RELIGIO PSYCHO-MEDICI

PART II.

BY

W. A. F. BROWNE, LL.D.

FORMERLY MEDICAL COMMISSIONER IN LUNACY, SCOTLAND

Reprinted from The Journal of Psychological Medicine
Vol. III. Part 2

LONDON

BAILLIÈRE, TINDALL, & COX, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND

Reprinted from "THE JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE," *Vol. III. Part* 2.

RELIGIO-PSYCHO MEDICI.

BY

W. A. F. BROWNE, LL.D.,

Formerly Medical Commissioner in Lunacy, Scotland.

RELIGIO-PSYCHO MEDICI.

BY W. A. F. BROWNE, LL.D.

Formerly Medical Commissioner in Lunacy, Scotland.

Part II.

Creeds are slowly built up in the human spirit, and the structure is scarcely completed when the darkness comes, in which no man can work. As the daylight fades into night they seem to shrink in their scope, become short and simple, and resemble the sacred epigram of the Jewish proselyte: "I believe, help thou mine unbelief." The same process takes place in the sane and in the insane; dark and doubtful sayings are avoided; sin, and shame, and sorrow, and weakness, and waywardness are confessed; there is a cry for help and forgiveness; and we have often listened with awe and reverence to the last words of the dying lunatic as they assumed the form, the infantile but expressive phrase which had been taught while the child knelt by a mother's knee. A large proportion of this class are struck down suddenly, are dazzled by the false glare of their own wild imaginings, or die in ignorance of an impending change; but there are others—the calm, the resigned, the reverential—who, without any restoration of the light of reason, see, and feel, and appreciate the warnings of decaying strength, and, from the depths of an original and kindly heart, pour forth utterances which differ little from those of a sane and sincere intelligence. "He prayeth best who loveth most." Even when the lips fail in their office, and imperfectly repeat or respond to the brief prayer suggested by others; the eye, the expression, the attitude, may all show forth that "sense of supplication" which Coleridge esteemed more fitting than the articulate sounds of cold, uninspired words. It is an impressive fact that you never meet a lunatic who is an atheist. Scepticism seems to fall off with the habits, and customs, and conventionalities of common life. Blasphemies may be heard, but they are uttered against a Deity whose existence, and some of whose grandest attributes, are acknowledged in the very defiance and irreverence of the utterance.

The tenacity with which early religious impressions are held may depend upon the perpetuity of certain trains of morbid thought, upon the moral constitution, mental concentration, or, in many instances, upon the support, and strength, and consolation which they afford. That years, sufferings, hopeless seclusion effect no breach in the sincerity and en-

durance with which such feelings, if they be not convictions, exercise influence, let the extatic and melancholic prove!

Martyrs have courted and caressed the very fire by which they were devoured. Cranmer thrust his offending right hand into the orthodox flame, and pious fanaticism has sustained and set at nought every form of pain, deprivation, and discomfort. It may be that a divine or supernatural insensibility or tolerance imparted courage or intensified resignation. It may be that any grand or genuine faith or emotion spreads anæsthesia like an invulnerable armour over the frame; but the firmness and fortitude of the lunatic exceeds, or at least equals, all that has been told of the triumphs of exalted devotion or noble daring, and this when neither aid from without or from within could well be predicated. It would scarcely point the moral to cite the wounds, the injuries, the jubilant self-murders and mutilations of the Convulsionnaires, as they may be claimed by hagiology; but their sufferings, if suffer they did, cannot fairly be compared with those of the lunatic, who, in lengthened misery long drawn out, bears and cherishes a self-inflicted agony of remorse; who conceals and perishes under some frightful and loathsome malady; who meditates, and may attempt, suicide, or what in his conviction may be annihilation or eternal punishment, daily or hourly; or seeks extinction by the gradual process of inanition, the very remedy for which, compulsory feeding, must seem to a perverted and conscience-stricken imagination to resemble the horrible accompaniments of violent death.

There are several instances on record where, with a similar travesty of the circumstances and significance of the grand typical act, Crucifixion has been chosen as a mode of self-destruction. One in which the attitude of a hystero-epileptic imitated the sacred symbol repeatedly, and for several hours.* A second, where a homicidal maniac, or, in more euphonious terms, a religious enthusiast, after killing her sister and wounding herself severely, as "without shedding of blood there could be no remission," caused herself to be bound and nailed to the wall, in the attitude of the crucified, by surviving relatives, and, these sanguinary measures having failed to produce death, was killed by having the heart transfixed by a nail.† A third, where a cobbler, a pietistic melancholic, having been foiled in an attempt to crucify himself in a public street in Venice, constructed a cross, and binding himself so far as he could to its surface, ingeniously suspended himself in a net

* *Recherches sur l'Epilepsie et l'Hystérie*, par Bourneville. 1876, p. 142.

