

PART II.—REVIEWS.

De la Folie Raisonnable et de l'importance du délire des actes pour le diagnostic et la médecine légale. Par A. BRIERRE DE BOISMONT. Paris, 1867, pp. 95.

THE indefatigable M. de Boismont has lately added another to the long list of his published works, and this last arrival is not less welcome than its predecessors. It is, indeed, encouraging to see the earnestness with which a man so celebrated in his specialty still labours to give his *confrères* the results of his ripe experience, and through them the public at large, thus conferring a double benefit. There is, perhaps, no subject on which the public require so much to be enlightened as on insanity, and none of which the general ignorance works more harm. Every fresh trial shows how faulty are the notions of even educated and intelligent men on this subject, and how absurd are some of the judicial fictions, based as they are on the errors and want of observation of half a century or more ago; we can, then, hardly wonder that the unreflecting and credulous public should follow in a similar track.

There is no better remedy for such a state of things than the extensive record of well-observed facts and cases, for the cumulative force of such evidence tells in time and carries a weight which is denied to the ingenious theories of original speculation. M. de Boismont's last contribution is of this useful though unpretending character, and is a sort of running commentary on five and twenty cases of a class which we in this country are in the habit of calling "moral" insanity. By this term we would not imply mere cases of vicious habits or ill-regulated passion without intellectual disturbance, but also those of altered character, disordered affections, and perversities of disposition, noticed with exaltation or depression, illusion, and epilepsy, or alternating with such conditions.

Such cases are a lesson to those who can only see insanity in either the raving or idiotic; and we agree with the author, that the best cure for such a creed is to lay before the public a few "portraits after nature" of this "reasoning madness." "If," he says, "there ever was a fact determined by practical experience, it is this, viz. the existence of a class of the insane who can talk, write, and act for hours together, and even longer, with every appearance of reason.

Reasonable language and foolish actions have their analogues in the world. Is it not, indeed, the ordinary habit of a number of people who, after having charmed one by their cleverness and reasoning, proceed to risk their fortune, their life and honour, in the most foolish and compromising enterprises? These analogies are especially evident in the morally insane, and the cases we are about to relate show that these patients speak, write, and behave themselves like other men in their lucid intervals and when they are on their guard; but when they return to asylum life and are subject to daily observation they show their real character, and in the immense majority of cases, their acts, and often even their words, dissipate all doubts."

The following case (Obs. 3, p. 10) is an instance of mania, as evidenced by the acts of the patient, without incoherence:—"Mademoiselle J., æt. 21, whose mother was weak-minded and devoid of resolution, has been several times placed in my establishment for attacks of mania which seemed to originate in disappointments in marriage. This young lady becomes very anxious to ask questions, demanding an explanation on every subject, so that every one avoids her to escape the torment. When the attack is fully developed her actions offer the most painful contrast to her words. She tears off portions of skin; covers the walls with her excrement, throwing it into her bed or secreting it in her mattress. She removes the horsehair from the furniture, the feathers from her pillows, and destroys her clothes. If her conduct is remarked on, she replies that her malady overpowers her; that she suffers dreadfully from *ennui*; and that she acts thus to bewilder herself and give another course to her ideas. Is there, she says, anything more horrible than to be shut up with lunatics? Death is a hundred times preferable to such a position; it would be far better to take me back to my mother; I should then be cared for at home, and I should escape from this scene and these thoughts. In her periods of excitement, which last for weeks, sometimes a month or two, she does not talk incoherently, she refers all that she has said to her malady, of which she is quite conscious. Her cries, her fury, her actions, her agitation, are only, according to her, the consequence of her state of suffering; one has to yield to her request to leave, but when she has got home she finds it impossible to remain there. She disappears, goes off by the train, is searched for in all directions, and has to be brought back to the asylum.

"This young lady, who is of agreeable manners and well off, wishes to marry, and several suitable persons have made her offers since her return into society, but her disease has left an irresolution which, happily, puts obstacles in the way of every offer, for insanity is constantly in view. On several occasions the engagements have gone so far that presents have been bought and the day fixed, &c.,

but at the last moment she has abruptly broken it off, and often with very harsh speeches. No sooner has she done this than she is seized with the most lively regrets and makes attempts to renew it; and this has gone on for years."

