

*Psychical Diseases of Early Life*, by J. CRICHTON BROWNE,  
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IN all ages of the world, from the earliest dawning of society down to our own enlightened day—theologians, philosophers, and legislators, those called upon to govern and to guide mankind, have agreed as to the importance to be attached to the physical, mental, and moral training of infancy and childhood. States and societies, and the Church too, have admitted the truth of their theories, and have practically applied them to the affairs of life, to the prevention of crime, and to the advancement of the human race in many social and moral respects. For it is well known to these that it is during infancy and childhood that the being, with a mind plastic and educable, may be taught that discipline and self-control, the application of those principles of responsibility, of justice, and of truth, which are afterwards to fit him to fight the battle of life, and to become a useful member of society.

The physician, too, whose mission it is, at all stages of life, to deal with morbid action, to cope with disease, and to effect its cure, is, or ought to be, well acquainted with the paramount importance of early training, of physical training, in securing a strong and healthy constitution, in overcoming tendencies to bodily disease; of mental training, in securing a strong, a healthy, and a powerful mind, and in dispelling predispositions to mental disease; of physical, mental, and moral training, combined in ensuring perfect health.—“mens sana in corpore sano.”

When we consider that the child is the father of the man, and that the man is but the germ cell developed and matured; that they are one and the same being, we shall easily see how necessary it is for the enlightened physician to take an enlarged and expansive view of existence. When we know that existence, from the moment of conception, consists of a series of inseparable gradations, each one of which includes all its predecessors; when we know that the embryo possesses, contains within itself, the rudiments of all those properties and qualities which characterize the perfect being, we shall easily see how necessary it is for the

physician to take every stage of existence into consideration, and to weigh well every influence to which the being is liable, from the instant of union of the spermatozoid with the ovum.

When we know that the spermatozoid and the ovum convey to the progeny, in a manner as yet eluding all research, the physical and psychical qualities, not merely of the parents, but of the parents' parents for generations back, we shall easily see how necessary it is for us to consider and weigh well the characteristics and pursuits of past generations, and the influences brought to bear upon them. And here we should recollect that the spermatozoid and the ovum, not only, respectively, bear the impress of the form, gait and manners, internal qualities and construction of the respective parents, but that these microscopic bodies also transmit and communicate to the offspring the acquired tendencies and liabilities to particular forms of disease which the parents possess; we should recollect that they transmit not only general adaptations to healthy or diseased actions, not only comprehensive tendencies in certain directions, but minute and particular peculiarities and eccentricities, mental and bodily, which characterise the parents. These tendencies and liabilities, those predispositions may remain latent and concealed, but, when placed in circumstances favourable for their maturation, they may develop and become actual disease. It cannot be doubted that these may become developed, and ripened, and unfolded, as well in the womb and in the cradle, as in the strength of manhood and the second childishness of age; as well in the fœtus, the suckling, and the child, as in the stripling, the adult, and the aged.

One of the essential characteristics of a living being, is its capability of undergoing "certain derangements from which it may recover, constituting disease;"\* whilst the simplest and the most complex forms of organization are equally liable to disease. The nervous system then, even in its most rudimentary state, is liable to organic lesion, or functional derangement; in other words, to disease; and it is now my endeavour to direct attention to a certain class of nervous diseases, namely, mental disorders, as manifested in infancy and childhood—in utero, post partum, and up to puberty. Enough has already been said to point out the vast moment of the study of such diseases. For, if the mental training of children in general be of such import-

\* Bennett's *Outlines of Physiology*, p. 11.

ance, how important also is the training of those predisposed to mental disease, or actually suffering from it; how important, not only to the sufferers themselves, not only to those immediately interested in them, and solicitous regarding them, but to the community at large. Such an investigation must be one of importance and surpassing interest; yet, notwithstanding this, it has not yet been made. The mental aberrations of infancy and childhood, excepting idiocy and imbecility, may be said to be yet uninvestigated—undescribed. The field is untrodden! the land unexplored! Here and there, indeed, in the literature of psychology, a stray case of infantile insanity is to be found recorded, but these have never been collected nor arranged. The existence of insanity in early life has even been disputed. Some distinguished authorities have doubted its occurrence previous to puberty. Burrows says, "As a general maxim insanity cannot occur before the approach of puberty;"\* and Spurzheim remarks "It may be asked whether children suffer mania and insanity."† Almost all writers upon the subject of psychology are agreed as to the extreme rarity of mental diseases before that period of life, and I am not aware that any one has even suggested its occurrence in utero. Unfortunately, however, I shall be enabled to demonstrate to you that insanity does occur in utero, in infancy, and childhood, and that it is by no means so uncommon as supposed. Infantile insanity is still, however, comparatively rare, and it is so, firstly, because infancy is not exposed to many of those predisposing and existing causes which operate at other periods of life, and which go on increasing until maturity is passed; secondly, because fewer faculties of mind being then developed, fewer are liable to be assailed by disease; and, thirdly, because the delicacy of the infant brain is such that it is unable to undergo severe morbid action without perilling life. Diseases of the nervous centre in infancy and childhood are generally acute in their nature, rapid in their progress, and more frequently appear as hydrocephalus and convulsions than as insanity. But with the above we should also remember the extreme susceptibility of the infant and childish mind; its high impressionability, and the readiness with which it admits of being bent aside from that perfect rectitude constituting health. Great and almost insurmountable difficulties exist in the way of arriving at a true knowledge of the mental condition of infants, and

\* Burrows, on Insanity, p. 244.

† Spurzheim on Insanity, p. 106.

thus departures from the standard of mental health may exist in them, unknown and unobserved. Among certain classes of young children, also, little or no attention is, as yet, paid to the workings and operations of the immortal mind; and in them those incoherent speeches, or odd remarks, which are attributed to childish unmeaning babbling and folly, may sometimes be in reality the result of delusions, illusions, and hallucinations. In other children those eccentricities and peculiarities of conduct, feeling and temper, those unnatural aversions and desires, which are traced by parents and guardians to wilful perversity, may be but the exposition of morbid changes going on in the brain. With those considerations before us, and seeing, that, according to the account of Jonathan Edwards,\* an entire moral revolution and conversion may take place at the early age of four years, we have reason to believe that infants and children suffer more frequently from psychopathies than has hitherto been believed.

We shall now proceed to consider these psychopathies, and, in order to facilitate our progress, we shall speak of them in a fixed and definite order. We shall begin by speaking of those influences productive of psychical diseases which are brought to bear upon the being at conception. We shall secondly consider those operating during utero-gestation, and allude to the morbid psychical conditions which may exist in utero. We shall thirdly treat of the influences accompanying parturition, and their probable consequences. We shall fourthly direct our attention to the psychical diseases which affect the child from birth to the end of the first dentition; and fifthly, and, lastly, to those which affect it from dentition to puberty.

Firstly. As to the influences which are brought to bear upon the embryo at conception; they are many and various, and many and various are their results. In the same family how frequently do we remark the differences in constitution and character existing between its various members, the difference in external configuration and internal disposition, in liabilities to healthy or diseased action. Now many of these differences and discrepancies, we believe to be attributable to the condition, mental and bodily, of the parents at the moment of conception, and to the influences which are then brought to bear upon the being conceived. Beings produced, apparently under the same circumstances, from the same material, must necessarily be precisely similar; and yet

\* Jonathan Edwards' Narrative of Conversions.

we never do see two creatures the products of the same parents exactly alike, and this, because they are never produced under the same circumstances. Ignoring other considerations, the mere time which elapses between two periods of conception must greatly alter the conditions of the parents, and must increase or diminish their vitality and vigour, so that at no two periods of conception are parents in a similar condition, and at no two distinct periods of time are two beings conceived accurately resembling one another. How often do we observe two families spring from equally healthy ancestors, reared and placed in apparently identical circumstances, yet differing from each other most widely, with regard to the mental and corporeal health enjoyed by each. How often do we observe the same causes operating upon similar individuals produce marvellously different results. How often, in the same domestic circle, do we find one child, who is, and has been from birth, strong, robust, and healthy, and another who, from his first breath, has been weak and puny and fragile; and yet those children, so dissimilar, are the offspring of the same parents. We would be inclined to trace these differences to the influences brought to bear upon the embryo at conception.

The question next naturally arises, what are these influences which affect the human race in so important a manner?

We have said that they are many and various; we might have said innumerable, for we hold that all the antecedents of the parents and their progenitors do then, and during utero gestation, assist in stamping certain characters upon the embryo, and in imparting certain impulses and tendencies to it. Treating of the influences bearing upon the embryo, with reference to time, we may speak of the past conditions of the parents and their ancestors; and of the actual condition of the parents at the time of conception.

Among the former class hereditary predisposition stands pre-eminent. Esquirol remarked, that of all diseases, insanity is the most hereditary, and all other psychologists have confirmed his observations, and have even exceeded him in their estimates of the number of cases of insanity in which there exists hereditary taint. Hereditary taint is the most frequent predisposing cause of insanity, and may be traced in more than one half of the cases which occur. Esquirol has also remarked, that persons born before their parents became insane are less liable to suffer from psychopathies than those born after the invasion of the disease.