† Dr. Pagan, quoted in *Spiritualistic Madness*, by Dr. L. S. Forbes Winslow. 1877, p. 32.

from his window; but was saved from death and canonisation, and transferred to his proper destination, an hospital.*

In such cases these alternatives may be adopted as expiatory of unrepented and unforgiven offences, or in order to quench the fiery accusations of memory; and acts pregnant with such intense suffering may fall lightly upon a morbid, stolid, hebete nervous system; but why should we not conceive that the same strength and the same spirit which supported and gave joy to the martyrs at the stake may be extended to the maniac; nay, may be poured out in the same or more abundant measure to the human affliction which, whether the outcome of individual error, or a heritage from a polluted ancestry, forms part and parcel of the destiny alike of the individual and of the race, of the great balance between what we must bear and what we can bear? But the sincerity, making the convictions—even the most absurd delusions—incompatible with and abhorrent to the heart and understanding of the very victim, who may look upon them as another self, a shadow, a spectre, or an invisible persecutor, is more striking than indifference or even insensibility to the ordinary ills that flesh is heir to. It is not obstinacy. Pertinaciously such revolting opinions are clung to in defiance of the evidence of reason, the external senses, the testimony of others, of the very experience of the being who is their puppet and plaything.

There may be teaching in this. As we borrow lofty sentiments, high resolves, self-abnegation from false faiths, we may learn moral lessons from the errors and absurdities of our patients. The martyrs of Juggernaut, the victims of the Suttee, the obedience of the Assassins, even the indomitable stoicism of sheer impostors, have given forth an aroma, which, like the balsams in a mummy case, may somewhat sweeten the corruption beneath.

Withered flowers are sometimes fragrant. The stem may be broken, the leaves may be crushed, the golden tints of summer may have faded, but still some of the Insane create around them an atmosphere of sweetness. They bend under, but bear their miseries and misfortunes gently, patiently, resignedly. They seek to help and to deal with the deeper and darker sufferings of their companions. They are ministrants in the hands of the physician. They hold the community together, and add usefulness, order, beauty to its products. Lessons, the seed of thought and conduct, might be gathered from such deportment. The mirror is not the only surface which insensibly reflects surrounding forms and movements. The human mind is—unconsciously it may be—affected by every

* *Anatomy of Suicide*, by Dr. Forbes Winslow. 1840, p. 331.

impression with which it is brought into contact through the senses. It may not perceive, it may cast off, it may not intelligently retain the doings, the sayings, the thinkings of others, of those whom it is its province and proud boast to control and to guide to judgments and sentiments of a certain class; but it cannot escape from such influences, it is acted upon, however transiently, for good or for evil, by the most insignificant look or smile; and, what is more important, these fleeting sensations leave faithful photographs on the plane of consciousness, which may exert great, and must exert some potency on the recipient.

A faint corroboration of this supposed infection has been afforded when the guardians of the insane have broken down under their responsibilities and shared their fate. But, instead of numbing or narrowing the judgment and the sentiments, as oracularly pronounced by a distinguished physician, contact with those stricken by mental maladies, long companionship in their daily life, ministration to their wants and infirmities, expand and elevate the observer beyond and above the dull and level routine of ordinary Practice. In an asylum all bodily diseases as well as mental affections demand attention and relief; not merely the casual visit, but continuous intercourse, mutual friendship and reliance are unavoidable; not merely the coarse and the contentious, but the most subtle intellects, the noblest genius, the purest and most delicate hearts have to be dealt with, for have not Tasso and Cowper and Robert Hall been mad? There must be an adaptation of manners, as well as a selection of drugs, to every individual; there must be solicitude as to every impression addressed to the senses by surroundings, as well as to what shall be eaten or drunk; there must be a guidance of the sorrowful towards hope, of the weak towards strength, of the incurable towards a second or artificial nature, of the dying towards a life eternal. The scope of the alienist is as wide as human science or sympathies can reach. If he does not realise all or many of these behests, he is a traitor to his trust, a defaulter in his mission.

It has been narrated that the presence, the look, the folded hands, and the accents of prayer of a tiny child have softened and swerved the malice, the murderous intentions of violent rapacious men; and it has often occurred to me that the imploring glance, the sob, the inarticulate appeal of a stricken lunatic has changed my purpose, has called into activity a nobler form of sympathy than mere compassion, has led me nearer to the source of unselfish, unscientific mercy.

