

sanity in one but fail to do so in another. The basis of insanity is an essential or acquired neurosis, and by neurosis is meant an abnormal tendency to react too readily to the surroundings. This neurotic condition may be inherited, or it may be acquired by causes leading to brain exhaustion.

The lecturer then goes on to state that insanity is not necessarily a case of disease. He regards the teaching that one must return to health to return to natural ways of mind is not always true. To put it another way, there are insanities due to faulty evolution, as well as to dissolution of a nervous organism previously normal. There is no definite entity which can be considered the cause of insanity, and there is no definite set of symptoms always associated with conduct which must be looked upon as mad. While every result must have a cause and every action must have its nervous equivalent, there may be many relationships between tissue and function, inconvenient and even inconsistent with the stability of social life, and that are not due to any generative process.

When we consider the effects of dissolution in the nervous system, it becomes apparent that when the highest functions are impaired or lost the lowest ones are freed from control. With slight loss of mental power there may be inability to decide; and if this advances it becomes the insanity of doubt. This lack of decision may go so far as to endanger life. Another event in dissolutional insanity is early impairment of memory, or, in acute cases, confusion of memory. Lack of control over one's actions is another feature. The person is liable to be easily imposed upon by suggestions from outside regardless of the consequences. He may not be able to control his own suggestions. This loss of control may be very slight and cause much difficulty in deciding the true nature of the case, and yet the person's domestic life is wrecked because of the loss of the power of adaptation. These are social misfits. When the higher control is lost what is left and normal may act, and the person may recognize that his acts are perverted and not be able to correct them.

This process of dissolution is usually slow. In senility the conditions are of slow formation, but the effects may be shown rather suddenly as the result of some stress. Thus, acute manifestations may be implanted upon a chronic condition. Toxic agents may act upon the nervous system so as to give rise to dissolutions that are acute or fairly so. The effects of alcohol, the toxins of disease, life in unhealthy climates, are well known as factors in the causation of acute dissolutions, when the subjective life becomes very active, but there is a lack of registering power, so that when the person recovers he may have no remembrance of all he said and did. In epilepsy there is an instance of complete dissolution down to loss of consciousness and muscular power.