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POPULAR DELUSIONS ABOUT THE INSANE.

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The word lunatic has conveyed erroneous impressions to the public in respect to the insane. The inference is drawn that the moon has to do with, or in some mysterious way influences, the mentally deranged. There is a notion afloat that our lunar neighbor affects agriculture in respect to the sprouting and growth and ripening of grain. Many farmers will not sow grain except during certain phases of the moon. They will not kill swine unless the moon is in the right quarter, as they say the pork will keep better at this benign stage. A large number of superstitions cluster round the supposed potency of lunar influences. This is very natural when the ignorant observe its attractiveness in tidal relations. This occult agency of the moon was expected to have a perturbing effect on the insane, hence the expression "moon struck." There is no foundation for this delusion, as physical and mental diseases obey more powerful laws in their operation than any causes which could operate emanating from our satellite.

It is also supposed by those who do not come in daily contact with the insane, that all those with mind disorders are maniacs, hence the nickname mad-house. The stage has done much to perpetuate this error. The Ophelias are decked out in the most absurd way, from straws in the hair to rags on the body. They are supposed to be always jabbering inanities, or shouting verbal nonsense, or muttering incoherent sentences. All this is a travesty on the facts as seen in the wards of an asylum. There are few to whom the term maniac could justly be applied. There is some-