

aunt stated that owing to her unintelligible speech she was left very much to herself at school.

On the physical side there was noted a prow-shaped forehead. There was no deformity of the mouth; the palate was not unduly arched. The limbs were well-shaped, and with one exception there was complete symmetry; *the exception was the right little toe—it was double.*

It is of interest to observe that this malformation was on the side of the body served by the speech hemisphere. The connection, of course, may be purely accidental.

May not this case be classed as one of aphasia?

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*Notes of a Case of Folie à Deux in Five Members of one Family.* By OSCAR T. WOODS, M.D. Dub., Medical Superintendent of the Killarney Asylum.

The following case of "communicated insanity" exhibited all the symptoms of Folie à Deux as described by Dr. Hack Tuke in his paper read last year in Dublin,\* and for many reasons is, I think, deserving of record.

Johanna D., aged 45, mother;  
 Julia D., aged 24, daughter;  
 Michael D., aged 22, son;  
 Mary D., aged 18, daughter;  
 Kate D., aged 15, daughter;

were admitted into the Killarney Asylum on January 30th, 1888, under the following circumstances:—

The information of the constabulary sergeant is as follows: "From information I received I proceeded to the house of Michael D. I saw the dead body of a boy lying in the yard in front of the door; it had no clothing on except a shirt. The nose had disappeared, the front of both cheeks had been removed by violence. When I came in front of the house I saw a number of the family grouped together. Michael, junior, called out to me not to come near the house, or that I would never forget it. The others then all repeated what he said. Michael, senior, had nothing on but his shirt, Mary and Julia their chemises only; the others very little more. I then with assistance arrested them. They were all evidently insane, jumping about and shouting in an excited way."

These patients were brought to the asylum together, where they were seen by two magistrates, who committed all except the father. He, although suffering from hallucinations, was quiet, and comprehended all that was said to him. He refused to tell

\* At the B. M. Association Meeting in Dublin, held in August, 1887.

what he knew, and said, "My wife will tell you all. They are all more clever than I am, and say they have been to heaven, and I must believe them."

*Family History.*—Michael D., senior, has two brothers, Patrick and Dan. Their father and mother lived to be 90 and 70 years of age respectively, and were always healthy.

Patrick married a Kerry woman (no relation, whose family history was good). They had several children, nearly all of whom are deaf and dumb.

Dan married a first cousin, and all his children are grown up and healthy.

Michael married Johanna S., who had no brothers or sisters; and her family are supposed to be healthy, except one maternal uncle, who died insane. First cousin of Michael D. has recently committed suicide.

Their family is as follows:—

Michael D., father;  
Johanna D., mother, in asylum.

Children:

Julia,	in asylum;	Patrick, epileptic idiot, murdered;
Michael,	"	Denis (12), imbecile;
Mary,	"	Dan,
Kate,	"	Denis;

so that out of the whole family there are only the two youngest who have not been mentally affected.

*On admission.*—Their condition may shortly be described thus: The three daughters were in a very violent state of acute hysterical mania, flinging themselves about; could not comprehend anything said to them; pupils largely dilated; pulse quick. Mother and son very excited, but more collected, and able to comprehend what was said to them. All patients were much bruised about the body, Julia's face and left eye being greatly torn. Mother and son both fell on their knees and prayed to God and the Virgin Mary, and the former made the following statement:—"On Saturday night at cock-crow I took that fairy Patsy—he was not my son, he was a devil, a bad fairy, I could have no luck while he was in the house—carried him out of the house and threw him into the yard, and then got a hatchet and struck him three blows on the head. I then came back, and we all prayed and went to Heaven." All had the one dominant delusion that they had been to Heaven, each one describing minutely what she imagined she had seen.

None of the family complained of being ill up to evening of 28th save Julia, who had not been quite herself for about a week. The only other two facts obtainable were that the family ate heartily on Wednesday and Thursday of goat's meat, part of which I found in a tub in the house, which was stinking, green, and putrid; 2nd, that most of the members of the house had lost their

rest the previous week while sitting up minding a sow and young ones.

*Result of post-mortem.*—We found a bruise on the left shoulder, a fracture of the lower jaw on the right side, both cheek bones broken and the flesh over them lacerated; in fact, all the small bones of the face were broken. The lower jaw was also broken on the left side, the left temporal frontal and parietal bones were extensively fractured, and also the occipital bone; the brain and its covering was lacerated; the hands raised as if in a position of defence.

*Progress of case.*—*January 31.*—They all slept well. When visited, mother quiet, and answers questions collectedly; knows where she is; says she killed her own child; “Took Patsy out between the blankets at cock-crow with my little boy Michael; did it because he was a bad fairy, and not my son at all.”

Julia’s face very black and disfigured; she is quiet, but refuses to answer questions.

Mary very excited, swinging about and repeating over “Depart, ye devils. Thanks be to God, my name is in Heaven; I am a saint in Heaven, no devil can touch me now; you can touch my body but not my soul, it is in Heaven.” Tongue clean, pupils natural.

Kate. “Jesus, Mary, Joseph, help me. Oh! Jesus, banish those devils. I will do all for them because of the Holy Cross, thou hast redeemed me.”

