

Mental Diseases Regarded as...Disorders of the Instinct by John Macpherson MD(Edin) FRCP(Edin) Commissioner in Lunacy for Scotland

Publication/Creation

8th October 1913

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hz6pwfj4>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution, Non-commercial license.

Non-commercial use includes private study, academic research, teaching, and other activities that are not primarily intended for, or directed towards, commercial advantage or private monetary compensation. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Mental Diseases
Regarded as . . .
Disorders of the
Instinct

An Address to the Nursing Staff of
The Retreat, York

delivered October 8th, 1913.

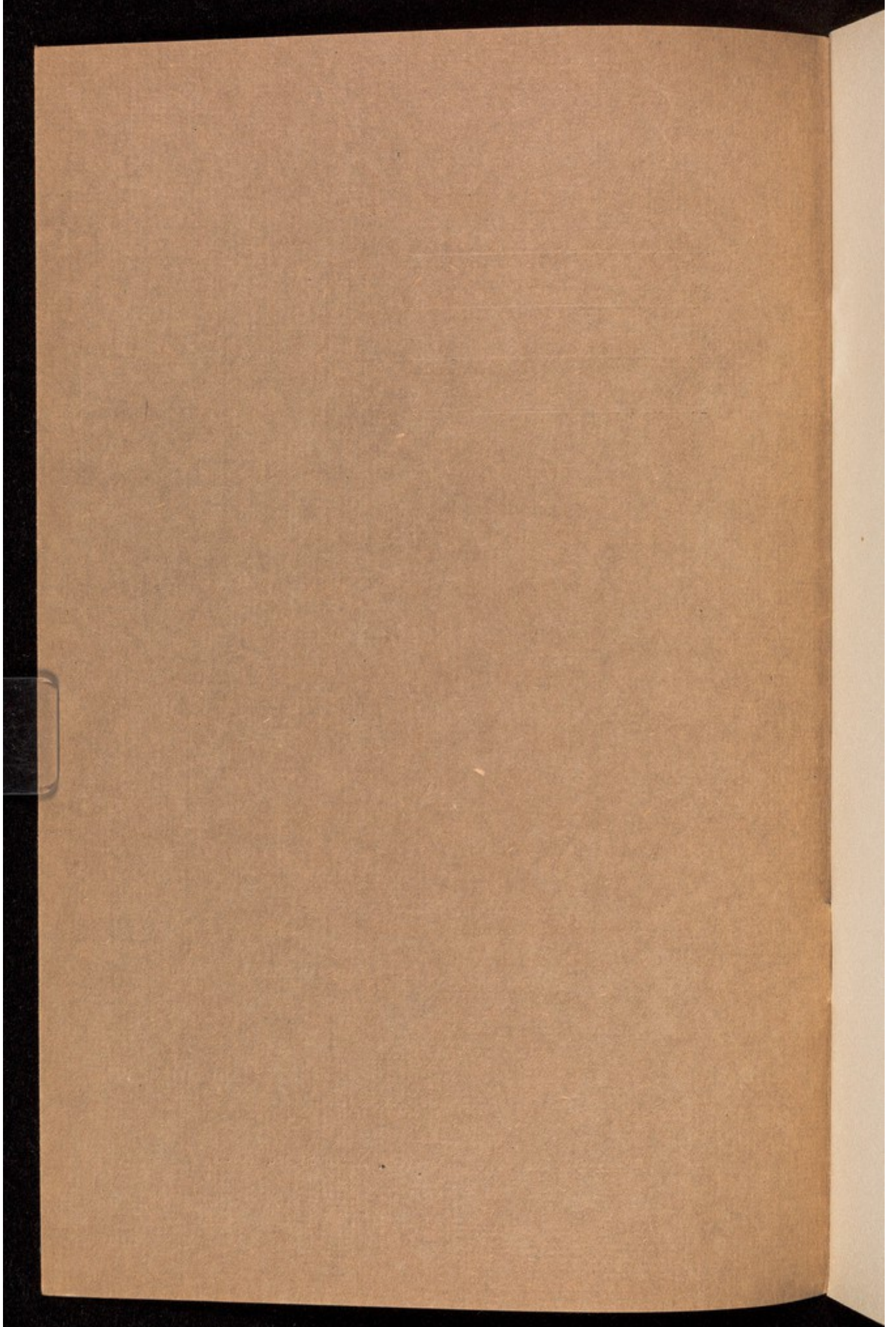
BY

JOHN MACPHERSON,

M.D. (Edin.), F.R.C.P. (Edin.)

Commissioner in Lunacy for Scotland.

William Sessions, The Ebor Press, North Street, York.



Mental Diseases
Regarded as . . .
Disorders of the
Instinct

**An Address to the Nursing Staff of
The Retreat, York**

delivered October 8th, 1913.

BY

JOHN MACPHERSON,

M.D. (Edin.), F.R.C.P. (Edin.)

Commissioner in Lunacy for Scotland.

William Sessions, The Ebor Press, North Street, York.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM 1630 TO 1800
BY
JOHN W. COOPER

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM 1630 TO 1800
BY
JOHN W. COOPER

JOHN W. COOPER

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM 1630 TO 1800
BY
JOHN W. COOPER

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM 1630 TO 1800
BY
JOHN W. COOPER

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM 1630 TO 1800
BY
JOHN W. COOPER

Insanity : a Disorder of Instinct.

It is often helpful to look at matters which we have always regarded as settled facts from another point of view, even when that point of view does not appear to help us very far on in our practice or work. In looking around for a subject upon which to address you, I resolved to select one to which my own attention had been directed and which certainly presents another point of view of the nature and manifestation of insanity.

In ordinary conversation we are accustomed to speak of "diseases of the mind" or "mental diseases" by which we mean disorders of the intellect only. We probably mean something more, but in practice we endeavour to reduce all insanity to disorders of the intellect, and even when we find that an insane person's reasoning is unimpaired we endeavour to justify this view on the ground that while apparently his intellect is unimpaired yet that in reality, under the surface somehow or another, it must be disordered. For we say to ourselves and to others "No person who behaves as this man or this woman behaves can have the full use of their