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Professor Marshall, F. R. S.
with the authors' kind regards.

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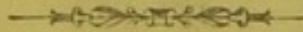
29

MODERN TEACHINGS OF INSANITY.

BY

EDGAR SHEPPARD, M.D.,

*Professor of Psychological Medicine in King's College, London, and Medical
Superintendent of the Male Department of the Colney Hatch Asylum.*



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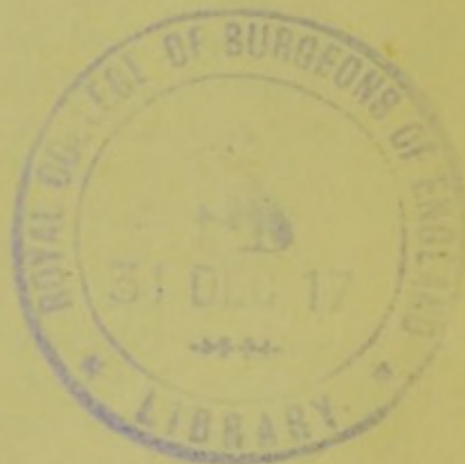
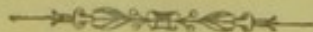
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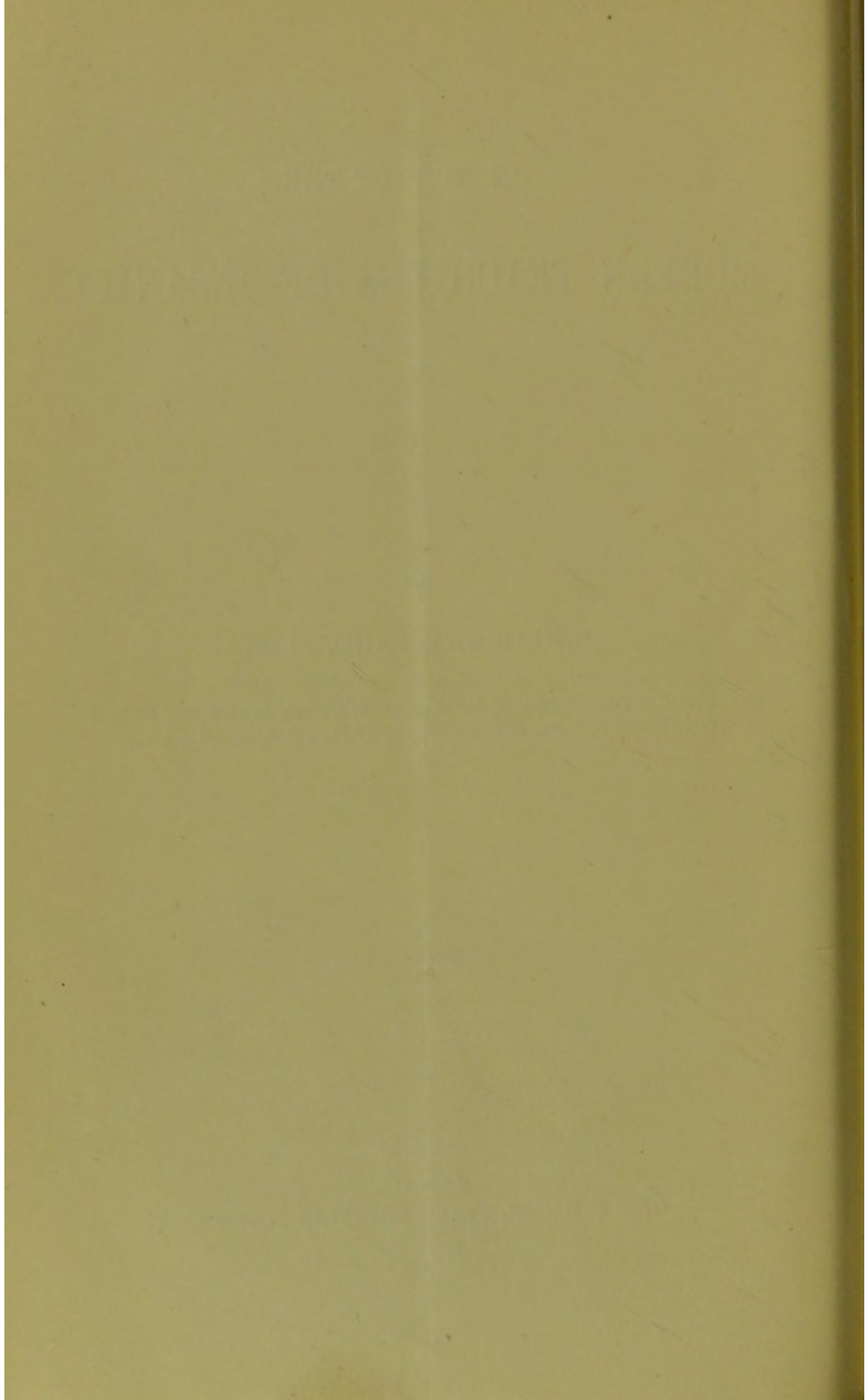
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MODERN TEACHINGS OF INSANITY.

