

[For the Deseret News.]

REASON AND INSANITY.

BY ALEXANDER OTT.

Reason enables man to compare one fact with another, as well as idealities with realities, that is, internal expressions with external ones. For instance, at the sight of a pretty cottage nestling, as it were, amid the luxuriant foliage and shrubbery of rural scenery, not only one, but a series of sentiments or ideas are suggested and transferred, by comparing the concrete, physical residence with the abstract results or concomitants thereof, viz., parental and conjugal love, happiness and filial devotion, are identified with the peaceful abode in which kindred hearts are dwelling in serene and growing companionship. Here we trace the relations, connections and tendencies so as to show the legitimate results or inferences arising from one fact and the other, and thus reason will prove the necessity of a harmony existing between everything abstract and concrete, between everything tangible as well as intellectual.

It is very true that very often misery dwells where happiness would be supposed to hold its benign sceptre, but that is owing to the corrupt, unnatural state in which the majority of mankind are placed. The design of the Creator is to have harmony, beauty, intelligence and happiness throughout the immensity of space.

In a healthy state of mind, we can change our mental train, as often as we think proper; we have the power to continue one subject and commence an entirely new one, always controlling our thoughts and impressions, and endeavoring to discover the relationship existing between the different items of the intellectual and physical world.

But an insane person is, as remarked before, entirely governed by ideas and impressions which rise within him, like *ignes fatui*, leading him more and more into error. And here is a remarkable analogy between dreaming and insanity, viz., in both conditions impressions and thoughts are believed to be real.

It appears, viz., that in a dream images and visions arise in the mind, which seem to represent a life and world of its own, hence Lord Byron's passage, "Our life is two fold; sleep has its own world." These mental-somatic operations are generally the embodiment of our feelings, and emotions with a distinct or faint outline of some event or fact.

During the process of these mental phenomena, reason holds generally a very subordinate office, as the associations and motions of the various scenes of the dream-land are entirely beyond its control, and bear often the impress of the greatest absurdity and inconsistency, while sometimes the veil of futurity is drawn aside, and visions with revelations and other manifestations from the mansions above or the regions below, are unfolded to the mind.

Frequently an oppression at the epigastrium or the stomach itself will start a series of thoughts which have been slumbering, and a dream will be called into existence at the very time that the bodily uneasiness is experienced. Thus dreams of murder, graves and ghosts, with talking, grinding of the teeth, convulsive movements of the hands and fingers; comatose (drowsy) sleep with ravings, nightmare, dreams of travelling, of danger, fire and water, of seeing objects which increase and decrease in size, are frequently produced by an oppression at the stomach or sternum (breast bone). In what manner the ganglion and sympathetic nerves are productive, when affected by a local complaint, of images, comes within the domain of philosophical, physiology and animal chemistry, suffice it to say, reason has nothing or little to do with the peculiar phenomena of dreaming.

Frequently ideas and memories are called up by mere bodily sensation, without a real local indisposition, as in the following authentically recorded instance:—Dr. Gregory, the eminent philosopher and physician, mentions of himself that, having on one occasion, gone to bed with a vessel of hot water at his feet, he dreamed of war king up the crater of Mount Etna, and of feeling the ground warm under him. He had at an early period of his life visited Mount Vesuvius, and actually felt a strong sensation of warmth in his feet when walking up the side of the crater; but it was remarkable that the dream was not of Vesuvius, but of Etna, of which he had only read some traveller's account. This was probably from the latter impression having been the more recent.

The relationship existing between dreaming and insanity is really remarkable, the mental *status quo* of the former being exactly the same as that of the latter, especially when perfectly developed into mania, that is, the beggar dreams being a king, and so overpowering is his imagination that reason has entirely left him, and he cannot by means of intellect or judgment compare his real position with the visionary one, hence he is deceived, believing himself surrounded by all the pomp and splendor of royalty, till the dream bursts;—the maniac fancies himself an emperor, with all the paraphernalia of that high position, and although his physical organs are in full play, the hallucination is by no means corrected or removed by the sound of clinking chains and the sight of his miserable abode.