Next to hereditary taint the respective ages of the parents exercise an important influence upon the progeny. The children of parents who have married young, before the attainment of maturity, and the full development of their organisations, are often idiotic and imbecile, besides being physically weak ; whereas, the children of the same parents, born at a more advanced period of life, may preserve sound mental and bodily health. According to Burton, the offspring of those who procreate when far advanced in life are liable to melancholia—this liability probably arising from the enfeebled condition of the parents. We believe that in all cases the respective ages of the parents affect their children, morally and mentally. The offspring conceived and born in the early life of the parents, being distinguished by a predominance of the passions and animal nature ; those produced in the prime of life, by a superiority of the intellectual faculties ; and those brought forth towards the close of the productive period, by a higher development of the affections and emotions.

We may next consider the respective positions which the parents hold to each other. It is now beyond all doubt, that the union of blood relations, of those nearly allied, is productive of a debilitated, delicate, and unhealthy race ; and this is even more strikingly exemplified in mental than in any other disease. In Howe's work, on the Causes of Idiocy, the following appalling tale is to be found, "In seventeen families, the heads of which, being blood relatives intermarried, there were born ninety-five children, of whom forty-four were idiotic, twelve were scrofulous and puny, one was deaf, and one a dwarf."\* We have ourselves seen seven imbeciles in one family, the heads of which were cousins, and examples of the law just stated must be known to all. The position which the parents hold to each other, with regard to constitution and diathesis, also influences the mental character of the offspring ; for how intimate, yet inscrutable, is the connexion between mind and body ; how wonderful are their reciprocal actions ; how often are they associated in healthy or morbid processes.

Our last division of the influences, connected with the past history of the parents, exerted at conception, treats of the previous habits and modes of life of the progenitors. Those who, having been born with a good constitution, have lived in accordance with, and in obedience to, natural laws, may expect to produce children free from infirmity ; but those who have violated natural laws, may expect that

\* Howe, on the Causes of Idiocy, p. 35.

punishment, proportional to the offence, will inevitably be visited upon them and their descendants. Those who have perpetrated self-abuse, who have given themselves up to licentiousness, lust, and passion, to the vice of intemperance, to the pleasures of the table, or to any nervous excitement in excess, must suffer themselves from their want of self control, and must entail upon their progeny numerous and grievous ills—none more numerous and grievous than psychical disorders. The intemperate parent will transmit to his children a heritage of disease, and will inflict upon them ills innumerable. Of 359 idiots in the State of Massachusetts 99 were the children of confirmed and habitual drunkards, and many others, doubtless, owed their idiocy to the over indulgence of their parents.\* But not only are the offspring of the intemperate liable to idiocy, but to all other forms of mental disease. They have transmitted to them constitutions that readily succumb to sources of diseased action, and that are but little able to resist those influences by which mental disorders are produced. They are born with a strong, sometimes irresistible, tendency to that very vice, from the effects of which they so grievously suffer. The author of a paper upon Intemperance and Insanity, says, "The genealogical tree of some families presents successive generations of drunkards. We have traced the tendency back for a hundred and fifty years. We have repeatedly treated three generations."† This hereditary tendency may be easily developed.

We have found cases recorded, of children addicted to stimulants, indeed drunkards, at and before the age of twelve; and we have ourselves observed a keen relish and liking for alcohol, in its various forms, at a much earlier age. The children of drunkards are often marked by vicious and depraved tastes, by sensual and criminal habits.

"Of 234 boys resident in the Glasgow House of Refuge, whose lineage, as well as their history, was known, and who, although mere children, had already run a course of drinking and debauchery—seventy-two had drunken fathers, sixty-nine drunken mothers, and of twelve both parents were drunkards."‡ Excessive mental exertion on the part of the father is often productive of mental weakness in the child. Thus the children of the great and the eminent are frequently below mediocrity, and a race of distinguished men is quite exceptional. A liability to mental disease is

\* Report of Commissioners, Massachusetts.

† Intemperance and Insanity, by W. A. F. Browne, P. II.

‡ Ibid.

oftimes the legacy left by a genius to his family. Excessive mental idleness and inactivity on the part of the father may be reproduced in his son in a morbid form ; and excessive use of any faculty, or series of faculties, to the exclusion of others, in the father, may exert a baneful influence upon his progeny. In short, any departure, during the past lives of the parents, from the strict and immutable code of natural laws, may at conception, and during utero gestation, hurtfully affect their offspring.

So is it with the condition of the parents at the moment of conception. The state of the parents at this time apparently exercises a gigantic influence over the whole existence of the being conceived, no matter whether that state be permanent or transitory and accidental. What we have just stated is strikingly illustrated by the following case. "A gentleman had one idiotic child, and several other children mentally healthy, and there existed no hereditary taint in the family. The child's idiocy was accounted for in the following way. On the day and the evening of his marriage the father had indulged in an improper amount of stimulants. That very night conception is supposed to have taken place, the child being born nine months thereafter. Thus to this one act of intemperance of the father, who was not a habitual drunkard, was to be attributed the disease and degradation of the child."\* We have three cases of congenital idiots of a low type, who were the children of a drunkard, whose habit was to retire to bed every night in a state of complete intoxication, and who was known to have had intercourse with his wife whilst drunk ; but who having become abstinent had healthy children born to him. So that even a brief suspension of intelligence appears to be propagable. A similar case may be found in a late number of the *Psychological Journal* ; † and, indeed, such cases might be multiplied without limit.

From what has been said it must be palpable to all that mighty influences are brought to bear upon the embryo at conception, and that a bias is then imparted to the being. Conception, we hold to be an act involving far greater consequences than have hitherto been attributed to it ; and we believe it to exert influences more vast and serious than have hitherto been thought of.

An example of the influence of one single conception upon the nature of the mother, and upon the result of

\* From Notes of Prof. Laycock's Psychological Lectures.

† *Psychological Journal*, Vol. XI, p. 109.

future conceptions, may serve to illustrate our views. A. B. in early womanhood bore a child to a deaf mute. She afterwards entered into another alliance, and eight of this poor woman's children, by that marriage, are deaf mutes. Of these, two are dead; of the six living, one is insane. Connexion with the deaf mute, after her marriage, was rendered impossible, by his removal to a distant part of the country, and, indeed, the parentage of the children remains unquestioned. In no branch of the father's or mother's family had deaf-mutism ever appeared.

We now proceed to consider the physical and moral influences bearing upon the foetus, during utero-gestation, as far as they refer to morbid physical conditions. First, as to the physical.

Whilst the foetus lies in its mother's womb united to her, and in fact a part of her organization, it is but reasonable to suppose that the connexion between them being thus intimate, the influences affecting the one will affect the other, and the conditions of the one will be associated with corresponding conditions in the other. And so it is; for the healthy or diseased state of the mother is usually shared by the foetus in utero. Thus a syphilitic woman transmits syphilis to her unborn child. Fever, measles, small pox, erythema, &c., are thus communicated; and Menard states, "That in the majority of cases of death by convulsions previous to delivery, the child has been found dead, the contractions of the features and extremities denoting that it had participated in the affection of the mother." A vitiated state of the maternal blood may cause various morbid symptoms in the foetus, and may even psychically affect it. Anæmia in the mother produces in the child a weakness and depression, closely allied to melancholia, whilst plethora has quite a contrary effect. To a blow on the abdomen, or a fall, may often be traced idiocy, imbecility, and other mental derangements. We believe tight lacing to be another prolific cause of such diseases. It is a well ascertained fact that illegitimate children are not only more frequently still born than legitimate, but that they are also more frequently of unsound mind. This we believe, due so far to moral causes to be spoken of shortly, but likewise to the efforts used to conceal pregnancy, by the mothers of such children. Attempts to obtain abortion constitute another of the physical causes of insanity acting in utero. Of 400 cases of idiocy examined in one of the northern States of America, at least seven were caused by such attempts. The actual number was

probably much greater, for the most strenuous efforts to conceal such a crime will naturally be made by the mother committing it.

As to the moral influences exerted by the mother upon the foetus in utero, great difference of opinion has existed; some altogether denying their existence, and others carrying them to an undue extent. The reality and importance of such influences cannot, we think, be doubted, but the extent to which some have carried them requires limitation. The longings and desires of the pregnant mother do, we think, influence the foetus. Agitation and mental excitement during pregnancy seem greatly to influence the foetus psychically. The life-long timidity and susceptibility of James VI. were traceable to the murder of Rizzio, in the presence of his pregnant mother. The philosopher Hobbes ascribed his acute nervous susceptibility to the fear of a foreign invasion, entertained by his mother during his utero gestation. The imbecility of a child, mentioned by Bird,\* was caused by the melancholia of its mother whilst pregnant. The facts related of the siege of Landau afford a striking example of the effects of maternal emotion. With regard to this siege it is stated, that "of ninety-two children born in the district within a few months afterwards sixteen died at the instant of birth; thirty-three languished for from eight to ten months, and then died; eight became idiotic, and died before the age of five years; and two came into the world with numerous fractures of bones of the limbs, caused by the convulsive starts in the mother, excited by the cannonading and explosions."†

We have before mentioned that illegitimate children are more liable to suffer from insanity than children born in wedlock, and this we so far attributed to physical causes. Moral causes, however, frequently occasion this. The anxiety and distress, or remorse, which are felt by the mothers of such children, must certainly influence them when in utero. Natural children are frequently possessed of great genius and ability, and this, perhaps, because they are the products of an ardent passion, and because their pregnant mothers are called upon for mental exertion and ingenuity. Most frequently do mothers attribute the idiocy and imbecility of their children to frights received during pregnancy. Many such cases we have seen, and many are to be found recorded in the First Report of the Commissioners in Lu-

\* Bouchut, translated by Bird, p. 5, note.