reason—a reasonable being would not do so and so." But in fact you know and I know that reasonable people do most extraordinary things—unaccountable things—if reason is to be our sole standard of conduct. We also know that many of our patients can reason as correctly and as acutely as ourselves—some of them perhaps better. There must therefore be something radically wrong in our conception of insanity and of the insane when we reduce all mental disorder to affections of the reason, for that is what we practically do at present.

There are three things of which we know next to nothing, and they are the three most important things in our existence. These three things are birth, death, and life.

Birth and death are of course incidents of life; life, therefore, is the subject which must engage our attention. The manifestations of life are innumerable, but human reason is so developed that it is able to classify and arrange them in scientific order.

The whole material world is, if not itself alive, permeated by life. But what we mean by life is organic life—life associated with some living organism, however humble that organism may be. The manifestations of life become more and more obvious, more and more complicated the higher we ascend in the scale of living things. To begin with we have a living organism of which it is difficult to say whether it is plant or animal. From this on the one side branches off an ascending order of plants, from the humble algae or lichen to the giant forest tree; on the other side there branches off an ascending order of animals, from the protozoa or bacteria to man. In animal life there are two supreme manifestations, instinct and reason. In the insects, instinct, which, if it is not life, is inseparable from life, reaches its highest development, but it is unaccompanied by developed intellect as we understand that word. In the vertebrates—that is animals with a special brain and a back bone containing a spinal cord, and which range from the fishes to man, the great characteristic is the presence of intellect; it may be very rudimentary intellect, but in a sense it is always there. The higher vertebrates, a little lower than man, give unmistakable evidences of its presence, as we see it in such intelligent animals as the dog, but in man intellect reaches its highest culmination and has been aptly described as his crown. The lower vertebrates are almost entirely guided by instinct, and man himself in his ordinary every-day mode of life is as instinctive as any animal. It is only when he is placed in circumstances calling for the use of reason that he exercises his intellect. When we consider for example that most men eat, sleep and fall in love, and how immensely these three instinctive