The first mental derangement or transit from a healthy state is eccentricity which consists in laying too much stress on a small, trivial point or circumstance, without consid-

ering other facts and things in connection with it. I remember two interesting specimens of this kind: Two painters who enjoyed a high professional eminence in Prussia, were very much occupied with the construction of a certain peculiar machine of a very complicated nature in the shape of a locomotive, which should do away with the present artillery, and in fact, they believed the destructive power of their designed machine so great, that they actually imagined war would come to an end and general peace be established.—They corresponded with Elisha Burritt, applied to the Prussian and other German government; but, on an examination of their plans and designs by competent engineers, the entire infeasibility and utter impossibility was discovered. The two designers had only seen important advantages, without considering or noticing the difficulties. So great, however, was their eccentricity in that particular point, that they could not be convinced of their error, but continued their useless speculative theories about a great, reforming infernal machine up to their end.

There are many other curious and remarkable instances of this kind of insanity on record. Samuel Warren, in his diary of a late physician, relates the following circumstance: "A bachelor friend of mine, who generally was of a very lively disposition, sent for me, on day, his negro servant insinuating that his master was in great distress in consequence of his head having literally turned round. On entering the bed room of my friend, I said, 'but pray, my dear sir, when did this dreadful accident happen?'"

"Sit down, Doctor, and I will tell you."—Whereupon he commenced as follows:

"You know I have a plantation on the island of Barbadoes. Well, last night, I dreamt I was there, when all at once, a terrible tornado arose, and while looking around to see the destruction that was going on, my head was suddenly seized by a violent current of air and literally turned, as you can see for yourself. Isn't it shocking, Doctor?"

"Very," I replied dryly; "but then, my dear sir, look ahead, you will be well in a few days." But how can I? I am obliged to look backward all the time, and I am actually a walking lie." To make the matter short, the invalid was speedily cured, when he confessed to his professional friend, that he feared his mind had been rather out of order.

Next to eccentricity comes lunacy, a violent sort of insanity, wherein the patient is apt to use brutal force; it was supposed to be influenced by the moon, hence the name lunacy, from the Latin *luna*, the moon. Madness and mania, from the Greek *manomai*, to rage, implies insanity or lunacy in its most furious and confirmed stage.

* How many perhaps do know that a drop of water or a small, tiny leaf is the arena of miniature worlds of busy microscopic insects, enjoying themselves in the ratio of their intelligence!

† *Epigastrium*, from the Greek *gaster*—the belly, the abdomen; and the preposition, *epi*, about, around,—signifies the region of the stomach.

‡ *Ignis fatuus*, literally translated, signifies an erring light, better known as a 'Jack o' Lantern.' It is a fiery, electric exhalation of swampy places. These phenomena, which are apt to lead the unlettered, superstitious wanderer from the right road, are frequently observed after a thunder-shower.

§ I quote the above article merely from memory.

NONSENSICALNESS OF SECTARIAN SERMONIZING.

The following strictures on the effusions of modern Sectarian preachers, or divines, from the London Spectator, are more truthful than poetical.

There is a growing feeling amongst thinking men that the sermon institution, as at present enforced, is altogether intolerable, that it is an intellectual burden which more or less saps the life of modern churches, and more perhaps than anything else introduces the dry-rot in social worship. We hold this to be true, not because we are insensible to the peculiar capacities of the pulpit—not because we have failed to find in the higher department of this great field of literature much of the noblest and most potent thought, but because we hold that in consequence of the true aim of the sermon as a properly voluntary element in social worship—voluntary both on the part of the preacher and the hearer—having been lost sight, the whole character of the institution has been depraved. Few thinking Englishmen, even of the present generation, can have grown up without recognizing in some form the influence of the few great preachers of the age—those few that can utter the cry that comes from the infinite side of man's nature. The broad and stately, but painfully self-manipulated creed of Father Newman, the metaphysical depth and subtlety of Mr. Martineau's religious psychology, or the spiritual ploughshare which Mr. Maurice drives with irresistible force right through the neatly-arrayed plantations of human theory—have influenced in one direction or another the most powerful minds of the present generation, and have influenced them for the most part through the medium of sermons. On a lower level of genius, though not necessarily of practical power, come a host of others who from the pulpit have influenced, through some medium or other, fine or coarse—or evil or good, or usually perhaps both—the conscience of their

