

AN INCHOATIVE PARANOIAC.¹

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I PRESENT the following case of incipient paranoia as illustrating a peculiar type of moral deficiency—a type in whose composition the moral sense (in its highest meaning) seems to be entirely absent, who recognizes no such rules as right and duty, and in whom the sentiments of affection and sympathy are unknown.

Landon Carter Gray² makes the following striking remarks in his brilliant article on paranoia: "Moral insanity or moral paranoia, is invariably found among those who have a neurotic heredity. In these cases the moral defect may begin in early youth and continue through life. The acts of these individuals are usually without motive, although when the passions or prejudices of people have been aroused, they may seem to be nothing more than the deeds of rogues; but the useless theft of small articles by a person who is abundantly able to pay for them, the obtaining of money upon false pretences by an outlay far greater than is represented by the money thus obtained, without estimating the cost of time and labor, the utter lack of appreciation of the consequences evidenced by the act, and very frequently its stupidity, are all very evident to the dispassionate or unprejudiced and experienced observer."

The incorrigible boy who is the hero and the chosen companion of all the well-bred children in the neighborhood, and the *bête noire* of every careful mother, is an old and familiar story to us all.

But a few years past he was known only as a remarkably naughty child, but modern science now teaches us

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² "A Treatise on Nervous and Mental Diseases." By Landon Carter Gray, Philadelphia, 1893, p. 638.

that such an one is primarily no more responsible for his vicious tendencies than he is for his own birth ; but it also teaches, that these same vicious tendencies, while they cannot be entirely eradicated, may by extreme care be repressed, and the vital force thereby gained directed into more healthful channels.

F. R., a white male epileptic, aged thirteen years, was first brought to my notice August 3, 1892. His height was four feet, six and three-fourth inches; weight, seventy-two pounds. Thin and sparely built. No bodily deformity, and no paralysis. Head asymmetrical, the left side being much larger than the right; left maxillary bones (especially inferior maxillary) more prominent. Left parietal region larger than the right, which is slightly flattened. Ears unusually large and very prominent (the left one more so than the right), lobule large, conchia extremely deep. Choreic movements of the right side of the face, and countenance sly. Hair light brown, eyes blue, and complexion sallow. Mouth well shut, and teeth good. Sight, hearing, and speech perfect, but spoke in a whining, nasal tone. Right handed; feet and hands cold. Fingers crooked and "stumpy" from biting nails, but was very deft in the use of his hands and exhibited considerable ingenuity. There was no marked irregularity in walking, but he assumed a lounging gait. The account of his earlier history informs us that he began to walk when one year old. Has had no brain disease, but was extremely nervous and sensitive to pain. Has had the various diseases of childhood. Was active, noisy and restless, and eat nervously and fast. Has been circumcised. Passionately fond of music, could sing, and readily committed words of a song. Had attended school, and was in third grade. Could read and write fairly well, and showed some talent for drawing. Powers of attention, imitation, and memory good. Was further described as disobedient, untruthful, passionate, stealthy, and vulgar—a slave to evil habits; heedless of danger, destructive to furniture and clothing, with incendiary tendencies, and eloped at every opportunity. He had been much indulged on account of epilepsy, and parents had absolutely no control over him.

He was the fifth child; born at full term, in good physical condition, non-instrumental delivery. Nour-

ished by mother for first year, then fed on condensed milk.

Father, Belgian, "stone-cutter and marble worker" by trade. Extremely nervous; used alcohol, but not to excess; very brutal toward wife; aged fifty-six years at time of F.'s birth.

Mother an American, born in Maryland; is a thin, nervous, garrulous woman, suffering from some uterine disease and subject to sick headache and neuralgia. Aged thirty-nine years when child was born.

The patient has two brothers and three sisters living, and they are all sound, both mentally and physically. A brother, aged two years and seven months, was accidentally burned to death about one year prior to F.'s birth.

To create a sensation was the delight of his heart, and a few weeks before he was brought to me, he ran away from home, climbed with some difficulty and no little risk, into the private office of a railroad official, and after purloining a large pistol from the drawer of a desk made good his escape without detection. He then marched down one of the principal thoroughfares of Washington at high noon, when the street was thronged with people, flourishing the pistol and shooting right and left (fortunately without injuring anyone) until he was finally arrested by a policeman, but not before he had terrorized the people for several blocks.