Nor is it only when the emotions are thus highly wrought and exalted that the ideas, even the delusions, of the patient

reach and react upon his physician; but there is every reason to believe that at all times, and under all circumstances, such a confluence and communion does take place, often in purifying, sometimes, alas, in soiling and deteriorating the mental conditions of the insane.

To those of cast-iron mould, to those of foot-rule and figure-rule benevolence, who would regard an hospital as the complement of space, air, food, exercise, such reciprocity would be impossible and unintelligible. To those who approach insanity as a physical disease and nothing more, which it is incumbent upon them to remove or relieve, in the same way, and by somewhat the same means, as it is the duty of a surgeon to reset a fractured limb, or of an engineer to repair a disabled locomotive, such intercommunion would appear not merely out of place, but absurd. But when the education of a medical man is not confined to the dead-house and dissecting room, and we are constrained to prefer this profession to that of a retired butcher or superannuated jailor, which sometimes usurp its place, when he has received some simple philosophical culture, such as may grow up in his own nature, or under the nurture of a happily constituted home, or of specific religious or moral teachings, or in the schools, he will be able to see in his patient, not merely a collection of cells, fibres, interstitial tissue, undergoing fatty, colloid, or amyloid degeneration, but a spirit composed of hopes and fears, as well as of ideas and impressions, and, from whatever evolution coming, displaying in its capacities, its aspirations, convictions, in its never-ceasing growth and inexhaustible resources, that it is intended for a higher sphere, stretching away far and beyond into the interminable future, mounting demonstrably, because, as predicable from its constitution, able and designed to mount, into another higher, more God-like phase of mental existence.

> O joy! that in our embers
> Is something that doth live,
> Moving about in worlds not realised,
> High instincts before which our mortal nature
> Did tremble as a guilty thing surprised.*

Like the primitive Christians, who had not so much as heard whether there was a Holy Spirit or not, I have met adventurers, intrusted with the care of the insane, who had not heard whether there was so much as a human mind or not, that is to say, in addition to the ordinary functions of the cerebro-spinal axis.

It is affirmed that when we gaze steadily through a deep shaft into a well the stars can be seen at noonday. Assuredly,

* Wordsworth's Ode, *Intimations of Immortality.*

if we gaze steadily and penetratingly into the depths of the conscience and consciousness of the insane, we shall see there reflected rays of light of which we could not have dreamed. And these rays will be revealed even when the spirit is troubled and tempest-tossed, when the waters are sullied. These brilliant points are not merely the sincerity, the love, the trustfulness of which we have spoken, but they may consist of hereditary tendencies to virtue or genius, stretching far back into the ages, demonstrating, as clearly as similar tendencies to vice and dulness, that, however nervous matter or any other sort of matter may change or degenerate, the psychical element undergoes no variability by transmission through generations and centuries, and although in contact and conflicting with disease. There is, besides, the original type, the personality, which resists the passage of years, misfortunes, physical decay, even the revolution in opinions, tastes, habits. There is in all to be traced the luminous track impressed by the desire for and the belief in something to obey and worship, something to love and to rest upon, something to enlighten, to guide, to purify. When the body is broken down piecemeal by palsy, when portions are separated from self, when it is divided, halved, there is no partition, no bisection of the concrete ego. The living half may drag along its cold, senseless, corpse-companion, now beyond the influence of will, conscience, almost of animal life, yet the personality survives the partial death intact and entire. Nor does this individualism contract into a mere point: it expands around in likings and dislikings; upwards in prayer and communion with what is stronger, kinder, better; onwards into the eternity of an unmutilated, painless life. Professor Lordat during paralysis preserved all intellectual combinations, but had lost the power to express them. There is in many that marvellous educability and tractableness which impart a capacity for assuming that second or artificial nature which has been alluded to, that growth under and towards new influences and towards the acquisition of new dispositions, new ties, and even new occupations and accomplishments. Under the same category may be placed aged men of genius, who, notwithstanding brain-wasting, display, according to Goethe, fresh productiveness, a second puberty.