Hypochondriasis and melancholia, when not very well marked, and even when of the ordinary type, are often at their commencement attended by symptoms of moral insanity, and are not unfrequently misinterpreted by those unacquainted with the insane. In such cases the patients appear reasonable, have no delusions, can distinguish right from wrong, and behave themselves properly, but on closer examination, a change in disposition is noticed and their affections undergo a complete change; they become irritable and malicious. Such cases prove very troublesome to every one, both to friends and doctors, and our author gives several illustrations from his own experience.

These symptoms may coexist with delusions, or tendency to suicide, and are sometimes associated with impulsive mania and give rise to acts of violence.

The following case is a good example of the course pursued by some of these patients, and the misery and annoyance they cause to others:—

"Madame G., æt. 55, of strong constitution, and sanguine, nervous temperament. Among her near relations is one who is imbecile; and one of her parents, a very eccentric and rather immoral man, set her the example of strange conduct, and in early life poisoned her mind by loose reading. Her conversation and letters give evidence of an intelligent and cultivated mind, and it would be difficult to discover when she is on her guard or during her lucid intervals any trace of intellectual derangement. Married to an official of high rank, her instinctive tendencies soon manifested themselves, and her vagaries became so notorious as to involve a speedy judicial separation. She was first placed in a religious establishment, but her conduct was such she could not remain there, and she was brought back to her father's house, where she behaved in such a manner that her further residence was impossible. Her restlessness and the inequality of her temper, her threats, paroxysms of fury, and acts which had not even the excuse of passion, forced her husband to place her in an asylum. This was the first trial. Madame G. made use of all the resources of her mind, caused a disturbance in the establishment, made an attempt at suicide, wrote letters to the authorities, and succeeded in regaining her liberty.

The hatred with which her husband had inspired her, and which her frequent seclusions had increased, suggested to her a plan which caused him the greatest annoyances. She wrote anonymous letters, so much the more dangerous and perfidious since they entered into the most private affairs and could only be incompletely answered.

Every time that she practised this manœuvre she succeeded in doing her husband some injury, though the author of the mischief was not known.

“Having regained her liberty, Madame G. gave herself up to the unrestrained gratification of her passions, and her husband was driven, for the sake of her children as well as herself, to shut her up again. She was placed in an asylum to which we were attached. Her antecedents and mental disease made us alive to noticing her words and acts. When things went as she liked she behaved agreeably, only it was needful to keep at a distance, for there was no rest while any man was near her. Young and old, gentlemen and servants, were all the same, and one could feel no security while she was within reach of any of the male sex.

“The variations in her temper were extreme. She talked, got angry, laughed, wept, and refused to speak by turns; and when vexed, if you made a simple observation, she went into a great passion and poured forth a torrent of abuse. After having had recourse to every possible artifice to attain her object, she made the establishment the object of her attack, and sent letters to the authorities. A magistrate came to examine her, and listened to the account given him, but though he might have had confidence in the director, yet, dazzled by the very clever defence of Madame G., who laid all her wrongs to her husband to whom she attributed all her misery, he raised some objections to which it became necessary to reply. It was needful to acquaint the husband, who, after having seen the Procureur Imperial, was obliged to take his wife back again. Perhaps, also, the father, who could never quite believe in the madness of his daughter, may have contributed to this result.

“Two years passed without any great complaint. This lady lived with her father, but at last her inequalities of temper, rages, and vagaries were too much for the love and patience of him who was her only friend and protector. This time it was with his consent that she was brought back to the asylum where she had been placed on the last occasion. When we saw her the day after her admission she smiled and said, ‘Since they insist that I am mad, and have even made use of an artifice to confine me, I prefer to be sent to your care. I believe you to be an honest man, and am convinced that after having observed and recognised the tranquillity of my mind and conduct, you will order the doors to be opened for me. I do not now wish to return to my father’s, but I should ask to be received into a convent, or in an ordinary boarding-house, where I could go in and out as I please.’ Madame G. did not talk incoherently now any more than she did at first. Her conversation, when she was pretty contented, was lively, brilliant, and often impassioned, but never exceeding proper bounds. Her reproaches of her husband’s conduct