† Combe on the Management of Infancy, p. 76.

nacy for Scotland. During the French Revolution, and the Irish Rebellion, it was observed, that those women who were subjected to anxiety and alarm afterwards produced children liable to spasms, convulsions, and madness. Mr. W. B. Neville says, "I knew an instance of a female who was subject to shocks of terror, inflicted by her husband when intoxicated, which used generally to occur once a month, consequent on his receipt of a pension. She was afterwards delivered of a well formed though delicate child, who up to the age of eighteen continued subject to panic terrors at intervals of a month."\* Boerhaave states that a tendency to epilepsy may be "born with one from the imagination of the mother, when she was pregnant, being shocked by the sight of a person in an epileptic fit."† The following case, given by Howe, is an interesting instance of the maternal influence. "H. C. F's. mother was extremely intemperate for years before his birth. In him muscular vigour is impaired, by a singular affection of his nervous system, which gives him the air, gait, and appearance of a drunken man. He seems to have inherited from his mother a strong resemblance to her acquired habit of body. He trips and staggers in his walk, and frequently falters in his other motions."‡ The Romans appear to have appreciated the power of maternal emotions over the unborn foetus, for they placed their finest works of art before their pregnant women, that they might contemplate them, believing that thus a beautiful race would be created. Hufeland expresses his belief that the Madonna-like expression of the women in catholic countries, is due to the length of time passed in adoration before pictures of the Virgin by their pregnant women.||

The physical and moral influences exerted in utero may, even in utero, produce certain effects, causing, arrest of development, imperfect development, and abnormal development. Acephali and anencephali are rendered such by physical means, development being obstructed by the presence of two or more foetus, by a deformed pelvis, by hypertrophied placenta, or by similar causes. Other deformities and malformations, of every description, may be produced in like manner. Moral causes may influence development. Whitehead narrates the case of a lady,

\* Neville, on Insanity, p. 44.

† Boerhaave Aphor, 1095.

‡ Howe on the Causes of Idiocy, p. 19.

|| Hufeland paper, published in Stuttgard Collection.

who, during five pregnancies experienced dread lest her offspring should suffer from blindness. He thus proceeds. "Of five children born at the full term of utero gestation, each as remarkable for plumpness and vigour as the mother is for a well developed frame and robust health; the first, third, and fifth of her children had defective development of the left eye, amounting in one to deformity, and the second and fourth had complete loss of vision of the same side."\* Hair lip has been produced in a child by the mere sight of that deformity by its mother during pregnancy.

It seems that certain forms of imperfect development are associated with certain morbid psychical conditions. In idiocy, with which arrest of development is often concomitant, a certain symmetry of deformity seems to exist. Strabismus is frequently observed in both eyes. The *alæ nasi* may be abnormally developed. Hair lip may be present. The palate is arched and lofty. The teeth are symmetrically irregular. On both hands a finger may be wanting—a sixth finger developed, or the fingers may be webbed. The feet may be similarly affected. Many idiots suffer from monorchidism.

Nervous disease may exist in utero. I have been informed by a distinguished practitioner in this city, that he has attended a case of convulsions in utero, and of other such cases we have heard. Paralysis is known sometimes to be congenital.

Psychical disease may exist in utero. That amentia, in its various forms, exists in the foetus, is, of course, undisputed; but we hold that the foetus is subject to other mental disorders. Infants have been born maniacal, and during the utero-gestation of these infants, great pain has been experienced by the mother, and attributed to the restlessness of the foetus in the womb. We have collected three cases of *conate mania*, one very interesting case given by Crichton we shall hereafter allude to. Another case may be found in the Appendix to the Scotch Lunacy Commissioners' Report. We think that such cases are not so uncommon as supposed. Hitherto no attention has been paid to the subject, and at all times the diagnosis of such cases must be extremely difficult.

The mode and the manner of parturition influence the psychical existence of the child being born. The dangers attending delivery are known to be very much greater among civilized than among barbarous nations, and infant

\* Whitehead on Hereditary Diseases, p. 16.

mortality holds a proportional position. In Europe, during infancy, cerebral diseases are the most frequent causes of death, and these cerebral diseases are often induced by the pressure exerted upon the child's head during parturition. Among black nations where the foetal heads are smaller than among nations that have been for ages civilized, parturition is looked upon as a process attended with little or no danger to mother or child, and cerebral diseases are comparatively rare. Tedious labour, instrumental or abnormal delivery of any kind may induce psychical changes in the child of a serious nature, and may alter its mental character for life.

May the mental condition of the mother, at the time of parturition, or immediately preceding it, influence the after mental life of the child? In the autobiography of a drunkard, the author states that just before his birth, the midwife having left the room for a moment, his mother rose and swallowed a large quantity of brandy. She was ordinarily of the most strictly temperate habits. To this single act, he seems inclined to attribute his moral abandonment.

As a mental state of a moment's duration may, during pregnancy, influence the foetal nervous system, we are entitled to hold that the condition of the mother during parturition may similarly act.

From the regions of speculation and doubt, which we have hitherto traversed, we now emerge, though our course will still be shrouded by the mists of obscurity and uncertainty. Yet in a land so uncultivated, so unexplored as that, through which we must now grope our way, we cannot expect to advance by rapid strides, or with steady and unerring step.

From birth to the end of the first dentition, many psychical diseases occur, which we shall now describe. Idiocy, which has been so often and so fully treated of, that we need but mention it, with all its modifications, with cretinism and cagotism, is strictly a congenital disease, and is said by M. Esquirol to commence with life. It consists in an abortion of mind, or an abolition of the mental faculties, associated with a defective organisation, and is manifested in various degrees. The lowest class of idiots may be regarded as altogether beneath the animal world. They possess not taste, smell, hearing, sight or touch. They are unable to nourish themselves, though food be placed within their reach, and in some cases the food requires to be placed within the pharynx. They perform every function imperfectly. From these degraded entities, these human logs, up to comparative intelligence, there exist idiots in every stage of transition. These

have been differently arranged by different authors, but with them we have not time to deal. Idiots have always an imperfect organism, and have generally brains which have been arrested in development. They may often be recognised at the moment of birth, by their deformed heads, or their want of sensation, or their inability to suck, or other such symptoms. They are often strumous, rachitic or paralytic. In these days of idiot schools, and idiot training, we think the imperfect organization of the idiot ought to be borne in mind in every attempt at education. The education of such beings ought to contain more of the physical, than of the mental element, and ought to be directed to giving them means of employment and happiness, which they do not possess. Much has been done towards the elevation of the idiot, and many means have been discovered, by which, pleasure may be added to his brief existence, and by which he may be rendered less burdensome to those about him; but much remains to be done. Cretinism and cagotism are endemic forms of idiocy, accompanied by certain peculiarities. There seems reason for adopting the view of some German writers, who hold that they consist in a subordinate form of idiocy, complicated with an advanced stage of rachitis or scrofula. It is declared that in countries where cretinism exists, midwives, at the moment of birth, are able to pronounce whether or not the child will prove a cretin, and this at least is certain, that some of the symptoms of cretinism manifest themselves in earliest infancy. They are sometimes born with incipient goitre, which afterwards becomes developed.

Much interesting discussion has taken place as to the nature and causes of cretinism and cagotism, but upon so extensive a subject, we cannot enter. In certain cases of idiocy, a sort of assimilation to certain members of the brute creation, is to be observed. The following case given by Pinel will illustrate our statement. "A young female idiot, in the form of her head, her tastes, her mode of living, seemed to approach the instincts of a sheep. She exhibited an especial repugnance to meat, and ate with avidity, vegetable substances, such as peas, apples, salad and bread. She only drank water. Her demonstrations of feeling were confined to these two words, "bé ma tante," for she could not utter any other words, and appeared silent solely from wanting ideas. She was accustomed to exercise alternate movements of flexion and extension of the head in supporting it, (like a sheep), on the breast of her nurse. Her back, loins and shoulders were covered with long flexible hairs, from one to

two inches in length, and which resembled wool in texture. In making efforts to get out of the bath, she would repeat in an acute tone, bé, bé, bé. She would not sit, but lay on the ground, le corps roulé, et étendu sur la terre à la manière de brebis."\* Idiots may often be met with, who go upon all fours, eat grass and filth, and in their actions, gestures, and mode of life, resemble lower animals. Brute children, those beings who have herded with wolves, and other wild creatures are idiotic, simply because they have been removed from every civilizing and elevating influence.†

But amentia is not the only form of mental aberration that exists from birth to the end of the first dentition. Mania, or derangement of the mind as a whole, has been observed. As we shall again speak of mania, we shall here only strive to support our assertion. Crichton says—"A woman about forty years old, of a full and plethoric habit of body, who constantly laughed and did the strangest things, but who, independently of these circumstances, enjoyed the very best of health, was, on the 20th January, 1763, brought to bed, without any assistance, of a male child, who was raving mad. When he was brought to our workhouse, which was on the 24th, he possessed so much strength in his legs and arms, that four women could at times, with difficulty restrain him. These paroxysms either ended in an uncontrollable fit of laughter, for which no evident reason could be observed, or else he tore in anger, everything near him, clothes, linen, bed furniture, and even thread, when he could get hold of it. We durst not allow him to be alone, otherwise he would get on the benches and tables, and even attempt to climb up the walls. Afterwards however, when he began to have teeth he died."‡ Paroxysms of fury and passion strongly resembling mania, are sometimes seen in mere infants.

