periods than one year, no return is required, so that a large class of insane persons, *under certificate* exists, in respect to whose number there are no materials for calculation.” Again they say, “as regards those of whom return ought to be made, it is believed, that in a very small proportion of instances is the law complied with.” “We have not taken the class last mentioned, [certificated single patients] into the account, in our estimate of the present numbers of the insane.—Even if these returns were complete and all *certificated* single patients were comprised in them, there would still remain a considerable class of insane persons of all ranks of life, under the care of guardians or relatives, without certificate, of whose probable number we have no means of forming an estimate.”

We have then no enumeration nor any complete estimate of the insane in even England and Wales. Still less have we two enumerations taken at different times by which we may make any comparison.



The marshals of the United States enumerated and reported 627 self-sustaining, and 644 pauper lunatics in the State of Massachusetts, in 1840. The government of that State, in the year 1847, appointed a large and respectable commission to ascertain the number of the insane in the Commonwealth at that time. Instead of going themselves or sending suitable agents to every house to learn the sanity of its inmates, these commissioners sent circulars to the mayors and aldermen of the several cities, and to the selectmen of the several towns asking them to obtain and give this information. These public authorities, in their answers to the commissioners, gave them such knowledge as they possessed in regard to these matters. They returned the names of all the insane persons they knew. These municipal officers could return the numbers of the pauper lunatics in their respective towns and cities for they were subjects of public record; but they have no more knowledge of the domestic condition of private families than any other men of their respectability and range of acquaintance. Consequently this commission, through this mode of enquiry ascertained and reported one thousand one hundred and fifty-six lunatics who were paupers, two hundred and ninety-one who or whose friends were able to support them, and sixty-five others whose pecuniary circumstances could not be learned. These made one thousand, five hundred and twelve lunatics of all classes within the State of Massachusetts, in the year 1847.

The best commentary on the incompleteness of this report is the fact, that at the very time, when the commissioners made their enquiry, there were, in the various hospitals of Massachusetts or the neighboring States, three hundred and twelve lunatic patients belonging to Massachusetts, who were able to support themselves or were

supported by their friends, beside a probably larger number who were kept at their homes or boarded in private families, and yet this public commission discovered only two hundred and ninety one in all conditions both in public institutions and in private houses.

If this investigation had been thorough, and its results complete, there might have been some plausible ground for comparison of numbers, and determining the difference of the proportion of lunatics to the entire population in 1840, and in 1847. But as the last statement certainly is, and the first probably is, incorrect, all inferences from them would be useless and worthless.

The reports of the number of lunatics in other States and Nations are taken from still looser data than even these. They are generally founded on the number of patients resident in the lunatic hospitals. The various writers on this special subject, whose works, articles, and reports I have seen, go to this source and give the ratio of the hospital patients to the whole population in several countries, districts, and cities, as evidence of the comparative prevalence of insanity. Dr. Pliny Earle, quoting from the American Journal of Medical Sciences, gives the proportion of lunatics, as one in 3,350 inhabitants in Madrid, one in 4,879 in Italy, one in 7,181 in Spain, and one in 30,714 in Cairo, because these are the several quotients of their respective populations divided by the number of the lunatics in their hospitals.

The number of patients in the hospitals must bear some relation to the numbers of the insane in the countries to which they respectively belong: that is, they cannot have inmates unless there are insane among the people, and these inmates cannot exceed the whole number of the lunatics in the country or district unless they come from abroad.



But there are so many other elements to be taken into the calculation, that as yet the hospital population is no indication of the prevalence of mental disease in any community. It is rather an indication of the degree of civilization, and of general intelligence, especially in respect to mental disorder, of public generosity, and of popular interest, in behalf of the afflicted.

Thus we find, that whenever the seeds of this interest are once sown, and allowed to germinate, and grow, it spreads continually thereafter. Whenever the attention of the people of any country is called to this subject, and a hospital is built, there follows a remarkable increase of the cases of insanity revealed to the public eye, and seeking for admission.

In the year 1832, when the McLean Asylum at Somerville, Massachusetts, contained 64 patients, the State Lunatic Hospital was established at Worcester, for 120 patients. This was as large a number as was then supposed would need its accommodation. In 1836 one new wing, and in 1837 another new wing, and rooms for 100 more patients were added to the Worcester Hospital, and at the same time the McLean Asylum contained 93 lunatic inmates. In 1842, the Worcester Hospital was again enlarged by the addition of two new wings, and now these are all filled to the over flowing, having 450 patients in May 1851, while, at the same time, there were 200 at the McLean Asylum, 204 at the City Lunatic Hospital, at Boston, and 115 in the county receptacles for the insane at Cambridge and Ipswich, beside 36 in the jails, making 1,015 lunatics in the public establishments of Massachusetts in 1851, instead of the 182 which were there in 1832.

