On the Terms Delusion, Illusion, and Hallucination. By
J. H. BLOUNT, M.D. Part II.

In a former number I was led to draw attention to the distinctive meaning of illusions, hallucinations, and delusions, in consequence of the confusion manifested in the medical evidence given at a late celebrated trial, and from observing a like confusion in most of our works on mental medicine. And without entering into the physiological or psychological nature of these phenomena, I endeavoured to point out the plain, simple, and efficient characteristic, that illusions and hallucinations were the morbid phenomena of perception, the former occurring with, the latter without any external or objective cause; and that delusion was the result of morbid conception. In the following remarks, I wish to point out the distinctive features of those faculties whose morbid phenomena are designated by the above three terms, particularly the distinction between *sensation* and *perception*; for the confusion existing relative to the phenomena, healthy or morbid of any faculty does and must result from that faculty in its nature and limits being badly and confusedly apprehended, and therefore requiring a further analysis and more decided definition; a confusion which, relative to our subject, has led some in the present day to locate the faculty of perception, independent of sensation, in the nerves and organs of special sense; (see the *Annales Psychologiques*.)

No one can name any phenomenon which may come under his observation, without having some more or less definite notion of the category under which he would place it; and where there are classes of objects which appear to, or do merge into each other, he forms types around which, as a centre, are grouped all other phenomena. These types or centres are more or less numerous, according to the utility of a more or less minute division, and the less or greater admixture of new elements. It is, then, necessary for me to define what is meant by sensation and perception; and this will be best done by taking the definitions of those who are authorities in the study of mind, and pointing out as I proceed where and whence confusion has arisen. And here I must disclaim any intention of explaining what sensation or perception are in themselves, or how it comes that we are sensational or perceptive creatures. My object is to point out where and why certain phenomena which are now most

universally confused and confounded—at least, as far as language is concerned—should be, on the contrary, distinct and determinate, both in name and category—that all our intercommunication should be clear and without misunderstanding.

Dugald Stewart gives us the caution not to confound sensation with perception, for the former “is that state of the mind which is produced by an *impression* upon our organs of sense, (of which change we can conceive the mind to be conscious without any knowledge of external objects), and the latter expresses the *knowledge* we obtain by means of our sensations, of the qualities of matter.” Mr. Morell, in his work on *Psychology*, uses the term perception as “the apprehension of material qualities;” and further explains—“an awaking of the consciousness to the bodily condition of the moment; here the process stops as far as sensation is concerned, for any enquiry into the cause or object of such feelings, would be an intellectual process clearly distinguishable from the sensation itself.” In fact, without at present multiplying quotations, the reducing to precise language the obvious meaning of most authors is, that impressions *felt subjectively* are sensations, *translated objectively* are perceptions; that *sensations* are subjective appreciations of states of being, while *perceptions* are the objective knowledge of the materials external and independent of us; and consequently, that these two faculties are totally distinct, and, as we shall see, different in rise, progress, and results.

No word is solely and always used in its purely scientific sense, but has a general, universal, and every-day interpretation; thus as generic words “perception,” and to “perceive,” are in daily use for the reception of knowledge, the tuition of experience, the comprehension of ideas, &c.; and we are said to perceive a thousand facts, mental and bodily, which in strict language, are only felt, recollected, experienced, conceived, &c., and which have nothing in common with that faculty of mind, perception; a faculty, which, though far from being the highest in the scale of intelligence, is one upon which there ever has, is, and will be the greatest amount of controversy; for in fact, the coincidence and agreement between outward matter and our apprehension of it, is the very fundamental principle of mind; a clear understanding of which, as distinguished from all other faculties, is necessary for the slightest consideration of mental phenomena to be conducted with precision and clearness.

No one doubts that nervous matter carries *impressions*; and the comparative anatomy of the nervous system leads us

to conclude that in the lowest animals impressions are received, conveyed, and reflected into acts for certain special ends, and that this is performed blindly, instinctively, without the control or even consciousness of the animal. In these lowest animals this reflex is confined to immediate contact, often requiring force to effect it; but as we rise higher in the scale the senses called special are added, those whose contact is mediate and more delicate; and these animals are influenced by light, sound, touch, &c. But even here there is no evidence to shew that they have any sensation of these influences, while there is evidence to shew that it is wrong to say,

"The poor beetle that we tread upon

"In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great

"As when a giant dies."