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I am desirous of making a few critical remarks upon the address of its President, read before the Medico-Psychological Association in August last, as also upon some of the observations which were elicited thereby from various members at the time of its delivery.

It is strange that those who have been given to teach us somewhat dogmatically should step forward to fill us with doubt and suspicion as to our antecedent theories and practice. But we live in an age of paradoxes, and must, I suppose, be grateful to those who, at a period which "seems to lack the originating impulse," will "break through the usual routine of thought and action," and flood us with new and inspiring ideas. And yet "the originating impulse" is calculated to suggest misgivings as to the soundness and stability of those who set themselves up for pioneers. The dictum of to-day, so clear and precise, is obscured by the dictum of to-morrow. We are called upon to retrace our steps, and reconsider, perhaps, both our premisses and conclusions.

Let us examine a little closely this Presidential teaching; for I do not mean for a moment to imply that it does not contain much which, though startling to the conventional mind, is pregnant with true philosophy. Notably so in reference to the *Management of a Predisposition to Insanity*.

It has always seemed to me that our duties as psychologists should lead us to handle much more largely than we are wont

to do, and yet with the greatest delicacy and tact, this very interesting question. The saying of Descartes (quoted by Dr. Maudsley) may or may not be true, that "If it be possible to perfect mankind, the means of doing so will be found in the medical sciences." It would be truer wisdom, perhaps, to say that such means rest rather with the science of physical and moral education. We cannot begin too early, for a substratum of mischief is unwittingly laid even in the cradles of countless children, by fond but unmeaning parents, and becomes a *predisposing cause* of insanity. Unfortunately, however, the opportunity of beginning early is not readily afforded to us. If foolish stumbling blocks are thrown by foolish parents (as so frequently happens) in the way of those who have no insane cloggings, and prove to exercise a prejudicial effect upon the moral health, how much more likely are they to be thrust in the path of, and do violence to, those who are weighted with the desperate heritage of an insane temperament? Even at that period when the sacred symbol of redemption is signed upon the infant brow a curse may be mingled with the blessing, and a stupid baptismal name, or the thoughtless arrangement of the initial letters of names not in themselves objectionable, may injuriously affect all the future of one who might otherwise have done well. Take, for example, such a case as this. A child's patronymic begins with the letter *S*. His parents give him two names beginning respectively with the letters *A* and *S*—Arthur Samuel Smith, say. What is the result? He goes to a public school, when at once he is pointed at, and written down *ASS*. Or parental piety may have dubbed the infant Zachariah, or parental vanity may have crowded upon him the most ambitious accumulation of Christian prefixes. The smallest body may be welded with the smallest mind in the personality of a Charles Augustus Frederick Plantagenet Smith. Children thus named are at a disadvantage from their earliest years (even in the nursery the petty tyranny begins) with those who bear more sober and discreet appellations.

It may seem absurd, perhaps, to many, thus to speak of these trifles of nomenclature. But they are not trifles if they are pregnant with great influences, and I am persuaded, from what I have seen and heard of public schools, that the power for evil which a matter of this kind exercises over certain temperaments of the neuropathic type is both large and fruitful. It is not every child who can bear to be laughed at. The devil himself, Luther remarked, will turn tail and run like a

fool at ridicule. To subject a child, under even the most favourable circumstances, to the shocks and jars of a public school is no trifling experiment. To invite the taunts and gibes of others is a dangerous and unnecessary complication of a process, even at the best, not remarkable for its simplicity. The tender brain-cells require the most delicate handling under the educational pressure to which they are about to be subjected. But the brain-cells of John and Ebenezer, though strictly identical in their physiological and chemical structure, are not equally weighted in the coming race, if the name of the one is a stumbling block of ridicule, while that of the other fails to evoke remark or comment.

