

Taking Major Dhunjibhoy's figures of population : 82,696 out of the 101,778 Parsees in India live in Bombay Presidency. The Central Mental Hospital at Poona, from its completion for fourteen years in my care, has been the chief mental hospital for the treatment of Parsees in Bombay, and has special allotted or endowed wards to which patients of other nationalities are not admitted. I have therefore had special opportunities for comparison with other groups of inmates, *i.e.*, Europeans, Anglo-Indians (domiciled), Hindus of all castes, Mohammedans, etc., in addition to experience at two other large mental hospitals, at Lahore and Rangoon, which had been in my charge earlier. I have discussed this subject for years with educated Parsees, referred to it in my lectures and in my *Clinical Handbook of Mental Diseases*, 1925, and can assure Major Dhunjibhoy that it is no new and undigested idea. I have nowhere contended, as he infers, that inbreeding is a necessary predisponent of schizophrenia, but have suggested that it may be a predisposing cause of the various degenerations noted by many observers. I have nowhere stated that dementia præcox is "rare" among other Indian groups, as your correspondent infers. The term "comparatively rare" has a quite different connotation, and the views I have expressed as to the comparative incidence of dementia præcox in other Indian communities are apparently in agreement with those of Major Dhunjibhoy, who, however, most unwarrantably characterizes the agreement as "inadvertent" on my part!

It is very probable, for obvious reasons, that there has been a good deal of inbreeding in the Anglo-Indian domiciled community, in which the incidence of schizophrenia is rather high.

I have already stated quite clearly that, in common with most alienists, I consider that abnormal mental stress is often the precipitating cause of dementia præcox in predisposed individuals. Surely Major Dhunjibhoy is not serious in arguing that the preparation of Parsee children for the Kasti ceremony can be considered a form of intensive education, in the sense in which I have used the term! It is similar to the study required of Christians for Confirmation. I fear somehow that my conception of the term "education" is not that of your correspondent.

Though Major Dhunjibhoy holds that the long inbreeding of the Parsees has resulted in nothing but good, and that its object is the preservation of racial purity, he writes that he is in no sense a champion of it, and "fully realizes its undesirability." I wonder why?

Your correspondent writes of "inbreeding"—an admitted custom: "What I am urging is that its relationship to dementia præcox has never been definitely established." This bald statement is certainly true at present, and it constitutes his whole case! I have, however, still a hope that my paper may have shown a new field for inquiry, in which the relationship can be thoroughly tested. I have personally no doubt of the result of an impartial investigation, should one ever be made—a possibility which experience compels me to doubt, for the reason I have already given.

I have previously remarked on the curious theory that schizophrenia among Parsees and Indians generally is directly due to "western education," and have little to add. Major Dhunjibhoy seems to consider the term synonymous with "stress." He, however, loses sight of the fact that statistics in Europe and America have become increasingly accurate with the years, whereas Indian statistics of disease in general, and of mental disease in particular, are still untrustworthy, and will continue so to be as long as the Alienist Department remains as it is, and has no responsible specialist supervision and control.

Parkstone,
Dorset.
July 10, 1931.

W. S. JAGOE SHAW, M.D.,
Lt.-Col. I.M.S. (retired).

STUDY TOURS AND POST-GRADUATE EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION SUB-COMMITTEE.

Notice.

TOUR OF GERMAN MENTAL HOSPITALS.

A Study Tour of German Mental Hospitals and Clinics has been arranged to take place from Monday, October 5, to Wednesday October 14th.

The party will leave London (Liverpool Street Station) on the Monday evening and travel by the Hook of Holland to Cleve, whence the journey will be continued by motor-coach to hospitals and clinics at Bedburg-Hau, Gütersloh, Bielefeld, Giessen, Frankfurt, Wiesloh, Bruchsal, Karlsruhe, Illenau and Renchen.

The week-end will be spent at Baden-Baden, allowing an opportunity for a visit to the Black Forest, and the return journey will be made from Strasbourg by train, London being reached on Wednesday, October 14.

The hotel and travelling charges from London are £23 10s., payable by ordinary cheque about ten days before the commencement of the tour to the Reisebüro der Hamburg-Amerika Linie, Sofienstrasse 1b Am Kurgarten, Baden-Baden.

These charges are based on the party numbering twenty persons, and may be lowered or raised should it exceed or not reach that number. The above sum includes second-class rail, first-class boat, London to Cleve; motor-coach from Cleve to Strasbourg; second-class rail with sleeper and first-class boat, Strasbourg to London; hotel accommodation, with dinner, breakfast, and, in some hotels, lunch; hotel gratuities are included, and a guide awaits the party at Cleve to assist with the Customs.

Members intending to make this tour are requested to notify, as early as possible, the Hon. Secretary, Dr. A. E. Evans, 11, Weymouth Avenue, Mill Hill, N.W. 7, intimating also the names of relatives or friends by whom they may be accompanied.

OBITUARY.

DR. OWEN FELIX MCCARTHY.

The unexpected death of Dr. Owen Felix McCarthy, Resident Medical Superintendent, Cork Mental Hospital, which took place on November 6, 1930, was a great shock to his wide circle of friends. He was the younger son of Mr. John McCarthy, of Mount Alto, Glanmine, co. Cork. Dr. McCarthy was educated in Cork City, and pursued his medical studies at the Queen's College, Cork, and the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. Qualified in 1900, he was appointed Assistant Medical Officer at Cork in 1901.

Dr. McCarthy served with the Forces from 1915 to 1917 during the Great War.

He was elected Medical Superintendent of Cork Mental Hospital in 1922, and in the same year was appointed Lecturer in Mental Diseases at Cork University College. He was most hospitable and genial in disposition, and was keenly interested in the welfare of his patients and staff. He held the view strongly that a contented staff ensured better care of the patients, and to that end he devoted himself. During his period of office trained female nurses were for the first time appointed to nurse in the male hospital.

Dr. McCarthy was keenly interested in golf, and was at one time captain of the Muskerry Golf Club. He was a successful grower of roses.

He married in 1915 Miss Phillippa Dorothy Parnell, daughter of Mr. Edmond Parnell of Brockley, London, whom with three children he leaves to mourn his loss.

The funeral on November 9 was largely attended by members of the clerical, legal and medical professions, as well as representatives of the Cork County Council, Cork Corporation and many of the general public.

HUGH DE MAINE ALEXANDER, M.D., C.M. Edin.

By the death, on June 1, 1931, of Dr. Hugh de Maine Alexander, Medical Superintendent, Kingseat Mental Hospital, Aberdeen, Scottish psychiatry has suffered a severe loss. Although he did not participate actively in the affairs of the Association, of which he was a member since 1899, he was a well-known figure at the Scottish Divisional meetings.