

observed in one-half of the face, but at times in other parts of the body. On careful examination of the whole cutaneous area of an old man, evidence of cutaneous wasting will usually be found occurring locally and generally, the skin being wanting in lustre, and in some old and thin men I have seen the epidermis of the face and shins stretched over the bones like a piece of hog's bladder. Wilson called the condition *dermatoxerasia*. Celsus, in his chapter *de areis*, describes a form of baldness which probably refers to the case now under discussion. It is what he calls the worst form—namely, that which destroys the fat and renders the surface totally smooth—but he confuses it obviously with alopecia areata. One may, without any unfair straining of theory, easily understand that the injurious and positively cruel way in which women produce the curling of the hair will account for an injury to the scalp. Curling pins, curling irons, and curling papers form an essential part of the toilet armoury of almost every woman, and this torturing of the hair drags on the roots, and by so doing starts the inflammation which may be the forerunner of this atrophy. The scalp being so dull of sensation will enable the victim to bear a good deal of tension without much suffering. Again, the number of hairpins used in dressing the head may damage the scalp.—Tom Robinson, M.D., in *Lancet*.

THE SEQUEL OF A SPURIOUS PREGNANCY.

Young unmarried women of a hysterical temperament, after illicit intercourse, not infrequently closely simulate the symptoms of pregnancy, and no harm results; but an outbreak of religious excitement in eleven persons, terminating in acute mania, which followed on such a case, is, perhaps, worthy of record.

In a small country town there resides a family of well-to-do artisans, with a history free from any trace of insanity. The parents are in the prime of life, while their four sons and five daughters are adolescents. The favorite daughter, a shop assistant in a neighboring city, at the beginning of this year falling into bad company, was seduced, and soon afterwards, alarmed at the suppression of her menstruation, consulted a medical man, who suggested the possibility of pregnancy.

Returning to her home in a state of great mental perturbation, she locked herself into her room for several hours. When interrupted by her friends, she was found to be in a state of religious ecstasy, declaring that she had communed with God, who had revealed to her that she was about to die, and that Christ would appear to receive her into His arms.

Moved by her earnest protestations, the family

gathered round the bedside, and sent off for her father and brothers, who were working in neighboring towns; and, influenced by the contagion of her example, began also to engage in prayer and anticipate the immediate coming of Christ.

When the father arrived on the scene, he found the whole family in a state of great religious excitement; his house had been divided by them into a part they called "heaven" and a part called "hell," the mother, who did not completely fall in with their views, having, of course, been consigned to the latter division.

Attempts by the parents to reason with and control their children were unavailing; unable to stem the torrent, the father and mother were soon as excited as the rest. For several days matters went on in this way; little food was taken, there was no sound sleep, day and night were spent in religious exercises in preparation for the immediate coming of Christ. The mental symptoms in all consisted in a state of ecstasy, with hallucinations of sight and hearing, and an overpowering desire to pray and preach.

At the end of a week the father came to his senses, and made strong efforts to induce his family to resume their ordinary mode of life. During an altercation which ensued, the eldest son jumped through the window in a semi-nude state, followed closely by the daughter who had been the originator of the mischief. Both were at once arrested by the police, and, having been certified to be insane, were consigned to the nearest asylum.

On admission, the male patient was found to be a well-developed, muscular man, with no evidence of bodily disorder. He was wildly excited, gesticulating, and shouting in an incoherent way, with hallucinations of sight and hearing. During the first week he did not converse rationally, had well-marked hallucinations, and was very restless and noisy at night. Improvement then rapidly set in, and at the end of a fortnight he was discharged recovered.

The female patient showed very similar symptoms. She, however, was more coherent, and gave a rambling account of her seduction, always winding up with, "But my sin is forgiven me; what man put into me God has taken out of me." She had many of the signs of pregnancy—e.g., amenorrhœa of some months' duration, a milky fluid could be expressed from the enlarged breasts, and the areolæ were altered. In the course of a few months, coincident with an improvement in the mental condition, these spurious signs of pregnancy disappeared, and the patient ultimately completely recovered.

The remaining members of the family, sobered by the removal of the ringleaders, soon resumed their ordinary way of life, and have remained well since.

Remarks.—The history of this case is of con-