INSANITY IN TWINS.

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The following cases, observed by me in the Michigan Asylum for the Insane, are perhaps of sufficient rarity to warrant putting them on record:

John J., laborer, aged 26, single, of Dutch parentage, was admitted on the 11th of December, 1879. His parents were people of good habits, but his mother was considered rather weak-minded, and both he and his twin brother had always been rather below par intellectually. The patient had been temperate, but was suspected to have been addicted to masturbation. For four or five years he had failed mentally, became indolent and unsociable, and suffered from repeated attacks of mental disturbance, in which he was wakeful and talkative, and evinced delusions on religious subjects. Had not been violent, destructive nor suicidal. At the time of admission he seemed somewhat depressed, and in rather feeble health.

For a number of weeks he remained in much the same condition. He was low spirited and inactive; complained that "his head was weak," and that he could not sleep, and was troubled in mind about what he characterized as "his sin," without being apparently able to specify what his sin was. In the early part of March, 1880, he was comparatively cheerful, but became depressed again towards the end of the month, and soon afterward began to show excitement, rather of the character of agitated melancholia than of mania. He was noisy, restless and disorderly, destroyed his clothing, denuded himself, and practiced masturbation with little attempt at concealment. On one occasion he assaulted an attendant who insisted on his taking his medicine. When reproved for his improper conduct he admitted that it was wrong, but said he was "so bad that he could not help it." He acquiesced in the employment of mechanical restraint at one time, to check his destructiveness, and never tried to justify his misbehavior. His excitement began to subside about the 1st of August, and by the middle of that month he was in a more comfortable mental state than at any previous time since his admission. He did pretty efficient work on the farm until about the 1st of December,

when his excitement returned, with the same symptoms as before. This attack lasted less than a month, but left him in much the same condition as at the time of his admission, and was followed by another time of excitement in the latter part of January, 1881. Similar attacks recurred, at irregular intervals, until the following September.

In December, 1881, he showed symptoms of incipient phthisis. The disease made pretty rapid progress for some months, but subsequently seemed to be checked, and from the latter part of October, 1881, to the following September, he worked on the farm, with only one interruption, from a comparatively mild attack of excitement, in a very comfortable condition of body and mind. On the 6th of September, 1882, his twin brother, who was then an inmate of the Asylum, died. This seemed to depress him greatly, and he became incapable of any efficient work. He was taken home for a visit in the following October, and on his return, on the 27th of December, was found to have failed decidedly, both in mind and body. He had cough and fever, with night sweats, and his mind was so inactive that he was almost incapable of conversation. He showed no interest in anything; would not dress himself without help, nor go to his meals without urging. Later, he was inclined to stand in constrained postures, and walked with quick, mincing steps. His pulmonary disease progressed steadily, although he was not confined to bed until July, 1883. He died on the 21st of August of that year.

James J., twin brother of the foregoing patient, was admitted June 4th, 1881. He presented that strong degree of resemblance to his brother that is only seen in twins of the same sex, presumably produced by complete segmentation of a single ovum, as in the case of double monsters. He had always been feeble-minded, and was said to have shown symptoms of insanity for about four years, characterized principally by a mild mental depression.

At the time of his admission he seemed in good bodily health, and, apart from very decided mental enfeeblement, he never showed any marked symptoms of insanity during his stay in the Asylum. He was pretty uniformly good-humored and contented, and often volunteered the remark: "This is a nice place."

In November, 1881, he was first noticed to be suffering from phthisis, which ran a more rapid course than in his brother's case, proving fatal September 6th, 1882.

In these cases, it seems reasonable to suppose that the mental

defect which laid the foundation for the more active symptoms of later life was due to influences dating at least as far back as the time of conception. Whether the habit of masturbation observed in the first case was a cause or an effect of the insanity cannot now be determined. The fact of their contracting the same fatal disease so nearly at the same time, if a mere coincidence, is rather a striking one.

This is the only case of the kind that I have observed, and, so far as my recollection extends, I think few similar observations have been recorded.