processes bulk in the lives of humanity, we realise that intellect, when it is called upon in connection with them, is requisitioned with the object of regulating and refining our indulgence in them, or increasing our pleasure in them, or preventing other people from robbing us of our enjoyment of them. Even among different classes of men the use made of intellect varies greatly. A savage leads on the whole a less intellectual and a more instinctive life than a modern man of business, while the life of an idiot or an imbecile is almost wholly instinctive and unintellectual.

But the terms "instinct" and "intellect" must be more carefully defined in order that we may have no doubt as to their meaning. The best way to do this is to give examples of instinct as it exists say in the insect. With many such examples you are all more or less familiar. For instance the work of the bee; the collection of honey; the mathematical formation of the honeycomb which could not be excelled for adaptation to its purpose by the highest human intellect; the rearing of the young; the selective feeding of the future queens; the killing of the drones and the swarming off from the hive. The life of the bee is so familiar to us that we have ceased to wonder at it. But there are other instances of insect life that are positively startling. The eggs of the horse fly are hatched in the stomach of the horse and the fly therefore lays its eggs on the shoulder or legs of the horse—parts of the body which the horse can conveniently lick.

Certain species of wasps lay their eggs on spiders, beetles, or caterpillars in order that when the eggs are hatched the larvæ or young wasps may live by eating these animals. But as it is necessary that the young wasp should live upon fresh meat, wasps do not kill their victims, but paralyse them by means of the following delicate surgical operation. They accurately sting the victim just into the nervous motor ganglia which control the motions of the limbs. Some of the victims have as many as nine pairs of these motor

ganglia, and the wasp in that case administers nine stings with unerring exactitude in the right place.

The sitaris, a little beetle, lays its eggs at the entrance of an underground passage dug by a kind of bee. When the egg is hatched, the larva or young beetle attaches itself to the male bee as it leaves its underground residence. From the male bee it transfers itself to the female bee and quietly waits until she lays her eggs upon which it lives until it becomes a perfect beetle.

These strange events are mentioned not for the purpose of exciting your wonder, but for the purpose of leading you to consider their true import.

(1) The first thing I would desire you to observe is that they are not solitary incidents in nature, for nature is made up of such incidents; in fact they form nature; in short they are life.

(2) They are not the result of intelligence or reason as we understand that word or of experience or of training.

(3) They are exact and unerring adaptations of means to the required ends.

Take for example the knowledge—if we can call it knowledge—displayed by the wasp which stings its victim to paralyse but not to kill. What is implied here?

(a) a knowledge of anatomy and physiology possessed by few human beings, and then only acquired after a life-time of study.

(b) An unerring skill in performing a delicate surgical operation.

(c) A knowledge of the future requirements of its progeny on the part of a creature which has never had any progeny, which will not live to see them, and which has never seen its own parents.

I might go on indefinitely, for instinct is the predominating factor in all life, but I have said enough to bring out this particular point of view.

It is now necessary to refer to intellect or "mind" as we wrongly call it. Intellect is feeble where instinct is supreme, and instinct is comparatively feeble where intellect is supreme. As the great French philosopher, Bergson, puts it. "Intellect seeks but does not find, instinct finds without seeking." There is no intelligence in which some traces of instinct cannot be discovered, and no instinct that is not "surrounded by a fringe of intelligence." Therefore we may presume that both have a common origin, and that both are products of life. But intelligence, which is a later and a secondary product, is the peculiar property of the higher animals, especially of man. It does not supplant instinct in man, but it modifies it. Intellect is a function which enables us to regard instinct and its operations; it enables us to look around us, to look back and to look forward. By means of it we are able to form judgments, to criticise, to regulate our instincts and to act if necessary contrary to the promptings of our instincts. To quote a biblical phrase, it is "a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our path." At the same time so far as the great functions of life and what we call mind are concerned, it is instinct that is fundamental, intelligence which is secondary or accessory. In order to establish this somewhat novel proposition, we must consider instinct in man, and we must distinguish between two kinds of human instinct.