Beside these, there is now so great a demand for the admission of patients who cannot be accommodated in these establishments already built, and there is so much

interest excited in their behalf, and the friends of the lunatics are so alive to the necessity of providing means of relief for all of these sufferers, that the legislature has just now authorised the erection of a new hospital sufficiently large to receive 250 patients.

The State Hospital at Augusta, Maine, was opened in December 1840, with only 30 patients. In 1845, it was so crowded that the trustees asked for more rooms. In 1847, the building was enlarged, and 128 patients were admitted. In 1848, the house was all filled, and more were offered than could be accommodated, and the superintendent asked the Legislature to build still another wing to enable him to meet the increased demand.

The New Hampshire Hospital was opened in 1842, and received 22 patients: these were all that were offered. In 1843, these were increased to 41; in another year, 1844, there were 70; in 1845, there were 76; in 1846, there were 98; and in 1850, they reached the number of 120. In the meantime additions have been made to meet this growing demand for more and more accommodations.

The number of patients in the Eastern Virginia Asylum, at Williamsburgh, has increased more than 200 per cent in fifteen years,—from 60 in 1836 to 193 in 1850. Those in the Western Virginia Asylum, at Staunton, have increased more than 800 per cent in twenty-three years,—from 38 in 1828 to 348 in 1850.

The average number of patients in the Ohio State Lunatic Asylum, at Columbus, was 64 in 1839, and 328 in 1850, being an increase of more than 400 per cent in eleven years.

Now, no one would imagine, that the populations of these several States, have increased in these ratios of the increase of the lunatics in their asylums, within these



respective periods. But it will readily be supposed, that the opening of these establishments for the cure or the protection of lunatics, the spread of their reports, the extension of the knowledge of their character, power, and usefulness, by the means of the patients that they protect and cure, have created, and continue to create, more and more interest in the subject of insanity, and more confidence in its curability. Consequently, more and more persons and families, who, or such as who, formerly kept their insane friends and relations at home, or allowed them to stroll abroad about the streets or country, now believe, that they can be restored, or improved, or, at least made more comfortable in these public institutions, and, therefore, they send their patients to these asylums, and thus swell the lists of their inmates.

For the same reason, the people in the vicinity of lunatic hospitals send more patients to them than those at a greater distance. Thus, the county of Worcester, Massachusetts, has sent one lunatic out of every 116 of its population, while the most remote counties of the State have sent only one in 361 of their people to the State Hospital, since its first establishment.

In New York, the county of Oneida has sent one in 361, and the remotest counties sent only one in 1,523, of their people to the State Lunatic Asylum at Utica.

In Kentucky, the people of Fayette county sent one in 89 of their people to the Lunatic Hospital at Lexington, while the farthest counties sent only one in 1,635 of their population to that institution.

Similar differences, in the use of the public hospital, are found in Maine, New-Hampshire, Connecticut, Ohio, Maryland, Tennessee, and, doubtless, in other States the same will be found on investigation.

If we assumed the principles by which the numbers of the insane are determined or estimated by some writers, in Spain, Italy, Cairo, &c., assuming the hospital population as the basis of calculation, we should infer that the numbers of the insane, in proportion to the whole numbers of the people, had multiplied more than five-fold in Massachusetts in twenty years, five-fold in Ohio in ten years, and more than four-fold in Maine in the same period. We should also conclude, that insanity was more than three times as prevalent in Worcester as in Barnstable and Berkshire counties, in Massachusetts, four times as frequent in Oneida as in Cattaraugus and Chataque counties, in New York, and eighteen times as frequent in Fayette as in Macracken and Hickman counties, in Kentucky, in proportion to their respective populations. These deductions would be manifestly absurd.

In the year 1806, a committee of the British House of Commons, appointed for the purpose, made an inquiry as to the number of lunatics in the kingdom, and discovered and reported there to be 2,248, in all. Another committee, in 1815, reported these patients to be twice as many.

Dr. Burrows, in 1819, found 4,041 in the asylums of every sort, and estimated that there were 2,000 more in private families, making about 6,000 in all.

