

mass and to feel and think with the individual is an essential.

Again, we have mentioned the frequent failure of the schools to meet the needs of the potential genius. What does this show? That even when, by accident or by the exercise on the part of some one of that faculty we have just described, the genius has been detected, something more is needed. He often requires very special treatment—very special care. His exceptional powers in some matters may have been produced at the cost of great defects in other matters. His furious appetite for some kinds of learning may be accompanied by a feeling that the subjects at which the boy of mediocre parts will work uncomplainingly are galling and insupportable impositions. In fact the unfolding genius often needs to be protected against himself by the exercise of both tact and care.

Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

Geniuses and many others who are not destined to become geniuses are often over-sensitive. What are we to do with the over-sensitive? Harden them? If we had a scholar known to possess a valvular weakness of heart should we send him to compete in the long races, with a view of strengthening his weak organ? Would not a verdict of manslaughter rightly follow such a course? We may draw an analogy between this and other kinds of morbid sensitiveness.

Within the last few days the daily papers have expressed lay opinions on a case of schoolboy suicide. Such correspondence is generally more amusing than edifying, but there is one out of the many letters which seems to me to be dictated by sound sense, and hits the very "bull's-eye" of my contention. The writer asks: "How far is it possible to save a

super-sensitive boy from the consequences of his own organization? What chance is there, under a public-school system, for the boy who, for whatever reason, is 'singular,' as compared with the average and conventional type of British youth?" In answering these questions, the writer first acknowledges the good features of the public schools. He says: "No one but cranks will deny that, on the whole, our public-school system has been justified of its children. It has produced a manly, self-reliant race, simple, straightforward and truthful, modest and clean-minded, with a holy abhorrence of cant and rant, and an uncommonly clear—almost a petulant—perception of character. These results are due to a system which creates independence by giving responsibility, and enables men to belong to a governing race by teaching them to govern themselves and one another." The writer then shows how the influence of the headmaster may prevent this governing power from being abused and made irksome to abnormally constituted individuals. He says: "It depends absolutely and entirely upon the chief what is the character of the prefects, and therefore, that of the school at large. The prefects who come nearest to him, are quick to catch his manner, his sympathies, his influence, and become, in their way, reproductions of his personality. Everyone can see that if a dreamy, nervous melancholy boy is allowed to go from bad to worse before the eyes of his schoolfellows, some imputation must rest upon the prefects for their lack, not only of good feeling, but of common sense." This I am convinced is the righteous view. There must be an eye to discover over-sensitiveness, and there must be a resolution emanating from the head, but permeating the prefects and all in authority, to prevent all malevolent sporting with this peculiarity.