

and, beginning with a few, there resulted by visual infection wild orgies of whole assemblages.

Another, well known, example of psychic-infection is that of a Chapel at Redruth in which, during divine service, a man suddenly cried out "What shall I do to be saved?" He was followed by others, apparently in much bodily pain. Soon hundreds of people were thrown into the same state and the queer disorder advanced to the towns of Cambourne, Helston, Truro, Penryn and Falmouth. In every instance it was excited by these words, was associated with bodily pains, terrible convulsions and distortions and the afflicted cried out that they saw hell open to receive them. According to a moderate computation 4,000 people were, within a short time, affected by this complaint. A convulsive epidemic disease passing into catalepsy developing during public worship and public amusements has been recognized in the Shetland Islands for one hundred years. Cold water speedily relieves the spasms.

In the United States, camp meetings, their consequences and exploitations by adventurers are notorious and were especially in vogue during the middle of the last century. The descriptions of Huckleberry Finn and the advantage which one of the two imposters in the story took of the mental state of the attending crowd are not poetic exaggerations, but borne out by ample truthful evidence. The spreading disorder of the mind is here quite similar to that of all other psychic epidemics. Children especially are apt to suffer lasting harm and often retain weakened or perverse nervous systems through life.

One could multiply these and similar instances in all human communities to the present day.

But there exist other types of psychic epidemics which do not depend upon severe motor and sensory impressions and which, on account of a greater difficulty in fixing their physical expressions, are not so easily classified and recognized. I refer to epidemics of abnormal, exaggerated and fantastic, often absurd ideas merely through suggestion,

They also appear most prominent in times of, or following, great mental excitement, deprivations of all kinds, war, famine, fear and social disorder. They are most always objectivated upon something concrete, sometimes persons, sometimes non-living things. Adoration, love, admiration for, or fear, hatred, despite against them, are expressed. The importance and influence of such concrete objects is morbidly exaggerated; they are either brought into causative relation to all bodily ills and misfortunes from which a time suffers and a public hatred for their annihilation or destruction is cultivated; or, they are held to be the only salvation of a deteriorating world for realization of ideals which are proclaimed by meaningless catch words or phrases.² All critique, mental and moral restraint are lost and the public mind then resembles

² In Goethe's words:—

"Denn eben wo Begriffe fehlen,"

"Da stellt ein Wort Zur rechten zeit sich ein."