Delusions and hallucinations sometimes exist at this period of life. Hallucinations of the organ of vision form a common symptom in cerebral diseases of infancy, and they have been observed to result from the use of certain poisonous agents. They are manifested by the conduct of the child. It may smile, attempt to grasp imaginary objects in front of it, stretch out its hands and cling to the side of its cradle to reach them the better; or it may wear an expression of dread and alarm, shrink as if trying to hide

\* Pinel. *Traité Médico-philosophique sur l'aliénation mentale*, p. 182. Bucknill and Tuke's *Manual of Psychology*, p. 97.

† Chambers' *Journal*. July, 1852.

‡ Greting, quoted by Crichton, vol. ii., p. 355.

itself, and shriek as if terror-stricken. Now if these effects may result from poisoning, by stramonium, or like drugs, we may fairly conclude that they may also result from poisoning by bile, urea, or from any cause productive of insanity. The fact being established that this morbid condition does exist in infancy, there is every probability for supposing that it may result from various causes, as it does during adult life.

M. Thore, a French psychologist, has met with hallucinations of sight and hearing in children, even when in perfect health. He says, they appear to form part, or to be a continuation of a previous dream.\* Ecstatic phenomena are often manifested by children, even at the early age of which we speak. They will remain for a longer or shorter time with their eyes fixed upon one spot. They are wrapt in contemplation, from which even vivid impressions will fail to arouse them. Very shortly after birth in some children a state allied to melancholia may be observed, and, indeed, they are sometimes born in this state. They are languid; they moan, they are sleepless.† If they chance to fall asleep their rest is disturbed and broken, and even whilst sleeping they continue to whine. They start up suddenly, as if alarmed. They pass dark coloured fœces, and are often more or less convulsed. Such infants often die convulsed.

Precocity, which may begin to shew itself in infancy, we look upon as a morbid psychical condition, generally terminating in the worst results. It is due to an abnormal enlargement of the whole, or some part, of the brain, and this enlargement is due either to premature and excessive use, or to disease. Precocity may generally be looked upon as expressive of disease, and thus, those manifesting it almost invariably die young. Most strongly should this truth be impressed upon the minds of those parents and guardians who view it merely as an indication of talent, and who, by every means in their power, seek to encourage and foster it. Scrofulous and rickety infants are often precocious, and in them the untimely development is accompanied by a visible enlargement of the head. "Rickety children," says M. Monfalcon, "have minds active and penetrating, their wit is astonishing, they are susceptible of lively passions, and have perspicacity which does not belong to their age. The brains enlarge in the same manner as the cranium." But this precocity cannot last long. It is soon exhausted, and passes

\* *Psychological Journal*, Vol. II., p. 616.

† *Burn's Midwifery*, p. 737.

into actual insanity, or mental weakness and eccentricity. The precocious child is often of stunted form, of sickly aspect, and of unsound health. His physical inferiority contrasts strangely with his mental power. His body seems to suffer from deficient nutrition, in consequence of the large demand for nourishment always made by the brain. Those who have in after life attained eminence and distinction, have often, during childhood, been remarkable only for muscular activity and mental stupidity. Exceptions are, of course, to be found, such as Pope, Congreve, Chatterton, Byron, Keats, Dante, &c., but we must remark, that all these whilst they lived were diseased or unhealthy.

The following interesting case of precocity is given by Brigham. "Master W— M—, the fourth child of his parents, was born in Philadelphia, on June 4th, 1820. At birth his head was of ordinary size, but very soon after an attack of dropsy of the brain, it began to grow inordinately. After he began to walk its size was so great that he attracted much attention, and he was apt to fall, especially forwards, from readily losing his equilibrium. In 1828 he fell against a door, and bruised his forehead; in an hour afterwards he vomited, became very sick, and died next morning. When fourteen months old the child spoke well, and at eighteen months was able to sing a variety of musical airs. His intellectual faculties, generally, were very respectable, and his powers of observation rather remarkable; but his memory, both of language and sentiments, were such as to excite surprise in those who took pains to converse with him. Of a grave and quiet temperament, he preferred the society of his seniors, and took little interest in the common pastimes of childhood. Only sedate children were agreeable to him. His sentiments and affections were of a lofty character. For two years before his death little M. became affected by religious impressions."\* Dr. Crotch, the famous professor of harmony, was a musician from his infancy, and when three years old he could play the organ. We have many other instances of such prodigies, but these we think it unnecessary to narrate. During the period of which we now speak, we must remark the peculiar susceptibility of the infant frame. The muscles are soft and pale, and contract rapidly. The cuticle is thin. The nerves are large and widely distributed. The nervous centres are very large in proportion to the size of the body. The general circulation is rapid. From these circumstances

\* Brigham, on Mental Culture, p. 29.

it arises that the infant is extremely susceptible and impressionable, and that very slight stimuli, when applied to it, produce very powerful results. The maternal influence is still maintained through lactation, or another series of influences is brought to bear upon the being, through the milk of a strange nurse. The quality of the milk is of great importance, as it powerfully affects the recipient. Its quality may be altered by disease, by therapeutic agents, by food, or by emotion; and from being the most nutritious and harmless of all substances it may become a deadly poison. Tourtoal relates an instance of the power of maternal emotion upon the quality of the milk. "A carpenter having quarrelled with a soldier who was billeted on him, the latter fell upon him with his drawn sword. The carpenter's wife first trembled with fear and horror, then suddenly throwing herself between the combatants, she wrested the sword out of the soldier's hand, broke it, and flung it away. The mother, while thus violently excited, took up her child from the cradle and gave it the breast. The infant was in perfect health, and had never had a moment's illness. After some minutes it became restless, and left off sucking; it panted, and fell dead in its mother's lap."\*

The first dentition is a critical period in infantile life, and is accompanied, especially in weak children, by a sort of systemic disturbance or irritation. During this state of the system predispositions tend to evolve themselves, and great affectability exists.

From the end of the first dentition, up to puberty, we may state, as a general principle, that there is a liability to every psychical disease from which the adult may suffer, together with certain disordered conditions peculiar to that stage of life.

We have already spoken of amentia, or congenital absence of the mental faculties. We will now turn to dementia, or obliteration of mind. Acute dementia may be regarded as a temporary extinction of the mental faculties; chronic dementia as a more complete obliteration. Dementia must be carefully distinguished from idiocy; in the latter case, mind is congenitally absent, and has never existed; whilst in the former, mind, having existed, is veiled and diseased. Dementia may be recognised in its earlier stages by slight incoherence, and by a want of connexion of ideas; when fully developed by obliteration or enfeeblement of intellect, by diminished sensibility, and by derangement of the bodily

\* Bouchut, translated by Bird, p. 32, note.

functions generally. Seguin \* has denied the existence of dementia in youth. In doing so he is in error. Acute dementia, or fatuity, is frequently met with in this country between the ages of ten and sixteen, during the period of growth. It differs from senile and other species of dementia, in that it seems to depend either on the imperfect nutrition of the nervous system, or on the influence of the processes by which its building up is carried on ; and, secondly, that it is curable generally by generous diet, and other means that supply materials for construction. A physician in the West of Scotland has kindly forwarded to us the following case of juvenile dementia. "J. T., æt. 10, was from birth a nervous and easily excited boy ; previous to his attaining his fifth year he shewed sufficient intellect to compass the alphabet, a short prayer, and a blessing. There was noticed during this period an increasing nervousness and greater susceptibility of excitement. At five years of age he had an attack of gastric fever, succeeded by a continuous crop of boils over the whole body. During, and after his recovery from this illness, a change in his mental constitution was observed, as evidenced, by increasing nervousness and excitability—failing memory and speech, incapacity in controlling himself, with a considerable degree of fear in his actions. This condition continued, more or less, for two years. For a time he was hardly able to move out of the house, apparently from an instinctive fear or dread of something. He frequently threw articles into the fire, or out of the window ; he ran out of the house in a state of nudity, and was quite indifferent when corrected. He never had fits of any kind. His general habits are now considerably improved, but though attempts have been made to re-teach him his alphabet, &c., there has yet been no appearance of returning intellect." We shall extract a portion of a case of dementia in youth, as given by Burrows. "Master —, a stout, healthy boy, till he was twelve years old had evinced all the capacity and activity usual to his years. At this period some change was observed in his disposition and habits. He became negligent and irascible, fonder of amusements below his age, and, if opposed, fell into silly passions. What he desired he cared not how he obtained. At length slight symptoms, like chorea, came on. When aged fourteen he was brought to London for my advice. He appeared then to be a stout lad, with a healthy complexion. The conformation of his head was good. The expression of his countenance denoted a degree of vacuity. He hesitated

\* Seguin, *Traitement Morale, &c., des Idiots*, p. 88.

in his speech a little, and then uttered his words suddenly. He desired almost everything he saw, and attempted to gain it with force and violence, and, if restrained, broke into furious passions. He had lost all knowledge of the classics, and only amused himself occasionally with childish books and pictures. A year afterwards his tutor wrote to me that he was gradually becoming worse, his senses were more impaired, his movements were more restricted; in short, he was quite in a state of fatuity."\*