For the first twenty-four hours after F. came under my observation he behaved fairly well and was very quiet and tractable. At the end of this time he suddenly began to have severe spasms in such quick succession that death from exhaustion seemed imminent. The usual remedies were applied with negative result. But after a time it was observed that these apparently frightful convulsions were unaccompanied by the usual phenomena of epilepsy, that they only occurred in the presence of a sympathizing audience, and that the violence of the spasms were in direct proportion to the tenderness of the ministrations of the nurse.

I was very soon convinced that they were unquestionably feigned, although he fancied himself complete master of his *technique*. His *modus operandi* of the simulation of an epileptic convulsion was as follows: He would rise to his feet, sway to and fro for an instant, utter a cry as though he were being choked, then dart forward and grasp some object—preferably a man around the leg, or

a boy by the neck—attempt to bite, and then fall in a tonic spasm lasting from one to five minutes, after which the symptoms quickly subsiding he would in two minutes return to his usual condition, with no heaviness or tendency to sleep. I noticed particularly that the cry which invariably ushered in the attack was not the peculiar wailing shriek of the true epileptic seizure; that in falling he was always sure to guard himself from harm; that the face became slightly red (caused naturally by the exertion); that consciousness was completely retained, and that the tongue was never bitten.

I immediately placed him on large doses of bromide of potassium and ammonium, but the frequency of the attacks continued. Occasionally, he would have a genuine epileptic spasm which was followed by a profound sleep. I then ordered:

R	Strych sulph.	gr.	iv
	Sodii brom.		vi
	Liq. potass. arsenit.		i
	Tr. digitalis.		iss
	Ext. ergot. fl.		vi
	Aquae q. s. ad.	o	i
M	Sig. Teaspoonful in water before meals.		

As there was still no abatement in the number of spasms, on August 16th I adopted the "drip-sheet" treatment, more for the moral than the physical effect. After each spasm showing evidence of conscious will power, the patient was carefully wrapped in a sheet wrung out of cold water at 60°F. or 65°F., the feet being left free. He was then placed on a bed protected by rubber and enveloped with a blanket, and left there from five to ten minutes. The record for this day is as follows;

II	A.M.	I assumed spasm	Wet sheet envelope.		
12.15	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
1.15	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
1.45	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
2.15	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
3.45	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
5	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
6.30	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
6.45	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
9.45	P.M.	True spasm. Awakened from sleep. No drip sheet.			

The following conversation held immediately after one of the simulated spasms, was carefully recorded, together with those subsequently presented in this paper by the nurse, who was a man of unusual intelligence and much interested in the case.

Nurse—"Now you have again tried to deceive me. Do you think I cannot distinguish between a real and a feigned spasm?"

F. R.—"What interest would I have to deceive you? I do not like to be put in wet sheets, and if I could help it I would surely try to stop these spasms."

Nurse—"I do not know whether you have any interest in deceiving me, but I am sure that your spasms are not real, and I will report you to Dr. Barr, who will give you a spanking if you continue."

F. R.—"I am not allowed to be spanked. Thirty-five doctors in Washington and New York have called my father's attention to the fact that I am not responsible, and, therefore, not to be beaten, and if my father knew that I am put in wet sheets, he would not let me stay half an hour in this place."

Record for August 17th.

8	A.M.	I assumed spasm	Wet sheet envelope.		
10	A.M.	I " "	"	"	"
12	M.	I " "	"	"	"
1.45	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
2.45	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
4.30	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
7	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"
7.15	P.M.	I " "	"	"	"

During the next to the last spasm, the nurse picked him with a needle in order to ascertain whether consciousness were lost, and the seizure terminated instantly.

Nurse—"Now you see if you had had a real spasm you would not have felt the needle."

F. R.—"What do you know about it? These are not spasms, these are nervous shocks."

In fifteen minutes he had another which lasted five minutes.

Nurse—"I shall have to wrap you in wet sheets again."

F. R.—"If you continue to put me in wet sheets I will have more spasms than ever; the change from warm to cold causes them."

In the afternoon he went to walk with his attendant, and while out stopped to play with a group of small children. He amused himself by hiding behind a tree and throwing stones with great force at them. He also struck several small boys with a stick.

Just before going to bed he asked permission to pet a small dog that belonged to another boy. Watching his

opportunity when he imagined the attendant's attention was engaged, he caught the dog in his arms squeezing it with all his might, and digging his nails into the poor creature's flesh, while he gnashed his teeth and laughed with joy at the piteous cries of the dog.

