

intellect is concerned, no outsider coming to do business, or to converse with him, detects any flaw or impairment, and I believe it would be impossible for any three medical practitioners undertaking examination of his mental state to find in his conversation, or his deportment towards them, adequate facts to enable them to fill up the first question required to be answered in the statutory certificate of lunacy, which is indispensable to the commitment of a person to asylum custody. Should he commit some capital offence, every judge, jury, or crown prosecutor, that I have yet encountered, would pooh pooh the idea of his insanity; the newspaper reporters would, in due course, have to record of him, *abiit ad plures*. And yet, gentlemen, this man's case is exactly one of that class which Pritchard, Ray, and other illustrious writers have ventured to call *moral insanity*; but woe and abiding ridicule betide the medical witness who might, when pushed by an ardent prosecutor to mention the *class* of insanity in which he would place the case, be so indiscreet as to utter this term! He would be sure to hear the prisoner ordered to be *corded* up, and he would feel inclined to try the experiment on himself as his only escape from the tortures awaiting him at the hands of a few who bid fair for yet passing a satisfactory examination for asylum honours.

It is indeed high time that the obnoxious, death-bearing words should be expunged from the literature of alienism and from the minds of the whole community. It is my belief that the term is as unhappy as it is uncalled for. An extended and close *practical* study of insanity in its every phase and degree, from its earliest inception up to its final culmination, would, I think, convince every careful observer that the line of demarcation drawn by some writers between what they have called *moral insanity* and unsoundness of the intellect, is

often very untraceable, and that lapse of time and intimate observance are all that is necessary for its total obliteration. Of 17 cases of moral insanity recorded by Pritchard, hardly one, I think, will stand the test of critical analysis. They were all more or less dashed with streaks of actual impairment of intellect, or the majority of them ran on into undeniable mental overthrow; one, indeed, turned out to be a case of a form of intellectual wreck, which, at the present day, no asylum physician could fail to recognize as appertaining to the most hopeless and the most salient of all the forms of mental dethronement. I refer to general paresis,—a form of brain disease which would appear to have been but little prevalent, or little known, fifty years ago, but which, in the present day, seems to be making deathly strides, even in our sparsely peopled Province.

Those who throw their aspersions broadcast over the entire speciality of alienism, or as they are pleased to dub these toilers in the service of humanity—the mad doctors—because of their enunciation of facts and opinions which their detractors have never had either the opportunity, the desire, or the courage to investigate, know assuredly but little of the true merits of the subject on which they so confidently pronounce judgment.

I have devoted a good deal of time, and of careful research, to the enquiry as to the present and past expressed opinions of asylum physicians, on the vexed question of moral insanity; and I have found the views which close observance had early constrained me to entertain, so abundantly corroborated by a multitude of able writers and speakers, as to render retrogression from my position a very improbable, if not impracticable, movement.

(To be continued.)

Wm. Carden Cousens, of Ottawa, has been elected L.R.C.P. & S.E.D.M.