If the influences for evil are thus so thoughtlessly generated in the cradle, it is obvious that others, both for it and for good, are constantly being called into play, not only in the nursery and the schoolroom, but in all the social surroundings which take their colouring from the members of the family circle. We have it in the general habits of the household, in the meek or turbulent tempers, the strong or feeble wills, of its individualities; in the authority exercised by one parent, or both, or neither, upon those to whom, in obedience to a sexual law, they have given their own shape and form, and let loose upon "that vast rolling vehicle the world, the end of whose journey is everywhere and nowhere."

Nor is it less clear that the religious belief of every family, and the different mode of dealing with religious questions by those who possess the same belief, may seriously affect the finite future of its every member. But it is a difficult question to touch upon, and Dr. Clouston seems to have been somewhat alarmed at what he terms (unjustly as it seems to me) the "utter and entire scepticism" of the President. I confess to perceiving a large measure of true and thoughtful philosophy in Dr. Maudsley's allusion to this delicate subject, and I venture to share with him the responsibility of believing that mankind has learned more practical morality from certain scientific discoveries than from half its creeds.

There is nothing more certain than that erroneous views are given to young children, as to the objects and offices of prayer, by which they are taught to ignore the most obvious physical conditions, and leave to a higher power work which a higher power has already given them the means and opportunity of performing. They are instructed that God will do all that they want if they will only pray for it persistently; but the wisdom of the proverb is never put before them, that

“God is a good worker, but He loves to be helped,” and so, failing in the exercise of an already imparted *will*, they begin to cast about to discover the causes of their failure, and embark upon that miserable system of analysing thoughts and feelings which ever eventuates in pusillanimity and feebleness of character. Mental introversion is ruin to the young; repeated acts of self-anatomy are a fertile cause of insanity. This subject could not better be illustrated than by reference to the case of a nervous child who has contracted the habit of blinking and making facial contortions—a habit which grows upon youth with great rapidity. A strong effort of the *will*, enforced by persevering efforts at muscular repose, will soon establish the desired condition. But with a certain school of religionists such an effort would be scarcely possible, because the principle of that school would not admit to the child the existence of the will. The *neurosis* would not disappear, and the unhappy sufferer would be taught to pray more fervently, and subject himself to more intense self-scrutiny. This false teaching is the parent of infidelity, for the multiform seekings of the earnest mind are so fruitless in their sequences that it is ultimately led to unbelief, or to a miserable conviction that it is the object of a special judgment from above. No healthy, mental action can possibly exist under such a system as this. What is called religious insanity is one of its inevitable results. I have never forgotten what a good Christian philosopher once said to me, that there are but two things for which men ought to pray, viz., for grace and mercy. In doing this we fulfil all the requirements of a healthy religion, and we leave untouched in their beauty and harmony those natural phenomena which never fail in their obedience to a universal law. But half the prayers of the devout community are offered up for the performance of absolute miracles, and for officious interference with the most perfect mechanism. We ask for fine weather when we are tired of rain, and for rain when we are tired of fine weather, each according to the measure of his caprice and of his little wants; we ask for new brains when we have permanently impaired the old ones, under laws and conditions as certain as the daily revolution of the earth upon its own axis. Failing to regard the book of nature in the right spirit, we come not to see that (as Professor Tyndall expresses it) “touched by the wand of law the dross of facts becomes gold, the meanest being raised thereby to brotherhood with the highest.”

It is of paramount importance, then, that all who are con-

cerned in the education of the young—especially in the management of those who have any kind of *neurosis*—should engage their pupils in a religion which does not paralyse the *will*, seeking by prayer for gifts which have been already bestowed; which does not ignore the teachings of science, and the natural phenomena of the material world; which admits “the morality of clean blood,” expounding that “the physical is the substratum of the spiritual,” and so “giving to the food we eat and the air we breathe a transcendental significance.” A bad education—an education which is not up to the light of its day—may become “a wicked broth,” as subtle and potent as that which Lucilla gave to her liege lord, the Roman poet and philosopher—

“Confused the chemic labour of the blood,
And tickling the brute brain within the man’s,
Made havoc among those tender cells, and check’d
His power to shape.”