Monomania, or delusional insanity, we believe to be more common during infancy and childhood than at any other period of life. It consists in an exaltation, or undue predominance, of some one faculty, is characterized by "some particular illusion or erroneous conviction, impressed upon the understanding," and implies an unhealthy state of the mind as a whole. Delusions and hallucinations are its exponents. We generally find that the delusions of the monomaniac bear distinct reference to his ordinary mode of thought and life, and are but diseased distortions, or exaggerations of his ordinary ideas. Thus, in childhood, they are frequently induced by castle building, and we would here take an opportunity of denouncing that most pleasant but pernicious practice. Impressions, created by the ever fertile imagination of a child, it may be whilst "glow'ring at the fuffing low," are soon believed in as realities, and become a part of the child's psychical existence. They become, in fact, actual delusions. Such delusions are formed with facility, but eradicated with difficulty, and much mental derangement in mature life, we believe, is attributable to these reveries indulged in during childhood. It should not be forgotten that the "disposition is builded up by the fashionings of first impressions." Infantile and childish minds ought to be engaged with active, natural, and simple pursuits carried out into objectivity, and ought to be allowed little opportunity to "Give to airy nothings a local habitation and a name." A most curious example of all that we have just stated is offered by Hartley Coleridge. The delusions of his boyhood are thus narrated by his brother. "At a very early period of his childhood, of which he himself had a distinct, though visionary, remembrance, he imagined himself to foresee a time, when in a field that lay close to the house in which he lived, a small cataract would burst forth, to which he gave the name of Jugforce. The banks of the stream thus created, soon became populous, a region, a realm, and, as the vision spread in ever widening

\* Burrows, on Insanity, p. 490.

circles, it soon overflowed, as it were, the narrow spot, in which it was originally generated, and Jugforce, disguised under the less familiar name of Equxria, became an island continent, with its attendant isles. Taken as a whole, the Equxrian world presented a complete analogue to the world of fact, so far as it was known to Hartley, complete in all its parts, furnishing a theatre and scene of action, with dramatis personæ and suitable machinery, in which, day after day, for the space of long years he went on evolving the complicated drama of existence. When at length he was obliged to account for his knowledge of, and connexion with this distant land, he had a story borrowed from the Arabian Nights, of a great bird, by which he was carried to and fro. Once I asked how it was that his absence on these occasions was not observed, but he was angry and mortified. His usual mode of introducing the subject was, 'Derwent, I have had letters or papers from Equxria.' Nothing could exceed the seriousness of his manner, and, doubtless, of his feelings. He was, I am sure, utterly unconscious of invention. A certain infirmity of will, the specific evil of his life, had already shewn itself. His sensibility was intense, and he had not wherewithal to control it. He could not open a letter without trembling. He shrank from mental pain, he was beyond measure impatient of restraint. He was liable to paroxysms of rage."\*

A marked instance of juvenile hallucinations is to be found in the life of Jerome Cardon. "Between his fourth and seventh year, the excitement of his nervous system caused a condition, perhaps, not altogether rare in children—phantoms haunted him. During the last hour or two of morning rest, lying awake, the boy commonly saw figures that were colourless, and seemed to be built out of rings of mail, rising out of the right corner of the bed. The figures followed each other in long procession, were of many kinds, houses, castles, animals, knights on horseback, plants, trees, musical instruments, &c., and wild shapes that represented nothing he had ever seen before. The figures rising out of the right hand corner, and describing an arch, descended into the left hand corner, and were lost. Jerome had pleasure in this spectacle."†

Mrs. Jameson speaks as follows, "The shaping spirit of imagination began when I was eight or nine years old to haunt my inner life. I can truly say that from ten years old to fourteen or fifteen I lived a double existence; one, outward, linking me with the external sensible world; the other, in-

\* Extracts from *Memoirs*—Ed. Rev., July, 1851.

† *Life of Giralomo Cardano, of Milan, Physician*, by Henry Morely, vol. I., p. 35.

ward, creating a world to and for itself, conscious to itself only. I carried on for whole years a series of actions, scenes, and adventures, one springing out of another. This habit grew so upon me, that there were moments when I was not more awake to outward things than when in sleep.”\*

In the eighteenth Annual Report of the Crichton Royal Institution, Dumfries, the case of a gentleman is recounted, who, when a child, being compelled to sleep in a garret alone, upon one occasion saw a scroll, of the name and nature of which he was then ignorant, although he has since ascertained it, to resemble those used in remote antiquity. It was covered with written characters, which he could not read, and which he did not know to be significant of thought or speech. It was broad, with ribbons attached, and was suspended without visible agency. He was alarmed, and screamed so loudly as to alarm a relative. On her arrival, actuated by shame, he declared that there was nothing the matter. This impression may be coloured by experience, for the narrator has since seen myriads of visions, and has been insane, and it is only certain that at an early age he saw that which did not exist, and what he could not know to exist.”† Crichton gives the following case of infantile hallucination, as narrated by the sufferer herself. “In the fourth year of my life I took a folio Bible and rolled it with my hands and feet to a bank where I had been sitting, and placed my feet on it. I had scarcely taken my place above a minute, when I heard a voice at my ear say, ‘Put the book where you found it.’ The voice repeated the mandate that I should do it, and, at the same time, I thought somebody took hold of my face. I instantly obeyed, with fear and trembling.” ‡

Those ambitious thoughts which even in childhood occupied the mind of Oliver Cromwell, appear to have assumed the form of hallucination. “He laid himself down one day, when suddenly the curtains of his bed were slowly withdrawn by a gigantic figure, which bore the aspect of a woman, and which, gazing at him silently for a while, told him that he should before his death be the greatest man in England.” ‖

We have ourselves seen two children in the same family, independently of each other, at the ages of four and six, cherish the same delusions. The delusions consisted in the personification and localization of mental images. They

\* Mrs. Jameson's Common-place Book, p. 131.

† Eighteenth Annual Report Crichton Institution, Dumfries, p. 28.

‡ Crichton, on Insanity, vol. II., p. 47.

‖ Oliver Cromwell and the Protectorate, by Daniel Wilson, p. 29.

believed themselves possessed of riches and property, and talked of companions who had no existence. It is worthy of observation, that in the family to which these children belong, two uncles were affected during youth, by what amounted to a delusion, in so far as they conceived, that the relations of places, with which they were constantly familiar, underwent a change. We have collected very numerous cases of infantile delusions, but we have already given a sufficient number, by which to illustrate and establish our statements.

Theomania is another form of delusional insanity by which youth may be attacked. The person attacked by it believes himself to be a deity, an archangel, a prophet, to be inspired, to be under divine protection, guided by divine impulses, or to be actuated by the divine spirit. Theomania may assume various forms, according to the current opinions of the age, and the previous religious views of the person affected by it. About the beginning of the thirteenth century, a most strange and marvellous epidemic of this kind prevailed among the children of the Continent, and led many of them to destruction. It is thus spoken of by Michaud. "About this period such a circumstance was beheld, as had never occurred even in times so abounding in prodigies and extraordinary events. Fifty thousand children in France and Germany braving paternal authority, gathered together and pervaded both cities and countries, singing these words, 'Lord Jesus, restore to us your holy cross.' When they were asked whither they were going, or what they intended to do, they replied, 'we are going to Jerusalem to deliver the sepulchre of our Lord.' A great portion of this juvenile militia crossed the Alps to embark at the Italian ports, whilst those who came from the provinces of France directed their course to Marseilles. On the faith of a miraculous revelation they had been made to believe that this year (1213) the drought would be so great that the sun would dissipate all the waters of the sea, and thus an easy road for pilgrims would be opened across the bed of the Mediterranean. On the coasts of Syria many of these young crusaders lost themselves in forests, and wandering about at hazard perished with heat, hunger, thirst, and fatigue. Others returned to their homes ashamed of their imprudence, saying they did not really know why they had gone. Amongst those who had embarked, some were shipwrecked, or given up to the Saracens, against whom they had set out to fight."\*

We have translated the following case of theomania from

\* Michaud's *History of the Crusades*, Vol. II., p. 202

Calmeil. "I knew at Tyres a man, called G., who had a little boy of five years old, who prophesied. He fell repeatedly in my presence into mental excitement, accompanied with great agitation of the head and body. After that he spoke, predicting evils to Babylon, and blessings to the Church. He exhorted most earnestly to repentance."\*

Joan of Arc was the victim of a transport of theomania. "When hardly past the period of infancy she was often observed thoughtful and abstracted in the midst of the dances and gaieties into which, of a Sunday, she was led by her companions. If she chanced, like the other girls, to gather flowers, as she roamed the forest, in place of decking her own person, her sole idea was to carry them to the village, to adorn the image of the Virgin, or some other holy personage. From the age of thirteen she experienced frequent hallucinations of seeing and hearing. She thought herself visited by the archangel Michael, by the angel Gabriel, by St. Catherine, and St. Margaret."†

Demonomania, a morbid state in which the patient believes himself to be demoniacally possessed, and acts as if demoniacally possessed, has been often noticed in early life. It is not now so frequently seen as it was of yore, but it is still to be met with. Calmeil thus speaks of a paroxysm of demonomania, which had an epidemic character. "The majority of the children, whatever their age, were attacked with hallucinations, and pre-occupied by ideas which are observed in demonomania. It is certain that it was chiefly during sleep that these little visionaries felt themselves carried into the air by women, metamorphosed into cats; some were, perhaps, in a sort of ecstatic transport, when their brain became the seat of the illusions which poisoned their existence."‡ Calmeil also states, that during the winter of 1566, there was an epidemic of demonomania among the foundlings of the hospital of Amsterdam. The foundlings were attacked with convulsions and delirium. An austere and gloomy faith, dealing rather with the horrors and punishments attending the lost, than with the rewards awaiting the blest, may induce this frightful disease, as the following case well exemplifies. "A young girl, about 9 or 10 years old, had parents who were of a rigorous and devout sect, who had filled the child's head with a number of strange and horrid notions, about the devil, hell,

\* *De la Folie considéré sous le point de Vue Pathologique, Philosophique, &c.*, par S. F. Calmeil, t. II., p. 273.

