

Alterations of character and disposition, morbid views of religion, unaccountable acts of brutality and immorality, recklessness in expense, erotic excitement, and diseased imagination as distinguished from the operations of vice—each and all of these various moods, in their several manifestations, Dr. Winslow believes to constitute a type of morbid mental disorder which exists to a frightful extent in real life. Its detection, he affirms, is happily within the reach of the physician who, “to a practical knowledge of human nature adds an acquaintance with the higher departments of mental and moral philosophy, as well as of cerebral pathology.”

The stages of mental depression and aberration in which the intellectual, perceptive, and moral faculties become involved, suggest inquiries as to what means exist of detecting the fatal boundary line separating the sane from the deranged mind. In the former of these conditions, the presence of latent and concealed delusions explains the act of self-destruction, in which cases of that class not unusually end. The steps by which such a condition is accomplished, the struggles between sane knowledge and insane apprehensions, the inward strivings and outward watchings, marking the ebb and flow of disease, are traced from their trivial and insignificant beginnings to the stage when

“The intellect at last yields to the pressure, and the general health becoming deranged, the idea which was originally only an extravagant conception, assumes the dimensions of a clearly manifested delusion: in other words, a *fixed and settled insane idea*; the insanity consisting not in a creation of the fancy *de novo*, but in a morbid *exaggeration* and insane *perversion* of actually existing circumstances.”

Impairment of Mind as manifest in its general weakness, morbid phenomena of Attention, and morbid phenomena of Memory conclude the subjects discussed in the first section of the divisions adopted for the purposes of review.

The morbid phenomena of memory are reserved for future notice.

It will be apparent from the extent and nature of this imperfect analysis of its first section, that Dr. Winslow has produced no ordinary book. The plan on which it is carried out is altogether original. Complete in range, exact in description, copious in matter, and abounding with cases, its worth may be said to consist as much in its enumeration of sources of error as in its exposition of principles of truth.

## THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS AND UNEDUCATED CANDIDATES.

[LETTER FROM DR. ROBERT H. SEMPLE.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have just read a letter in your impression of last week, written by Sir B. Brodie, on the subject of the admission of uneducated candidates to the membership of the College of Surgeons, and I confess that this document has filled me with astonishment and dismay—feelings which I am sure that I share with the great body of medical practitioners in this country.

The facts of the case to which Sir B. Brodie's attention has been drawn are patent to the profession, and they simply disclose the circumstance that certain persons, who have passed through no course of professional study, have been admitted members of the College of Surgeons, to the great and just indignation of hundreds and thousands of gentlemen, who have worked hard to obtain the same honour. Now, Sir B. Brodie professes to have no knowledge of the particular cases which have occasioned so much scandal; but he proceeds to justify the whole proceeding on general grounds, which I cannot help thinking are utterly untenable, and upon these general grounds I beg leave to offer a few remarks.

I hope that I do not misrepresent Sir B. Brodie's opinion when I conceive it to mean that the College of Surgeons is perfectly justified in admitting to examination persons who have received no previous professional education, and that the Col-

lege in so doing has acted in strict conformity with the spirit and the letter of the Medical Act of 1858.

Now, Sir, I fully admit that the different medical corporations have acted wisely and judiciously in facilitating the admission to licences and degrees of gentlemen who, from various circumstances, have failed to procure *all* the testimonials required for medical practitioners since the Act of 1858. I think, therefore, that a Surgical College granting on somewhat easy terms a diploma to a medical graduate, or a Medical College granting one to a surgeon, is a proceeding strictly within the meaning of the Medical Act, and is consistent with justice; but until the appearance of Sir B. Brodie's letter I had no idea that it was either legal, or fair, or just, or necessary to admit to examination persons who not only possessed *no legal qualification at all*, but who had *never received any education whatever* to entitle them to present themselves for examination. Yet such was precisely the case with the persons who have lately received the diploma of the College of Surgeons, and Sir B. Brodie casts the shield of his great name over this very disreputable proceeding.

I recollect very well that about this time last year a contributor to your journal, acting under a mistaken conviction, alleged, in a letter published in your columns, that two gentlemen had received licences from the Court of Examiners of the Society of Apothecaries under circumstances precisely similar to those under which certain diplomas have been granted lately by the College of Surgeons. The difference, however, turned out to be this, that both the gentlemen who had received the licence of the Society of Apothecaries were *members of the College of Surgeons of several years' standing*, and were subjected to the usual examination *after producing ample evidence of professional education and hospital practice*. These facts the Court of Examiners were prepared to prove upon oath, and by the production of documentary evidence; but your own liberal and honourable conduct in publishing the real facts in your columns obviated the necessity of legal proceedings.

For my own part, having been for many years connected with one of the Medical Examining Boards, I can truly state that I have never before contemplated the propriety of admitting to examination persons who have not been regularly educated; on the contrary, considering the abundant opportunities afforded to medical students in the present day of acquiring information, I should think it preposterous to entertain such an idea, and I feel truly grieved to differ from so high an authority as Sir B. Brodie upon this most important subject.

If Sir B. Brodie's opinion is to be acted upon, I really think that it will be unnecessary hereafter for any of the medical corporations to “make any minute inquiries” (as Sir Benjamin delicately expresses it) into the early professional studies of any candidates for examination; but they can merely take all the fish that come into the net, and thus swamp completely with half-fledged pretenders a profession already overcrowded with zealous and well-educated practitioners. But before such a result shall ensue, (and may Heaven avert it!) I hope that the profession will speak out, undeterred even by the authority of a gentleman so justly esteemed and so universally admired as Sir Benjamin Brodie. In your widely circulated columns the voice of the many thousand practitioners of the British empire can make itself heard, and I am sadly mistaken if the general opinion does not coincide with that of so humble an individual as myself—namely, that the present is an age of progress rather than of retrogression, and that it is the duty of those who possess any influence on medical education to advance, and not to retard, the acquisition of sound medical knowledge.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,  
Torrington-square, May, 1860.

ROBT. H. SEMPLE, M.D.

WESTERN MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SOCIETY.—The annual meeting of this Society took place on the evening of the 4th inst., when the following officers were elected for the ensuing session:—*President*: Dr. E. C. Seaton. — *Vice-Presidents*: Dr. Fincham; Messrs. Keen, Leggatt, and Cumberbatch. — *Council*: Drs. Cahill, Barclay, C. G. Brown, Marcet, Anstie, and Stacpoole; Messrs. J. R. Lane, H. Brown, Turner, Scannell, Pollock, and Mould. — *Treasurer*: Dr. E. C. Seaton. — *Hon. Secretaries*: Dr. Baines and Mr. Milner. — *Hon. Librarian*: Mr. Thomas Dickinson. — *Auditors*: Messrs. Stevens and C. Hunter. — The reports of the Auditors and Council were read and adopted. A vote of thanks to the officers for the past session was proposed, to which the President replied, making a few remarks upon the satisfactory condition of the Society. The meeting then terminated.