In 1844, the Metropolitan Commission discovered 11,272 lunatics in the asylums of all kinds, besides 9,621 in workhouses and elsewhere, without including "a considerable class of insane persons of all ranks of life, under the care of guardians and relatives." The comparison of the results of these estimates and inquiries shows an increase of near 200 per cent in the asylums, and about 250 per cent of all in twenty-five years, and almost 900 per cent in thirty-eight years. The popu-



lation increased, in the shorter period, about 37 per cent, and in the other period, about 78 per cent.

The number of lunatics reported to exist in the hospitals in France was 1,070 in 1801, and 2,145 in 1821, and 13,887 in 1841. This would indicate an increase of 100 per cent in the first twenty years, and 547 per cent in the next twenty years.

Thus we see that, except in Belgium and Norway, and perhaps in the United States, we have no positive and reliable means of knowing the numbers of the insane in the whole population at any point of time; and in no nation have we these facts satisfactorily given at different times, by which any comparison would be made.

We see also from the very great difference of hospital accommodations, and of the use made of them by the people of different nations, and at different periods by the same nation, that we have no means of knowing what number of lunatics abroad those in these establishments represent.

The statistics,—the ascertained and enumerated facts—then, are not sufficient to enable us to determine this question satisfactorily. For although we might compare the number of lunatics ascertained to exist in Belgium in 1841, and in the United States in 1840, with the numbers found in the hospitals, or calculated from conjectural answers to general inquiries, to exist at any previous or subsequent period, yet this comparison of an enumeration, which is supposed to be all fact, with a computation, which is part fact and part conjecture, would be, at least, unphilosophical, and might lead to error, and, certainly, it would lead to no reliable truth.

To compare the estimates of the proportion of insanity among the people, founded on the number of the lunatics in the asylums in England, or in France, or in Egypt, at

different periods, would be a still more unsafe method of reasoning, and lead to still more unsatisfactory results.

To infer the number of lunatics in the community from the number in the hospitals, is about as unsafe as to infer the number of births from the number of children in the schools. The first element here is wanting; that is, the proportion of all the children that are sent to school. Now as this is very different in Massachusetts, and England, and Spain, and Egypt, and Siam, no reasonable man would venture to compare the number of births in these several countries by the population of their school-houses. The provision for the cure and the custody of the insane in these countries differs as widely as their provision for the education of children; and yet, writers have given us the comparative numbers on this ground, as, in London one in 200, because there were 7,000 in the metropolitan Hospitals, and in Cairo one in 30,714, because there were 14 in the hospital of that city.

It must be farther considered, that many of these statements that were put forth as positive facts, are given in such round numbers, as to afford good reason for supposing that they, or their elements, are estimates, rather than actual enumerations.

Thus, in some works on this subject, there are stated to be 32,000 lunatics in France; 16,000 in the United States; 7,000 in London; 4,000 in Paris; 2,000 in Pennsylvania; and 1,000 in Massachusetts. Millingen says, the proportion of lunatics to the people, is one in 1,000 in England, and in France, one in 1,000.

One department in France, Ariege, gives 300 vagabond lunatics, for four successive years without change, but these suddenly, in the fifth year, diminish to 250, and, in the seventh year disappear entirely. Another department, Seine Inferieure, reports 200 lunatics for seven suc-



cessive years, and another 300 for three successive years in private families ; Saone Haute reports none either in private families or as vagabonds for two years, when suddenly in one year there appear to be 193. Sarthe reports 273 lunatics in families in 1837, and then they all disappear, and are reported no more. Mayenne reports eight in families, and as vagabonds in 1835. These are increased to 209 in 1837, and diminished to 21 in 1838, and to 8, the original reported number, in 1841. There are so many of these apparent inaccuracies, such full and round numbers, and such unvarying totals, where there must be some change, and such sudden and violent changes, out of all relation to the ordinary changes in disease, or the circumstances of society, that we are compelled to look with distrust upon the whole and consider it as but little better than mere guess work, with more or less foundation in fact.

Even if these statements were all accurate and complete, they are of such different nature, that they do not enable us to determine with any certainty the number of the insane of the same country at different periods, nor of different countries at the same period.

