

proportion of cases of insanity, sent to asylums, no exciting cause is assigned; and in a very large proportion of those in which the exciting cause is assigned, the only true relation existing between it and the malady, is that of mere coincidence, or indeed it may be that the assigned cause has been rather an effect of the insanity or one of its capacious epiphenomena. Statistic tabulation of such fallacies must be not merely useless but most deceptive. In the last annual report of one of the best insane hospitals in America, and one of the best in the world, in a total of 4323 cases admitted, no cause was ascertained in 1766, or nearly 41 per cent. of the whole; whilst of the remainder, 727 are ascribed to "ill-health of various kinds;" 286 to "intemperance;" 227 to "grief, loss of friends, &c.;" 146 to "religious excitement;" 278 to "mental anxiety;" 149 to "loss of property;" 94 to "domestic difficulties," and 35 to "intense application to business." Now it is very questionable whether in all these cases, amounting to 1942, or 45 per cent. of the whole, not excepting "ill-health of various kinds," nor even "intemperance," the assigned cause was not in reality, an effect of the so-called mental *disease*. Of the 146 ascribed to "religious excitement," probably in 140 the religious excitement germinated in latent insanity. The 94 ascribed to domestic difficulties may be regarded in a similar light. Grief, loss of friends, &c., are no doubt severe mental trials; but sound minds survive them. I have never yet met with a case which I could fairly assign to any of this class of causes, as a sole efficient agency in its production. The designation of "mental anxiety," as the cause of insanity has the aspect of a psychological solecism. To my apprehension it is about as philosophic as the ascription of loss of sight to blindness, or baldness of the head to loss of hair. Scrutinize the 278 cases ascribed to this cause, and see in how many of them the "mental anxiety" was not the veritable insanity. So to with regard to the 35 cases assigned to "intense application to business,"—who that has ever watched one of these, not indeed from the time at which the mental disease burst into full blow, in the form of furious mania, or profound melancholy, but for months and years antecedent, will affirm that the "intense application to business" was other than incubative insanity?

Now if, in the tabulation of causes of insanity, in the very best institutions of America, or Europe, by the most competent and conscientious chief officers, we find that in 40 per cent. of all the cases, no cause has been assigned or ascertained, and that in 45 per cent. more, very little reliance is to be placed in the assigned causes, of what real value to mental therapeutics can the whole work be? But the above 45 per cent. might have