"To Laugh Is Insanity," Declares a Great Alienist.

"Theaters Are But Gatherings of People Suffering from Temporary Disorders of the Mind."



GHTER is insanity, health giving insanity; healthy distinuith.

To laugh is to exhibit acute tempotury mental derangement; to smile is but a milder attack. Theaters are but gatherings of people suffering from tempo-

Sir Arthur Mitchell, K. C. B., most

famous of Scotch alienists, after a lifetime of the study of laughter; after years devoted to study and analysis of grins, of smiles, of outbursts of laughter, makes these declarations. He has analyzed from every possible standpoint the couses, the varieties, the effects of laughter, and he declares that it is transfent lapse

rary disorders of the mind.

This man, perhaps the best known British alienist, has undertaken to solve the mystery of the phenomenon of laughter; to find why the human being among all the animals, laughs aloud, and why and from what laughter comes. His astounding announcements, backed by sound reasoning and by citation of authority after authority, have attracted the attention of the world of English speaking scientists.

Insanity That Is Healthful

But the strange and weird part of his argument, as it will appeal to the lay mind, is that while the person who laughs is suffering temporarily from one; orm of insanity, it is good to be insane in such a way. Further, he advocates or advances as a practical theory-that melancholy persons, and persons suffering from mental depression, he given nitrous oxide (laugh ing gas) and made to laugh repeatedly and violentlythat is, according to him-be made temporarily insune by the use of laughing gas and thus lifted above their depresson. By this method he believes sorrow might be relieved, suicides prevented, and men bordering on insanity lifted, by means of a lighter dose of insanity,

The definition of laughter given by Sir Arthur is as follows: "Laughter consists of a succession of convulsive movements effected by the combined action of the muscles of inspiration, expiration, and voice, causing a remarkable commotion and giving the whole body special aspects and attitudes. The vocal cords are brought together and separated in rapid dancing fashion with explosive, reiterated, and differently modulated sounds as a result. In the opinion of many the diaphragm is the muscle primarily affected."

If anything like that happens to you-you are suffering from mental derangement until your mouth quits sprending and your sides stop shaking and your eyes

Difference Between Smile and Laugh.

At the outset Bir Arthur explains carefully the difference between smiling and laughing, showing that they are different manifestations of the same mental state, and that, while the smile may occur locally, conflued to the muscles of the face, it need not be accompanied by laughter, while laughter is always accompanied by a smile. He then shows that, while laughter is accepted as a bodily expression of a mental state it occurs frequently without any mental emotion, as from tickling; an involuntary laughter-that is, instinctive and inherited. Then he says:

"Laughter that appears to be the expression of a mental state is largely, if not entirely, beyond control. Let us suppose that such a fit of laughter, instead of being of quite short duration, should last for a day, or longer than the state of mind which it expresses would be of corresponding duration. In such a case it would be difficult to say that the person thus persistently and continuously laughing was not in a state of mental disorder. When this prolonged laughter had ceased I think we should be justified in calling what had happened a transitory fit of mental disorder. The same applies to a fit of laughter lasting only for a few distinguishable,

moments. Duration only has varied. "This would practically mean that there may be a occurrence of short periods of mental disorder which are not accepted as having any bad effect. vincingly imitated.

though anthropold ages and dogs grimace Man's erect position and the location of diaphragm are not the cause of laughter. Laughter is not to be accounted for by reason because (1) reason condenths much laughter. (2) young persons with unripe reason laugh most, (3) laughter from tickling play no part in reason. Dogs and apes are su-cepman's feet and hands. Dogs and spes do not smile when tickled Infants haugh from tickling before they laugh from Causes of laughter very widely and change with the age of persons and their pleasure. He says: mental development. Laughter comes mainly from the ridiculous and bumorous - and is therefore

"As I see it, the mind may at times act passingly in certain disordered fashions which are not pathologi- searches in these widely different fields Sir Arthur cal, which are without injury and probably beneficial. Beyond question, we get strength of mind from laughing, which is a mental disorder."

It may sound strange to hear an argument that short periods of insanity strengthen the mind-but this view has been solemnly accepted.

Various Forms of Laughter. One by one, in detail and with much weight of evi- the third and fourth closely allied.

dence, Sir Arthur gives the forms and manifestations of laughter. He says: Laughter from tickling occurs without actual tick-

People cannot tickle themselves. The spots on the human body susceptible to ticking he says: are curlously scattered.

