



Government Hospital for the Insane.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Oct. 22.—(Special Correspondence.)—Are we growing crazier?

The census office finds that within six years the insane in our asylums have increased from 146,2 to 203,5 per 100,000 of our population? And that lunacy is increasing throughout the entire world was announced the other day by the famous Dr. Forbes Winslow, who at the same time made the grim prediction that "there will be more lunatics in the world than sane people 300 years hence"; that "we are rapidly approaching a mad world."

An Alarmist View, Says Alienist.

"Dr. Forbes Winslow's view is undoubtedly an alarmist's one," quoth he. "It is based apparently upon the assumption that a social condition may be isolated from all other social conditions and considered alone and by itself. When so considered the natural tendency would probably be as Dr. Winslow has suggested, but social conditions are not to be so simply considered. They are always extremely complex by being surrounded and influenced by other conditions that modify the results. There is hardly a living species today but what, if it went on producing at its normal rate without being interfered with by surrounding and modifying conditions, would in a marvellously short time populate the entire surface of the globe. But we know that this does not happen. In fact, if you will measure off a plot of ground a few feet square in which are contained plants and animals of numerous species and habitats, any one of which, if left to itself, would populate the globe in a few years, you will find at the end of a few months that the relative proportions between the several species has not materially varied. This fact was pointed out many years ago on the basis of actual observation by Darwin."

Insanity Increases With Longevity.

"Dr. Winslow is quoted as stating also that in every part of the world civ-

lization is advancing and so insanity is bound to advance," I added. "Is insanity a necessary accompaniment of civilization? Will not higher intelligence, produced by advancing civilization, conquer more and more the tendency toward madness?"

Chief Factor in Madness.

"Which do you regard as the more dangerous factor in insanity today, exciting or predisposing causes?" "The general tendency today is to believe that the more important factors in the production of mental disease are those that are resident in the individual, or the predisposing." "A noted alienist lately named 'wine, women, worry and work' as the chief exciting causes. Do you agree with him?" "No, that is a good example of alliteration; that's all."

"Insanity" Not a Medical Term.

"The general answer to the question would be yes, although it calls for certain criticism as to the use of the word insanity. Insanity, in my estimation, is not a medical term at all. The mind is subject to various diseases. When

such diseases are of a nature or degree as to render the individual unfitted to live in the community either because of danger to himself or to others—when, in other words, the community is unwilling to put up with him any longer—is it that community segregated to the confines of an institution. The process of this segregation is a legal process. It is a legal process to determine sanity. Sanity, in the meaning of the process is fitness to live in the community. Insanity the physician sees the presence of mental disease, the lawyer fixes the legal status. Naturally as civilization advances it becomes more and more complex, and, therefore, the difficulties of a given individual getting along in the community become greater and greater, and, therefore, again departures from the normal of less and less extent become matters which may lead to one's commitment as 'insane.'"

Chief Factor in Madness.

"How can the chief exciting and predisposing causes of insanity best be eliminated?" "The subject of mental hygiene is an extensive one. Preventive medicine as applied to mental disorders has its most difficult problem, and its most complex, in the main, a more intensive scientific study of the various mental diseases in order to determine more accurately the various factors that are at work in their production and development is an essential precondition."

Are there any sex differences in

modern tendencies toward insanity? Does the rate of increase seem to be greater among men or women?" "The percentage of insanity in the two sexes is practically equal."

Race Suicide and Insanity.

"Does not the general decrease in the size of families tend toward relieving women of worries which lay the foundation for insanity?" "That is too complex a question to be answered categorically. The presence of children in a family that is poverty-stricken becomes a source of drain which the mother particularly is ill fitted to maintain. The actual etiology of the mental breakdown under such circumstances has largely to do with exhaustive work and poor nutrition, which, of course, in such an instance is focalized about the presence of the child. Of course, the presence of the child is merely incidental. Such causes might well produce actual disease for other reasons than the mere fact that there were too many children. The absence of children in certain other types of families might readily leave to idleness an opportunity for indulgence that would be distinctly opposed to the best tenets of mental health, and so the question might be

Are We Growing Crazier?

SPREAD OF INSANITY NOTED BY CENSUS OFFICE.

More Lunatics Than Six Years Ago—Government's Chief Alienist Gives Interesting Opinions on Effect of Race Suicide and Other Modern Conditions.



Census Office Computers.

conditions which are comprised under the term 'insanity' is not material."

Are there any new forms of insanity?

"I asked Dr. White, in conclusion. 'In all probability there are no new forms of insanity,' he said. 'If they are not recorded in the older works it was simply because they were not observed. Probably they all existed, and the more we are acquainted with the older writers the more we are astounded to find recorded in their works observations of conditions which we thought we had discovered.'"

But let us get back to the original question: "Are we growing crazier?"

"And to the census office, whose recent figures would indicate that we are. It appears from these statistics that the number of persons becoming insane, in the average American community of 100,000 persons, has increased nearly 18 in six years. Commenting on these figures, Dr. J. A. Hill, chief statistician, has this to say: 'It must be remembered that these figures include not only the insane who are committed to hospitals, but also the number of cases of insanity not resulting in such commitments; the census has no doubt that it is entirely possible that the increase in the number of commitments per 100,000 is not due in any considerable degree to an increased prevalence of insanity, but sim-



Dr. J. A. Hill

considered, you see, from many standpoints."