Record for August 18th.

7	A.M.	1	assumed spasm	Wet sheet envelope.
12.30	P.M.	1	" "	" " "
3	P.M.	1	" "	" " "
4	P.M.	1	" "	" " "
4 30	P.M.	1	" "	" " "
9.30	P.M.		True spasm. Awakened from sleep.	No "

One of the worst epileptics had a severe spasm in F.'s presence which he observed with the closest attention, and scarcely one minute afterwards fell to the floor in precisely the same manner, doing his best to imitate the clonic contractions of the epileptic, but without marked success. An hour later, while walking with the attendant, he suddenly said: "If I should have one of these spells will you please squeeze me?" and before the nurse could answer, F. was upon him, embracing, biting, pinching and squeezing him with a force of which he would never have been supposed capable. His face was very pale, and while in this paroxysm, a strange man passed by, to whom F., becoming aware of his presence, called with a bewildered air: "You are telling lies on me; I did not throw any stones."

Record for August 19th.

4	P.M.	1	assumed spasm	Wet sheet envelope.
5.30	P.M.	1	" "	" " "
9	P.M.	1	" "	" " "

Directly after some of his spasms he seems to have a sudden and irresistible impulse to do mischief. After the last one he took a scrubbing-brush and, saturating it with excrement, painted a small boy's face.

Record for August 20th.

8	A.M.	1	assumed spasm	Wet sheet envelope.
8	P.M.	1	" "	" " "

August 21st—No spasm.

August 22d—No spasm.

August 23d—I assumed spasm.

After this spasm, which was undoubtedly spurious, he said to his nurse: "I wish you would put me in wet sheets again. God knows I cannot help these spells, and I would be so glad if Jesus would stop them." Later,

when he went to walk, he deliberately threw a large stone and struck a very helpless boy, inflicting a painful, though not serious, wound.

Nurse—"How many times have I told you to stop throwing stones at boys? I will report you to the doctor."

N. R.—"Please let it go this time. I won't do it any more, because I know W. is a cripple."

Nurse—"But you always annoy those boys who cannot defend themselves, just like a coward."

F. R.—"I am no coward. I know as well as you that he is helpless, but that small stone (it was almost a rock) just happened (he took careful aim) to hit him, and W. makes such a noise that they thought I had killed him.

August 24th—No spasms.

To-day he urinated on the porch, though all the doors leading to the water-closet were open. As punishment he had to clean the wash room, but it seemed to have no effect. When asked how he liked that kind of work, he replied: "Exceedingly well."

Nurse—"Why did you not go to the closet?"

F. R.—"Because I did not want to take the trouble."

August 25th—No spasms.

To-day at the table he threw food in a boy's face, although he had been punished for the same offence before. As he left the table he said: "How I wish I was a man so I could kill O." He had but few spasms during the remainder of the month. On the 30th he remarked to the nurse: "Do you think it right for the doctor to put me to eat with such boys as are here? Why, I have often dined at the White House, and these boys are all like monkeys. By the way, how much do you get a week for looking after me?"

On September 1st I ordered a simple diet, consisting mainly of soups, broths, a little well-cooked meat occasionally, potatoes, well-boiled rice, fruit, milk, and bread and butter. He was placed in school, with regular open-air exercise out of school hours, and when night came he was thoroughly tired out, and ready to sleep.

One day he said: "To save my neck I do not know what I was sent here for. I don't believe the doctor here understands my case. Why, all the boys are bigger fools than I am, and I am sure I am not getting any better. These boys will never get any better, although they are taking the same medicine I am."

He had forty assumed spasms during September, and one hundred and three in October. One day, during the latter month, he observed to his nurse: "It does seem strange I cannot get better."

Had several severe attacks of epistaxis, and was at last discovered putting straws and splinters up his nose in order to induce the hemorrhage.

He became much interested in formulating plans to blow up buildings. Said it was a very easy thing to do, just place a box of gunpowder in the cellar with a fuse, then light it, and be sure to get out yourself. Later, he amused himself by playing Indian, and was particularly fond of doing the scalping act. Then he conceived the idea that he was a pick-pocket, and ran around showing the boys how easily and successfully it was practised in large cities. Boasted that he spoke six languages, and strutted around the day-rooms pouring a stream of gibberish into the ears of the other children. Then he suddenly became very profane.