appeared to have some foundation, and might easily have imposed on people if they had not been misled by her perfidious character and anonymous letters. She soon became amorously disposed towards the doctors, the director of the establishment, and his relations, made them each propositions before their wives, and wrote them letters and verses. This lady, despite her mental attainments, and forgetful of the ravages of time, would show herself barely covered, and when she thought she was alone, had but little respect for decency. A word or gesture of disapprobation was enough to excite her anger to the utmost, she filled the house with complaints, cries and abuse; she rolled on the ground with her hair and dress in disorder, or else she gave herself up to a fit of despair which rendered it needful to have her carefully watched; she would then ask to change her abode, and recommenced her complaints of arbitrary detention. Under other circumstances she was ironical and given to sneer at and ridicule everything said to her. Impressionable, and changeable to the last degree, she would turn her back on those she best liked for a whole day for a mere trifle, and often without any apparent cause, and then return with the same cordiality as ever, melting into tears, and bursting out laughing as though her friendship had never been interrupted. To see her in these moods, which were of very frequent recurrence, one would never have doubted but that she might have been kept at home, but her self-control altered her as she chose. Before a stranger she assumed a calm demeanour, and entered into conversation without betraying any signs of her mental malady. On several occasions she has mixed in society and behaved herself most properly, not giving way to her feelings in any way.

“This case from its nature gave rise to many complications, and the patient’s discharge was several times ordered by the authorities, but the interposition of the Procureur was requested. This functionary, after listening to all sides, visited her apartment. He found the walls covered with pictures, flowers, ribbons, letters, papers, and decorations, the arrangement of which and their oddity showed at once the disorder of her imagination, and the Procureur said the sight of this satisfied him, and that her proper place was in an asylum.”

We have given this case at length as a good illustration of a class. It is not uncommon for this form of insanity to show itself at the commencement of general paralysis, but it is seen in a very characteristic manner in the case of chronic alcoholism, *i. e.* in those who drink in paroxysms. Such cases are well known in private practice, and the difficulty of retaining them legally is not one of their least troublesome features. Speaking of this, M. de Boismont says:—

“We have had charge of many ladies well brought up, who have been found half-naked in very low places, who on coming to them-

selves have found a thousand specious reasons to explain, justify, or even deny their conduct. At first they were kept at their own homes, for their reasoning was so clear that the authorities refused to allow their seclusion; but their disgraceful conduct, so little in accordance with their rank, their education, and the scandalous scenes they caused, have in the end convinced the powers that be, and they have been shut up. Once in confinement, no trace of mental disorder showed itself, but then began the appeals and complaints to the magistrates, plots and disorder in the establishment, and more than once there was no other course open than to send these 'reasoning lunatics' back to their families; however, to gratify their deplorable inclinations, they would stop at nothing, and several abandoned themselves to the lowest companions. This form of insanity is so familiar to us that we now refuse to take such patients."

There remains another class of the insane liable to these symptoms, viz. epileptics, and in them it may be followed by terrible consequences—murder and suicide having often been the result, as illustrated by the murder of two attendants at the Marseilles Asylum only last year. Of this class Trousseau said, "If a man, without any previous intellectual disturbance, and without having hitherto shown any sign of excitement, without being under the influence of alcohol or any other substance exercising an energetic action over the nervous system, commits suicide or kills any one, that man is an epileptic."

It is these cases of moral insanity that the public cannot understand, and which so often get liberated when their wrongs are brought forward, to the great damage of society, friends, morality, truth, and science, and for illustrations we can refer the sceptical to M. de Boismont's pages. There is one point in its diagnosis which deserves especial consideration, and that is the influence of hereditary taint, and also of the antecedents of the patients. Thus in the twenty-five cases alluded to it was found that one of the patients was half imbecile from birth; another was epileptic, with also derangement of the intellect; seven were odd, eccentric, irritable, unstable, and irresolute, and of these, one had had a previous attack of insanity. But the most distinctive character is the insanity of the acts, while the reasoning is clear and the language coherent. It is this, too, which so often gives rise to so much misery to others, the patients being generally malicious, if not violent, and disposed to every degrading passion. M. de Boismont says towards the close of his pages—

"The relation of the facts contained in this work is, for every enlightened man, a proof of the existence of a variety of lunatics who can speak, write, and act for a longer or shorter period with every appearance of reason. The first conclusion to be drawn from the

examination of these patients is, that the reasoning powers are susceptible of being deranged and injured in their functions in the same way as those of the heart, lungs, or stomach. The second inference, not less important, is, that insanity, like other diseases, is governed by laws like those regulating health. It is, then, essential, in order to study the insane, to fully understand the sane man who must be taken as the starting-point. The third conclusion is, that insanity may show itself while the reasoning powers remain, although the idea on which it rests is false, a matter which much increases the difficulty of diagnosis as regards questions of legal medicine."