(1) That form of instinct which is common to all animals. In this sense our whole life is instinctive as is shown by the beating of the heart, the functions of growth, respiration, digestion, and reproduction. The human infant, like the young of other animals, feeds itself, cries, learns to walk and to play instinctively.

(2) The peculiarly human instincts which are characteristic of man, but which are present in a more or less degree in other animals, are seven in number. For a very clear exposition of them I refer you to Professor Macdougall's book on Social Psychology. These seven

primary instincts, although as we shall see not the sole possession of man, are yet so prominent in him, so wonderfully blended and so modified by reason as largely to account for the pre-eminence of the human species. Unlike the more primitive instincts exhibited by man in common with all animals, they do not properly develop their distinctive human character until childhood is past and years of discretion have arrived.

The following is a short description of each of these seven human instincts.

1. **The instinct of self-preservation**, with which is associated the emotion of fear. The emotion of fear is undoubtedly the emotion which induces us to avoid danger and to preserve ourselves from injury and death. It is our constant accompaniment in all the affairs of life; it prevents us from rash conduct of all kinds, and leads to caution, sobriety, and humility. It is present throughout the animal kingdom. In young children fear is caused by loud noises, by being held too loosely in the arms, or by the presence of animals or strangers. In almost all animals, including man, the impulse of flight is occasioned by fear, and if the circumstances are sufficiently alarming every living thing that can move runs away. In most animals the impulse of flight is followed by concealment as soon as cover is reached. Fear exercises a profound influence upon the bodily functions.

Corresponding to the impulse to flight we see hurried breathing, violent heart beats, and frantic muscular movements or tremors. Corresponding to the impulse to concealment we see pallor, paralysis of movement, slowing of the heart beat and lowered respiration. If fright is very severe and sudden it may produce convulsions or cause death.

2. **Self abasement and subjection**. There are strong reasons for regarding this as a primary instinct. It expresses itself in a slinking, crestfallen behaviour, slow movements, a hanging down of the head, and a general

submissiveness. It is very well exemplified in the behaviour of the dog who often approaches a human being with his tail between his legs, or in the manner of a young dog at the approach of a larger, older dog; he crouches with his belly on the ground, his tail tucked away and his head on one side with every appearance of submission. In children the expression of this emotion is often mistaken for that of fear, but the expression of the young child sitting on its mother's knee, in perfect silence, casting furtive glances at a stranger is not fear but abasement or shyness.

Men and women vary much in the expression of this instinct. When it is temperamentally present we speak of a person as "modest" or "conciliatory" in manner, or as humble or reverent.

3. Self-display and elation. The instinct of self-display is manifested by many animals besides man. Thus the prancing of a well-fed, gaily caparisoned horse and the strutting of a peacock have become proverbial. If you have seen a Highland piper playing his pipes, or a cavalry soldier riding alone through the streets of a town you have seen excellent examples of self-display. Many children, too young to walk or talk, exhibit the instinct amidst the admiring looks and plaudits of the family circle. A little later it is apparent in what is known as the "showing off" of children, in the boasting and swaggering of boys, and the vanity of girls. The instinct is naturally excited both in men and animals by the presence of spectators. It is this instinct that makes life tolerable for many of us by giving us what in Scotland we call a "gude conceit o' oorsels." The joy of life, and the elation of mere existence, supplies us with those harmless illusions of self-importance which sustain and cheer us on the weary path from the cradle to the grave. We live in hope, too often disappointed, that to-morrow will be better than to-day. We cling to life strenuously and our worst enemy is death about which we think as little as possible.

