

MENTAL HYGIENE

In a recent issue of the *American Journal of Insanity*, we find an able essay upon this topic from the pen of GEORGE COOK, and we purpose making some extracts as space will permit. The entire article is worthy of close perusal, but its length forbids publication in our columns:

It is only by a careful observance of the early peculiarities of disposition and mind in their relations to the physical constitution, that parents can prepare themselves for the enlightened training of their children, and are enabled so to bend the twig as to insure a sound and upright growth. The young learn more from example than precept, therefore it is essential that their early years should be passed within the sacred precincts of a home, surrounded by the healthful influences of parental affection, which by its own faith and trust in a Heavenly Father shall fix in the innermost heart of the child that confiding reliance upon a higher power, and the instinctive love of truth and goodness which serve as a shield against the assaults of trial and temptation.

Children should be impressed by the routine of daily life that there is a place for them in the home circle, ever vacant in their absence, and which they are expected to fill; thus will be developed a love of home, the chief corner stone of health and safety to the young. The lives of parents should inculcate the all-important lessons of patience and self-denial, without which a healthy balance of the mental and moral powers is rarely developed.

Any tendency to undue nervous development should attract the attention, and instead of being cherished by parental pride as a mark of precocity and promise, should give rise to a watchful anxiety; and especial care should be taken to retard the early growth of this dangerous element. Children require much exercise in the open air—the sunlight being as essential to their healthy development as it is to healthy growing plants. Hence the deleterious effects of confinement for many hours every day in close rooms at home, or in the impure atmosphere of school-rooms, by which the growth of bone and muscle is retarded, and the nervous system unduly stimulated.

In searching for the causes of mental disease in the numerous patients now pressing into the asylums of our country, the physician is often struck with the apparent insufficiency of the one assigned.

A slight disappointment, reverse in business, religious excitement, or some other equally trivial cause, which a healthy brain and nervous system should be able to encounter without danger, is frequently the only immediate cause discoverable on the closest examination. But a minute history of the whole life of such individuals will almost invariably reveal remote causes, sometimes hereditary—more frequently, perhaps, the offspring of defective training and education. In no small number of those who have passed under our observation have we been able to trace the mental disease back to the disregard of some of the rules given above, and the consequent errors which have usurped their place in so many minds. We now proceed to speak of these evil influences in no evil-ing spirit, but with an earnest desire to contribute, in some degree, to the correction of what is fast becoming a gigantic and far-reaching evil. The fountain, corrupted or embittered at its source, fed by impure springs and flowing on amidst increasing impurities, will only widen and deepen its channel as it passes on with ever-increasing power. So with the evil in question, unless arrested at its source, all efforts to hold in check the flood of moral tergitude and mental disease which is sweeping over our country, will meet with partial success.

Albert Smith was one day boasting, in the presence of Douglas Jerrold, that he and Lamartine always rowed in the same boat. "Oh yes," replied the wit, "but with very different sort of sculls!" The point of Jerrold's wit loses none of its sharpness when turned against many parents of the present day. It would be well for them to remember that, though in the providence of the Creator they are rowing in the same boat with their children, they may not have the same sort of sculls. It is a sad truth that too many parents give no thought whatever to this matter; they cannot see why there should be such differences in the character and disposition of their children, when they subject them all alike to the same system, or rather no-system of government. The high-spirited, impulsive and excitable child is governed in the same manner as the meek and retiring one, or more frequently he is left to his own self will and inclinations.

It was a high speech of Seneca (after the manner of the Stoics), that the "good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired."

REVENGE.

Revenge is a kind of wild justice, which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out; for as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law, but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge a man is but even with his enemy, but in passing it over he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon; and Solomon, I am sure saith, "It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence." That which is past is gone and irrecoverable, and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come; therefore they do but trifle with themselves, that labor in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake, but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honor, or the like; therefore why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong, merely out of ill nature; why, yet it is but like the thorn or brier, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then, let a man take heed the revenge be such as there is no law to punish, else a man's enemy is still beforehand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know when it cometh: this is the more generous, for the delight seemeth to be not so much in doing the hurt as in making the party repent: but base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flieth in the dark.—*Bacon.*

HE that talketh what he knoweth, will also talk what he knoweth not, therefore set it down, that a habit of secrecy is both politic and moral. and in this part it is good that a man's face give his tongue leave to speak; for the discovery of a man's self, by the tracks of his countenance, is a great weakness and betraying, by how much it is many times more marked and believed than a man's words.

WE see in needleworks and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground. Judge, therefore, of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant where they are increased, or crushed, for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.