"Is insanity becoming more and more curable?"

"We are learning how to influence mental disorder as never before. So far, however, the general result on the curability of that whole mass of con-



Dr. White, Famous Alienist Who is Not Alarmed

ply to an extension of this method of caring for the insane. It is a change that might easily result from an increase in the number of institutions of this class and from an increasing disposition on the part of the public to resort to such institutions.

"The statistics, in proportion to its population, had at our last inquiry the largest number of insane reported in institutions in Massachusetts with 24.6 per 100,000 population. New York, however, had almost the same proportion, namely, 24.1 per 100,000 population. And the state which ranks next is Connecticut, where the ratio is 22.1 per 100,000 population. But it should be borne in mind that the variations between different states in the number of insane in institutions, in proportion to population, are probably due to differences in the sufficiency of provision for caring for the insane in this way, and also to differences as regards the practice of committing the insane to institutions, quite as much as to variations in the insanity rate prevailing in different communities. There is no doubt, for example, that in Massachusetts and New York, where the figures are the highest, better provision is made for the care of the insane in institutions than in most of the other states."

Least Insanity in West.

"In general, the number of insane in hospitals is, in proportion to population, much smaller in the West than in the East. The ratios are also smaller in the South than in the North. In 34 of the states and territories the ratio of insane in institutions to total population has increased in the six-year period. Most of the states in which this ratio has decreased lie west of the Mississippi, these commonwealths including states of the Pacific Coast states and all of the mountain states but three—Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico. 'The section of the country showing the greatest decrease has undergone a very rapid development in recent years and it is possible that the new population coming from other sections of the United States represents a class in which insanity is less prevalent than in the stay-at-homes.'"

(Copyright, 1912, by John Elfreth Watkins.)



In the camp of the Molliecoddies, at the rear with the baggage-wagons, men sat silent about the fires and avoided one another's eyes.

ing, facing about on the new line, and firing a round or two before they were overwhelmed. Then the regiment, and after it the brigade, was rolled up, telescoped, crushed, with hardly a chance to fire a shot. It was not their fault. The best and most seasoned regiment in the army could have done no better under the circumstances. But when the Major-General had collected the shattered remnant of his forces on the safe side of the river, he felt the need of a scapegoat, as the Colonel had divined, and recognized work in their production and development is an essential precondition."

The Molliecoddies

by Frederick Walworth Brown

ing, facing about on the new line, and firing a round or two before they were overwhelmed. Then the regiment, and after it the brigade, was rolled up, telescoped, crushed, with hardly a chance to fire a shot. It was not their fault. The best and most seasoned regiment in the army could have done no better under the circumstances. But when the Major-General had collected the shattered remnant of his forces on the safe side of the river, he felt the need of a scapegoat, as the Colonel had divined, and recognized work in their production and development is an essential precondition."

The Molliecoddies

ing, facing about on the new line, and firing a round or two before they were overwhelmed. Then the regiment, and after it the brigade, was rolled up, telescoped, crushed, with hardly a chance to fire a shot. It was not their fault. The best and most seasoned regiment in the army could have done no better under the circumstances. But when the Major-General had collected the shattered remnant of his forces on the safe side of the river, he felt the need of a scapegoat, as the Colonel had divined, and recognized work in their production and development is an essential precondition."

The Molliecoddies

ing, facing about on the new line, and firing a round or two before they were overwhelmed. Then the regiment, and after it the brigade, was rolled up, telescoped, crushed, with hardly a chance to fire a shot. It was not their fault. The best and most seasoned regiment in the army could have done no better under the circumstances. But when the Major-General had collected the shattered remnant of his forces on the safe side of the river, he felt the need of a scapegoat, as the Colonel had divined, and recognized work in their production and development is an essential precondition."

The Molliecoddies

ing, facing about on the new line, and firing a round or two before they were overwhelmed. Then the regiment, and after it the brigade, was rolled up, telescoped, crushed, with hardly a chance to fire a shot. It was not their fault. The best and most seasoned regiment in the army could have done no better under the circumstances. But when the Major-General had collected the shattered remnant of his forces on the safe side of the river, he felt the need of a scapegoat, as the Colonel had divined, and recognized work in their production and development is an essential precondition."

The Molliecoddies

ing, facing about on the new line, and firing a round or two before they were overwhelmed. Then the regiment, and after it the brigade, was rolled up, telescoped, crushed, with hardly a chance to fire a shot. It was not their fault. The best and most seasoned regiment in the army could have done no better under the circumstances. But when the Major-General had collected the shattered remnant of his forces on the safe side of the river, he felt the need of a scapegoat, as the Colonel had divined, and recognized work in their production and development is an essential precondition."

The Molliecoddies

ing, facing about on the new line, and firing a round or two before they were overwhelmed. Then the regiment, and after it the brigade, was rolled up, telescoped, crushed, with hardly a chance to fire a shot. It was not their fault. The best and most seasoned regiment in the army could have done no better under the circumstances. But when the Major-General had collected the shattered remnant of his forces on the safe side of the river, he felt the need of a scapegoat, as the Colonel had divined, and recognized work in their production and development is an essential precondition."