4. **The Social or Herd instinct.** Among all gregarious animals, including man, there is an instinct which compels collectivism or living together in herds or society. This instinct leads to the formation of laws of conduct and ensures by means of severe penalties that each individual shall conform to the rules and standards of the society in which he lives. From this instinct issue the ethical codes, the beliefs, the usages and the laws common to every society of human beings.

5. **Curiosity and wonder.** This instinct abounds in all species of the higher animals. Cows, horses, dogs, monkeys, and men evince it in an unmistakable manner. In man under the guidance of reason, it is the prime motive of civilisation, scientific research, mechanical inventions and philosophy.

6. **Pugnacity and anger.** The fighting instinct is universal in nature. While some animals, notably some dogs and some men love fighting for its own sake, in the vast majority of instances it is resorted to in the defence of property and rights. Be it ever so abject, a hungry dog will growl if anyone attempts to deprive it of a bone. A hungry child will scream if its meal is interfered with, and a timid animal will fight to the death for the preservation of its young.

7. **The Parental instinct** is a universal and a very strong instinct. It is the bed rock of human society, and ensures the continuation of the species among all the higher animals. From it and the tender emotion which accompanies it spring our sympathy, our charity, and the care which we bestow upon the sick, the weak, and the helpless.

These then are the seven primary instincts of man. (1) self-preservation, (2) self-abasement, (3) self-display, (4) the social or herd instinct, (5) curiosity, (6) pugnacity, and (7) parental or family affection.

Man then, according to this view, is a bundle of instincts which form the basis of all human activity, and which supply

the driving power by means of which all our actions, whether they are good or bad, are initiated and carried on. Take away the impulses coming from these instincts and we would become incapable of activity of any kind. Take for example love, whether sexual, or parental, or social. Could reason dictate the love of the sexes, or could religion stimulate our love for mankind unless these were founded upon instincts inseparable from our nature?

I shall now consider the pathological manifestation of the instincts as illustrated in the more common forms of insanity with which you are all familiar.

Insanity is not one disease but many. For our present purpose however, it may be divided into two parts. First, that form in which there is congenital malformation of the brain—as in idiots or imbeciles—or gross disease or injury of the brain—as in general paralysis or apoplexy—and Secondly, that form in which the chief symptom is a profound emotional disturbance. With each of these two groups we shall briefly deal in turn.

Congenital absence of the instincts is found in the large class of the mentally defective; it varies in degree from the helpless idiot who scarcely possesses even primitive animal instincts, up to the higher defectives in whom the development of one or other of the primary human instincts has been arrested or perverted.

Permanent loss or impairment of the instincts may occur as the result of apoplexy or of injury to the brain, or of old age. In the majority of such cases we see also a loss of intelligence, but there can be no doubt that in some people, after severe illness, or occasionally after an acute attack of insanity, there is observed an impairment of instinct without any perceptible change in the reasoning faculties. I do not know whether any of you have read a novel by Robert Louis Stevenson called the "Master of Ballantrae." I am fond of quoting the following passage from that remarkable book:—"When he was able to resume

"some charge of his affairs (after a severe illness), I had
 "many opportunities to try him with precision. There was
 "no lack of understanding nor yet of authority; but the old
 "continuous interest had quite departed, he grew readily
 "fatigued, and fell to yawning, and he carried into money
 "relations, where it is certainly out of place, a facility that
 "bordered upon slackness. True there was nothing
 "excessive in these relaxations, or I would have been no
 "party to them. But the whole thing marked a change,
 "very slight yet very perceptible, and although no man
 "could say my master had gone out of his mind, no man
 "could deny that he had drifted from his character. It was
 "the same to the end with his manner and appearance.
 "Some of the heat of the fever lingered in his veins, his
 "movements a little hurried, his speech notably more
 "voluble, yet neither truly amiss. His whole mind stood
 "open to happy impressions, welcoming these and making
 "much of them, but the smallest suggestion of trouble or
 "sorrow he received with visible impatience and dismissed
 "again with evident relief. It was to this temper that he
 "owed the felicity of his later days, and yet it was here if
 "anywhere that you would call the man insane."