The gospel of mildness, mercy, and justice, acting on and by this quality of teachableness, has in a sense converted both medical men and those confided to their care to Christianity; not, perhaps, to a particular creed, dogma, or ritual, but to the worship of the Unseen, and yet the Omnipotent, of Divinity which acts by direct operation on the spirit of man. It is true the theory that alienation was a disease of the body exclusively may have

led to materialistic views; but the experience that moral means, which act apparently independently of the body, were even more effective and curative than those means which act obviously through it and by it, that the soft answer *does* turn away wrath, have dealt a severe blow to scepticism. That lunatics have been restored to a consciousness of their condition and to reason by being beaten, as was George III., manacled, half-drowned, etc., cannot be doubted. Very recently, under the sardonic title of moral treatment, a physician, Leuret, subjected a dozen patients to long-continued shower baths until, in fact, they confessed and abandoned their delusions; but the success of all such experiments or outrages must be explained on the ground that the subjects of them were frightened into their senses, that the remedy is not to be sought in the blows or water, but in the terror which produced the mental revolution. It is worthy of very serious investigation whether an act of the will, inspired by fear or any other moral agent, can sweep away delusions, distempered sentiments, mental disease. That intense voluntary attention directed to an organ may interfere with its nutrition, or, when duly nourished, with its function, is generally believed. Feuchtersleben held that the exercise of will led to an "evolution of life," to the control of disease, to the restoration of health.* Goethe affirmed—we must venture to say assumed—that he could repel, and had actually resisted contagion by acts of volition. The difficulty here involved is as great where elements of a different class are dealt with, where the power of music, colour, beauty, in tranquillising excitement, reanimating hope, in diffusing joy, even in dispelling perversions, is manifested in the re-establishment of sanity. It matters not whether these influences or impulses initiate new molecular movements in the brain or repair the structures upon which these depend; they directly reach consciousness, they directly overthrow diseased action.

In attributing recovery from infirmity or illness to the inventive faculty, do we approach nearer to a solution of the difficulties which ever surround causation, whether the suffering were structural or sensational? Is it easier or more logical to believe that a feeling, or a fancy, could pluck it from the flesh, than the will of God? The restoration to reason, especially if sudden, is a miracle, in the working of which the physician can claim no participation. Is not every vital action, especially in its point of origin—growth, for example, or repair of structure, without detectable cause, object, or controlling power—miraculous?

Such marvels, such triumphs of the creative and recuperative power are well exemplified in the reciprocity, or rather the

* *The Dietetics of the Soul.*

subjugation of physical to psychical functions—in more popular phraseology, in the influence of imagination—as in the Rostan's experiments in the Hotel Dieu, where bread served the purpose of colocynth pills, tepid water acted as an emetic; where the sight of a few drops of blood from venesection produced syncope, under the conviction of the patient that the remedies named had been actually exhibited in the ordinary way and to the ordinary extent; secondly, in the experiment by Broca and Velpeau, where twenty-four individuals were thrown into slumber by a modification of Braid's process, when surgical operations were performed without causing the slightest pain; and thirdly, in the somnambulism, the simulations, the credulity, the delusions—if such they be—willed, or created by the will, either of the operator or the person operated upon, through the influence of the legions of mesmerisers, animal magnetisers, moral conjurors, and charlatans, who have secured the confidence of so large a portion of educated communities.

The aggrandisement, the increase of stature and strength of the unhealthy in the exercise of intellect, in the acquisition of new thoughts, new habits, and manual dexterity, as well as occasionally in restoration to reason, is notably proved in the religious, moral, musical, mechanical, scholastic tuition and training introduced into schools for the imbecile and the insane. In Richmond Asylum, Dublin, education, as a means of improvement and cure, has been resorted to for several years, under the able superintendence of Dr. Lalor—whose patients under culture generally amount to nearly two hundred—with decided and beneficial results, although both the amount and rationale have not been fully stated.

Under my charge I have had moping idiots, a deaf and dumb general paralytic, and gesticulating maniacs, who were from preoccupation practically deaf and dumb, and who appeared beyond the reach of sympathy or the plummet of reason; yet this depth has been fathomed, and what was without form and void has been fashioned into order and symmetry, and placed in relation to God and man. Even to the deft Chiaromonte, interpreter of the uncouth sounds taught to deaf mutes as language, the converse is awe-inspiring and wonderful. But when a church is entered where there are hundreds of this class, where the preacher is one of themselves, where all is silence and sobriety; but where active, it may be eloquent communion is going on between the teacher and the taught, on transcendental topics of the last importance to these isolated beings, we trace another link between the multiplicity and universality of divine purposes and human wants and weakness. The transmission of a visible thought of external forms to the consciousness of the

deaf mute is intelligible; but, unless we presuppose a receptivity, a capacity to comprehend an abstract proposition, a special plasticity in the pupils and the presence of Divine intelligence, we cannot comprehend how they grasp, obey, and act out a living faith, a moral law.