Michael very excited and restless. Smashed a large pane of plate glass; will not answer questions.

*February 1st.*—Last night Mary very restless, kicking door. Julia sleepless to one o’clock. Johanna and Kate slept. Mary excited and rambling; will not answer questions. Julia and Kate quiet, but refuse to speak, only muttering to themselves at times. Johanna stupid, position fixed, mouth and eyes firmly closed; refuses to answer all questions, but takes her food well, and speaks occasionally to the nurse. Michael appears to remember all that was done and is very communicative. He says: “We wanted father to get up and pray with us, but he would not. He was too bad and would not come with us, he is now in hell for all eternity; we threw all his bedclothes out into the yard, and me and my sisters went to Heaven.” He then described the appearance of the road to, and the gates of Heaven.

*February 2nd.*—All quieter, evidently improving, but Mrs. D. still refuses to speak. Mary and Kate, who have been most excited, much quieter.

*February 3rd.*—All slept well and are quiet to-day.

*February 4th.*—All improved. Michael quite collected. Says he first felt himself all right last night; gives a very fair account of everything, but rather anxious to conceal the worst features.

Says Julia was the first to show symptoms of anything wrong and to speak of Heaven; this was on Thursday night.

Mary fairly collected, remembers all that occurred; states "Heard my mother in the yard when she took Patsy out, 'It is time for me to kill you, you young devil; I wonder if I have killed you enough now.' I was not shocked when I heard my mother kill him, as I heard people say he was a fairy, and I believed them. I suppose it was not right to do so. I think I am right in my mind to-day."

Mrs. D. willing to talk, but pretends to forget everything. Says Patsy is alive, knows where she is, and is very collected; remembers everything *except* what took place on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday; evidently is not speaking the truth and knows everything, but as she now realizes her position, wishes to conceal the fact of her guilt.

*February 14th.*—During the last week mother and Michael have gone on very well, apparently sane, conversing rationally, the former, however, asserting she believes Patsy to be alive; the latter is willing to give an account of the fatal affair. When D., senior, was here to-day his wife inquired how Patsy was. I believe this was only because the nurse was present. Both sleep well. Mary and Kate convalescent.

*February 26th.*—Since the above date progress has continued uninterruptedly save in the case of Julia,\* who has not improved much; she is, however, quieter and inclined to be more tidy in her habits. She was the first attacked, and I would be inclined to think was some days ill before noticed by the family.

No special medical treatment was found necessary. Aperient and tonic medicine with chloral as a night draught during the first week; plenty of nourishing food and out-door exercise was alone required.

Happily such cases as this have not often to be reported in this country. In foreign countries, however, they are not so uncommon; no doubt the hereditary taint, and the strong superstitious ideas instilled into their ignorant minds by the old country women, acting on people whose bodily health was somewhat undermined by bad food and loss of rest, had much to say to the cause of the attack.

The sudden and simultaneous onset of the attack, the similarity of the delusions and symptoms, the immediate committal of the murder, the quick recovery of those secondarily attacked, and last the family history are all interesting features of the case. With regard to the family history, it is curious to note that while Michael D. and his brother Dan both married strangers, almost every member

\* Dec. 1st, Julia still an inmate of the asylum, daily becoming more demented.

of both families have been affected, the former mentally, the latter being deaf and dumb. Patrick, who married a first cousin, has had a number of healthy children, all now grown up.

Owing to the criminal charge hanging over these patients there was some difficulty in arranging for their discharge, which took place on July 7th.

A question arose during the preliminary investigation on which I would be glad to have your opinion—as to whether the medical officer of an asylum is right to divulge in a court of law statements made by a patient, either when that patient is labouring under delusions or convalescent. I think any conversation with an inmate of an asylum should be privileged, as it is held not with the object of obtaining information, but with a view to test the sanity and promote the recovery of the patient. If all conversations held with a lunatic could be extracted from a superintendent in a witness-box his influence over many of the patients would, I believe, be lost. I, at all events, refused at the preliminary inquiry to state communications made to me by the prisoners, and was not asked to do so at the assizes. The mother was found not guilty on the ground of insanity, and ordered to be detained in an asylum during the Lord Lieutenant's pleasure.

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*Case of Foreign Body in the Œsophagus.* By E. MAZIERE  
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M. L., æt. 38, admitted into the Limerick Asylum on June 16th, 1886, from the Limerick Workhouse, where she had been since the previous November. During the whole of this time she is stated to have been in depressed spirits, to have had various delusions that "her head and chest were filled with vermin," that "she was rotten," and, according to the account of the ward mistress, she had made three distinct attempts to commit suicide by plunging her head in the water cistern. The medical certificate merely states that "she is violent," and "has attempted bodily harm."

On admission she was much depressed, but was able to answer questions sensibly, and to give a clear account of her past history. Suffered from a similar attack fifteen years ago, from which she recovered. Has been at service all her life, but two years ago had an illegitimate child, which threw her out of employment, after which she suffered much from want, and was at length obliged to seek the shelter of the workhouse.