When both reason and instinct are more profoundly
 involved than in the quotation just given, we call the
 condition dementia. As you know dementia may be of
 every degree from mere facility up to an absence of the
 primary human and animal instincts. We see this in that
 most terrible of all mental diseases, general paralysis.
 Until quite recently medical science, except as regards its
 gross pathology and symptoms was ignorant of its cause,
 and consequently unable to approach the question of its
 treatment. There is now every prospect that before very
 long it may be possible to arrest its symptoms, if not to
 prevent its occurrence. From the nursing point of view,
 however, the problem of general paralysis will remain so
 long as the disease remains.

The examples I have given are fairly representative of the group of insanities with profound affection of the instincts due to non-development or gross disease of the brain.

Broadly speaking, this group of the insanities is incurable. They are, however, capable of much amelioration, and the ameliorating influence belongs more to the sphere of the nurse than to that of the doctor.

Turn again to general paralysis. When the patient is in the earlier stages of the disease, when he is vamping about his wealth, strength or ability, or when in a more advanced stage he is restless, passionate, careless and filthy, his management is a matter of the greatest difficulty.

You may possibly think I am exaggerating because you find no excessive difficulty in managing your general paralytics. Yes, but consider what sort of stir this person, whom you can so easily manage, made in his own family circle and acquaintanceship prior to his being removed to your care; consider also how you would succeed if you had never seen a general paralytic and had had no training in the care of such cases. Now let us consider for a moment how it is you succeed in managing a paralytic so successfully. You do it by humouring him, not by thwarting him, by tact, not by force. To go a step farther, you do not use your reason in the treatment of the patient but your instincts, and your healthy instincts influence and control the patient's diseased and perverted instincts. It is essential that a mental nurse should have healthy instincts, for patients instinctively discover weaknesses. If for instance your combative instinct is too pronounced and not sufficiently under control, force is apt to be too much in evidence in your treatment, and force is in the long run the least successful method of managing the insane. What is true of general paralysis is equally true of all forms of mental disease. I cannot too much impress upon you that it is character or instinct that exercises the greatest influence in the care and management

of the insane. In a way which we do not fully understand, instinct acts upon instinct without the aid of reason often without a word being spoken. Certain individualities have only to come near us to influence us either for good or evil. This instinctive influence can no doubt be strengthened and perfected by training in the knowledge of our work, by experience and especially by self-training.

The second group of mental diseases which I have mentioned, namely those which depend upon emotional disturbance, are altogether different. They are not dependent upon any definite alteration of the substance of the nervous system—so far as we as yet know—but their chief characteristic is that they are accompanied by strong disturbances of the emotions which affect seriously judgment and conduct. The probable mechanism of this disturbance will be referred to later. In the meantime it will be sufficient to observe that each of the human instincts which has been mentioned is accompanied by a distinct, powerful and peculiar emotion which augments and enforces its operation. These emotions are apt to become in human beings, under certain diseased conditions which we do not fully understand, morbidly exaggerated. When morbid emotion is thus aroused in an individual it disturbs the judgment, affects injuriously the mental and physical functions and causes certain forms of insanity. We see this exemplified in melancholia, mania, and the great group of delusional insanities. Take a typical case of melancholia in which there are the cardinal symptoms of (1) an exaggeration of the instinct of self-abasement, (2) a perversion of the instinct of self-preservation, and (3) a predominance of the emotion of fear, the emotion which as we have seen invariably accompanies the latter instinct. You have never seen a patient suffering from typical melancholia that did not accuse himself of all manner of wickedness, humble himself abjectly and declare himself unworthy to live. That is an exaggeration of the instinct of

