

viction I have, from time to time as occasion offered, endeavoured to draw public attention to the fallacies and incongruities of tables of causes, as they are presented in asylum reports, so that it cannot now be necessary to say much on this head. In former reports I have shewn that certain causes, supposed to be powerfully operative, and especially those of a *mental form*, have not much, or probably very little, to do with the production of insanity. Among the most prominent of the latter form is *Religion*; and first in general estimation among the physical supposed causes has been *Intemperance*.

It is of course understood that all I may here say is based merely on my own limited sphere of observation; but though limited, it has been a sphere of *facts*, and it has certainly been more extensive than that of a multitude of persons whom I have heard speak very dogmatically on the subject under consideration.

The figures furnished in my report for 1864, derived from a surface of 24 years, shewed very clearly that as to religion, it is either inoperative as a factor of insanity; or, if operative, its action has been least where it was always believed to be greatest, and greatest where believed to be least. The facts then given to light have been received, as might have been expected, with high gratification by one section of the community, and with mortification by others. With these feelings I have nothing to do. It was my duty to state the truth, and in whichever direction this might wound or gratify, it would have been told.

Religion, or peculiarities of religious belief, I think, have nothing to do in the causation of insanity. I would not, however, assert the converse, that insanity never has anything to do with the determination of religious peculiarities. I question if even the most tumultuous excitement of what are designated religious revivals ever suffices to upset the mind of a person in whom there is no prior taint of this malady. In other words, it may be concomitant to the development of insanity, as any other of the so-called mental causes, and even some of the physical causes, may be, and coincidences may be mistaken for consequence; but it is a matter almost beyond uncertainty that insanity, apparently evoked by religion, would not long remain undeveloped by some

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