When wards for the agitated and excited are visited, we are less reminded of violent passions than of demoniac possession. Individuals are tossed to and fro, are cast down, carried out of themselves, against their inclinations and wishes; they shout, gesticulate, threaten, as if in mortal combat. Whether it be a conflict between their sense of propriety and a dominant propensity or between volition and automatism as in epilepsy, there ever a struggle. Pascal has said that there were two souls within us—one that leads to good, one that leads to evil: one which may be distorted and destroyed and distraught by madness—one pure, invulnerable, invincible, eternal, the animus and the anima; in the equipoise between which health consists. There are many confirmations of this duality; there is a strong probability in favour of the opinion that while the mind may be ruffled and rent and impaired, the soul may continue undisturbed, uncontaminated by disease, and constituting the bulwark against mental death. The separation into two natures may be traced in double consciousness. This condition invites, but has hitherto defied, the investigations of the metaphysicians. The personal identity seems to be lost or impaired. The individual is separated into two distinct beings. He feels the promptings of two different natures; he remembers two different trains of thought and conceives that he is two persons at the same time, or at different times. Or, which is more rarely the case, all recollection of the one state is lost when the mind passes into the other, and the two periods of existence are in no way connected by consciousness or memory. One of these states may be healthy, characterised by the exercise of sound sense and generous affections; the other may be diseased, marked by folly or passion; or both may be diseased, but distinguished from each other. In both cases there is a contest between two distinct entities. A. B. conceives that he is himself and another person at the same time; he acts as if this belief were sincere, and cannot divest himself of the conviction that in his own body are two minds or persons, suggesting courses of conduct widely opposed. He is certain that his original self, A. B., is a base, abandoned scoundrel, tempting his other, or new, or better self—to whom, it should be noted, is attached the emphatic *ego*—to commit crimes or acts of which he altogether disapproves. The second person of this duality repels, struggles with, these abominable solicitations, such as that he should

commit suicide, and loathes the tempter or first person. This struggle sometimes becomes real and visible, when the hands, acting under the will of No. 1, or the virtuous and opposing impulse, beat and bruise the legs, body, or head, which, it may be presumed, are supposed to belong to No. 2, the vicious or tempting impulse. The object of the one is obviously to inflict pain upon the other. The blows are so severe as to leave marks for days; and when these are adverted to, the answer is, as if from No. 2, "Don't justify him, he deserved it."*

The alternate domination of different natures, the whirlwind of passion, the stagnation and hebetude of despair are strikingly contrasted in certain modifications of the *Folie Circulaire*, where the self-reliance and strength of mania give place to the suffering and feebleness of melancholia; or it assumes a more pleasing aspect where insensate fury subsides into calmness and lucidity in the temporary lull of an intermission or permanent recovery, and where the patient passes from the darkness and moral tempest of seclusion to the cheerfulness and amenities of a convalescent gallery, and is seen "clothed, seated, and in his right mind." This well-marked duplicity of condition, if not of character, has suggested the fancy—yet is it a fancy?—that the higher, more rational, self-regulating spirit is of us, but not in us; is an objective influence vouchsafed to guide and to govern at the very time when help is required; that it is a guardian angel.

Sir Thomas Brown says: "Therefore, for spirits, I am so far from denying their existence, that I could easily believe that not only whole countries, but particular persons have their tutelary and guardian angels. It is not a new opinion of the Church of Rome, but an old one of Pythagoras and Plato."† But others less speculative, though as humble, reposing in that trust which has sufficed since genuine civilisation commenced, have recognised in certain of these manifestations a divine afflatus which may cast out, chastise, or calm not merely the Satanic impulse of which the monomaniac is the sport, but the legion of foul and ferocious morbid instincts which are the motive powers in the polymaniac.

The tranquillisation which almost always accompanies the act of prayer and religious services, in which the force and fortitude inspired by faith are shadowed forth, countenance the latter view. The theomaniac who told Esquirol that angels revealed to him his divinity and whispered their

* For examples of this rare condition, see Dr. Dyer, in *Philosophical Transactions*; Ellicott, in *Combe's System of Phrenology*; Dewar, in *Abercrombie on the Intellectual Powers*; and Wigan, in his *Duality of Mind*.

† *Religio Medici*, p. 87.

allegiance, and the general paralytic who announced to myself, while staggering beside me, that he had literally taken up his bed, and that his faith had "made him whole," both believed from an intuition, which, if not a mockery to deceive and delude us, is in itself God-given, however it may be misdirected. It might be profane if Laurent L——, the savage recluse of the forest of Pierrefou, near Hyères, were compared with the Ascetics and Eremites of the Thebaid, but how like are the sorrows, sufferings, self-accusations of the melancholic to the religious condition of Conviction; how like the dependence, the calm devotion, the perfect confidence of many monomaniacs to that of Conversion; how like the inextinguishable hope, the glorious anticipations of the insane optimist to that of Assurance! Of the orthodoxy or catholicity of these dogmata I profess ignorance, and am contented to know that they have been held by rational and religious people.