But as we further rise in the scale we find something is added. The blind reflex or consensual action is often delayed; like impressions do not necessarily give like results; the animal becomes conscious of and feels the impressions, and actions resulting from the existence thus felt may be said to be the dawn of volition. This stage is the one described by Mr. Morell as the first stage of intelligence, or "intelligence as sensation." These feelings are purely subjective, and give rise to the states of comfort or discomfort, or pain—the coenæsthesia—they give an *ego*, but not the *non ego*, for until the objectifying power is added, these animals have but various sensations as various states of existence. Afterwards is added the perceptive faculty, the appreciation of external matter, and its relation to us; the *ego* and the *non ego*, an addition which cannot be too strongly pointed out as the starting point of all intellectual action and without which every subsequent faculty would be useless. Here we have Mr. Morell's stage of intelligence as intuition.

A mere reflex or consensual action, can give no evidence of mind, less than of intellectual action. The simple addition of sensation gives a rudimentary mind, as it resides in the simplest sensorium, the feeling of personal changes and impressions entirely without reference to their causes; much more then is there of mind when perception, the portal to other faculties is added to sensation, whereby its impressions are read, *i. e.*, perceived; and are referred to their external causes; for after all, life is but a contention of matter with matter, with a guiding principle acting at first blindly, then subjectively, afterwards objectively, gradually rising in the scale of intelligence into the moral being.

The functions of nerve are, as we have said, simply to re-

ceive and convey impressions, and the nerves of each of the special senses have their own peculiar function. Light and colour *per se*, sound *per se*, are as much sensations, as much felt, as the resistance of contact; and primarily neither of them have any objective influence till perception comes into play. The reception is, by means of physical organs, prepared for, and carried by the nerves, which have nothing to do with the rudimentary mental power, sensation. As a double proof I need scarcely mention the reflex actions that take place when sensation and perception are in abeyance from accident or disease; or that sensation as such may be remarked when the physical organ is injured, as opacity of cornea; or that hallucinations may take place, *i.e.*, perception, when the organ of sense is destroyed. But there are here two remarks to be made. First, all our sensational organs are not only in general accord, but they are each intimately and separately connected with common sensation, *coenæsthesia*, containing more or less of its elements, so that when violently influenced they act through it. This is a source of confusion when the subject is analytically considered, but, on the other hand, it is a proof of the resemblance between our sensations, and of the unity of our sensational powers, in that they are purely subjective in their action; and secondly, that perception is not a definite and precise faculty, but one that requires education and experience; for the great difference between instinct and reason lies in the difference of the fundamental faculty of perception—in the former acting blindly and perfectly from the very first call into play, in the latter requiring the association of other faculties, and an educational course of experience, for with it arises memory, association, &c. Intellectual powers increasing in power and complicity, as we find the cranial nervous contents increase; contents gradually increasing from the early development of parts corresponding to the internal convolutions of Foville, which experiment, comparative anatomy, and analogy, would point out as the probable seat of the faculty of perception, and which is certainly not in the organs of sense, as the above remarks shew; again, the destruction of an organ of sense is no more the destruction of perception, than the amputation of a limb destroys volition.

Previously to the consideration of the morbid phenomena, illusion, hallucination, &c., I may here add one or two instances of the confusing language resulting from not keeping the distinctive characters of sensation and perception in view. Thus Mr. Morell, in his *Psychology*, says, "Let us take the perception of heat and cold;" and three lines further he says

that they are "simple affections which we experience." Heat and cold are sensations, simple states of existence which we experience, and are never connected objectively, until other faculties have given us the constant association of certain causes, to the which we refer our sensations, by which we can conceive and interpret the why and wherefore, but can only *feel* the effect. Again he remarks that the "prick of a pin experienced by the mind has no likeness to the instrument." Pain is a sensation, indicating a state of existence, a form of *ego*, but giving nothing of the *non ego*. Though in both these cases, and in others like to them, when the principle of causality has with the knowledge acquired by past experience taught us to refer, with more or less certainty, certain sensations to certain causes, we find we have acquired a faculty which gives to each sensation a responding intelligence that simulates perception, but has nothing in common with it more than a name. It is, too, from such like confusion that we are told that every sensation is accompanied by the belief in an external cause; (Wyld's *Philosophy of the Senses*.) Here the peculiar property of perception is given to states of sensation. It is only from a like confusion that perception, as well as and separate from sensation, could be supposed to reside in the nerves of special sensation; (*Les Annales Psychologiques*.) Again, sensation has been said to consist of two parts, (Dr. Monro, *On Classification of Insanity*;) one physical, sensation proper; the other mental, *i.e.*, perception. But we have already pointed out how very different are these two conditions; for, as Mr. Morell says, "whatever of knowledge or idea grows out of it, it is all due to a development of mind higher up in the scale than sensation itself." We can now see how this junction of sensation and perception influences the consideration of morbid mental phenomena, inasmuch as a proper separation of two such different endowments would have prevented the author from adding another sense to the category of mental powers, and have again confounded common sensation—the known coenesthesia—with the "functional sense."