† *American Journal of Insanity*, Vol. III., p. 136, translated from Calmeil.

‡ *De la Folie, &c., &c.*, Calmeil, t. I., p. 433.

and eternal damnation. One evening the devil appeared to her, and threatened to devour her. She gave a loud shriek, and fled to the neighbouring apartment, where her parents were, and fell down, apparently dead. On recovering herself, she stated what had happened, adding that she was sure to be damned."\*

The mind of childhood, that which we are accustomed to look upon as emblematic of all that is simple, and pure, and innocent, may be assailed by the most loathsome of psychical disorders, viz., satyriasis, or nymphomania; the monomania affecting the sexual instinct. Sexual precocity has been frequently observed at an early age. This "digusting anticipation" is illustrated by a case published in the *Journal des Scavans*, where it occurred in a boy aged three years; † and by another in the *Philosophical Transactions*, where the boy was only two years and eleven months. ‡ Well authenticated cases of pregnancy itself, occurring at the age of nine years, are on record. Buchan states that the first symptoms of nymphomania have been observed in a girl three years old, who was in the habit of throwing herself into the most indecent attitudes, and indulging in the most licentious movements. § M. Louyer Villermay has likewise seen this condition in girls of three or four years old. || Satyriasis has been observed in boys of three and four years. ¶ Gall relates a case of satyriasis in a boy only three years old. \* \* We have seen symptoms of nymphomania in a girl aged twelve.

Erotomania is a modified form of the disease which we have just considered, or a morbid form of sentimentality generally attacking those of a romantic and passionate disposition. It has been observed in early life. Seguin gives the case of a boy aged twelve who cherished the belief that he had in his possession, a young princess, who had been his paramour. \* \* \*

That insane and irresistible impulse prompting to murder and destruction, which has been designated homicidal monomania is a malady from the incursions of which childhood is not exempt. The powerful sometimes unconquerable im-

\* Crichton, on *Insanity*, Vol. II., p. 15.

† *Journal des Scavans*, 1688.

‡ *Philosophical Transactions*, 1745.

§ Buchan, quoted by Voison, *Des causes morales et physique de Maladies Mentales*, p. 249.

|| M. Souyer Villermay, p. 251.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

\* \* Gall's *Works*, Tome III., p. 260.

\* \* \* Seguin, *Traitment moral, Hygiene et Education de Idiots*, p. 93.

pulse felt by those suffering from this disease, originates in various circumstances, and various reasons may be given for a homicidal act by the monomaniac committing it. He may believe that he is conferring a real benefit, upon the person he kills ; or that by destroying life he is obeying the behest of Heaven. He may perpetrate a homicidal act as the minister of retributive justice, or as the avenger of his own imagined wrongs. Or he may do it from a pure love of destruction and cruelty, or from the force of imitation. Frequently a mere blind motiveless impulse to destroy is felt, against which the monomaniac himself earnestly strives. Examples of this disease, as occurring in early life, are by no means uncommon. "In 1854 a boy shot his stepmother in France. He confessed the act, but said it was the result of a mysterious irresistible impulse. He admitted an aversion to his stepmother. There was no disorder of the intellect apparent. There was an hereditary pre-disposition to insanity on both sides."\* "A girl aged five years, conceived a violent dislike to her stepmother, who treated her kindly, and to her little brother, both of whom she endeavoured to kill."† The American Journal of Insanity, registers a case, the result of imitation. "A child about seven years old strangled his brother. His parents caught him in the act. They asked him the cause, he replied weeping, that he was only imitating the devil, whom he had seen strangling Punch."‡ A similar case happened in a county in the south of Scotland. A little boy having seen a butcher kill a pig, was caught preparing to imitate the process upon his younger sister. The love of destroying and inflicting torture and pain, entertained by some minds, is well shewn in a case given in a late volume of the Psychological Journal. "T. P., fourteen years of age, was a clever boy. His mind was peculiarly constituted, evincing a pre-disposition to cruelty. He had been frequently known to hang up mice and other animals, for the purpose of enjoying the pain, which they appeared to suffer, whilst in the agonies of death. He would often call boys to witness these sports exclaiming, "Here's a lark ; he's just having his last kick." He had often been known to catch flies and throw them into the fire, and he had also been observed, whilst passing along the streets, to pull the ears of the children, and when they cried out, he would burst into a paroxysm of fiendish delight."§

\* *Annales Medico-Psychologique*, April, 1856.

† *Esquirol, Mal. Ment.*, Vol. II., p. 115.

‡ *American Journal of Insanity*, Vol. L., p. 119.

§ *Psychological Journal*, Vol. IX., p. 286.

Like propensities, we have seen manifested, by the eldest son of a gentleman occupying an elevated position in society; one who from his very cradle had mingled with the gentle and the refined. At his own earnest request, this boy was permitted to act as butcher to all the farmers on his father's estate. His favourite amusement was putting fowls and rabbits to the most cruel and agonising deaths, and he gloried in gratuitously shooting the roes whilst with young. When repairs were going on at his father's house, he sawed through the scaffolding in such a manner, that when the workmen mounted it, they might be precipitated to the ground. Such is destructive or homicidal insanity.

An instinctive impulse prompting to theft, or kleptomania, is frequently felt by the young, and we say without hesitation that many of those young criminals, who are yearly brought before our Courts of Justice, and tried and punished for theft and like crimes, are the victims of this disease. The inveteracy and pertinacity of these children in crime, their utter recklessness of consequences, their intractability under reformatory measures and tuition, and their own confessions and statements might, ere this, have convinced those in power, that it is not by the lash or by solitary confinement, that these poor wanderers are to be brought back to the paths of honesty and virtue. Wholesome diet, cleanliness, and cod liver oil would affect them much more beneficially than stripes *ad libitum*, confinement *ad infinitum*, and magisterial advice at discretion. More correct views, however, on this subject are now being disseminated, and the papers which during the few past years have been read before the Association for the Promotion of Social Science, demonstrate that the cause of these poor children is being adopted by those who can help them. Our cases of kleptomania in early life are only too numerous. We can select but one or two for perusal. We extract our first case from *The Times*. "Worship Street. A diminutive urchin, stated to be twelve years of age, was charged by his father with repeated acts of robbery. The prosecutor who appeared to be much affected, stated that young as the prisoner was, he had for years past exhibited the most vicious propensities, and that though every means likely to work a reformation in him had been adopted; kindness and severity had both the same effect, and he remained perfectly incorrigible. His habits of pilfering were so active and inveterate that witness was compelled when he retired to rest, to dispose of his clothes about the bed in which he lay to prevent their being stolen. The prisoner

heard this detail of his delinquencies with perfect apathy and indifference, and two previous convictions for robbery being established against him, he was fully committed to Newgate for trial."\*

Our next case of kleptomania occurred in a girl between nine and ten years of age, whose parents were in most affluent circumstances, and who had not the slightest inducement to the crimes which she committed. This girl has repeatedly stolen silver and copper of various amounts, the property of her parents or of visitors in the house, and cast it away in the shrubbery, or concealed it so that it could not be discovered. She has stolen money and other articles from servants, concealing them likewise. Has stolen articles and concealed them in servants' boxes. Has stolen biscuits and bread from a shop, and also a pair of red stockings belonging to her sister, which were afterwards found in the water closet. She has stolen articles of jewellery, and concealed them. When a theft has been committed, and while it was regarded as criminal, a whole night has been consumed in entreaties, prayers, caresses, in order to induce confession of the act and surrender of articles abstracted, in vain. Punishment was, likewise, without effect. She has volunteered confession and penitence, with an assurance of total inability to resist the inclination, and a declaration that she is "different" when she steals. This child also lies, scratches the backs of looking-glasses, and disorders furniture. It is worthy of observation, that this girl generally steals bright or brilliantly coloured objects, and that she never makes any use of what she steals. The physician who saw her believed her condition to be connected with the premature approach of puberty. In Mr. Hill's able work *On Crime*, a boy is described as thus speaking, "I am thirteen years of age. I was eighteen months in Perth prison for stealing, and in Edinburgh gaol three different times for the like offence. I have two sisters and two brothers. One brother was transported; the other has been in Edinburgh prison several times. I have one sister in the General prison, where I was."† 193 families sent each two members to jail per annum, twenty-eight sent three, twenty-eight sent four, eight sent five, four sent six, one sent seven.‡ Thus kleptomania extends through families, and is, as it were, a family complaint.

Pyromania, or a tendency to destroy by fire, is especially

\* *Times*, Jan. 1., 1848, quoted in "Juvenile Depravity," by T. Beggs, p. 88.