self-abasement. You have never had charge of such a patient without being warned that he was suicidal; that is a perversion of the instinct of self-preservation. You have, moreover, observed that these patients are in a state of constant fear of something going to happen, which is the manifestation of the emotion of fear which invariably accompanies a disturbance of the instinct of self-preservation. Turn next to the group of disorders which we call mania and take one of the most troublesome of the groups, ordinary simple mania. The patient is loquacious, egotistical, exceedingly self satisfied, proud, and restless. He is suffering from an exaggeration of the instinct of self display, and the accompanying emotion of elation is well in evidence in his conduct, manner, and dress. Added to all this he is intolerant, impatient of contradiction and often quarrelsome, for the instinct of pugnacity is naturally aroused in a person who has the best reasons for supposing that his self importance is not sufficiently recognised by others. In the two latter instances of melancholia and mania, you know that the intellectual faculties are unimpaired, however they may be implicated secondarily, and it is often a cause of wonder to us how a person otherwise so sensible can so behave and believe such things.

If this is so in mania and melancholia how much more so is it in the third group to which I direct your attention, namely, the group of the pure delusional insanities. You must have seen patients—I have seen scores of them—who were not only intellectually intact but were men and women who to the last were much above the average in capability and intellectuality who yet believed that their food was systematically poisoned by incredible means; that they were acted on surreptitiously and grossly by invisible enemies; that they are surrounded by clouds of persecutors who uttered vile and calumnious statements concerning them which no one else could hear but themselves. What do we

make of the case of a distinguished and intellectually capable man who sat on the staircase of his own house, night after night, with a loaded revolver, in the hope that he might be fortunate enough to get a pot shot at one of his enemies, or of another man—a scientist of repute—who slept on a bed the feet of which was insulated by glass castors so that the currents of electricity which the evil machinations of his enemies directed against him might be frustrated. In such cases there is only one explanation. The emotion of fear is exaggerated and the instinct of self-preservation is correspondingly exaggerated. Reason may for a time correct the impulses of the instinct, but emotion, as it always does, ultimately overcomes judgment, while the human mind is so complex that certain morbid trains of thought may co-exist with normal trains of thought.

It seems extraordinary that normal and morbid trains of thought can co-exist side by side in the same mind, but as you all know such is the fact. It is almost incredible that at one moment a man should sincerely believe that he is the omnipotent ruler of the world, and the next moment beg for some trivial favour or complain about some insignificant inconvenience, but so it is. We may not be able to explain this, but I think with a little trouble we may be able to approach a plausible explanation.

Some people have hobbies such as golf, stamp collecting, mountain climbing, or ecclesiastical architecture, other men have fads such as politics, eugenics or Christian Science. I am now particularly referring to that class of people who run their hobbies or their fads for all they are worth; we have all of us met them and as a rule we have found them undesirable. They may be quite estimable, capable people, but too often their hobbies or their fads are by far too prominent for the comfort of others. A state of mind which revolves around a secondary centre of interest of this kind is called a 'mental complex.' Whether a mental

complex is normal as in the instances I have mentioned, or morbid as in the case of an insane delusion, it possesses certain marked characteristics which are as follows: (1) it arouses emotion. (2) This emotion colours the man's judgment on all matters pertaining to it. For example, contradiction makes him angry; he is not open to conviction; his reasoning power is, as regards the complex, perverted, for his mind is so biased in one direction that his arguments are used not to convince or instruct others, but to support this mental bias from which they really proceed.

The mind of an extreme faddist has in fact become divided into two logic-tight compartments, the larger, his normal self, the smaller, the mental complex forming the fad. This is exactly what happens in the case of the subjects of the large group of insanities we are now considering. The process is called dissociation. It is of course a diseased process, and the emotion which forms the centre of all insane ideas or delusions is abnormally powerful, for as I have repeatedly pointed out in the course of these remarks, one or more of the great primary instincts is at the root of all of these insanities, and we have to deal not with an intellectual but with an instinctive disturbance.