Nevertheless, as all enumerations, estimates, and computations, from whatever source, give larger numbers of the insane at each succeeding period, and as none of them give less, except the enquiry in Massachusetts, by the State Commissioners in 1847, and as, in almost all states and countries, the history of whose hospitals through several years has come to us, there are more and more that ask for hospital accommodations, and they increase as fast as rooms in the hospitals increase, and in some places faster, there is plausible ground at least for the supposition that insanity has been increasing for the last half century, and is now on the increase; and there

is certainly a manifestation of more and more lunatics in these communities, if not a development of more and more insanity, among their individual members.

Not finding the facts of history and statistics sufficient to determine, whether insanity is an increasing, or diminishing, or stationary disease, we may derive some additional light from an examination of the origin and sources of this class of diseases, and see whether the causes are more or less abundant, and act with more or less efficiency now than formerly, and are likely to produce more or less lunacy.

Esquirol says, that "insanity is a disease of civilization and the number of the insane is in direct proportion to its progress." "The progress of civilization multiplies madmen (*fous*.)" So certain is he, that this progress of society causes this disorder, that he asserts, that the insane have a right to demand that civilized society should remedy the evil which it causes. "It is not pity, nor benevolence, but justice that should restore madness." "If it is true, that madness has a direct relation with civilization, it is the duty of society not only to ameliorate the lot of the insane, but it is right even to compel it to diminish their number."\*

Nothing can be more positive than this opinion of one of the ablest and most learned writers on diseases of the mind; and he sustains it at length by various observations on the proportion of lunatics in countries of different degrees of civilization. "There is less insanity in Spain than in countries where civilization is more advanced." "There are fewer insane in the northern parts of Norway where civilization is the lowest, than in the southern provinces where civilization is the highest."†

\* Esquirol in "Annales De Hygiene," tome iv. p. 348-9.    † *Ibid.* p. 34.



Humboldt made diligent enquiry and found none among the Indians of America. Travellers find none in Africa, and the general opinion of writers, travellers, and physicians is, that this disease is seldom found in the savage state, while it is known to be frequent in the civilized state.

We are then led to examine the causes of lunacy, and see how far they are necessarily connected with, or grow out of, the improving condition of civilized society.

On analyzing the causes of the cases of insanity which are reported in the several hospitals of the United States and Great Britain, we find 184 different names of causes given, but rejecting 8 which are known to be synonyms, there are 176 different causes stated in these reports. But these are not all the causes that may produce mental disease. They are manifold, almost as numerous perhaps as the diseases of the nosology, as the accidents and injuries that may happen to man, as the temptations to overwork the mind, as the causes of excitement that may provoke the evil passions or the sensual appetites, as the chances and varieties of fortune, and as the evil influences that may fall upon humanity.

All of them may directly or indirectly act upon the brain and disturb its operations.

The following list includes the names of causes which are found in the American Hospital Reports, and in some treatises on insanity.

For convenience of analysis, these may be reduced to classes—the Physical and the Moral causes.

The Physical causes are those which primarily act upon the body and disturb the brain, and then its functions,

deranging thus the mind or the moral affections. These are,

Congestion of the Brain,

Disease of " "

Phrenitis,

Epilepsy,

Arachnoiditis,

Apoplexy,

Convulsions,

Hydrocephalus.

Nervous Irritation,

Excessive pain,

Neuralgia,

Typhus Fever,

Nervous " "

Bilious " "

Scarlet " "

Intermittent " "

Yellow " "

Gastritis,

Measles,

Gout,

Dyspepsia,

Dysentery,

Erysipelas,

Phthisis,

Rheumatism,

Bilious Rheumatism,

Suppression of Hemorrhoids,

" Perspiration,

" Secretions,

" Eruption,

" Tumor,

" Fistula,

Small Pox,

Varioloid,

Irritation of the Spine,

Disease of " "

Pregnancy,

Parturition,

Abortion,

Puerperal,

Cold in Childbed,

Lactation,

Sexual Derangement,

Disease of Uterus,

Irregular Menstruation,

Profuse " "

Suspended " "

Suppressed " at change of life,

Hysteria,

Ill Health,

" and solitude.

" and perplexity in business,

" and family trouble,

" and pecuniary difficulty,

" and lawsuit,

Old Age,

Irregular decay of powers in old age,

Congenital,

Hereditary,

*Injuries.*

Concussion of Brain,

Lesion of Brain,

Blow on the head,

Fracture of the head,

Burn on the head,

Malformed head,

Fall,

Kick on the stomach,

Surgical operation,

Mesmerism,

Insolation,

Want of Exercise,

Sedentary life,

Idleness,

Insolation and drinking cold water,

Exposure to excessive heat,

Exposure to cold,

Bathing in cold water,

Sleeping in a barn filled with new hay,

Tight lacing,

Excess of Quinine,

Metallic vapor,

Prussic Acid vapor,

Charcoal vapor,

Carbonic Acid Gas,

Working in White Lead,

Acetate of Lead,

Excessive labor,

Bodily exertion,

Loss of sleep.

