

Clinical Notes and Cases.

A Characteristic Attitude assumed by many Cases of Dementia Præcox. By R. H. STEEN, M.D.Lond., M.R.C.P.Lond.

THE accompanying photograph illustrates an attitude when sitting frequently adopted by many cases of dementia præcox. The point to which special attention is directed is the position of the arms and hands. The arms are held close to the trunk, with, as a rule, the elbow-joint in a condition of stiff extension and the hands in pronation, and resting on the lower part of the thighs, or even on the knees. When the photograph was taken there was no special posing for the purpose of this note, the subjects merely being told to sit down. In the wards I have seen these particular patients as well as others maintain this position for hours at a time. They sit, as a rule, rigidly upright, for example, in the case of the man shown, whose head is erect with the eyes staring forwards. In other cases the body and head may be bent slightly forwards. Most frequently the feet and knees are found to be close together, but, as in the case of the woman on the extreme right, the legs may be kept apart.

I believe in most cases the muscles of the arms are in a condition of rigidity, but when I try to test the point the patient at once relaxes. The hands are slightly œdematous and of bluish colour, indicating bad circulation. The patients are all cases of dementia præcox of long standing, with the exception of the man, whose illness has lasted only twelve months. I am unable to suggest any explanation of this phenomenon. It is possible that it is an example of reversion. It is certainly well seen in the statues of ancient Egypt (see illustrations). I have therefore named it the "Ancient Egyptian attitude." I am drawing attention to the matter, as it does not appear to be described in any text-book, and may be of interest to the readers of the Journal.
