

8. Sociology.

Flagellatio Puerorum as an Expression of Masked Sadism in a Sexual Invert [Flagellatio Puerorum als Ausdruck des larvirten Sadismus eines pädophilen Conträrsexuellen]. (Allg. Zeitsch. f. Psychiat., Bd. lviii, H. 4, 1901.) Von Krafft-Ebing.

The patient, æt. 34, a lawyer by profession, married, with neuropathic heredity, and having himself presented all his life symptoms of the degenerate temperament—obsessions, labile emotional tone, tremors, etc.,—was accused of immoral acts with boys under his care. It was proved that for many years he had shown a morbid passion for flogging boys about the age of puberty on the bare nates, frequently offering them bribes to get their consent to the operation. He also stroked and pinched the buttocks, but did not at any time touch the genitals, nor did he himself on these occasions show any signs of sexual excitement.

The accused did not dispute the facts, but maintained that he had acted purely from motives of pedagogic zeal, that when flogging the boys he had no sexual thoughts, and no erection. It appeared, however, from his own admissions, that he was of morbid sexual disposition; his sexual impulses were feeble; he found difficulty in normal intercourse, to which he had to stimulate himself by images of boys, and by the desire of paternity; his rare erotic dreams were associated with similar images.

The case was clearly one of homosexuality and sadism in a degenerate. A further question, however, remains: May not the patient himself have been, as he alleged he was, unconscious of the sexual cause of his conduct? Krafft-Ebing is disposed to think that he probably was. His sexual hypæsthesia would allow his inversion to develop in the ideal direction without local genital reactions. So he would remain ignorant of the sexual origin of his pedagogic taste, just as the pubescent girl is unaware of the sexual source of her religious passion. And when, later on, sadist impulses appeared, he would still remain in this state of self-deception, since the satisfaction of these impulses was not associated with any specifically sexual phenomena.

Such a condition must evidently modify the individual's "responsibility," since it implies the absence of the sense of wrong-doing. The question raised in this case is of wide application, for this independence of consciousness and conduct is by no means rare, especially in the degenerate, in whom the rôle of the unconsciousness is greater than in the normal. Cases of the kind illustrate the disadvantages in practice of standards of responsibility based on such metaphysical notions as the doctrine of free-will.

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A Plea for the Sterilisation of Women as a Means of limiting or preventing the Reproduction of Lower Degenerates [Per la Sterilizzazione della Donna come Mezzo per limitare o impedire la Riproduzione dei Maggiormente Degenerati]. (Bollettino della Soc. Ginecol. di Napoli, 1901.) Zuccarelli.

In an address to the Gynæcological Society of Naples, the author,