

*Insanity of Twins.**

I.

Twins Suffering from Similar Attacks of Melancholia. By
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Bethlem Hospital.

The subjoined cases are of great interest from the parallelism in the life histories of the two. The two sisters are very much alike in personal appearance, and their histories will be seen to be extraordinarily alike; each has three children, the youngest being nine months in one family and ten in the other.

Both patients are typical cases of melancholia with stupor. They stand about unoccupied, and without care or attention to appearance or to necessities. There has been no case of insanity in the family as far as we can ascertain, and the causation of the taint is unknown. Since admission the cases have been placed in separate wards, but still the progress has been very similar in both; at present both are beginning to look about them to say a word now and then.

I have already seen one other case in which twins were affected with nervous disease at the same time, one being insane the other epileptic.

We generally have at Bethlem pairs of sisters in the hospital, and I should think that during the past ten years, at least two sisters of one family have been under care at the same time twenty times. In most of these cases, however, both have been under the same roof, and so under the same special as well as general contributing circumstances. In the case here reported the circumstances were very similar, but the two women had left their parental home, and had homes of their own.

CASE I.—A. S. U., 28. Admitted 14th August, 1882. A farmer's wife. Married. Three children, youngest ten months. First attack: Duration two weeks. The supposed cause is the shock of seeing her sister suffering from melancholia. Stated to be suicidal, but not dangerous. Sober and well educated.

One sister (twin) similarly affected.

No phthisis, acute rheumatism, chorea, fits or fevers. Has weak health from nursing baby ten months. Menses not reappeared since last confinement. Temperament quiet.

Earliest symptoms: Excitement and talkativeness, crying out that

* We shall be glad of reports of similar cases for this Journal.—[Eds.]

God has taken her heart, and that she has sinned very grievously against Him.

Present condition : Is never found sitting ; stands with her hands in front of her for hours, never speaking. Is with difficulty induced to take her food.

CASE II.—E. G. W., 28. Admitted August 17th, 1882. She is an architect's wife. Married. Three children, youngest eight months. First attack : Duration nine weeks.

Neither suicidal nor dangerous. Sober and well educated.

One sister (twin) similarly affected. No phthisis, &c. Menses regular. Temperament cheerful, placid, and industrious.

Earliest symptoms : Had a fainting fit, and was semi-unconscious for a week, when she came to herself very depressed and melancholy.

Present condition very much the same as sister ; does not sit down or speak ; has to be fed by spoon.

II.

Twins Suffering from Mania. By Mr. H. CLIFFORD GILL,
Medical Superintendent York Lunatic Hospital.

I have lately had under my care two cases of insanity occurring in twins, and it seems to me that it might be of interest to some of our readers if these cases were published. The patients were young girls, and between whom there existed a marked sympathy. Not only are they extremely alike in personal appearance, but in manner, style, and speech, so much so that at one time nothing would be easier than to mistake one for the other. This similarity obtained not only in their bodily development, but in their mental condition also, and on the authority of their mother I am informed that great sympathy existed between them even in their illnesses ; whenever one of the girls suffered from an illness the other would be sure to have the same illness also. This was particularly noticeable on one occasion : one of the twins was at Scarborough and the other in York. The twin told her mother that she believed her sister at Scarborough was ill, for she herself felt an attack coming on. The two sisters had no communication with one another, but the suspicion of the twin in York was true. The twin in Scarborough had exactly the same attack as the one in York (bilious headache). So again when the elder twin (who was the first attacked with insanity) began to show symptoms of unsound mind, her mother came to me expressing the deepest anxiety for the younger twin, though at that time there was no