Laughter is excited through the senses of sight and Laughter due to mental pleasure is to be desired. Laughter due to tickling is to be avoided.

Laughter from tickling and from enjoyment are in-Tickling and merriment causing diametrically op- with frequency and without injury is proved. Its

posite states of mind, result in the same manfestations. effects are sound, refreshing sleep, a good appetite, a

Sheltered a

moonshiner

Man is the only astimal that laughs al- mental depression might it not prove useful?" between the toes of dogs and the feet of infanta reveal. and could not avoid doing so: apparently, that the emotions excited are the same. Simple reflex in a dog," he says, "appears to be

in all fours with what happens to a young child when ecstasy. Southey says he felt "unusually cheerful." the soles of its feet are tickled. The jerking away follows in both, and in both no laughter or smilling folgws. In the case of the child, however, as it grows older, a difference appears. It stills jerks its foot Away, but there also occurs a commotion of the muscles of the face, with something like a smile. As it grows still older voiced laughter follows the tickling. Dogs. thus show the starting point of baughter but never

progress any further. asked to do so. He is observed to separate his lips, stretch them transversely, and slightly open his mouth in order, it is thought, to express his pleasure at receiving a biscuit. He is always happy when he thus tible to tickling in the feet smiles, but there is nothing involuntary about the and in the hind feet more than movements. He calls them into play. It is grimacing, in the front feet just as in not smilling."

Not Always Due to Joy.

After showing by the great variety of adjectives. used in connection with laughter that there are infinite forms of smiles and laughs. Sir Arthur proves by the bible that all laughter does not come from joy or

There are twenty-nine references to laughter in the Old Testament and four in the new. In thirteen instances the hughter referred to is that of scorn, derision, mocking, or contempt; laughing at some one, started by the senses of hear- or at some calamity, trial, or danger occurs more than ing or seeing, rarely by feet. once. It is once called madness-' I said of laughter it is mad.' Sarah's laugh within herself seems to be the same as the laugh in one's sleeve. It thus appears Dumb and blind persons laugh exactly as do normal that the laughter spoken of in the bible is not that persons, showing laughter is which is born of a joyful or merry heart. In only two Instances can it be so regarded: "Till he fill thy mouth Deeply idiotic persons with laughing and thy lips with rejoleing, and 'Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongues Imbeciles laugh freely, with singing.' The word smile does not occur in the bible, and no prophet, saint, or apostle is ever spoken.

ing, or smelling, or tasting.

neither laugh nor smile

ity and pleasure mostly.

from physical pleasure.

by inhaling nitrous exide.

from excitation of their van-

Imbecile laughter comes

The phenomenon of vio-

not imitation

From his investigations, experiments, and re-

The first, second, and fifth states are related and

ing gas. After relating in detail the effects of experi-

ments with the gas by Sir Humphrey Davy and others,

would not. I think, have been a far fetched speculation,

draws his conclusons regarding the "strange, irration-

classes laughter into five divisions:

Laughter from tickling.

Laughter from a mental state.

Laughter from infection or sympathy.

Laughter from mere threat of tickling.

Sir Arthur made an extensive study of the laughter from no mental effort but of mutes to show conclusively that laughter is a nat .. ural function and not the result of imitation in any way. He tells the case of James Mitchell, born blind lent laughter can be excited and deaf, who laughed heartily and naturally, and of Laura Bridgman of New Hampshire who was completely blind, deaf, and her sense of smell almost

She laughed frequently, screamed with delight, al, and disorderly " phenomenon of laughter. He and jumped about as an ordinary child," he says. " She used her voice carlously in naming persons, a chuckle for one, a cluck for another, and a guttural sound for another. She laughed aloud at the idea of a dog in school, and one day she pretended her doll was sick, put it to bed with a hot water bottle, and laughed heartily all the time.'

Taking the case of Helen Keller, the wonderful blind, deaf, and dumb girl, he studied her laugh and

Taking up the question of nitrous oxide (laughing "She is of joyous temperament, and, when bantering cause, gas), Sir Arthur propounds his startling theory of the cure of mental depression by the use of the exhibatat- some one, laughs audibly, placing her hand over her mouth to prevent too much bolsterousness. When she reads an amusing passage in a book she gives an audible exclamation, akin to a suppressed outburst of laughter, and frequently when alone, spelling with her Davy pointed out the possible value of the gas left hand into her right, she laughs aloud. This last is as an anasthetic in minor surgical operations. It an exception to the general rule, for human beings seln laugh aloud when alone,"

if he had also suggested its possible value in states of The story of Davy's experiments with laughing gas mental depression, if inhaled in suitable doses, with is told as a scientific study of laughter, and the testia proper admixture of common air and with sufficient mony of the great men who permitted Sir Humphrey frequency over a period of some length. That it can to experiment with them is given.