Having now separated sensation from perception, we will enquire into their morbid phenomena; and from the nature of sensation, as we understand it, it is evident that its subjectiveness, admitting merely of different states of existence, cannot be perverted, since it has but one factor which must ever remain the same. Now there are various sensations, most frequently the effect of disease or irritation of the organs of sense, such as flashes of light in the eye, tinnitus

aurium, &c., which have been cited as being examples of simple illusions and hallucinations, and have led to the belief that these phenomena depend upon some states of the organs themselves. Now as we have said, these flashes of light, &c., are but states of existence *experienced* by the subject, but never *perceived*. Again, mistakes which arise from the physical imperfection of our organs of sense, mistakes which arise from the conceptivity attempting to complete the imperfect perception from faulty impression, have led to a diseased state of the physical organs being given as the cause of illusions. (*Vide Feuchtersleben's Psychology, Sydenham Society, page 230.*) An apparent exception to the foregoing mere state of existence being the explanation of sensation, is, where after amputation, sensations felt as in the lost part, are immediately referred to what does not exist. This, when investigated, is but a proof of my whole position, for those born without certain parts, never miss those parts, or feel them, nor do sensations intuitively point out the locality injured, except imperfectly by a reflex action, as the nervous phenomena of certain diseases shew. Sensation being but a state of being, all arising from it has to be learnt, the higher faculty of perception being the door leading to that which the still higher faculties appropriate and elaborate. How all this is performed, how the various theories of perception explain what is for us as a fact, and a fundamental point of belief, is far from the question now in view; we have merely to remark that the concord between external objects and our appreciation of them, is not always sure, that hence arise illusions. Next, that this faculty of concordance may be exercised, or may exercise itself without any impression from the organs of sense; hence arise hallucinations. That no other faculty enters into these morbid occurrences, for they often are independent of the belief, the reason, judgment of consequences, &c. Indeed when these faculties are applied to them, they in no way modify them; they are perceived and corrected or not; they cannot be denied. As a typical example of illusions, we would point out Don Quixote, mistaking a windmill for a giant; of hallucinations, the phenomena experienced by the printer Nicolai, of Berlin.—(See *Lelut's l'Amulette de Pascal*, part I.)

Sensation, as a state of existence, as a single factor, is so totally distinct from the power of appreciating the qualities of matter, external form, &c., that confusion necessarily must arise if they are confounded; under one name and sensation being a state of existence, can only be depraved

when we have pleasure from those *acquired states of feeling*, which we know are rather the perversion than the legitimate use of sensation. Or, I might exemplify sensation as being positive in pleasure, negative in pain, and as being depraved when in a positive formula containing a negative result.

But with perception arises ideation, and in the process of acquiring experience, those faculties necessary for the use of whatever enters by the perception door; or in recapitulation, to quote from Mr. Morell, "In the sensational stage, the mind is least free, it acts as yet in immediate response to some physical impulse." "The second, or intuitional stage, the soul attaining somewhat more free activity, yet remains under the immediate influence of external realities." "The thing perceived, stands face to face with the percipient mind, and the latter wholly immersed in its object, exercises hardly any self-consciousness or activity in the apprehension of it." "How can we possibly get beyond the sphere of intuition, or disentangle ourselves from the influence of subjective impressions? By a power by which we are enabled to *recall* our experiences, and afterwards to build upon them a still higher form of knowledge in the process of intellectual developement." These faculties, memory, imagination, association, language, &c., all playing upon the perceptive experience, give rise to the higher intelligences, for the faculty of conception, responding to the principle of causality and the desire for knowledge, raise man above the brute creation. We only can rise from the known to the unknown. Sensations are associated with perceptions, and with former sensations recalled by memory, and are compared with collateral experiences. The principle of causality with the imaginative powers, adds a creative energy to the reasoning powers, which, combined with the judgment, makes the intelligence of man. But this process, so easy in act, has many factors, and consequently many chances for error; and in daily life, thousands of instances of error do occur continually; but the incompatibility error intuitively causes it to be suspected, reconsidered and detected, makes correction easy, and keeps mankind in general accord; however, this is not always so. Conclusions, the result of the higher faculties, will arise fixed, formed, and unimpeachable, leading to actions altogether in disaccord with these general known laws of mind, which govern the mass. These are *delusions*, and constitute the true mental symptoms of *non compos mentis*; as their stability is not compatible with the healthy action of the various intellectual faculties.