† Hill, on *Crime*, p. 38.

‡ Hill's VIII Report on Prisons, p. 26, 31, 36, 51.

manifested by the young, and this diseased propensity may be exhibited by the most gentle and docile children. It betokens an unhealthy and excited state of mind, and is most common during periods of public panic and alarm. Various motives lead to fire-raising. The desire to see a great conflagration, superstition, hatred, revenge, or nostalgia (home sickness) may induce pyromania. It may also be impulsive or imitative. It may appear as an epidemic, as a hereditary complaint, or as an obstinate and incorrigible disease again and again recurring.

The *Constitutionnel* gives the following case. "At the late assizes of Eure and Loire a child, of fourteen years of age, was accused of having been guilty of arson six times in less than six weeks. On his trial, his assurance and intelligence astonished the court, the jury, and the public. He placed himself in the attitudes of an experienced advocate. He replied to the questions asked by the judge. He cross-examined the witnesses, and replied to the counsel for the prosecution with incredible presence of mind. His motives for this multiplicity of crime were inexplicable, unless he was actuated by a pure love of mischief, and still he was the first to raise the cry of 'fire,' and render assistance to his victims. But such was his rage for this species of crime, that he has been known to place lighted touch paper under the petticoats of peasant women, who were reposing during the mid-day from the labours of the field. The jury found him guilty, but added that he acted without discernment. In consequence of this verdict he was sentenced to only twelve years imprisonment."\* Many similar cases we have collected, but it is surely unnecessary to multiply examples. Of eight cases given by Marc, as occurring before the period of puberty, one was aged eight, one aged ten, two aged twelve, two aged thirteen, one aged fourteen, and one aged fifteen.†

Dipsomania, that disease implying complete loss of self control with regard to the use of alcoholic beverages, has been observed in children. We possess the notes of a case, in which its first symptoms appeared at the age of four years.

Pantophobia is another form of mental disease, common in infancy and childhood. It is usually associated with, perhaps dependent upon, cardiac disease. It consists in an exalted or diseased state of the instinct of self-preservation, is often accompanied by delusions, and may occasion such intense misery, that suicide is resorted to as a means of relief. Night

\* *Constitutionnel*, June, 1841.

† Marc, Vol. II., p. 356, et seq.

terrors, so common among young children, are a transient species of pantophobia. Dr. West thus describes an attack. "The child will be found sitting up in its bed, crying out, as if in an agony of fear, 'Oh, dear! oh, dear! take it away father, mother,' while terror is depicted in its countenance, and it does not recognize its parents, who, alarmed by the shriek, have rushed into the room. By degrees consciousness returns. The child now clings to its mother, or nurse, sometimes wants to be taken up and carried about the room, and by degrees it grows quiet, and again falls asleep. As the terror abates, the child, in some instances, grows quiet at once, but frequently it bursts into a fit of passionate weeping, and sobs itself to rest. The terrors, which are always more or less distinctly associated with some object which occasions alarm, as a cat, or dog, which is fancied to be on the bed, may again return, and with precisely the same symptoms as before."\*

We are acquainted with a boy, who, during infancy, was subject to night terrors, and who, at the age of twelve, and for many succeeding years, was frequently attacked by pantophobia. The attacks were always introduced by palpitation, and characterized by the most intense, yet unaccountable, dread, by temporary loss of identity, and by trembling over the whole body. The following case shews the effects which fear may produce. "Some young girls went one day a little out of town to see a person, who had been executed, and was hung in chains. One of them threw several stones at the gibbet, and, at last, struck it with such violence as to make it move, at which the girl was so much terrified, that she imagined the dead person was alive, came down from the gibbet, and ran after her. She hastened home, and not being able to conquer the idea, she fell into strong convulsions, and died."† Many cases of infantile insanity owe their origin to fear. Most culpable are those who compel timid, nervous children to sleep alone in the dark, and who amuse them by narrating horrific tales.

Moral insanity, which has lately attracted much attention, and been much and warmly discussed, is of frequent occurrence in early life. The intellectual faculties of the person affected by it, remain entire and unimpaired. He is perfectly capable of perceiving, and knowing, and judging. He cherishes no delusion. He cannot, in the ordinary and legal acceptation of the term, be pronounced insane. And yet he is, to all

\* West, on the Diseases of Infancy and Childhood, p. 129.

† Plater, Obs., Lib. I., p. 36.

intents and purposes, of unsound mind, and as much requiring guidance, restraint, and treatment, as the furious maniac. He suffers from entire perversion of the moral principle, from the want of every good and honest sentiment. He is actuated by impulse, or by the most selfish, depraved, and cruel motives ; he presents, in short, a perfect picture of a desperado and a ruffian. The existence of moral insanity, like the existence of every thing else, has been called in question, and, at the present day, there are not lacking those who will remorselessly commit the moral monomaniac to the scaffold, or the penitentiary, little thinking that, in so doing, they punish disease, and not crime. We are forced to acknowledge moral insanity as an actual disease, by the most cursory glance at the previous history of some of those by whom it is manifested. Many of them, from being refined, and virtuous, and upright, and prudent, have become coarse, and licentious, and dishonest, and reckless. We believe that many of our jails and penitentiaries are peopled by such. Prichard, who first described moral insanity, gives a case in which it occurred in a girl aged seven. " This little girl was only seven years old. She was reported by her parents to have been a quick, lively child, of ready apprehension, mild disposition, affectionately fond of the members of her family, and capable of quite as much application to her school duties as children generally are. She had been sent home from school, in consequence of a great change which had taken place in her conduct. She had become abrupt, vulgar, and perfectly unmanageable ; neglecting her school duties, and using the most abusive language when chidden for her misdemeanours. I found her in this state, with the addition of having become extremely passionate, in consequence of corrections to which she had been subject, and, in order to escape which, she was prone to invent falsehoods. She was also changed in her appetites, preferring raw vegetables to her ordinary food. Her parents had no control over her, indeed, she appeared to despise them ; she was cruel to her younger sisters, taking every opportunity to pinch or otherwise hurt them. She could not apply herself to anything, but had a complete knowledge of persons and things, and a complete recollection of all that had occurred. Her general health was much disordered."\* For some time this little patient continued to become worse, but at length she entirely recovered. The foregoing may be taken, so far, as a typical case of moral insanity in early life. A highly instructive case of moral insanity

\* Prichard, on Insanity, p. 55.

may be found in Mayo's Pathology of the Human Mind.\* The patient was a boy of fair talents and considerable intelligence, but of the most singularly vicious, unruly, wayward, and depraved character. Under all means had recourse to, for his reformation he had been alike intractable. He was selfish, violent, delighted in mischief, had drawn a knife upon one of his tutors, exposed his person, and given way to every degrading vice. This case also resulted in recovery. Instructive cases of moral insanity are given by Haslam,† Morel,‡ and various other authors. Lack of time and space, however, prevent us from drawing more largely from the large supply of material we have accumulated. J. J. Rousseau, who was lazy and deceitful, given to lying and pilfering, and thoroughly disreputable even when a boy, was a moral monomaniac.§

Melancholia as manifested in childhood we shall next consider. This disease appears incompatible with early life, but it is so only in appearance, for the buoyancy and gladness of childhood may give place to despondency and despair, and faith and confidence be superseded by doubt and misery. Two forms of melancholia we believe to be observable in childhood, firstly, pure, abstract, indefinite depression; and secondly, despondency, having reference to religious matters or a future state. Other forms of lypemania, including hypochondriasis, are much less frequently seen before puberty, as their existence implies subjectivity of thought. Melancholia may be sudden or insidious in its attack; it may be a primary disorder, or it may be the sequel of some other form of insanity. Those suffering from it are gloomy, and taciturn, and indifferent. They shun their former pursuits and amusements; they are ever occupied in deploring their own hard fate, and in meditating self-destruction. They spend their nights and days in lamenting their miseries and woes. They are given up to "black despair." They are acutely susceptible. Harshness and cruelty persuade them that they are outcasts and aliens, whilst sympathy strengthens their belief in their own wretched doom. Simple melancholia, a mere exaggeration of that feeling of depression to which we are all at times liable, may, in youth, as in mature life, exist without at all involving the intellectual faculties.

Religious melancholia, which is almost always associated

\* Mayo's Pathology of the Human Mind, p. 172.

† Haslam's Observations.—p. 188.

‡ Etudes Cliniques. Traité Theorique et Pratique des Maladies Mentales, par M. Morel. Tome I. p. 332.

