

longer be encouraged. Insanity is essentially an incurable disease. It is true that an outbreak of mania or melancholia is not by any means always permanent, and does not even necessarily recur; but the permanence or recurrence of the disease, or the non-permanence or non-recurrence of it, depends not nearly so much upon the treatment to which the patient is subjected, as it does upon his or her original constitution. So that in the case of insanity, the "cures" are really nothing more than recoveries, more or less permanent, occurring in cases where the original predisposition to the disease was not sufficiently powerful to subjugate once for all the mind of its victim. It is not true of insanity alone, but it is true of nearly all diseases, that "cure" means spontaneous recovery, more or less aided by management, but seldom, if ever, actually brought about by medical interference. To look, therefore, for any material decrease of insanity from the cure of individual cases, is to look for something which will never be found. But an unsuccessful search for one thing often results in the discovery of something else, and the thing found may be far more valuable than that which was sought. So looking for a key to the future, the astrologers found astronomy; so looking for the philosopher's stone, the alchemists found chemistry; and so looking for cures, the medical profession is slowly learning the laws of health and disease, and in the end we shall discover something far better than modes of curing diseases—we shall learn how to prevent it. But in order to learn this, in the case of any particular disease, it is necessary in the first place to arrive at an understanding of the nature of the disease itself, and especially it is necessary to understand its cause or causes. No enlightened man will deny that, if insanity was better understood, a very large percentage of the cases of it, if not all of them, might be prevented. But while this is true, and while it is also true that the civilized world to-day is supporting hundreds of thousands of lunatics at an annual expense of a great many millions of dollars, it is also true that it is making no systematic attempt