"James Thomson speaks of 'Involuntary laughter" and a healthy well being. If it led and 'satisfaction felt in violent exertions of the to anything like this in the case of a person under and legs, S.T. Coleridge says: 'The only motion which and hearing.

While Sir Arthur makes no reference to ever writ. "Who were looking at me, but I could not avoid, nor ing a farce, his other experiments with laughter are indeed felt any wish to avoid, beating the ground with quite as interesting. His stories of tickling the bairs my feet. Wedgwood says that he acted ridicalously

> "Davy calls it plenourable delirium, Coloratge calls it 'unmingled pleasure,' 'bighty pleasurable,' and

> > Joy Over Other's Discomfort.

Why people laugh is a question into which Sir Arthur has spent years of delying. He has collected tens of thousands of reasons for bughter, varying widely, according to the ago, sex, condition, and race of the laughter but all similar in the expressions and accompanied by practically the same phenomena phys-I often meet a high-bred collie that smiles when leally. He finds that children laugh first at nothing, that at 7 or 8 years they laugh at something bulletings some action which they behold and which involves the idea of discomfort to more one etse, at 10 less at personal happenings, and up to 16 years, where some thing that upsets the dignity of some one else or made ... some one else ridiculous arouses fainghter. The idea of discomfort-even to bordoring upon danger-for others, slight injuries to others, appeals to the largest class of Innehers.

But, he shows, no one laughs at great, overmasterng joy, no one laughs at dire peril or serious injuries

Just when man passes the faugling stage the eminent student does not state, but he has discovered that men and women gradually sense to laugh as they grow older and that, in direct proportion, they lose their sensitiveness to tickling.

Proof of Mental Disorder.

In closing his record of his investigations the distingwished allenist says:

"The larger conclusions, which alves to be the outime of this short study of laughter, are as follows: That laughter is a state of mental disorder, which is evidenced by the irrational and purposeless phe numena attending it, and the absence during it of all

coherent thought.

That these short states of mental disorder, which may be very frequent, do not burt us, but, on the con-

That laughter is not, even usually, the expression of unalloyed pleasure and joy; that, on the contrary, it often expresses states of mind which are mean, contemptible, and cruel, the moral faculty being then in abeyance; and that laughter so arising is pardonable only on the view that it is a state of mental disorder. That deep foys are not expressed by laughter.

That laughter is not excited in regard to what involves danger or great suffering. That in like manner blows or firm pressure do not

tickle and so produce laughter.

That there are five distinct kinds of laughter

Can't Be Imitated Successfully.

"That laughter is involuntary, that in a strict sense it is impossible to laugh at will, and that it is difficult to imitate laughter successfully. "That there is a laughter the continuance of which.

we desire, even though we may be ushamed of its: That we always neske efforts to avoid tickling

and the laughter which follows it. "That the provocative of laughter are not the same at all ages or in all individuals or races. "That individuals and room laugh differently from

each other, but that the essentials of the phenomena are the same "That ages seem to lamit in a faction and dogs perhaps show the starting of laughter from tickling. but nevertheless that man may be said to be the only

animal that laughs "That there is no use attal difference between the laughter of those having all their school and those deof from high of sight or hourier or of both wight

She has had hine husbands and Is Only Chirty-Chree Years Old Che Many Matrimonial Adventures of the Prettiest Girl and Best Cook



Jane Harkins-Ellet-Boards-Wyckton . Lowman - Lowman -Hudson-Dumenil-Ayres, from which even the casual render can surmise that she was been a Harkins and that the new mate's name is Ayres, which it? is-Mason Ayres, who is not named after Mason county, Ky., but because his father was initiated into the secret order the night Mason arrived in this

Despite her many marital misadventures no more blushing

bride was ever led to the altar. Everybody in Taylor county is related to Mattle Ayres now, or if any escaped the outlook is that they will be, for she is only 33 years old and one of the handsomest women in the county and besides is noted as the best cook and house keeper in all the country round. And if Mason Ayres should happen to go to join the colony of husbands on the mountain side two miles southwest of Lone Star there would be others pleading for the opportunity to be No. 10.