The support which may be afforded by partial truths, imperfect revelations, and the foreshadowings which may be cast even by physical states and changes, may be gathered from the circumstances attending the transition from a solitary cell or a padded room to an associated dormitory. In the first may lie the victim of fear or remorse, calm, cold, sleepless, so mute and motionless that physical seems to have triumphed over that moral death entailed by chain-bound suffering. The soul feeds on itself, communes with the dead and the departed, or with sins and sorrows that never depart, and may thus perpetuate a life-long agony, so exquisite and continuous that sleep is banished for months and years, and the patient becomes rigid and statuesque as marble through the concentration of feeling. In the padded room may be an incarnate whirlwind, bounding, rushing, reeling, shouting, shrieking in fear and defiance of skeletons, spectres, supernatural or, it may be, more material foes; or, in utter disregard of cold, pain, even fatigue, casting off that morbid muscular energy in virtue of which he is enabled to sustain, and even enjoy, this gladiatorial struggle, and which, whatever its source, cannot originate in the innate forces of the poor excited combatant. In the associated dormitory there may be assembled a group of ten or twelve individuals, who, differing widely during the day—one being elated by passion, one being stupidly silent, another being a walking, incoherent logomachy—are now all placed upon an equality, all prostrated and saddened by that marvellous agent, sleep, which comes not from themselves nor from any physiological process known to us. Is this penumbra, this precursor of death, intended to serve as a moral teacher as well as a physical restorer? Does this unconscious instrument bring us nearer to the world of spirits?

Is the communion held in dreams, and which is not regulated by us, sustained with the past, the future, or the unknown? Dream-thought has been the field of discovery; it incessantly brings within such mental cognisance as to serve as the base of memory new combinations of thought, new creations, new impulses and purposes. Discoveries have been made, difficulties solved in, and fears and fancies embodied forth from dreams; and although little under the dominion of the body and less under that of the will, it might be argued that many delusions are little more than dreams perpetuated and running along with the current of waking thought. I have known insanity occur during dreams and remain a live-long blight. The profound, the tranquil, the refreshing slumber enjoyed by many lunatics, and the knowledge that their dreams must be uninfluenced to a great degree by existing external impressions, as they are assuredly removed from the power of the will and of the understanding, led me to make certain inquiries as to their character and scope. Were the insane mad or as mad during sleep, were their dreams a mere duplicate of their waking hallucinations and errors, were they similar to those of the healthy sane? Desiring to follow these fervid imaginations into sleep, and to watch the mental processes compatible with calmness and repose, and when the spirit is hovering on the confines of insensibility and immortality, I caused a record to be regularly kept of all remarkable dreams, phantasies, and visions which had made so deep an impression as to influence the conduct of the individual, which had excited some powerful emotion at the time, or had been afterwards communicated. Certain patients were selected for observation who were of marked character, whose habitual trains of thought were well known, and who spontaneously or willingly described their feelings; their confidence was sought and secured, and the disclosures of every night were carefully preserved. This scheme was adopted for the purpose of determining how far the night dream corresponded with the day delusion; whether the events of the day exercised a similar power over the insane as they were believed to do over the sane, and to what extent the mind was rational during sleep, somnambulism, and those states between sleeping and waking. The inquiry was new and led to a collection of most interesting and extraordinary information as to the laws of association during sleep. It established, so far as it went, the identity of the dream with the delusion, showed that the current of morbid thought flowed on uninterruptedly through the agitation and the vivid impressions of the day and the quiet and repose of the night. In some instances it appeared that previous acts and feelings entered into, and coloured,

