

Science Notes

BY WILLIAM G. HAYNES.

HOW TO REGAIN MENTAL BALANCE

The difference between a sane and an insane man is one of balance among the activities. Sanity is a proper adjustment of our activities and feelings to the varying conditions of life. And this adjustment may get out of order so gradually that no one is conscious of it. The first symptoms of the failure are obscure, and yet no one can afford to neglect them. One of them is a lack of "attentive control," as it is called by Dr. G. Wilse Robinson of Kansas City, from whose article in *The Medical Review of Reviews* (New York, September) we quote below. Attentive control—the power of fixing the attention on one thing and then doing it, to the exclusion of others—is "the one aim of all true education;" yet its loss is increasing at an alarming rate. We find more and more people who are victims of indecision, who can not make up their minds. These persons have lost their "will-power"—their ability to control attention and action. If this state of things goes too far, the result will be a form of insanity. As it is, many failures in business are due to it. Dr. Robinson tells us that it may be regained by proper exercise. He says, in substance.

"The two oldest and perhaps best known methods are relaxation and rhythmic breathing. Relaxation of the body implies cessation of any voluntary muscular movement. When our attention is intensely concentrated, voluntary movements are inhibited.

"Rhythmic breathing is another very old and well-known method of developing psychic control. When we give no attention to our breathing we breathe rhythmically and with a fairly constant rate. If we desire to change the rate of rhythm, which is normally automatic and involuntary, we must give the subject our undivided voluntary attention, for just as soon as we neglect to do this we immediately renew our normal rate of rhythm."

More complicated methods have been suggested for the same purpose by Dr. H. Crichton Miller, an authority quoted by Dr. Robinson. He differentiates between exercises which aim at holding the attention with a minimum of effort and those which demand effort. The former prevent introspection, while the latter are more educative in their aim. We read: "The scholar who has broken down after overwork, who is capable of controlling and even abusing his attentive powers, does not require a redevelopment of attentive control, but should be prevented from introspection. For him light literature, games of patience, and jig-saw puzzles are useful. For the society woman who has never concentrated her attention on anything more serious than a tango tea or a comedy, exercise requiring more effort of concentration should be advised.

"The following methods are given in the order in which they demand concentrated effort, beginning with the easiest:

"First. Pointing with the outstretched leg or arm at a given mark. Those who coordinate well will find this exercise easy; those who do not will find it more difficult than they anticipate.

"Second. Balancing is a very similar exercise. This exercise becomes involuntary and decreases in value with practice. A stick balanced on the finger or head is the customary procedure.

"Third. Letter-games (word-making) can be made useful and interesting by introducing the element of speed.

"Fourth. Reading a book upside down is a useful exercise, but the time required to read a given number of lines should always be determined. If the exercise is receiving the attention of the patient, the time will be shortened with practice.

"Fifth. Writing with two hands is an exercise of value, and the obvious improvement with practice will encourage the patient. Writing or drawing with the eyes fixed on a looking-glass in which the paper is reflected is much the same.

"Sixth. Describing accurately an object or picture which has been examined for a limited space of time develops the powers of observation and the memory.

"Seventh. Detailing a number of articles, say twenty, exposed for a short time is an exercise in which memory counts for more and observation less.

"Eighth. Counting with the eyes fixed on a given spot, say counting up to a hundred slowly without moving eyes or lips, at the time without allowing a single extraneous thought to occupy consciousness for a moment.

"Ninth. Following with a pin the second-hand of a watch is a good exercise.

"Tenth. This exercise is recommended by Munsterberg, Muller and others as being of great value. It consists of striking out a given vowel from a column of a newspaper. The exercise should be carried out with a view to three points: first, accuracy; second, speed; third, ignorance of contents. Columns of equal length should be given to the patient every time. Speed and accuracy should be noted after each test so that the improvement may be determined.

"Vittoz, in his most valuable work, suggests the following five classes of exercises for concentration. First, the symbol of infinity or the figure one; second, the ticking of a metronome; third, the tactile sense; fourth, affected parts of the body; fifth, ideas. The above exercises must be used intelligently and adapted to the individual patient and his environment."

INSIDIOUS DEFAMATION OF UNION CAUSE.

"I supposed its most offensive feature to be its defamation of the Negro. Much as I object to this on grounds both of justice and policy, the fundamental objection lies deeper. It is a covert, but most skillful and insidious defamation of the Union cause and apotheosis of slavery and rebellion. We of the white race should be first to rise against it, and we do ourselves no credit by leaving it to our colored fellow citizens to protest."

ALBERT E. PILLSBURY,
Ex-Gov. of Massachusetts.

The following are some opinions of the play:

Dr. Jacques Loeb, the eminent scientist, characterizes it as follows: "The play is in my opinion a glorification of homicidal mania with a special grievance against the Negro. It is an insult to this country to call that display of scenes of murder and its appeal to race hatred 'The Birth of a Nation.'"

FAVOR OPPOSING DIXON'S PHOTO PLAY.

(Continued from first page.)

white citizens, who will seek to prevent the showing of "The Birth of a Nation" at the Brandeis theatre.

By appealing to the managers and lessees of said theatre to cancel the engagement.

By bringing influence to bear upon the board of public welfare, who are empowered with censorship to forbid the play.

All other efforts having failed and only as a last resort to employ the best legal talent to be secured and carry the opposition into the courts, for the purpose of which suit we pledge ourselves to contribute the necessary funds.

Resolved, Further, that a suitable ordinance be drawn up and presented to the commissioners for passage which will forbid the giving of any plays or exhibiting any pictures that will stir up racial or religious strife.

A motion was unanimously passed that the chairman of the meeting be one of the committee of nine.

The following committee was named: The Rev. Messrs. Osborne, Botts, Logan and Wililams, Dr. J. H. Hutten, G. Wade Obee, Silas Robbins, James G. Jewell and Mrs. J. Alice Stewart.

This committee secured the cooperation of Robert Cowell, T. F. Sturgess, Rev. John Williams, Rabbi Cohn, Mrs. F. H. Cole, Mrs. H. G. Sunney and Victor Rosewater, but engagements prevented Rabbi Cohn and Mr. Rosewater meeting with the committee at the hour designated.

Wednesday morning, November 10, an interview was held by a committee of citizens with Mr. Sutphen, local manager of the Brandeis theatre, and Mr. Murphy, a representative of "The Birth of a Nation."

The committee sought to secure the elimination from the second part of the photo drama of two of the most objectionable features, namely: the exposing of the dead body of Gus, one of the victims of the Klu Klux Klan, which scene has been cut out of the film shown in New York, and the "rape" scene, which represents a little white girl being pursued by a repulsive Negro, and who only saves herself from dishonor and defilement by jumping off a cliff to her death.

This reasonable request of the committee was met by a positive and blank refusal from the theatrical representatives.

Mrs. F. H. Cole asked if it were not possible in some way to call attention to the fidelity and exemplary conduct of the Negroes who were the protectors of the white women and children of the south during war times, and who never betrayed their trust, which fact she understood had been either omitted or greatly slighted in the play. She believed that either in the film or in some other way this fact ought, in justice, be brought to the attention of the audience, and so modifying, at least in some degree, the unfavorable impression that the scenes portrayed with such dramatic power leaves upon the audience.

Mr. Sutphen consented to print such a statement, prepared by the committee, in the regular theatre program.

The British government has provided a pension of \$1,000 to the wife of Samuel Coleridge Taylor, \$100 to his mother and \$200 to each of his children until they reach the age of 21.

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