

Selections.

The Moods of the Sane.—It has been said that, “speaking scientifically, we cannot affirm that anybody is perfectly healthy.” If the pathologist can detect the symptoms of disease in the most apparently healthy body, no less certainly can the neurologist indicate subtle manifestations in the mental states of the sanest amongst us, which serve to warn us how perilously near we may all come at times to mental derangement. Just as it is impossible to set up a standard of bodily health of universal application, so is it with the mind; one man’s measure of mental health cannot be taken as that of another. “Health” and “whole” are both derived from the Anglo-Saxon term, *hæl*, and no one man has the completeness of either bodily or mental soundness at any one time. We may be sane (safe, sound), but at best only relatively, and the varying moods may often be strangely like the true persistent phases of the acknowledged alien. There are few of us who have not moments of depression or abnormal excitement, which, if unduly prolonged, would make us the objects of unpleasant attentions at the hands of our friends, and not one of us can say at any time that we shall never find those unhappy moods persist. Apart, however, from any such painful forebodings, it is an interesting subject to consider some of those mental attitudes of the perfectly sane, and trace their causes to their actual source. There is a posthumous paper in the recent number of the *Neurologist*, by Dr. Milner Fothergill, which deals—in the pleasant and instructive manner for which its distinguished writer was so celebrated—with this interesting question. If we would rightly know the workings of the human mind in their varied conditions, we must study them, as the brilliant author tells us, in the insane asylum. What angry man amongst us may not find food for reflection, and learn the habits of self-control from the incoherent frenzy? What garrulous, self-centred man may not be rebuked when he sees his infirmity a little magnified in the flow of the talkative maniac?