I cannot help thinking that Dr. Maudsley has done a real service to the cause of science by boldly proclaiming his views upon the question of education, and attempting to divorce morality from the exclusive possession of religion. The laws of nature and of morality are intimately blended, and avenging consequences are equally the result of their infraction. “There is nothing (he truly says) accidental, nothing supernatural, in the impulse to do right, or the impulse to do wrong; they both come by inheritance or by education. To ascribe one to the grace of heaven, and the other to the malice of the devil, is an explanation which may satisfy the religious sentiment, but which can have no place in a philosophy or science of mind. As an explanation, indeed, it is upon a par with that which formerly accounted for insanity as a possession of the devil.” What is needed is a little more of the Socratic spirit, and a little less of the conventional religious sentiment. Our youngsters would then have more “stiffness of fibre” in their natures, and would school themselves into the most complete masterhood of their volitions. “To judge from your looks,” said some one to the Athenian philosopher, “you are the best tempered man in the world.” “Then my looks belie me,” was the reply; “I have the worst possible temper by nature, with the strongest possible control over it by philosophy.”* Knowing as we do the potentiality, whether for

* No more distressing instance of exaggerated religious feeling is to be found in history than that of the poet Cowper. Had he been brought up in a different school of thought he probably would not have placed on record, “My feelings are all of the intense kind. Satan is ever plying me with horrible visions and more horrible voices.”

good or evil, of example, it is one of our first duties as physicians and men of science to counsel the removal of young persons from all those surroundings which are favourable to the development of latent mischief—as in the case of a bad ancestral taint. A nervous child should be placed in a “strong-minded” family, that is, with those who, having the will in complete domination, never allow themselves to be betrayed into doubt or vacillation. The melancholy should consort with the cheerful; the unduly hilarious with the more sober-minded and discreet. The wandering and vacant should be won to interest by comparatively sensational modes of placing things before them, their perceptive and reflective faculties being alike encouraged. Above all, the timid and introverting, having exaggerated religious feelings, and a belief in constant personal interferences and judgments from the Deity, should be placed with one of the school which is muscularly Christian and philosophically Socratic. These adjustments of individual temperaments and dispositions are the basis of true education; and society owes all her wellbeing to their observance. Each plant to its own peculiar soil: thus only can we discover its capacity for growth and beauty.

Before we quit the subject of the power of the *will*, we may express our satisfaction that Dr. Bucknill gives the weight of his authority and experience in support of the opinion that a large number of individuals having a tendency to become insane, have the power to resist the same if they can only be taught to exercise it. And this only renders more necessary that transplantation to a congenial soil which we have just alluded to. The same power is possessed by the insane themselves in a much larger degree than is generally supposed; and it is within my own experience that numbers of the very maddest of our asylum inmates may partially educate themselves to control, if not altogether to suppress, those periodical outbreaks of temper and excitement to which they are so singularly obnoxious.

We come now to the consideration of that most difficult socio-physiological question, the propriety of forbidding marriage in those who would bring to the nuptial bed the ancestral ingredient of epilepsy or insanity. I am asked the question over and over again by those who have a distressing personal interest in my professional judgment upon this point. And there can be but one sound answer. For a person charged with the insane temperament, acquired from his forefathers, to marry, is at once to defy the laws of nature and morality, and invite those avenging sequences which need no spiritual

guidance for their correct interpretation. But however strong and unanimous the professional judgment may be upon this point, it is quite certain that the subject is one on which there can never be any legislative interference. For, after all, if the law could step in and say "thou shalt not marry" to a certified member of a caste, it could not say, or could not enforce an edict, "thou shalt not copulate." It is one thing, however, to lessen the number of marriages, and another to lessen the number of illegitimate children. Connexions would equally be made, if not marriages, in violation of the laws of a healthy physiology; and the various anomalies of enervation would repeat themselves with a sure and retributive speed. Unfortunately the *neuropathia psychica sexualis* is one of the most frequent accompaniments of the insane and epileptic temperaments, and if it find not its legitimate indulgence it seeks an outlet in that pernicious habit which "grows by what it feeds on," and can "outlive and kill a thousand virtues." We have no power, and we never shall have any power to prevent the marriage of persons "weighted with the tyranny of a bad organization." First of all, it is so hard to determine the measure of baneful ancestral influence which should preclude an individual from continuing his species, as to make any attempt at legislative prohibition quite impossible. Secondly, the freaks and vagaries of the *neuroses* are so multi-form as to render any classification of individual cases a matter of extreme difficulty. Terrible, then, as are sometimes the consequences, we must grin and bear these morbid interlacings, deriving some consolation from the circumstance that there is an unmistakable tendency in all faulty organizations to die out and become extinct. Happily the measure of the sexual appetite is not the measure of the propagating power. There is yet another reason, too, which tends to lessen our apprehensions of the evil results of alliances between those who are the subjects of an inherited or idiopathic insane diathesis. Dr. Maudsley puts the matter forward in rather a startling manner; I venture, therefore, to quote his entire paragraph:—"Let it be supposed certain that a person will have children, one or more of whom will go mad, it might still happen that the world would gain more by one of the children who did not, than it would lose by those who did, go mad. In that case, would not his marriage, grievous as it might be to individuals, be amply justified by the good done to the race? So far as we see, nature is not in the habit of making much account of the individual and his sufferings—is