*Dissipations.*

Intemperance in spirit,

" in snuff,

" in smoking,

" in Opium eating,

Syphilis,

Vice and Immorality.



The moral causes affect the mind and the moral affections primarily, and through them they reach the brain. These are,

Mental labor and excitement,	Seduction,
" fatigue,	Domestic afflictions,
" shock,	" trouble,
" perplexity,	Family [affairs.]
Study Excessive,	Bad conduct of children,
Study of Metaphysics,	Ill treatment,
" of Phrenology,	" from husband,
Excitement of lawsuit,	" " parents,
Politics,	Abuse from husband.
Political commotions,	Infidelity of husband,
Excitement of Mexican War,	" of wife,
" visiting,	False accusation,
Sea voyage,	Imprisonment for crime,
License question,	Difficulty in neighborhood,
Anti-rent,	Avarice,
Fourierism,	Anticipation of wealth,
Preaching sixteen days and nights,	Speculation in Stocks,
Blowing Fife all night,	" Morus Multicaulis,
Application to business,	" Lottery Tickets,
Reading vile books,	Perplexity in business,
Seclusion,	Pecuniary difficulties,
Sudden joy,	Disappointment in business,
Hope,	Loss of Money,
Faulty Education,	" Property,
Day Dreaming,	Reverse of Fortune,
Extatic admiration of works of art,	Fear of Poverty,
Death of Relatives.	Want of Employment,
" Husband,	" Occupation,
" Father,	Destitution,
" Son,	Mortified pride,
Sight of death of a friend,	Ungoverned passion,
Sickness and death of friends,	Violent temper,
" " " kindred,	Misanthropy,
Murder of a Son,	Jealousy,
Anxiety,	Envy.
Anxiety and loss of sleep.	Duel,
" for absent friends,	Religious anxiety,
Home-sickness,	" excitement,
Being lost in the woods,	Remorse,
Fright,	Millerism,
Disappointment,	Mormonism,
" in love,	Struggle between the religious princi-
" in ambition,	ple and power of passion.
Celibacy,	Epidemic Influences.*
Unrequited love,	

\* "As there are certain atmospheric conditions, which render epidemic and contagious diseases more or less frequent, so there are, in the spirits, certain general dispositions, which cause mental aberrations to extend, propagate and communicate itself to a great many individuals by a sort of moral contagion."—Esquirol, *Maladies Mentales*, i. 63.

These are not all the diseases, accidents, events, habits or circumstances that can disturb the regular actions of the brain, but they probably include all the classes of such causes, and all the channels through which they may reach the mind.

The question now is whether these disturbing causes are increasing, stationary or diminishing.

An examination shows, that some of them are increasing in frequency and in force, some are probably stationary, and a few are diminishing with the advancement of civilization. Some of them are essentially inherent in man, in every condition, the savage and the refined nearly alike, and are to be found throughout the world and in all ages.

Some of the diseases which are supposed to be causes of insanity, such as measles, scarlatina, small pox, dysentery, rheumatism, fevers, exposure to cold and insolation, have probably diminished in frequency and power; certainly the description which Sydenham gives of the prevalence and fatality of several of these finds no counterpart in the observations of the present day.

Some other diseases as suppressions of secretions, convulsions, hydrocephalus, the effects of old age, generally the diseases and the disturbances of the uterine functions, erysipelas, rheumatism, hæmorrhoids, have remained stationary, and act as disturbing causes with about the same force in one age and among one class of people as another. Intemperance and its consequences vary in different ages, and in different nations; but in all there are some, and in some there are many, who are prone to this indulgence. There has been less of it within the last thirty years, than in the century previous in New-England, and probably through the United States and Great Britain. But there is more now than there was ten



years ago in Massachusetts. There is more in cities than in the country. The proportion of cases of lunacy caused by this habit to all the cases from known causes was in Great Britain 136 in a 1,000, in the United States 116 in 1,000, and in France 78 in a 1,000.

Syphilis is said to be comparatively a modern disease. This is probably said, not from want of facts, but from want of observers and records. As long as men have lived on earth there probably have been causes for this disease; and without doubt, it has in all time been itself a cause of more or less mental disturbance.

