

prevarication practised by the relatives of the insane. Not one of us but is well acquainted with the way in which people, even in the lower ranks of life, endeavour by every means to keep us ignorant of what they consider to be a stigma on the family. Almost every authority on mental diseases has commented on this, one writer going so far as to compare the difficulty experienced in getting at the truth in such cases to that which might be expected in dragging from an erring woman a confession of her frailty. Why brain disease should be regarded as more disgraceful than disease of the lungs or any other organ of the body, or why the fact of insanity being in a family should be looked upon by the public as tantamount to an acknowledgment of criminality is hard for us to grasp. Such, however, is the fact, and until the masses are educated out of such erroneous beliefs, friends will continue to lie about their antecedents most unblushingly. Often I have known cases where the relatives have positively asserted that there was no trace of insanity in their family history, and often I have afterwards discovered that it had been well marked for generations. I well remember a lady, widely known for her Christian principles, coming to see me about receiving her daughter as a patient. A prognosis in the case was of importance, and I was asked to give as definite a one as possible. Naturally, I asked as to any possible hereditary taint. My lady was firmness itself in her denials. In the course of further conversation, however, she happened to mention that her brother, who had been very fond of the insane girl, was dead, and added, "Perhaps it's as well after all that he is." It struck me at once that there must be something behind this expression of opinion, and my question, "Why so, Madam?" elicited the answer, "Well, doctor, you see for over a year before my brother shot himself he was always worrying about Mary's future welfare." Needless to say, the hospital registers showed heredity as a definite predisposing factor in the case.

But it is unnecessary that I should dwell upon the question of heredity as a cause of the increase of insanity. It and the marriage question were fully and ably discussed by Dr. Blumer in his presidential address delivered at Washington two years ago. I shall but strengthen, if that be possible, what was then said by a quotation. It is from an address on the prevention of insanity given by Dr. G. F. Blandford, as President of the Psychological Section of the British Medical Association, in 1894. On that occasion Dr. Blandford stated:—"I have long been of the opinion that insanity is to be prevented chiefly by limiting the propagation of this most fearful disease through the union of affected persons. I am convinced that the only way to really diminish and finally stamp