and directed the dream. Thus, immediately after one of our festive meetings the vision of one of the party was found to contain a picture of glittering and gorgeous dresses, and of another to display a dance performed by the wives of the Goths and Vandals in St. Paul's Cathedral. Much more frequently the dream, regarded as a reality, moulded and modified the conceptions and delusions of the waking state. Thus, one man was persuaded that he was destroyed by magnetism, silent combustion, and complained to the authorities that attempts were made upon his life; a second dreamed that he was possessed of corn, wine, and oil, and distributed them the next day; a third that he saw the books of the nation in the hands of the Lord Chancellor, and that a long black stroke was drawn across the national debt, and in the morning he announced that he was about to pay it. It is as difficult to convey any adequate notion of the extravagance, the grotesqueness, and sometimes the splendour of these reveries, as to follow the unsound mind through all its waywardness and wanderings; but it is consolatory to discover that the prevailing characteristics were pleasure and happiness. Of about seventy dreams detailed with great minuteness, four either owed their origin or their predominating features to fear; seventeen to the gratification of some sense, or the realisation of some hope, wish, or ambition; four sprung from re-awakened affection or kindness; three were occupied with political triumphs; three were disturbed by anger; nine were tinged with the harmless superstitions of early days; five seemed to be the offspring of vanity; two of pride; seven of suspicion; nine of avarice or the desire of aggrandisement; three were busied with martial pomp and glory; and three with the more peaceful operations of the farm; and, of the total number, whether pure creations of imagination or indistinct and distorted recollections of past events, not above fifteen could be regarded as giving pain or suffering, and as calling for sympathy.

The phenomenon of dreaming and the act of abrupt awakening resemble the instantaneous recoveries which have been witnessed by every psychologist. The closed eye, far behind which fantasies have been careering, opens to light and order. The darkness and dim chaos which have, perhaps during a quarter of a century, brooded over the tempest-tossed soul pass away into oblivion in the twinkling of an eye; and the enfranchised patient begins life anew, takes up the feelings, affections, opinions, projects which were left inchoate years ago, retaining nearly as little memory of the interval as the sleeper of the creations of the night. It is a resurrection. The physicist stands aghast that a moral consequent should have no

demonstrable or appreciable antecedent. The statistician is puzzled by the disturbance of his law of fixed ratios, by an exception outside his calculations of proportions, an index of a larger circle than he had conceived possible; while the humble and religious mind accepts the occurrence merely as the index of mental change, as a special Providence, or as a manifestation of God's will, as may be in keeping with his convictions. Were such a crux addressed to a restored patient, it is next to certain that he would describe the revolution as sudden, as not in himself or by himself, and as flashing like a gleam of lightning on his spirit from some supersensuous or supernal source.

The turbid and turbulent maniac is not the only moral opponent with whom the physician has to contend. The doubting, dreading, hair-splitting monomaniac is even more formidable. I have already pointed to the solemn lesson taught as to the universal and perpetual presence of God in the human heart, by the bowing down of rebellious spirits and of imaginary deities in the worship of the Omnipotent. I have likewise adverted to the indelibility of the idea of personality, of that *Me* which must have pre-existed and received the *Not Me*—in other terms, all impressions of externality—and which survives when all other tracings have faded from the tablet of memory. But there is still another intuition which is rarely obliterated. This is the sense of responsibility, the feeling of right and wrong. It is true that conscience must be weakened, may be warped, by delusions, imaginings, and the turmoil of passion, and its sensitiveness may have been blunted during the sane life of the lunatic. But it is so rarely extinct, so invariably accessible, that distinguished authorities have advocated the punishment of the insane as a means of moral treatment. They may have been emboldened to do this by the observations of the consciousness of error, by the appearance of shame, remorse, repentance in the insane, and by the fact that the moral management of the inmates of asylums consists in great measure of a system of rewards and penalties, of praise and blame. There is a form of derangement in which the mind itself, a self-tormentor, acts as a sort of devil's advocate, accuses itself, detects vice and delinquency where the bystander sees virtue and uprightness, and magnifies into crime what is neither culpable nor suspicious. I have seen a lucid interval converted into a Lenten season of sorrow and guilty apprehension over the violence, the blasphemous word, or the irreverent thought which had been indulged during the paroxysm of excitement. "I question much Paley's watch and watchmaker as an evidence of wise and beneficent creation," said a patient to me, "but I have a revelation within my own thought. It is conscience. I did not create it, but it

created me." Spenser sings, "The soul is form, and doth the body make." This feeling is the charter of man's superiority to all other living beings; it is the link with higher intelligences, purer moral natures, which he can neither measure nor approach. It is the prophetic evidence, the foreshadowing of a future court of judgment, at the bar of which he must appear, when his own thoughts or acts will become his defenders or his accusers.

The gorilla has muscles in his prehensile foot which confer a power peculiar to himself. Conscience, he and all other anthropoid creatures are denied; he fears danger and he flies from it, he feels pain and gibbers, pleasure and chuckles; but he may destroy his fellows, filch their food, and do all that assimilates him to the savage, the satyr; but neither shame nor sorrow nor the dread of chastisement enter his rudimentary mind.