We have no means of knowing whether masturbation increases or diminishes.

Other diseases as gout, dyspepsia, ill health in general, consumption, phrenitis, arachnoiditis, nervous irritation, neuralgia, cerebral congestion have probably increased and are increasing with the progress of the age.

Almost the whole class of accidents, injuries and exposures to noxious elements, and to dangers of body and limb, has increased. With the new improvements in the mechanic arts, the increase of machinery, the new and sometimes uncontrolled if not uncontrollable motive powers, and the new modes of travel, more accidents happen, and more injuries are inflicted on men, and in their way, they multiply the causes of cerebral disturbance.

In course of the same progress of improvement, there are more chemical agents discovered and applied to use in the common arts of life.

Men are therefore more exposed to minerals, salts, acids, gases, paints, dye-stuffs, and combustible and explosive mixtures, which are sometimes more or less injurious to health, and the sources of accidents dangerous to those who are exposed to them.

These therefore multiply the causes of insanity.



The moral causes may be subjected to a similar analysis, as they belong to man in every state, and as they belong to civilization or are increased by its progress.

They may be also arranged into classes, as they affect the mere mental action.

As excess of mental labor in study in general, study of special subjects, phrenology, metaphysics, excessive devotion to business.

As quickness and violence of mental action, as excitements of various kinds in law-suits, politics, anti-rent, fourierism, &c.

As they affect the feelings and emotions, and mostly of the depressing kind, as grief for the loss of friends and relations. As anxiety, grief connected with fear, as in case of sickness of friends, home-sickness, or grief for hopes suddenly blasted, as in disappointment of love, ambition, or other expectations. Sorrow for the misconduct of others—husbands, wives, children, &c. Suffering and sorrow on account of ill-treatment from relatives or friends. Sudden and overpowering apprehension of evil, as in fear, fright, &c.

As they are connected with property involving both the excess of mental action and the disturbance of the moral affections.

As in avarice, labor to acquire, and anxious fear of loss, dealing in merchandize of uncertain value, speculations in stocks, lands, &c.

Pecuniary difficulties, perplexity in business in which the mind struggles to accomplish and gain what it cannot, and at the same time the feelings are oppressed with anxieties and fears. Disappointment in business, losses of property involve the same troubles of mind and heart.



Poverty, and the fear of poverty cause much labor of the mind, unsupported by hope and confidence, but embarrassed by doubt and depression.

As they affect the maddening and evil passions, anger, violent temper, jealousy, pride, all of which have their depressing and exhausting influence upon the brain.

These last causes are often mingled with the others, and co-operate with them, as in family and neighborhood quarrels, lawsuits, and sometimes in political strifes and disappointments.

As they affect the religious element, when there is a great struggle of the mind to comprehend the doctrines and the mysteries, there may be intense exhilaration joined with the hopes, and an agonizing anxiety joined with the fears connected with the eternal interests.—There is so great a prize to strive for and to gain, and so complete a destruction to be avoided, that the mind labors with all-absorbing energy to secure that which is offered and to escape that which is threatened, and these connected with such an overpowering anxiety, that the overtasked brain sometimes falters and then acts with uncertainty.

Some of these causes are the same in all ages and in all nations, and in all states of barbarism and civilization.

Those especially which belong to the malignant and the evil passions, anger, hatred, jealousy, pride and violent temper, are probably the same at all times, and have an unvarying amount of influence on the sanity of the brain.

Those causes connected with the depressing emotions and feelings, anxiety on account of the suffering of friends and relatives, fear of their loss, sorrow for their death, and probably those causes which are connected with family variances, and misconduct, with the ill-treatment



of parents and husbands, remain as active now as ever and no more.

There are other causes of grief which become more painful with social cultivation, and therefore disturb the nervous system more.

In a higher state of refinement, the sensibilities become more keen, and the tender passions more powerful and more relied upon as sources of happiness. Then the affections between the sexes are more ardent and abiding, and have a more controlling influence over them, than in a ruder state, and a rupture of the proposed union, a disappointment in love, the failure in tenderness, of respect, or of fidelity in a partner after marriage, would produce a keener anguish, a more effective shock, and wear upon the spirits more in a refined, than in a less cultivated state of society, where less was hoped, and less suffering would follow failure or disappointment. Therefore, we may look for more insanity from disappointed love or domestic troubles now than in former ages.