Says Only Death Should Part. This woman, whose life has been as full of romances as

Eloped at

fifteen years

her state is of feuds, is a strong opponent of divorce. No man or woman should marry unless they are in love," she says. rate them except death. Neither has the right to seek freedom by law, and, while they may separate if conditions become unbearable, neither, under any condition, has the right to wed unless the other is dead,'

Up in the little graveyard above the "Washfoot Bapchurch in the hills near Lone Star is the graveyard and the row of stones, side by side, bear inscriptions that tell briefly the story of Mattle Ayres and her life of romance. For she has buried the eight husbands side by side, with graves just alike, with head and foot stones in exact duplicate. The first headstone in the row contains tot, inscription:

MORGAN ADAIR ELLEST. BELOVED HUSBAND OF MATILDA ELLET. TILL WE MEET AGAIN.

And down the line of gravestones the same inscription appears, only with a different name each time, until the casual visitor begins to speculate concerning the meeting and wonder if it will not be more like a convention.

First Romance When 15 Years Old.

The girl's romance commenced when she was 15 years old and fell in love with Morg Ellet, who fived in Campbellsville, the county town of Taylor county, and was the gayest, hardest riding, handsomest, and "drinkingest" man in all the country round about. He was also the "cornet playingest" young man and the "nerke bedagest" in the district-to use the form of speech that is commonest in the Taylor county hills. Mattle Harkins had been to Lexington sheriff's hammer.

and Most Expert Housekeeper in Caylor County, Kentucky. and to Frankfort and she was the "citifiedest" girl around about and as pretty as a speckled pup-to use another Taylor



But old Jesse Harkins, her father, did not see it that way. He knew Morg Ellet was a hard drinker and a reckless young fellow, and, bestdes, his

daughter, he thought, was too young to be married. But-as usual-love laughed at parental objections. One night Mattle crept out on to the roof of the "lean-to" of her father's home up in the hills ten miles from "And if they are in love nothing can sepa- Campbellsville, scurred across the fields to the big road, climbed up behind Mers Ellet on his horse, and they started away through the darkness towards Campbellsville. The barking of the dogs aroused old man Harkins, and, hurriedly grabbing his rifle, he started in pursuit on horseback. reached Campbellsville after midnight-just in time to meet his daughter and his new son-in-law coming away from the the justice of the peace-man and wife. Harkins stormed and, throwing his rifle to his shoulder, prepared to dispose of a sun-in-law hummarily, but his daughter stepped

in front of her husband and defied him to shoot. Eventually Old Man Harkins forgave them. For Morg steadied down" and became the "lovingest" husband in Campbellsville. Eleven months after the elopement Morg went hunting. While ne was sitting on a fence his rifle slipped, the hammer struck a rail, and the bullet pierced his

Mattle Ellet remained a widow just ten months, then her heart was won by Stephen Boards, who war elderly, kindly, and wealthy, owner of a large farm and much timber land. The young widow was in financial straits, for the Ellet property had fatten in value and was plastered with mortgages. most of which were held by Boards. He was a strange man, much disliked, and not popular with any one in the county, despite his wealth and his real kindness of heart, which he bid under a gruff and forbidding exterior. The young men of the county flocked around Mrs. Ellet, but she repulsed them all and struggled alone to hold up the family name of the Ellets and save the property from being sold under the

walked out. The papers were the canceled mortgages on sadly out of place.

she could not accept such a gift. Boards tolo der he loved her mitted to assist her.

No one knows what she said, but three months later they

worse than ever. And, within



Wed an old schoolmate

after foreclosing a mortgage he was shot from ambush and killed and Mattie Ellet Boards became a wealthy woman. Again a swarm of woodra

came around as seen as the young widow began to wear a touch of color to relieve the heavy mourning which heightened her beauty. She was kind and patient, but not one of them gained any advantage us it Ed Wyckton came from down about Gadberry in Adair counwhere he had been operating an illicit still. He was lodging revenue officers and he wandered around Camp sells ville and the adjacent country. Wyckton was a strong, handsome, daring man and he proved to be about the "woodingest" fellow that ever struck Taylor county. Within a few weeks after he beheld the beautiful young widow he was a regular caller, and seven months after the second grave was dug in the cometery of the Harkinses near Lone Star above the valley of Piney creek, he won her heart and she

Married

her brother-in-law

became Mrs. Elliet-Boards-Wyckton. The handsome moonshiner proved the worst of her ventures. Down in Adair county he and his five sisters operated a big illicit still in the mountains, defying the federal officers