There is, as we have said above, and now repeat, a disease of this moral sense, as well as of the judgment. It may be blotted out from the map of mind, or it may be submerged under a deluge of delusions, as cities have disappeared under the encroachments of the storm-moved ocean. But it is to the prominence, the exaltation, the excitement of conscientiousness, to which reference is made here. According to the exaggerated estimate of the sufferer, or sinner, as he would wish to be termed and treated, the most commonplace as well as the most exigent duties have been neglected, imperfectly performed, have originated in selfish, sordid, sinful motives, have secured gains which should be denounced as robbery, have been crowned with fame and honour where blame or shame should have been the reward. Punishment, disgrace, degradation are claimed, clamoured for, as the just and inevitable expiation, if such were possible, of such dereliction. Not only in the past, but in each succeeding minute, in every thought, in every movement, in every act of kindness, sympathy, and apparent disinterestedness, there appears to the victim something sinister, unworthy, unholy. The self-analysis includes the most trivial as well as the most momentous doings and feelings; and the perplexed, distracted convict stands ever at the bar of judgment awaiting condemnation—stands ever on the brink of a gulf into which he may be precipitated, even by the wish to escape it. I have often risen from a discussion, from an effort to convince or console this self-tormentor, with the feelings of exhaustion which follow a game of chess with an expert and experienced player, and with the sense of defeat which generally attends such an intellectual tournament. But this was the least inglorious sentiment. I often stood rebuked before the purity and majesty of the motives and aims, of the sincerity of the contrition, of the elevation of the standard of this self-accused whom I had presumptuously

essayed to instruct, to refute, to restore. The humiliating suspicion has pressed upon me that the world could not be conducted upon principles of such scrupulous optimism, and that, as at present constituted, society is kept together by baser, ruder, and less noble bonds. These morbid sentiments, or rather this hypercritical conscientiousness, may form a groundwork of religious depression, but the anxiety or prostration is more frequently the outcome of an ill-balanced moral nature than of pietism. In whatever combination, the misery entailed is exquisite.

The usufruct of the ophthalmoscope has been to show the very passage of the materials of an hallucination from the inner eye, along the retina, into the very depths and recesses of those structures where it is supposed to feed and to form the insane conception. The syphymograph may declare the heat and the hurry of passion as they disturb the pulse; and even the pace of the will, as it rushes along its course to the muscles, its instruments of good or evil; and the speed of pain, as it warns of danger or injury from without, may all be measured; but we have no gauge for that anguish which interpenetrates every state of consciousness, and clings to every impulse and sentiment. It may be styled in certain religious communities as natural penitence; in asylums it may assume the form of penance; the patient may remain in the same posture for days and months; compulsory alimentation may be required for years to preserve lives endangered by pertinacious fasting; blows and wounds, even self-immolation, may be resorted to; and all this upon the vain but universal notion of atonement, of making the body or its senses suffer for the sins of the soul.

Vicariousness is stamped upon our nature as an intuition, and not adopted as a principle. The law of compensation to others, to ourselves, to an abstraction, is an instinct of conscience, an incentive in conduct. It is often stronger in the uprooted than in the upright mind. Suicide is thus a sacrifice. The victim dies, or seeks to die, for his sins, because he is too abased and abominable to live, to save others—his children, mankind—from perishing and punishment, or to expiate hereditary crimes. Is this conception, deliberate or delirious, given to familiarise us with the central fact in Christian faith, or is it a reflection cast from thence, but, if so, reaching and actuating savage as well as saint and sage?

That materialism as well as atheism—and its necessary concomitant, a belief in, or a hope for annihilation—is rarely a symptom or an accompaniment of insanity has excited surprise. The highly educated sceptic, as well as the timid and the vulgar,

recoils from the ceasing to be. "Non occides," Sir Thomas Brown says, "is the commandment of God, yet scarce observed by any man; for I perceive every man is his atropos, and lends a hand to cut the thread of his own days." "Could the devil work my belief to imagine I could ever die, I would not outlive that very thought."*

Even the suicide desires, in many instances, to reach a future and a happier world, rather than to escape from this. It may be that, as subjectivity, or dealing with our own thoughts, is the essence of mental disease, whether the complexion of these thoughts be bright or gloomy, the morbid imagination may forget its earthly tenement, may realise chiefly, or exclusively, the world of ideas with which it is conversant, and believe more practically or trustingly in a life, an eternity, without pain, passions, as it will be without end. These sad and solemn teachers dispose me to say, without a sneer, or a condemnation of those who believe differently, an undevout Psychologist is mad!

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 104 and 177.

Spottiswoode & Co., Printers, New-street Square, London.