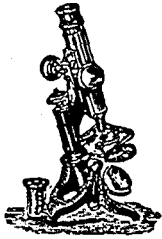


Medical Matters.

THE FORMS OF INSANITY.



Dr. George Savage, in delivering the Lumleian Lectures before the Royal College of Physicians, the first of which, on "The Forms of Insanity," is reported at length in the *British Medical Journal*, says:

"I admit that there is considerable increase in the insane, but I find no reason from this fact to dread the future of the race. I shall hope to demonstrate that much insanity does not depend on material brain disease, but has reference to the complexity of society and the numerous social misfits which occur. Many people are treated as insane because they are out of harmony with their surroundings. . . .

"Unsoundness of mind often occurs without anything which can be called insanity arising. The medical man looks for material brain change, the lawyer looks for responsibility, while society only considers whether a man is dangerous to himself or to society. There can, therefore, be no common pathological basis for the various classes. There are many cases of insanity in which I maintain that there is no ground for suspecting any detectable material change in the nervous system. . . .

"There is no fixed standard of sanity; a man is sane or insane in relation to himself, so that what is insane conduct in one man may not be insane conduct in another. Some persons are out of place, and others out of their time. Thus, a fine strong youth was described by his father as being suitable for the middle ages as a knight, or for America as a cowboy, but quite unsuited for the twentieth century in England. Again, the conduct suitable to youth may connote insanity in old age. Some persons, notwithstanding their education, fail to fit their surroundings, and are treated as aliens. . . .

"Conditions responsible for some forms of insanity are seen in the cases in which a daughter, devoting her life to an invalid mother, after the death of her mother begins to analyse her conduct and her feelings during her prolonged watching, and in the end comes to the conclusion that she did not do all she might to have saved her mother, and slowly a delusion arises of having killed her mother. The loving wife also may slowly pass into the suspicious one, and end by having delusions as to the honesty or constancy of her husband."

Typical forms of mental disorder, described by Dr. Savage are (1) the mental disorder chiefly marked by loss of the higher control. This varies in symptoms according to the degree of the defective control, and may range from hysteria to acute mania. (2) Melancholia, ranging from hypochondriacal self-consciousness to profound stupor. This has more frequently a more material nervous basis, which may be primary or secondary to other morbid states in the body, the brain being badly served by one or more of its organic servants. (3) Dementia and its various grades. There is an increase among the simply neurotic and neurasthenia is increasing in frequency, and these conditions are at the root of a large number of cases of delusional insanity, chronic recurring insanity, and paranoiac insanity, which fill our asylums.

Dr. Savage insists "that there is no such disease as insanity, that it is a negation, and depends more on social than on medical conditions. Finally, that certain forms are due to direct brain decay, others to brain intoxication, and others to morbid habit or morbid surrounding, or they are the natural but morbid mental growths occurring in certain unstable individuals."

FARMING AS A CURE FOR THE INSANE.

Dr. W. E. Taylor, Superintendent of the Illinois Western Hospital for the Insane, writing in *Charities and the Commons*, states that he is fully convinced that a thoroughly equipped farm, properly conducted, will contribute more to the cure of the insane than any other one thing we may resort to. He says, "I base my assertion upon experience, and experiments of ten years, and the results obtained are most gratifying. In order to obtain the best results, farming or gardening should be done in a strictly scientific manner, and the patients should be partners in the work, and in a manner enjoy a part of the benefits; that is, one or two acres should be attended by a few patients, and a premium offered for the best products. . . . Employment of any kind is always good, but when some incentive is offered the patient is stimulated to greater activity, the old morbid concentration is changed, and the mind undergoes a phenomenal transformation. Drudgery and routine will not accomplish the desired results any more than a wagon wheel running in the same track for months will obliterate a rut. . . . The plan of allotting stock to patients as well as land, results in a rivalry, which brightens the patient's mind, and in a short time restores him to his normal condition if his case is at all curable."

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