singularly lavish in the production and reckless in the destruction of life; of all the multitude of living germs produced, but an infinitesimal proportion ever reaches maturity; and it may well be, therefore, in the order of its evolution, that countless thousands of individuals should suffer and perish without result—as waste life. If, then, one man of genius were produced at the cost of one thousand, nay, at the cost of fifty thousand, insane persons, the result might be a sufficient compensation for the terrible cost.” And, he continues, that, whether this is or is not so, he has long had a suspicion that mankind is indebted for much of its originality, and for certain special forms of genius, to individuals who, themselves, directly or indirectly, have sprung from families in which there is some predisposition to insanity. It is indeed unfortunate for the country and the ratepayers that only one genius can be eliminated from fifty thousand lunatics, and we doubt whether society will ever be satisfied with such a bargain. It may suit posterity; but then, as posterity never did anything for us, we may be excused if we take but little interest in posterity. Be this, however, as it may, there is no novelty in the opinion of a league existing between insanity and the highest forms of intelligence. “Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixturâ dementiæ,” was the saying of Aristotle; and that which he wrote centuries ago may, in some sense, express the more recent revelations of morbid psychology. M. Moreau has already investigated this interesting question, and brought together “a cloud of witnesses,” “an aristocracy of talent,” to prove the existence of this alliance. And, the existence once proved, it follows by parity of reasoning, that the procreative power of the intellectual has the same proclivity as that of the insane; first, towards the production of feeble and faulty organizations, and, ultimately, to decay and extinction. So that Lamartine was right when he wrote, “Le génie porte en lui un principe de destruction, de mort, de folie, come le fruit porte le ver.”*

* “Lord Houghton, in a well-turned speech at the centenary in honour of Miss Hope Scott, the sole survivor of the line, mentioned the kind of loneliness in which the names of all the great *littérateurs* stand. They have rarely left descendants. We have no Shakspeare, no Milton, no Bacon, no Newton, no Pope, no Byron. Italy has no Danté, no Petrarch, no Ariosto, no Alfieri. Germany has no Göethe, no Schiller, no Heine. France has no Montaigne, no Descartes, no Voltaire, no Lamartine. There is no descendant known of Luther, Calvin, or John Knox. The fact is remarkable, and not favourable to the theory of an indefinite progress of humanity. The race of the very great does not multiply, while the race of the very little—say any Irish hodman [or English curate], is as the sands of the sea.”—*Spectator*, Aug. 12, 1871.

An American author of great originality and power (Nathaniel Hawthorne) has, in his happy way, expressed the opinion that "the world owes all its onward impulses to men ill at ease;" and this would seem to be something like an echo of the well-known couplet—

"Great wit to madness nearly is allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

It is equally true, that "men ill at ease" are they who are ripe for antagonistic bearing towards the laws which society sets up for her protection; so that intellectuality would seem to have two strange bed-fellows in insanity and crime. The alliance between the two latter is much more capable of demonstration than that between insanity and "great wit." But we are the rather concerned with the more inviting league, because it is that to which the President's address is directed; and no apology will be necessary for attempting its further elucidation by a reference to the remarkable work of Dr. Moreau, to which we have made previous reference.* In doing so, it will be difficult for me to avoid reproducing ideas which I expressed some years ago in a critique of this Treatise in one of our Quarterly Reviews.

It is an interesting physiological and psychical question of this nature, rather than in the actual treatment of disease, that we feel the importance of that "originating impulse" to which Dr. Maudsley points us. This pregnant theory we can "tickle with the hoe" of inquiry; it will "laugh with the harvest of discovery." There are few of us, I suppose, who are not familiar with individuals known as intellectually gifted, who, if not positively deranged, are yet incapable of preserving an equilibrium, and are not only eccentric, but display striking *bizarrieries* of character. "They are cracked, but the crack lets in the light." The line of demarcation is here most difficult to trace between the phenomena of health and disease; and the conclusions of to-day respecting the mental integrity of such persons are not unfrequently qualified by the doubts and uncertainties of to-morrow. Dr. Conolly made allusion to this class in that earlier work of his which initiated his celebrity as an alienist physician. They are "ill at ease," and constitute a sort of mixture of insanity and power, either the intelligential faculties or the affective dispositions being most disturbed. Thus it is (as Moreau