§ Westminster Review, Oct. 1859.

with delusions and disorder of the intellect, is begun by doubts and difficulties and recriminations, by

“Night-riding incubi  
 Troubling the fantasy.  
 All dire delusions  
 Causing confusions.  
 Figments heretical,  
 Scruples fantastical,  
 Doubts diabolical,”

and results in a settled belief that the sufferer is eternally damned ; that he is the chief of sinners ; that he has done that which will entail everlasting misery upon him. “Falret mentions a case of a fine, spirited boy, of eleven years of age, who was so deeply affected by the unmerited severity of his teacher, that he resisted him in every thing, became sad and sleepless ; resolved to starve himself to death, and then made several attempts to drown himself.”\* In another recorded case of melancholia, the patient had “spectred illusions, when seven years old, of a peculiar character. He saw visions of human forms, the bodies of which were well shaped, but the faces were like those of spectres and distorted in every possible way. As he had experienced those spectral illusions from early infancy, they attracted little of his attention, except when a sudden sensation of fear was excited by some peculiarly horrible grimace ; and it was only with increasing religious terrors that he began to think them spirits of the devil.”†

Whilst speaking of melancholia, we must devote a few words to the consideration of suicide in early life. Even in infancy and childhood, when cares and sorrows are comparatively unknown, and when sensations and feelings, pleasurable or painful, are transient and evanescent, we frequently meet with deliberate acts of self-destruction. In Berlin, between the years of 1812 and 1821, no less than thirty-one children, of twelve years of age and under, committed suicide, either because they were tired of existence, or had suffered some trifling chastisement,‡ and from the following sentence, it would appear that the number of juvenile suicides in Berlin is gradually and steadily on the increase :—

“La statistique nous demontre, dit le docteur Lisle, que le nombre des suicides est sept fois plus considerable aujourd'hui qu' il y a trente ans chez les enfants âgés de moins de

\* Combe on Mental Derangement.—p. 178.

† Psychological Journal, Vol. I., p. 232.

‡ Stated by Schegel on the authority of Caspar.

seize ans et douze fois plus chez les jeunes gens. Le savant Caspar fait remarquer que depuis un demi-siècle le nombre des suicide de jeunes gens, a augmenté en Prusse d'une manière déplorable. De 1788 à 1797 on ne comptait à Berlin qu'un suicide d'enfant ; de 1798 à 1807 la statistique, en signale 3, et de 1812 à 1821 le chiffre monte à 31.—*Traité des Maladies Mentales, par A. Morel.*—p. 102., 1860.

M. Durand Fardel states that amongst 25,760 suicides committed in France in a period of nine years, 192 were under sixteen years of age.\* According to another series of statistics of 33,038, 238 were under sixteen years of age.† We have ourselves personally and carefully examined the records of twenty-one cases of suicide under the age of fifteen. Of those cases, thirteen were of the male sex, eight of the female. With regard to the respective ages, one was aged five at the time of his suicide, one eight, one nine, one ten, four eleven, four twelve, three thirteen, two fourteen, two fifteen, and two below fifteen, the precise age not being mentioned. Of these cases, two were caused by dread of punishment, four by those evil and revengeful feelings which invariably follow chastisement, four by scolding and altercation, one by the force of imitation, one by the desire to be talked about, one by grief for the death of a sister, one by the effects of a dream, one by disappointed ambition, one by want of a situation, one by misconduct of a brother. Of four cases, the cause is not recorded. In seven cases hanging was the mode of death selected, in other seven drowning was preferred, in two precipitation was had resort to, in two poison was taken, in two shooting was adopted, in one starvation. Some twenty-six ably arranged cases of suicide in youth, are given by M. Durand Fardel, ‡ and some isolated cases are recounted by Dr. Forbes Winslow.§ Melancholia of a religious cast, with manifestations of morbid appetites, and a tendency to suicide, is not unfrequently observed in girls about the age of puberty, Melancholia is generally dependent upon anæmia, or an impoverished condition of the blood, or an imperfect supply of nutrition, and is hence to be treated by generous diet, stimulants, attention to hygiene and iron. A mere desire and longing for self-destruction may exist altogether apart from melancholia, and is then called suicidal monomania. A case ||

\* Psychological Journal, Vol. IX., p. 296.

† Psychological Journal, Vol. IV., p. 418.

‡ Psychological Journal, Vol. IX., p. 296.

§ Forbes Winslow, M.D. *Anatomy of Suicide.*

|| Psychological Medicine, by Drs. Bucknill and Tuke. p. 539.

of this description is recorded by Bucknill and Tuke. The patient was a boy aged twelve years.

That fearful and fatal disease, the general paralysis of the insane, or the monomania of ambition, and of hope, with a peculiar form of paralysis super-added, has been seen and remarked even before the age of puberty. M. Rodrigues says he has seen it occur in three cases before the age of fifteen; in one of these cases, the sufferer was only three years of age.\*

Mania, a more general disorder than those which we have lately considered, in all its various forms, may occur during infancy and childhood. In mania the mental faculties, as a whole, are deranged, and the mind is in a state of confusion and excitement. The ideas are incoherent and disconnected. The language is loose, voluble, and wild. The mental affection consists in a supremacy exercised by the lower over the higher faculties of mind, and is often accompanied by bodily disease. During its continuance, the incoherence of language is due to the electric rapidity with which the mind acts, to the impossibility of giving utterance to all "the fast coming fancies," and not to any loss of the knowledge of the meaning of words and phrases. Delusions are much more frequent in this form of insanity, than positive hallucinations. We have previously alluded to mania, as manifested congenitally, and in early infancy. Haslam relates a most interesting case of congenital mania, in which, the mother having been frightened during pregnancy, startings, sleeplessness, and unnatural liveliness, were observed, immediately after birth, in the child. Other symptoms of mania continued to develop themselves with developing powers, until it was found necessary to confine the child.† Haslam likewise mentions another case of mania, supervening upon small-pox, at the age of three and a half years. We have the notes of a case submitted to our observation, in which a male child exhibited mania whilst at the breast. It was the offspring of robust parents, of sanguine temperament. Nothing occurred during utero gestation to attract attention. Incessant restlessness first attracted attention. It occasionally became excited and cried for hours, rolled to and fro in its mother's arms, bent back as if tetanic, grasped with its hands, and when applied to the breast bit and lacerated the nipple. It subsequently died of marasmus. A well marked case of mania in a girl six years old was admitted into Bethlem Hospital, in 1842; she had been subject to occasional attacks of mania, from the age of eighteen months. When

\* Winn, on General Paralysis. p. 3.

† Haslam's Observations. p. 185.

admitted into the asylum, her conduct was violent, excited, and mischievous. She tore her clothes, struck those around her, and destroyed everything within her reach.\* The case terminated in recovery. We will now give an account of a case of intermittent mania, with great development of the lower faculties, which we personally examined. C. C, æt. 13, until two years' ago, was a clever, good natured girl. At that time, she rose one morning at two o'clock, came down from the garret in which she slept, trembled, was labouring under palpitation, appeared panic stricken, leapt into bed with her parents, and from that period, has been changed in all moral respects. Her parents imagine that the whole was the effect of a dream. For a week or weeks she remains seated on the same spot, and perfectly silent. For a similar period, she is bold, loquacious and restless. When at school, she learned to read, and was acute. She cannot now execute a message correctly. She may have some religious impressions, but is so incoherent as to mingle prayers and blasphemies, and songs together. She would destroy or injure her sisters, and upon this account is not allowed to sleep with them; she is profane, untruthful, erotic, has exposed her person, and is suspected of prostitution. Catamænia not established. She is cunning and mischievous, unmanageable by her mother, and is only kept in subjection by threats, and by severe punishment, applied by her father; she eats voraciously, and strikes when unprovoked. There are four other children all healthy. She is of dark complexion, short, squat but well formed, and of not displeasing aspect. Her manner is indifferent, or bold.

A case of chorea mania is to be found in a late volume of the Psychological Journal. The patient was a boy ten years of age, who having lifted an adder, supposing it to be a stick, was so much alarmed, though perfectly uninjured, that mania accompanied by involuntary and grotesque attitudes, and gesticulations, was induced.† Another case of chorea mania, complicated with epilepsy, is given in an early number of the American Journal of Insanity.‡ We have observed the progress of an attack of hysterical mania, in a boy of nervous temperament, aged nine. The disease was supposed to be caused by prolonged excitement and exhaustion. It occurred in paroxysms of violence and incoherence, preceded at first, by a temporary loss of consciousness. During the paroxysm, he attempted to injure himself, and those about him, he sung snatches of songs, and

\* Psychological Journal, Vol. I, p. 317.

† Psychological Journal, Vol. IX., p. 133.

‡ American Journal of Insanity, Vol. III., p. 197.

he invariably addressed those with whom he was constantly familiar by names other than their own. In this case an abundant supply of nourishment, a change of scene, and the use of iron and valerian produced an undoubted cure. We possess records of many other cases of mania in early life, but we have already quoted a sufficient number.

We have now hurriedly and imperfectly accomplished the task which we proposed to ourselves, upon commencing this essay. We have traced out and considered the various influences psychically affecting the human race during early life, and we have also considered those psychical disorders which may exist at that period. Lack of time has prevented us from dealing with our subject, as copiously and analytically as we could have wished, but from what we have said it must be obvious, that those influences which are productive of psychical disease are co-extensive with existence; that almost every form of mental disease which may attack the adult, may also attack the infant and the child; and that the subject which we have been investigating, is one of vast and ever increasing importance.

We would now repeat the opinion which we have before, in other words, expressed, that, for the remote causes of a great many cases of insanity, we must look to those eccentricities and peculiarities, those trivial deviations from mental health, which, occurring during infancy and childhood, either remain unrecognized, or, being recognized, are treated rather as voluntary mental conditions, to be reprehended, or encouraged, as the case may be, than as manifestations of morbid action, and as pre-monitions. We believe that early training, mental culture, and physical education act, not merely in modelling disposition, and laying the foundation of character, but in rearing up barriers opposed to the incursion of disease, and in furnishing weapons with which to resist its advance. We believe that states and communities will become great, and good, and healthy, and civilized, in proportion as they attend to early training.

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## Psychical Diseases of Early Life

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