But on the other hand, the same cultivation of life and spirit would probably engender more permanence of affection in both parties, more respect, and faithfulness, and tenderness in the domestic circle, so as to diminish the frequency of the causes of their disappointments and sorrows.

Some of the other causes connected with the feelings and passions, quarrels, duels, lawsuits, have probably diminished.

The causes connected with religion have doubtless diminished within the last thirty years. These have always been active as far back as even in the days of the oldest heathenism of which we have any record, there were those who became so exalted with their feelings of inspiration, that they imagined themselves especially



endued with knowledge and gifts from superior beings. The Pythoness "spoke the oracles of the God often with loud howlings and cries." There were the enthusiasts and the uncontrollable fanatics in all the days of the Roman church. Since the Reformation, when sects have multiplied, the various forms of doctrines meet more varieties of temperament, and probably more are brought under their active influence. With this change comes more desire to produce immediate and powerful impressions, and a greater confidence that this impression will establish one in a more satisfactory religious condition.

The desire to be so impressed, and the impression itself, after it is received, create in some a state of doubt between hope and fear, an anxiety and a mental struggle to attain to the position of security and happiness.

There is probably less of insanity from this cause in New-England now, than there was in the last and the preceding generation, yet all ages are subject to it.

The causes connected with mental labor, in its manifold applications have increased and are increasing continually. In the progress of the age, education has made rapid advances, both in reaching a wider circle of persons and in multiplying the subjects of study.

The improvements in the education of children and youth have increased their mental labors, and imposed more burdens upon their brains, in the present than in the preceding ages. The proportion of children who are taught in schools increases every year in the United States, and in most civilized nations. There are more and more of those whose love of knowledge, whose sense of duty, whose desire of gratifying friends, and whose ambition, impel them to make their utmost exertions, to become good scholars. Thus they task their minds unduly, and sometimes exhaust their cerebral energies and



leave their brains a prey to other causes which may derange them afterwards.

The new sciences which have been lately discovered, or the old sciences that were formerly confined to the learned, but are now simplified and popularized, and offered to the young as a part of their education, multiply the subjects of study and increase the mental labor of almost all in schools.

Men and classes of men, such as in the last century would have thought of nothing but how they should obtain their bread, are now induced to study subjects and pursue sciences, and burden their brains with great and sometimes excessive labor. New fields of investigation have been laid open within the last hundred, and especially within the last fifty years. New inducements are offered, so that a greater variety of tastes is invited to their peculiar feasts of knowledge. Many persons now study phrenology, metaphysics, mathematics, physiology, chemistry, botany, and other branches of natural history, to say nothing of mesmerism, biology, &c., and thus they compel their brains to labor with more energy and exhausting zeal than those of any former generation. In this multiplication of students, there are some who attempt to grapple with subjects, that they cannot master, and sink under the burden of perplexity which they cannot unravel.

In this general increase of mental activity, some men become interested and give their minds intensely to the study of public topics, politics, State or National affairs, and the subjects of legislation, the banking system, tariff, anti-rent, anti-masonry, the license question, &c., or to public moral questions, anti-slavery, temperance, and general or special reforms, any or all of which impose upon them great anxiety and mental labor.



In this country, where no son is necessarily confined to the work or employment of his father, but all the fields of labor, of profit, or of honor, are open to whomsoever will put on the harness and enter therein, and all are invited to join the strife for that which may be gained in each, many are in a transition state, from the lower and less desirable to the higher and more desirable conditions. They are struggling for that which costs them mental labor, anxiety, and pain. The mistake, or the ambition, of some, leads them to aim at that which they cannot reach,—to strive for more than they can grasp,—and their mental powers are strained to their utmost tension; they labor in agitation, and they end in frequent disappointment. Their minds stagger under the disproportionate burden; they are perplexed with the variety of insurmountable obstacles, and they are exhausted with the ineffectual labor.

There are many whose education is partially wrong, and some whose education is decidedly bad. These persons have wrong notions of life. They are neither taught to understand the responsibilities that they must meet, nor are they prepared to sustain them. They are filled with false hopes. They are flattered in childhood and youth, but they are not accustomed to mental labor, nor disciplined and strengthened to bear burdens. They are led to expect circumstances that will not belong to them. They look for success, honor, or advantages, which their talents, or education, or habits of business, or station in the world, will not obtain for them. Consequently, when they enter responsible life, they are laying plans which cannot be fulfilled, they are looking for events which will not happen. They are struggling perpetually and unsuccessfully against the tide of fortune. They are always hoping, but they are frequently disappointed. Their in-



effectual labor exhausts them, and their disappointments distress and disturb them. They are thus apt to become nervous, querulous and despondent, and, sometimes, insane.