* *La Psychologie Morbide dans ses Rapports avec la Philosophie de l'Histoire, ou de l'Influence des Neropathies sur le Dynamisme Intellectuel.* Par le Docteur J. Moreau (de Tours), Médecin de l'Hospice de Bicêtre.—Paris. 1859.

affirms) that "even as the precious metals are only met with enveloped in poor and worthless alloys, so the thoughts and conceptions which attest the greatest energy and the most abundant intellectuality are generated in cerebral organs, where reign likewise confusion and disorder." The importance of keeping under the most watchful control all tendency to "*suractivité*" in these singular and trying temperaments is sufficiently obvious; otherwise, it may be carried beyond a point compatible with the due exercise of the laws of the animal economy, by the development of mania or epilepsy. And thus we have brought before us that marvellous correlation of the extremest conditions of the human mind, and are made familiar at one and the same time with our littleness and our greatness. We are shown a genealogical tree, on which hang side by side the fruit of good and evil, and we are instructed that there is no contradiction in terms in the affirmation that disturbance of the intelligential faculties may become, by the path of seminal transmission, the source of a mental state regarded as essentially antipodal — "*que le délire et le génie ont de communes racines.*"

To such an extent, even, does Moreau carry his views, that he speaks of *Inspiration*—that state in which the intellectual power reaches its zenith, and sheds such brilliancy round the subject of it, that ancient philosophy attributed its origin to Divinity itself—as precisely that condition which presents the greatest analogy to insanity.* If these things are true, a "*mens sana in corpore sano*" is represented by that well-balanced condition which, in the language of the stock exchange, is neither above nor below *par*. To rise above or sink below a certain honest standard of mediocrity, is to initiate abnormal processes, which involve one of two issues—intellectuality or insanity. Genius—the *ne plus ultra* of intellectual activity—is the highest expression of nervousness, erethism, irritability, and uneasiness. Thus the deterioration

* A great poet, according to Plato, could not compose before feeling himself filled, as it were, with divinity, and *transported out of himself*, without, in fact, *losing his reason*. Great musicians do not compose while they are calm and sedate, but they are carried by a sort of harmonious coercion into a state of "*fureur comme des bacchantes.*" There are numberless facts on record in reference to the eccentricities of great men, showing the necessity of odd and whimsical surroundings, to condition that state of enthusiasm or inspiration from whose periodicity they have attained their celebrity. In this category are comprised Haydn, Handel, Mozart, Gluck, Sacchini, Sterne, Donizetti, Schiller, Guido-Reni, &c. These incidents illustrate (as Esquirol expresses it), "*cette espèce d'état cataleptique de la pensée,*" which isolates the man of genius from his fellow men, and constitutes, "*le cachet, le signe pathognomonique des idées fixes.*"

of the material is a condition required for the highest manifestation of the immaterial. The human intelligence is never so near its downfall as when it tests the full measure of its capacity and scales the grandest heights of its ambition. The causes of its precipitation, indeed, are the causes also of its greatness. In numberless respects, Moreau declares, to trace the physiological history of idiots will be to trace that of men of genius, and *vice versâ*. Their hereditary antecedents are pregnant with wonderful influences, from which have been generated the realities which walk before us, exciting in turn our sympathy and our admiration. In their ascendants and descendants, in all the extent of the collateral range, nervous affections, insanity of every form, convulsions, diseases of the brain and spinal cord, have abundantly existed. Idiots and members of the "scrofulo-rachitic" family have given evidence of precocious faculties, and of an intelligence beyond their years, until that morbid principle which was its cause, overstepping legitimate limits, broke the mental equilibrium, and shivered the material instrument of its manifestation. No one who has had much experience of life can have failed to notice the coincidence, too well established to be empirical, of bad health, diminished stature, strange habits and gait, peculiar physiognomy, with great genius. In this truth lies the explanation of the fact that in every country the portraits of individual greatness (with a few remarkable exceptions) are the portraits of individual ugliness, while intellectual mediocrity inclines to more æsthetic proportions; as also of the observation so commonly made after gazing upon a strange looking humanity—"that person is either a great fool or a great genius." And to whichever of these unpromising categories the individual may claim nosological attachment, if you could search his genealogical tree, you would probably find many of its roots having their common origin in weakness or in power. This is our "philosophy of history;" this is one of the revelations of morbid psychology, which has so much of truth in it as to make it indeed appalling.