The conclusions with which M. de Boismont sums up his work are as follows:—

"1st. There exists a variety of insanity in which the patients express themselves with every appearance of reason, and which is styled 'reasoning madness' (in English, moral insanity); the knowledge of it being acquired all the better by studying the sane man, from whom the lunatic is a mere deviation.

"2nd. This variety of insanity is observed under different forms, but more particularly in that of maniacal excitement, melancholy, impulsive monomania, and the alternating states, &c.

"3rd. This manifestation of insanity, which is only a symptom, may be sometimes so prominent that the secondary may seem to take the place of the primary disease. Prolonged observation generally discovers in the end some of the principal symptoms of insanity.

"4th. Moral insanity presents as its distinctive characters insane actions, and bad animal propensities, with rational conversation. Observation shows that, when there is no great excitement, and the patient is not on his guard, intellectual disturbance may then often be apparent in conversation.

"5th. They may continue to use reasonable language in writing, but, when these patients are studied for some time, the insanity of their actions reveals itself also in their writings.

"6th. The recognition of moral insanity is the more important in its relations to legal medicine, inasmuch as these patients are disposed to do wrong. Among the ordinary acts of the morally insane are calumnious or anonymous statements, plots, slandering, lying in every form, dishonorable actions, homicide, suicide, accusations of violence, theft, immorality, lawsuits for arbitrary detention, claims for damages, &c.

"7th. There exists an important difference in character between the sane and morally insane; the former, when they are not criminal, generally repress or repent of bad impulses when they have given way to them, but the latter, not thinking themselves in fault, hardly concern themselves about such acts, nor consider them worthy of blame.

"8th. Another characteristic, not less important, is the impossi-

bility of these patients keeping to one thing or showing any stability of purpose during the persistence of their disease.

"9th. Lastly, when the morally insane conceal their morbid ideas, causing doubts as to their reality, and do not commit injurious acts, the only course is to leave them at liberty, warning them they are the arbiters of their own fate."

G. M. B.

Inaugural Address delivered to the University of St. Andrew's, February 1st, 1867. By JOHN STUART MILL, M.P., Rector of the University.

COMPLYING with the custom, which he holds to be highly commendable, of embodying in an address some thoughts on the subjects which most nearly concern a seat of liberal education, Mr. Mill has taken the opportunity of his inauguration as Rector of the University of St. Andrew's to express his opinions upon what should be the character of university education. It has become a great question of the day whether general education should be classical or scientific; a dispute going on in a smouldering way, and occasionally lighting up into fierceness, as to the superiority of the ancient languages or of the modern sciences and arts. To impartial on-lookers it is sufficiently plain that the champions of each cause are far too one-sided; they are acutely alive to the merits of their own case, singularly blind to the merits of the case which their adversaries present. It is the old story, as old as life: has the shield a golden or a silver side?

"This question, whether we should be taught the classics or the sciences, seems to me," says Mr. Mill, "very like a dispute whether painters should cultivate drawing or colouring, or, to use a more homely illustration, whether a tailor should make coats or trousers. I can only reply by the question, why not both? Can anything deserve the name of a good education which does not include literature and science too? If there were no more to be said than that scientific education teaches us to think, and literary education to express our thoughts, do we not require both? Can anything deserve the name of a good education which does not include literature and science too? If there were no more to be said than that scientific education teaches us to think, and literary education to express our thoughts, do we not require both? And is not any one a poor, maimed, lopsided fragment of humanity who is deficient in either? We are not obliged to ask ourselves whether it is more important to know the languages or the sciences. Short as life is, and shorter still as we make it by the time we waste on things which are neither business, nor meditation, nor pleasure, we are not so badly off that