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HEREDITY.

Burton in his Anatomy of Melancholy, 1652, quotes an old French physician to the effect that:

"It is the greatest part of our felicity to be well-born, and it were happy for human kind, if only such parents as are sound of body and mind should be suffered to marry."

He adds:

"How careful, then, should we be in begetting of our children!"

He alludes to the cruel measures made use of in ancient Scotland for the repression of undesirable parentage and says:

"This was done for the common good, lest the whole nation be impaired or corrupted. A severe doom, you will say, and not to be used among Christians, yet more to be looked into than it is. For now by our too much facility in this kind, in giving way for all to marry that will, too much liberty and indulgence in tolerating all sorts, there is a vast confusion of hereditary diseases, no family secure, no man almost free, from some grievous infirmity or other. * * * It comes to pass that our generation is corrupt, we have many weak persons both in body and mind, many feral diseases raging among us, crazed families; our fathers bad, and we are like to be worse."

Human intelligence and human self-control are shown to be at a low average

A Low Level.

by the sophistries and delusions which frequently control the actions of large numbers of citizens. There are many striking instances of the kind furnished by history. The tendency prevails today in various parts of the world,

nowhere more dominantly than in the United States. Initiatives are not supplied the common mind from within itself. It gets motives, enthusiasm, action from external and stronger intelligences. There are a majority of mentalities which simulate the tree-toad which is always the color of the bark upon which it feeds and lives.

"The average man," says Doctor McKim, in his admirable work upon "Heredity and Human Progress," recently published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, "enjoys an enthusiasm, but is too indolent or feeble, intellectually, to find for himself an object sufficiently novel or imperative to induce in him this pleasurable emotion; when, therefore, a more energetic individual presents and recommends, however unreasonable, some idea or thing as worthy of enthusiasm, his proposal is quite sure to be accepted with acclamations of delight, and great masses of men may follow with docility the originator and his delusion."

This was illustrated by the religious mania called Millerism and also by the following of the money fallacies during recent times in the United States. Miller said the material world would burn up, be destroyed by fire, within a given time; Bryan said the commercial world would be annihilated by gold as soon as it became the single standard of value. Both prophets had myriads of disciples. Neither prophet proved himself worthy of credit.

"Whole communities suddenly fix their minds upon one object, and go mad in its pursuit; millions of people become simultaneously impressed with one delusion (say sixteen-to-one.) We see one nation, from its highest to its lowest members, with a fierce desire for military glory; another as suddenly becomes crazed upon a religious scruple; and neither of them recovers its senses until it has shed rivers of blood, and sowed a harvest of groans and tears to be reaped by its posterity."—[Doctor Elain].

Communal insanity existed in the tenth century, when nearly all believed

Examples.

the end of the world was at hand. From that belief the crusades were evolved. During centuries of the middle ages all believed in witchcraft, and even our dear New England ancestors hung people for witchcraft.

Among commercial delusions the "South Sea Craze" and the "Mississippi

Bubble" of the eighteenth century and the recent "South African Boom" are quite emphatic. But the most accentuated of the more recent epidemic lunacies is that which teaches that the free coinage of silver in unlimited quantities at the ratio of 16 to 1, by the government of the United States, would raise the price of all the silver on earth to more than twice its present value, that is, to \$1.29 an ounce. Can the men, who believe that, be otherwise than "defectives?" Must they be descended from any other than an ancestry with impaired powers of analytical reasoning?

A SOLACE.

Thoughtful citizens who reason for themselves came long since to know that the validity of a doctrine in finance, economics or religion is not to be safely measured by the number of its adherents. The impious adage that the voice of the people is the voice of God is seldom quoted except by office-seeking demagogues and never believed save by those who follow their teachings.

The great majority of the people of the United States have not formulated their own opinions. They have never moulded their own sentiments. Their opinions and sentiments are second-hand; they have been given to them by self-assertive, dogmatic teachers. Therefore, the conclusion that a thing is right, proper and useful because approved by a majority may be altogether erroneous. The voice of the people is oftener the voice of a demagogue or the devil than of a god.

The majority is a merciless tyrant, at times; and an ignorant democracy is more dangerous than an enlightened, humane and real aristocracy. A government of the best is better than a government of the vicious, the worst.

PORTO RICANS CAPABLE.

General Davis, military governor of Porto Rico, in

speaking of our dilatory congress, said:

"As free trade and constitutional rights have become political questions, I cannot enter into the controversy. I have given the government the facts, and have pointed out what I believe to be the only sound policy for the government. That ends my duty."

"The people of Porto Rico are civilized and are more capable than the people of New Mexico, who were given territorial government fifty years ago."