When I first read that part of the presidential address which deals with (2) *The Treatment of Insanity in Asylums and in Private Houses*, I could not help asking myself what had started Dr. Maudsley on the retrograde movement, and what strange revolution was going on in the mental apparatus of one whom I had hitherto regarded as enlightened and progressive. For the last forty years it has been the persistent

effort of our legislators, under the co-ordinated stimulus of science and philanthropy (chiefly administered by our own noble profession), to bring under observation the loose and scattered madness of the country, and provide for its subjects fitting homes and refuges. To such an extent and with such success has this been done, that I will venture to say that there is no class of persons in the United Kingdom so well cared for as the insane. The best sites in the counties are selected for their palaces, within which a cubic space per lung is measured for them; an acreage per head is meted out to them in the most fertile districts; a supply of water per head is welled up for them with a profusion which alarms alike the dirty and the clean; the fat kine of our fields are laid under contribution for them; the corn and wine is stored for them; clothing of the warmest and supervision of the best are provided for them. Every sort of indulgence within reasonable bounds is theirs. Though a large number of them are of the most degraded type, and have made themselves what they are by their own vice and wickedness, they are equally (if not altogether wisely) sustained and sheltered. They are rained upon by sympathy and sunshined by kindness. They are fenced about with every sort of protection which the legislature can devise. Magistrates, guardians, commissioners, friends inspect them, visit them, record their grievances, register their scratches, encourage their complaints, tabulate their ailments. Societies are formed to give pecuniary help for legal purposes to those who think they are unlawfully detained. Crazy but free novelists write for them, and for "hard cash," and do their best to mislead the public mind as to the rights and wrongs of lunatics. There is nothing elsewhere approaching the elaborate care which our asylum inmates receive from the hour of their admission to that of their discharge, and yet because they have not the one thing which they know not how to use—liberty in its largest sense—men are now beginning to encourage the reactionary idea that the mad world is unnecessarily confined; and those, from whom we should have expected better things, are found to talk to their professional brethren about "asylum-made lunatics." I had thought that a mind schooled in the inductive philosophy would have been more careful how it ventured upon hasty and unsound generalizations, venturing to screen its unorthodoxy under the plea of the liability of a special kind of practice to engender specialism in thought. Surely because a few exceptional cases are occasionally to be

met with, where, unfitness for the external world having been predicated, an accidental escape has shown the error of such a judgment, an attack is not to be made upon asylum-treatment, and comparisons instituted injurious to systems and establishments which have been rightly regarded as among the best evidences of humanitarian progress.

Dr. Maudsley ventures to say that *where there are the necessary means* for securing good attendance and proper medical supervision, he thinks that in comparatively few cases is it necessary to send patients to asylums. Yes—*where there are the necessary means*. But how very seldom are the necessary means to be found; and where they are found are they not the desired means by reason of their assimilation to asylum restraint and discipline? The trial and responsibility of an attendant in a private case is infinitely greater than in that of a public one, and the difficulty of meeting with thoroughly trustworthy men is well known. The liability and temptation which lie open to them to abuse their trust are enormous, and aggravated by the trying nature of their duties. My experience of private cases may not be as large as that of many others, but it is sufficient to justify me in the expression of this opinion; and I may add that I have been particularly struck by the sense of relief expressed by attendants joining a public staff, who had previously been occupied in the charge of private cases.* Dr. Wood has hit the mark when he says that asylums form the great means of arresting and restoring insane persons, and it is a mistake to encourage the notion that there is anything horrible about them. Our object should be rather to encourage people to believe that an asylum is a home with nothing that a patient or his friends need dread. Dr. Bucknill does not agree any more than Dr. Wood in thinking that lunatics can be cured out of asylums as well as in them. "I do think" (he says) "that for most cases of insanity the order, the method, the power, the whole of the means which can be brought to bear upon curative efforts in asylums are most valuable; and I should say that if a person were afflicted with acute and recent mania he would have, on the average, a much greater chance of

* In a private case which I had under treatment some time ago, where the whole ground floor of a gentleman's country residence was practically converted into an asylum, I had two skilled attendants in charge, under the supervision of a young resident medical man. One of them, of large experience, plausible manner, and irreproachable *written* character, proved himself to be utterly unworthy of confidence, and had to be dismissed at a moment's notice.

being cured in an asylum than if he were placed under the most scientific treatment out of one."

Dr. Thurnam also brings his experience to bear upon the same side, and wisely makes allusion to the well-known fact that near relations, not being capable of exercising control over the insane, are manifestly unfitted for their care and management.

The removal from home influences is frequently one of the best aids to successful treatment; kindness blended with firmness then take the place of kindness rendered cruel and inefficacious by indiscrimination.