cotemporaries. It would be simply absurd in the press of this country, which wields a wider sweeping but far less penetrating weapon, to depreciate at once the fashion and the homely labor of Brighton, by which Mr. Spurgeon rules the thousands whom no vulgarity will disgust with earnest and homely moral force, by which the Lord Bishop of Oxford compels attention and a pecuniary ransom from the bright creatures that rise so easily to his glittering artificial dyes, or by which even Dr. Cumming captivates the classes whom faith has steeled against the astrological auguries of Zadkiel. Nor do we depreciate it. But we are convinced that most of the causes which have degenerated the sermon, and which are rapidly rendering it a mischief instead of a benefit to the present generation, are materially aggravated when not actually set in motion, by the loss of that voluntary and supplementary character which ought to make it no part and parcel of public worship, but a spontaneous appendix to it—an appendix which the clergyman may either give or withhold according to the resources of the week—and which the congregation may either attend or ignore, according to their own state of mind and their own estimate of the worth of these voluntary teachings.

It seems to us obvious that in one sense the accidental impurity which the sermon assumed in Protestant countries at the Reformation, when the mass of people had exceedingly little personal knowledge of the primitive form of the Hebrew and Christian revelation, has no proper application to the present day. The clergy were then in general the only media for explaining the contents of the Bible to the people; and partly from the freshness of these contents when frankly put before an eager people, partly from the boldness which every great revolution inspires, partly from the sense of responsibility accompanying so great a task, no doubt there was proportionally much less of stereotyped formula and sanctified mannerism in the medium than there is now. The clergy felt that the sermon was really subsidiary to the exposition of the Bible, and the weight of the gospel to a great extent drowned the egotism of their personal importance. But now the clergy have exceedingly little advantage over the mass of their hearers except in opportunities for cohering study to balance which they have the disadvantage, growing rapidly every day, of belonging to a class almost isolated from the living thoughts of the world they address. They find forms of speech ready to their mouth which represent a world neither human nor divine, but rather shadows of both, blended on a common field of view—a world in which the current language is separated by generations of verbal definition and conventional doctrine from all direct contacts with spiritual things, and by the force of professional etiquette from all direct contact with actual human things.

What is the remedy for this? Clearly, in the first place, that clergymen should be taught to distinguish more clearly themselves, and to teach laymen to distinguish broadly between their own thoughts and the revelation they study and explain. There is nothing more deplorable either for the priesthood or the people than the quasi-sacred character which is given to the whole stream of words which is used from a pulpit, whether they be so foolish as to insult the understandings of all who hear, or so wise as to open and enlarge them. The first and most obvious check to ineptitude in the pulpit is the divine privilege of going away without any implied disrespect to the devotional service which precedes it; and the next most obvious limitation to the same ineptitude is the divine right on the part of the clergyman of abdicating the pulpit when he has nothing distinct to say, without any slur on his character as a devout and energetic pastor of his people. It is something simply monstrous that because a Christian wishes to pray with his fellow-Christians he should be enacted to listen as a religious duty to all the remarks of any croupier of the pulpit for the time being. What is the result of it? Why, in the first place, that more than half the preachers come to believe in their own remarks, however foolish and wild, as a part of the Christian faith. How should it be otherwise? They see the same solemn demeanor; they hear no sign of dissent; their remarks are never questioned; it is an unheard of thing for a layman to go up after service and say, "that service was inconsistent both with itself and with fact" as any one would not scruple to say after a political or scientific or literary lecture. The absurdest fanatical dreams or the boldest plainnesses are sanctified by the same apparent attention and assent which is commanded by the forms of worship. How can the ordinary clergyman help gliding into the unreal fancy, first, that his composition is as sacred as the Bible; next, that the Bible means as little as his composition?