But in an uneducated community, or where the people are overborne by despotic government or inflexible customs, where men are born in castes, and die without over-stepping their native condition, where the child is content with the pursuit and the fortune of his father, and has no hope or expectation of any other, there these undue mental excitements and struggles do not happen, and men's brains are not confused with new plans, nor exhausted with the struggles for a higher life, nor overborne with the disappointment in failure. Of course, in such a state of society, these causes of insanity cannot operate. But in proportion as education prevails, and emancipates the new generations from the trammels and condition of the old, and the manifold ways of life are open to all, the danger of misapplication of the cerebral forces and the mental powers increases, and men may think and act indiscreetly, and become insane.

The same is distinctly manifested in the pursuit of business. There are many new trades and new employments; there are new schemes of increasing wealth, new articles of merchandise, and speculations in many things of new and multiplying kinds. All these increase the activity of the commercial world. The energy of men of new enterprises gives a hope of actual value, and a momentary market value to some new kinds of property.

The consequent inflation or expansion of prices, to a greater or less degree, makes many kinds of business more uncertain, and many men's fortunes more precarious. This increases the doubts and perplexities of business,



the necessity of more labor and watchfulness, greater fear and anxiety, and the end is more frequently in loss, and failure of plans, and mental disturbance.

Besides these uncertainties which may happen to any, there are more that enter the free and open avenues to occupations which hold out high and flattering promises, and for which they are unprepared, in which they must struggle with greater labor and anxiety than others, and in which they must be more frequently disappointed.

Besides these causes of mental disturbance in the new and untried fields of study, business, and commerce, there are other causes in the social position which is subject to like changes. Many are passing, or have passed, from a comparatively retired, simple and unpretending, to the showy, the fashionable or the cultivated, style of life. In this transition state there must be more mental labor for those who are passing from one condition to the other; there must be much thought and toil, much hope and fear, and much anxiety and vexation, to effect the passage, and to sustain one's self in the new position.

With the increase of wealth and fashion there come also, more artificial life, more neglect of the natural laws of self-government, more unseasonable hours for food and for sleep, more dissipation of the open, allowable and genteel kind, and also more of the baser, disreputable and concealed sorts.

Consequent upon the new labor and new positions and new styles of life, there comes more low health, from exhausting and perplexing cares and toils of business, of social life and fashion, and from frequent irregular habits of diet and regimen. The secondary consequences of impaired health, of diminished vital forces, dyspepsia, debility, consumption, gout or other disease, are manifested in

the brain ; and then nervousness, frequently, and insanity, sometimes, follows.

Thus we see, that with advancing civilization, and especially in the present age and in our own country, there is a great development of activity of mind, and this is manifested in most of the employments, in the conduct of the mechanic arts, agriculture, trade and commerce, in the attention to the professions, and to other subjects of study, and to politics. This increase of mental activity, and of cerebral action comes without a corresponding increase of discretion to guide it, and of prudence to restrain it.

And this proneness to mental action must prevail until the world learn the nature and the limit of their mental faculties, the connection of these with the brain ; and the connection of the brain with all the other physical organs, and govern themselves accordingly.

In review of this history of the causes of insanity, we find that very few of them diminish with the progress of the world. Some are stationary, remaining about the same in the savage, the barbarous and the civilized state while many of them increase, and create more and more mental disorder.

Insanity is then a part of the price which we pay for civilization. The causes of the one increase with the developments and results of the other. This is not necessarily the case, but it is so now. The increase of knowledge, the improvements in the arts, the multiplication of comforts, the amelioration of manners, the growth of refinement, and the elevation of morals, do not of themselves disturb men's cerebral organs and create mental disorder. But with them come more opportunities and rewards for great and excessive mental action, more un-



certain and hazardous employments, and consequently more disappointments, more means and provocations for sensual indulgence, more dangers of accidents and injuries, more groundless hopes, and more painful struggle to obtain that which is beyond reach, or to effect that which is impossible.

The deductions, then, drawn from the prevalence and effects of causes, corroborate the opinion of nearly all writers, whether founded on positive and known facts, on analogy, on computation or on conjecture, that insanity is an increasing disease. In this opinion all agree.