Forty spasms were reported during November. Had now been in school for three months, and did quite well, but grew more mischievous every day. In a burst of confidence, told his attendant that a fortune teller, to whom his father had once taken him, had said that he had no spasms. He offered to have a spasm for me one day for five cents. When this was given him he immediately fell in a well simulated spasm. When it was over he coolly informed me that he could have a better one for ten cents, and the "better the pay the harder the spasm."

He took special delight in teasing the helpless children. When rebuked, he would say: "I was often whipped in Washington for teasing people." He would stick pins in the boys to see them jump, and at night crawled under the beds and lifted up the slats for the purpose of throwing the children out, and then told attendant that they fell out. One day he begged for a pistol to shoot some one with.

Twenty-six spasms were reported in December. It was during this month that he attempted to steal some apples, to see if they would not give him cholera, as he was very anxious to have the disease. One day, after taking his medicine, he remarked: "Doctors do me no good, neither does medicine. If I drank all the medicine in the world it would have no effect. But do you know, I think my mother was a — fool for sending me here, though I expect she was tired of me."

The "drip-sheet" treatment was continued without intermission. One night in the latter part of January he remarked that he considered it cruel, and when it was explained that it was his own fault, he piously folded his hands and said: "I would not put on spasms, oh, no, for then the 'Good Man' might make me have them sure enough."

As the weather grew colder this heroic treatment became more disagreeable to him, and in January he had only one spasm, and as that was genuine, of course he was not placed in the cold pack.

About this time he had a craving for tobacco; tobacco and nothing else was the theme of his conversation for days. Then his thoughts ran in the direction of suicide, and he calmly discussed the best way to end his life; whether by poison or the opening of a vein.

During February he had one hundred spurious spasms. The cold pack was again brought into use, and at last he became heartily sick of it, and consigned the wet sheet and myself to the infernal regions. As I have said, this "drip-sheet" treatment was used principally for its moral effect, and for the first few months it proved beneficial, but by the end of February I abandoned it, as I found it had lost its usefulness.

He still continues to have convulsions at irregular intervals, and they are most severe when he has a sympathizing audience. He is still under medical treatment for epilepsy, as many of the spasms are genuine, although it is frequently hard to distinguish between the real and the assumed. For the next fourteen months ending April 30th, 1895, his spasm record was as follows:

March, 1893—1 spasm.
 April, 1893—None.
 May, 1893—68 spasms
 June, 1893—60 spasms.
 July, 1893—22 spasms.
 August, 1893—1 spasm.
 September, 1893—None.
 October, 1893—65 spasms.
 November, 1893—None.
 December, 1893—1 spasm.
 January, 1894—89 spasms.
 February, 1894—None.
 March, 1894—61 spasms.
 April, 1894—103 spasms.

The boy has really done good work in the school, and has improved. He appears anxious to learn, but annoys the teacher by his unnecessary demands upon her attention, persisting in asking questions about work that he can do perfectly well without help. He reads with considerable accuracy, writes a fair hand, exhibits some thought in arithmetic, and shows a decided talent for drawing and modelling in clay. He has also improved in disposition, so that he is not now cruel to the children, but, on the contrary, will often help in the care of them.

At present he is four feet ten and one-quarter inches in height, and weighs eighty-six and a half pounds; having gained three and a half inches in height, and fourteen and a half pounds in weight.

The incidents and conversations that I have cited, although hastily sketched, will give a fair transcript of F's condition, both past and present. While he is doing well here under strict discipline and constant surveillance, if he were to take his place in the world, he would be as a fire-brand among the flax, and the end would probably be a tragedy perhaps equalled, but not exceeded, in the annals of crime. His evil passions are only restrained, and the ancient Latin proverb: "*Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurrent,*" may not be inaptly applied to him.

The Treatment of Chorea by Large Doses of Quinine.—(Dorland and Potts, *Journal American Med. Assoc.*, Dec. 16, 1893). These writers give brief reports of fifteen cases of Sydenham's chorea, in which the course of the disease was materially shortened by the administration of from 4 to 6 grains 3 or 4 times a day, combined with measures intended to build up and strengthen the depressed nervous system. It is thought noteworthy that no evidences of ceuchonism resulted in any of the cases from the administration of large doses of quinine.

T. C.