The cases most suited for private treatment are those in which the disease is likely to be of short duration, and where the position and standing of a patient are likely to be seriously compromised by the circumstance of his being sent to an asylum.

So much for the management of acute and curable cases.

There are, I doubt not, patients in every large asylum who are most anxious for their discharge, and who would do well if we could create for them those external surroundings which is specially needed by their peculiar temperaments. But the world is too rough for such, and their sensitive and unadaptive natures resent at once the briars and the thorns. In many cases friends have been so well rid of their troublesome lunatic relations while they have been in the asylum, that they do their utmost, and generally not unsuccessfully, to drive them back again from their *quondam* homes. For this class is needed some sort of probationary institution, such as was recommended by my friend Mr. Hawkins, in a previous number* of this journal—a sort of half-way house between the asylum and the world.

But am I not writing as though I thought and had experienced that all the inmates of our asylums were desirous of quitting them? Let me disabuse the reader of this impression. There is no necessity to make allusion to that large and hopeless class of demented, which may well make us stand aghast when our optimists chatter about "the dignity of human nature." These eat and drink and perform their natural functions, having no dreams of ambition or of pride, no desire beyond their immediate animal cravings, no consciousness of their miserable degradation. Of those, however, who are capable of appreciating the comforts of life, and of

* "A Plea for Convalescent Homes in Connection with Asylums for the Insane Poor." By the Rev. Henry Hawkins. "Journal of Mental Science," April, 1871.

reasoning upon them, I do not find that there are as many who want to leave as who want to stay with us. There are numbers in every asylum who are singularly wise in their generation as to the advantage of being well cared for at the expense of any one but "number one." There are others who are sensible of the advantage of leaving, but are timid and deficient in self-confidence. With few exceptions, those who are most desirous of liberty are those who are least capable of properly using it—malcontents, letter-writers, men and women who are continually thrusting their individualities upon you, clamouring about incarceration, and finding no warmth (as our Thackeray phrases it) either in the kitchen-fire or in the sun. "The routine of an establishment and the dictatorship of an attendant" is what galls them, for their own routine is a constant series of complaints, and they themselves would be the most arbitrary of dictators.

The theory may be "old and bad" (as Dr. Maudsley expresses it), that insanity is "a disease quite out of the category of other diseases;" but it is true to demonstration in spite of anything which may be said to the contrary, by the very weapons with which we are called upon to assail it.

It is much to be feared that in the desire which has lately been manifested by some to increase the liberty of the insane, and treat cases at home, sufficient thought is not given to what is due to society itself. Whether by his own fault, or by circumstances over which he had no control, he who has once given evidence of mental derangement is bound, through his responsible agents, by recognised social obligations to withdraw from the stage for awhile—first, that he may himself recover his equilibrium, and, secondly, that he may not exercise any baneful influence upon the sound members of the community. These obligations are frequently overlooked; and those who support private (home) as against asylum treatment, are, it seems to me, not sufficiently mindful of what is due to that larger and saner institution called society, of which they are themselves a part. A lunatic may be harmless in the sense of being unaggressive, but he may be anything but harmless in the sense of personal influence and contact with others. His looks, his ways, his grimaces, his recognised unstrung condition, excite a curiosity, or interest, or fear, which cannot fail to be prejudicial to young and sensitive persons of both sexes. Although the most elaborate and costly machinery has been set in motion to bring under proper care and surveillance those who had formerly no screens

behind which to hide themselves when they were no longer fitted for public observation, and who were exposed to the jeers of the thoughtless and unfeeling, the latest phase of philanthropy clamours for their periodical release. For some of the incurable as well as the curable cases nothing will now do but immoderate freedom. Our mad folk are to be seen at public amusements, theatres, concerts, churches, sea-side resorts, where they attract the notice of everybody, and disturb the equanimity of many. Surely the sound members of the state have some claim to protection from the unsound members, a large proportion of whom have conditioned their own craziness by the vices and follies from which others have been preserved by self-discipline.

I had intended to offer some few remarks upon the third head of our President's teaching; but I have so far exceeded the limits of that space to which I can have any legitimate claim, that I must defer them to a more convenient season, observing only that even here Dr. Maudsley's movement seems to be rather of the retrograde kind, and at variance with the notions of *early treatment*, which experience has taught us to be so valuable. "Chemical restraint" is, indeed, as bad as physical restraint, and I have before expressed my written opinion that it has been carried in some quarters to what I consider a reprehensible extent. But we cannot yet afford to "throw physic to the dogs" (notably *chloral*), and trust entirely to food, "cubic space," and discipline.



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