That being so, we have next to enquire whether there is any guide to the treatment from the nursing point of view, which will enable us to help persons who are thus afflicted.

There is one cardinal symptom common to them all which I commend to your careful consideration. The domination of the individual by the powerful instinctive emotion associated with his insanity, has the effect of diminishing one of the principal human instincts—the social or the herd instinct. The patients become indifferent to the ordinary conventions of society, they lose their natural affections, they become careless of dress and of personal

appearance; they prefer solitude to society, and generally their social interests become weak or disappear altogether. In the more pronounced cases, even personal cleanliness and ordinary decency are discarded.

Into the reasons of this marked change, it is impossible here to enter. What I want to indicate is that by means of infinite tact, kindness, example and patience, but above all, by the mysterious influence of the pure and healthy instincts of the nurse, it is often possible, gradually, to restore the repressed operations of the social instinct which restoration when effected is equivalent to the cure of the malady. This is, I am certain, one of the greatest functions of the mental nurse.

If insanity is a disorder of instinct we owe it to another of our instincts that at the present day the insane are so kindly cared for. From the extension of the parental instinct, with the emotion of tenderness and pity which accompanies it, springs the great social function of charity which impels us to protect the poor, the sick and the helpless. We have, most of us, evoked within us the tender feelings of a parent by the sight of a child in distress or by the suffering of one of the lower animals, by great poverty or great sickness. Not only so, but at the sight of cruelty to the helpless, our pugnacious instinct in the shape of moral indignation is aroused against the perpetrator of the injustice. By the sympathetic extension of the parental instinct the nations of Western Europe, under the influence of Christianity, have come to be willing to deny themselves for the alleviation of suffering. We, who are called upon to devote our lives to the care of the insane, sometimes complain of the want of interest taken in our work by the public generally, and we ascribe that lack of interest to defective sympathy. In this we may be wrong for to many sympathetic people suffering, and especially insanity, is so repellant that they cannot bear to look upon it. It has

been suggested that the Scribe and Pharisee in the parable may have been as sympathetic as the Good Samaritan, but that they had not the courage to succour the wounded man.

There are one or two general deductions suggested by the preceding remarks, with which I shall conclude.

It is your privilege to carry on the great work of nursing the insane in an institution with a classical history, founded over 120 years ago by a great man who was one of the first to perceive that the insane had rights in virtue of the fact that they, in common with ourselves, possessed the divine gift of reason. This is my first visit to the Retreat, but it rejoices me to observe that the torch first lighted here by William Tuke is still brilliantly burning.

I do not know whether Tuke would, if he were now living, approve of all I have said; but I feel certain that one of the driving motives of his mission was the recognition of the fact that the insane were reasonable beings. I have referred to reason as "Man's crown," as "a light unto his feet and a lamp unto his path." I might go further and suggest that it is the "Word" referred to in the first chapter of St. John's gospel, "which became flesh and dwelt with men," but "men preferred the darkness to the light because their deeds were evil." That is, men preferred to follow their instincts rather than their reason. I do not pretend that this is either the orthodox or the usually accepted interpretation of the passage, but it has a place nevertheless.

It is universally agreed upon by leading men in all departments of life that because he possesses this divine spark of reason it is essential to our civilization that the dignity of man should at all costs be maintained. Does not this also apply to the insane? I have endeavoured to prove to you that insanity is not primarily or necessarily a disease of the intellect. Hitherto, it is to be feared, we have set ourselves too much to the effort of minimising the amount

of intellect possessed by our patients. I suggest that you should endeavour to discover how much intellect they possess, and I believe the results will prove astonishing.

If then our patients, however disturbed instinctively, are, most of them, reasonable beings, it behoves us as a sacred duty to do nothing, either positively or negatively, that shall in any way detract from their human dignity.