Now a little consideration of our experience will point out

that these erroneous intellectual actions, these "imaginary existences so *entirely* of mental origin," are, when analysed, but the mind seeking for, and endeavouring to explain its own sensations; that these delusions are but the conceptive powers interpreting its states of existence in a fantastic and extraordinary manner, and by processes of imagination, association, and judgment, not in accord with the constituted laws of mind or matter. Conception being a faculty, acting in certain states of the sensational mind, especially when these are on the negative side of existence, causes delusive ideation, entraining in its turn the general intelligence.

The faculty of renewing impressions of sensational consciousness, of sensibility, varies in each individual, and from its general distribution and intimate connection with the entire physical organization, does, when exalted and disturbed, act through the material organs upon the entire mind, even to its higher intellectual faculties. Hence arise emotions. These "acutely experienced cœncœstheses," (Noble,) mal-interpreted (sensation can be only felt or interpreted, never perceived,) by the conceptive faculties answering falsely to the principle of causality, give *delusions*—the *idée délirante*, conception *délirante*. Thus sensation is more intimately connected with delusion than is the faculty of perception; but though the ground upon which delusion is raised is a morbid state of the higher faculties, they act upon sensation. Again, the elements of each of the three faculties, sensation, perception, and conception, exist in each of the morbid phenomena of illusion, hallucination, and delusion; for without there having been experience from previous perception, conception could not have been called in action; and without ideation and the previous action of the conceptive faculties, the perception could not have perceived what did not exist; yet, as I have before remarked, it is necessary, to prevent confusion, to have some definition of these terms whereby science may be rendered clearer, and our mutual understanding kept as perfect as possible. Nor is this incompatible; for who would deny the distinction between the *a priori* and *a posteriori* proofs of the divinity, because they mutually contain each other's element.

As the faculty of perception precedes in rise and development the higher faculties, so do we find, in the evolution of insanity, that illusions and hallucination, as the rule, precede the fixed delusion; that they are more especially the phenomena of the acute stages, and that, as earlier stages of mania sympathising with the body, they are more especially the

phenomena of general disease; and as such are not such grave prognostic signs as are delusions, the morbid action of the higher faculties.

Again, as the faculty of perception is lower in scale than conception, we can understand that illusions and hallucinations may exist, and yet in their effects, &c. be corrected by the higher powers, and therefore be quite compatible with sanity. (M. Lelut's researches are admirable exemplifications of this.) They are, therefore, in themselves not proofs of insanity; though when they are not corrected, and when the higher faculties do not withhold their assent, but build delusions upon the illusions and hallucinations arising from faulty perception, they become additional proofs of the aberration of the intellectual faculties.

We ought not then to err in the use of these terms; indeed, I can conceive no case, where, upon the above principles, not only a name may not be given to the mental action, but at the same time with the name may not be assigned its locality in the category of our intellectual faculties.

Statistics of Insanity, being a Decennial Report of Bethlem Hospital, from 1846 to 1855 inclusive. By W. CHARLES HOOD, M.D., Resident Physician of Bethlem Hospital, &c., &c., &c., pp. 121.

There can scarcely be a surer sign of the importance attached to scientific statistics, than the anxiety with which they are received, and the estimation in which, if worthy, they are held. And this proceeds not from mere curiosity or the pleasure of gratifying a speculative philosophy, but rather, as we hope and believe, from that pure, unquenchable love of truth which belongs to our better nature. Figures, like facts, "are stubborn things," and herein lies their value. They plead with a force of their own, neither requiring the sophistry of words nor the skilful arguments of a logician, yet oft refuting the propositions of reasoners, and withal not to be gainsaid. It follows, then, that whosoever undertakes to collate and frame evidence of this description, superimposes on himself responsibilities of no slight or trivial nature. Statistics of life and death, of health and

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