

Medical Matters.



KLEPTOMANIA.

THIS is a disease which is believed by many lawyers to have been invented by medical men for the purpose of shielding thieves from the hands of justice. But it is beyond all dispute that it represents a mental condition which is as much a form of insanity as those other types of brain disease which lead their victim to exaggerate wildly, or to attempt to kill and maim persons to whom they are perfect strangers. The case which recently attracted the attention of the public is an excellent illustration of the disease. An American lady, whose husband is known to be most wealthy, and who, it was proved, had during her visit to London purchased and paid for a large quantity of valuable jewellery and clothes, was suddenly discovered to have in her possession a number of articles which she must have purloined; and some of which were of value, but the majority of such a nature that there could not be the slightest rational excuse for their theft. She was proved to be suffering from a form of pelvic disease, which is commonly associated with a perverted nervous system; and the purposelessness and the needlessness of the thefts were so apparent that medical testimony was easily forthcoming to the effect that she was suffering from kleptomania. After a formal conviction and sentence, she was therefore very justly released, the law of this country recognising the principle that disease and crime are not synonymous; and that it is, therefore, both illogical and wrong to punish innocent sufferers from disease as though they were deliberate criminals. The case of a recently deceased statesman who suffered from this disease, is well known—a nobleman whose ability rendered him an invaluable member of the Cabinet whenever his party was in power; and whose wealth was very great. He suffered from various marked nervous peculiarities, besides an unconquerable disposition to pocket articles which did not belong to him; and this was so well known to his family and friends that his confidential servant was in the habit every evening of removing from his pockets a miscellaneous collection of spoons and forks,

and similar unconsidered trifles, and returning them to the house which his master had visited that evening—their safe return being usually accepted as a matter of course.

CLEANLINESS.

THIS, in popular parlance, is supposed to rank next to Godliness, throughout, at any rate, the English-speaking world; and, according to a valuable article published in the *Nineteenth Century* by Mr. Hankin, the connection is even closer than this in India. The interesting point emphasized by Mr. Hankin is that, although the natives of our great Dependency look upon pestilence and famine and other malignant catastrophes as due to the agency of some particular offended deity, and receive such manifestations as evidence of the need of propitiation and sacrifice to the especial god in question, the consequent observances self-imposed in certain Indian villages are most salutary from a sanitary point of view. For example, it is considered to be impious to attempt to escape from the offended deity, or to admit strangers to suffer from their assumed ill-deeds; and thus a close isolation of the affected village is enforced, the inhabitants of neighbouring villages being strictly excluded. In other words, an excellent system of quarantine is introduced, and outsiders are prevented from drawing water from the poisoned sources, which probably initiated the epidemic. The extreme cleanliness of the Hindoos, and their care to avoid contamination of food and water, are, it is shown, dependent upon the religious doctrines of the people; and how far this principle is carried may be estimated from the fact that the same term is used to express both "unclean" and "unholy." In India, therefore, Godliness and Cleanliness would appear to be almost synonymous, and so far, our Hindoo fellow subjects can claim to hold the primal laws of sanitary science in higher esteem than they are regarded even in this country. In fact, seeing the extensive and excellent regulations for personal ablutions and civic cleanliness enjoined amongst high caste Indians, for hundreds of years past, it is evident that their lawgivers of old must have been statesmen who possessed the most remarkable knowledge of hygienic principles.

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 You can tell it by its Dainty Fragrance.

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