In the crisis of her unancial affairs Stephen Boards came of their handsome brother in bringing home a new wife, and to her little cottage one evening to talk business. The the fact that she was wealthy did not change their orlinon. strange, quiet, much disliked man, listened while she told Wyckton, knowing that in Kentucky it is practically imposhim her troubles and pleaded for more time to pay the claims sible to convict a woman of moonshining, shielded himself que him. Without a word he took a bunch of papers from behind the skirts of the five amazons who helped him run his pocket, told her to examine them, and take her time, and the still, and in this family pretty, delicate little Mattie was

One day, after they had been married eight months, the Mrs. Ellet called the next day at Boards' dings little revenue officers made a raid. There were ten men in the office in Campbellsville and asked an explanation, declaring party and Ed was away from home. They came to the house, where the bride was waiting in alarm, and a huge and wanted to help her; that he had no hope that she would buildog attacked them and was killed by a shot. The officers ever love him, but that he deemed it a great favor to be per- burst into the house, discovered the shrinking wife, and deto tell. At that Instant two of the sisters entered and a fleres ere married, and Boards built for her one of the finest battle ensued, the women fighting, screaming, and struggling ouses in the district. Everybody said she married him for to reach their guns. The three other sisters, aroused by the his money and hated him sound of the struggle, rushed to the house and engaged in the encounter. After a fearful struggle the five were overseven weeks after the wed; powered and bound.

At that instant Ed Wyckton ran from the woods and opened fire upon the posso, believing that his wife and sisters were being ill treated. Stationed behind a tree he dropped two of the posse. Then one man crept out along the fencea shot rang out and Mattle saw her husband throw up his hands reel in a circle, and drop dead with a builet in his

Almost crazed by grief and the shock. Mattle devoted her wealth to freeling the sisters of her husband and managed, by employing excellent lawyers, to set them free when the federal court met at Louisville Mattie Harkins, widowed



This one amused her little girl

home on the site of the rude house from which she sloped as a schoolgirl. Two years later she was quietly married to Nat Lowman, who had been one of her baylood lovers. Nat.

lived just two years, then died of consumption, his wife nurs- remains happy and hearty, and ing him tenderly for over a year. She buried him alongside Mattie Ayres "waiting list" is and piling up money. The five sisters-in-law recented the act the others and mourned for nine months, then became the , beginning to get discouraged.

Accepted a man

from the Blue Grass

solicitude and tenderness during his brother's illness and death and during her fourth widowhood. By that time Mattle had come to be known as the "marry-

ingest" wonjan in Kentucky. This time, however, it seemed that she ind found a husband who would last. They lived happily for four years, and one child-Mattle's first-came to them the union. Then a tree fell the wrong direction as Andy was chopping it down. Mattle watted until after dark for her husband to r arn, then, leaving her 4 months old baby alone in its eradi , she set forth up the mountain side in seek her husband. She found his mangled body under the tree, and, all since in the dark woods, she tore and shopped at the tree and at daybreak she dragged the body the house and fell fainting by the side of her haby's cradle. The walls of the infant attracted attention-and the neighbors found them. Mattle was slowly nursed back to health, and her beauty, chastened and made purer by sorrow. attrac of the attention of all. Wooses came and went. Her sore: was too deep. But eleven months after her fifth be-Feat Litent Manuel Hudson came by chance to the house.

Won Her by Kindness to Baby.
There was no handsomer man in all the Kentucky hills.

and he had been away to college at Williamsburg, and was the "incingest" and "gultur pickingest" swain around con: y. He won Mattle's love by his kindness to her little girl but r, and six months after they met they were married Hudich was shot in a row at Frankfort the next year while inblying in the legislature for a timber land bill, and one year later his widow was led to the altar by " Pony." framentl, a man from the Blue Gross, who not her at Frankfort when, as Mrs. Hudson, she attended a session of the legislature. Dumenti took her to live at Harrodsburg, but that same full he was stricken with heart disease and fell dead in the lobby of the Gibson house, in Cincinnati, where he had gone to buy goods.

The eighth gravestone was erected in " Mattle Harkins" cemetery and the people of Taylor county declared that her husbands were the "dyingest" lot of men they ever auw. This did not stop the florking of bachelors and widowers toward Lone Star, and the unmarried girls made complaints that the bandsome mutti-widow was stealing all the available men. Mason Ayres, a young saw miller, was the ninth

man to win her heart, and, although thuy have been may ried for nearly a week, he still



Was wooed by all the younger ones