In the next place, the result of this factitious sacredness of sermons is, that half the people see the real inner life of the Old and New Testament, and of their own day, only through this dismal semi-opaque thought, and are never stirred into breaking through it for themselves. To distinguish vigorously between the blinding dust of half their teacher's moral fancies and facts, they must learn to lose all sense of sacredness in the volume of sound issuing from the pulpit merely as such. This they have never yet done, because they have never been taught to listen with the same independent judgment—the same freedom to cease to listen—which they exercise in all other cases. Yet why should a worthy man of limited capacity be permitted to dic-

tate on infinite and eternal subjects, whose authority would weigh little or nothing on any other? Why are we to listen, as we do every Sunday, with grave acquiescence to the most express statements as to the inner scenery of Elijah's mind when he was under the juniper trees, or the motives which induced Balaam to keep Balak's messengers for another night, or the reason why twelve baskets of fragments were taken up after one miraculous feast, and only seven after another, or why St. Paul left his cloak at Troas, or the rationale of infant baptism, or the causes why there were no bishops once, and why they were appointed for our sins, or any other of the many questions we weekly hear decided for us without any possibility of protest—why are we to listen patiently to all these fanciful *ex cathedra* explanations from men whose reasons for supporting a political candidate for Parliament we should scarcely weigh at all, and whom we might decline to hear upon the ethics of family life?

Surely the remedy for these things is simple—the de-consecration of sermons. There are portions of the religious service itself which usage has separated from the rest—portions which, like the celebration of the communion, have far more claim on men than the private opinions of the officiating priest. Why not, then, make the sermon what it ought to be—a matter of free choice both in preacher and audience? If this were so, the preacher would only speak when he had something that seemed to him of weight, and the hearer would only attend when he had reason to expect something worth attention. Both would be infinite gainers by dissociating a composition of no more intrinsic value than the speaker's own mind from this delusive association with the words which breathe the wants of centuries, and the acts which reveal the mind of God.

THE CARTEL OF 1812.

The agreement of Gen. Dix with the Confederate authorities for a general exchange of prisoners is based on the cartel of 1812. It provides for precisely the same system of exchange as has been in force in the Western Department since March last, when Gen. Halleck, by direction of Major General McClellan, ordered that "it be substituted for that of general order No. 30." The provisions are as follows:

- General commander-in-chief, or admiral—sixty men.
- Lieutenant General, or vice admiral—forty men.
- Major General, or rear admiral—thirty men.
- Brigadier General, or commodore, with a broad pennant, and a captain under him—twenty men.
- Colonel, or captain of a line-of-battle-ship—fifteen men.
- Lieutenant Colonel, or captain of a frigate—ten men.
- Major, or commander of a sloop-of-war, bomb ketch, fire ship or packet—eight men.
- Captain, or lieutenant or master—six men.
- Lieutenant, or master's mate—four men.
- Sub-lieutenant, or ensign, or midshipman, warrant officer, masters of merchant vessels and captains of private armed vessels—three men.
- Non-commissioned officers, or lieutenants and mates of private armed vessels, mates of merchant vessels and all petty officers of ships-of-war—two men.
- Private soldiers or seamen—one man.

THE ARMIES OF EUROPE.—It is enough to make one despair of the progress of mankind to find that something like 4,000,000 men are under arms. Here is a list: Army of Austria, 738,344; Prussia, 719,092; Russia, 850,000; France, 626,000; Great Britain and India, 534,827; Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Portugal and Italy, 300,497; total, 3,771,760. The cost of maintaining, clothing and paying these men, at the low average of £40 per head is £150,000,000 per annum. The labor of 3,771,760 able-bodied men cannot be calculated as producing less than £120,000,000 per annum, so that virtually between the cost of their maintenance and what they ought to produce, were their labor utilized, there is a difference of something like £300,000,000 a year.—[London Paper.]

OUR LOSSES IN THE WEST.—A correspondent of the New York Tribune makes a statement from official sources, that the losses in the Western armies amount to 63,500—no less than one-third the force in the field on the 1st of November last. The loss in the battles of Belmont, Mill Spring, Fort Donelson and Pea Ridge, excepting those slightly wounded and returned to duty, is estimated at 18,000; in minor engagements 3,000; by disease (dead and absent), 40,000; discharged, 2,500.

It is difficult to see the wisdom of forever harping upon great losses of men and the excessive cost of the war. The time to count the cost was before the war commenced, and now we have to look ahead.—[Journal of Commerce.]

JUVENILE ANTICIPATION.—A juvenile sportsman, belonging to a primary school in Manchester, N. H., boasted to his playfellows the other day, that he would by and by become the fortunate possessor of an important article of youthful aspiration, "My father," says he, "has gone to the war, and if he gets killed I am going to have his fish-line."