a way in which it can be analysed in a very large series of cases. I hope his suggestion will be carried out, and I hope his chart will be very widely adopted.

Dr. HAYES NEWINGTON.—I would like to ask what weighing machine Dr. Bond uses. I think that is an important element in carrying out his system. A beam machine to weigh by dead weight is most inconvenient. We want a machine that can be carried about without getting out of order, and I think Dr. Bond will do us a service if he can tell us which machine he finds to be the best. Probably he has tried many.

Dr. ROBERT JONES.—I should be glad if the author would tell us who fills up the percentages. It seems to be so technical a matter, that even a well-informed assistant medical officer might shy at it.

Dr. BOND.—I would thank those who have spoken on the subject I have brought forward. As to who fills up the percentages on the forms, I find it is impossible for the nursing staff to do it. If mistakes are made, charts such as this are absolutely useless, so the work has to be carried out by the medical officers. I shall be pleased to give members interested, if they will kindly write to me, full information regarding my experience of weighing machines.

Modern Witchcraft: a Study of a Phase of Paranoia.

By CONOLLY NORMAN (1).

WHEN any belief tends to reappear in various races from age to age and under various conditions of civilisation and education, it acquires a special interest because it probably depends on some general trait in the mental organisation of our species.

The sense of mystery from which we can never wholly rid ourselves is probably one of the primitive phases of human thought. It is perhaps connected with that great human desire to look beyond the surface of things, and to be unsatisfied with that mere recollection of phenomena which apparently satisfies our fellow-creatures who are lower in the animal scale. The sense of mystery, as the psychiater chiefly studies it, lies within the limits of the morbid.

Whether suspicion, which I am in the habit of calling the special emotion of paranoia, be a reversion or a denudation, or whether it be more immediately dependent upon the sense of mystery, I am not clear, nor have we now time to discuss, but mystery and suspicion are intimately associated in the minds of our patients.

Among the sane or partially sane or deemed-sane, the secular belief in witchcraft is perhaps the most remarkable example of a similar combination of feelings. Many of the phenomena of the belief in witchcraft are the same over all the world; and the machinations of the witch-finder among the Matabele are essentially identical with those of the notorious

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Matthew Hopkins and of the Salem worthies; nor were the "reasons" which convinced the Bishop of Rouen that Jeanne D'Arc was a witch very different from those which satisfied the Rev. Richard Baxter, the Rev. Cotton Mather, or Sir Matthew Hale, Chief Justice of England, or (of worse example) our own Sir Thomas Browne, who seems in this matter to have lost his reason in an *O profunditas*, and to have followed only too closely the maxim of the fierce African whom he quotes—*Certum est quia impossibile est.* (2)

These thoughts suggest themselves when we find reappearing, among the paranoiacs of to-day, notions having the closest kinship with some of the old witchcraft superstitions, although we can be tolerably sure that the victims of to-day's delusions are quite unfamiliar with the history of the ancient belief.

One of the most frequent means whereby the witches of old were considered to influence their victims injuriously was to acquire possession of something pertaining to the latter, and, by exercising malign energy upon this object, which was in the hands of the witch, to transfer evil to the bewitched. Thus, among the ordinary apparatus of the craft were waxen images representing individuals to be operated upon. Pins were thrust into these images, and by this means pain or disease was produced in the originals thereof; or the image was slowly melted and the victim lost flesh and pined away to his end like as his figure was dissolved by the heat. A picture could also be similarly treated. Anything that had actually belonged to the man or woman to be injured could be used in the same way; being burned amidst incantations and blasting spells, it gave to these words and ceremonies their personal application. A picture or a portrait image, as more nearly representing the individual, had special efficacy compared with mere articles of property. But great value belonged to anything that could be considered as part of the victim himself. His handwriting was important, especially his signature, even when this was not appended to some contract with the evil one, obtained either surreptitiously or otherwise. A lock of hair was even more valuable to the witch than to the lover, and for the same reason, that it had been part of the living body of the subject—part of his or her very self. (3)

We find this thought reproduced with singular fidelity, though in a modern garb, among those paranoiacs of to-day

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who entertain the very common delusions of mystic influence. The following cases will illustrate my meaning and exemplify a curious survival or, as one perhaps should rather say, reversion.

CASE 20624.—Female, æt. 20, came under treatment in December, 1901. She had been for a few weeks in one of the Dublin workhouses, whither she had come from a convent reformatory, where, it was said, her mental symptoms had first appeared about three months before. No further history was obtainable from external sources. The patient stated that she had been an orphan; that she was adopted by a lady, who brought her up as a servant. At little over 16 years of age she ran away with her mistress's coachman, who brought her to America. After a time he wanted to marry her, but she had already become jealous of his relations with other women, and so parted company with him and came back to Ireland. She adheres pretty closely to this story, which is probably approximately true. At the time of her admission she was clean and tidy in habits, capable of maintaining a conversation, and quite collected in manner. She said she had a vision of the B. V. M. in the workhouse chapel, and had also seen a cloud come down from the ceiling and a cross come out of the cloud. A voice in her ear had directed her to cut off her hair, and she had done so. Attempts were made in the workhouse to mesmerise her. A few days later she had formed numerous delusions as to her new surroundings: certain of the asylum officials were going to do something to her, and she knew this because she felt hot when they came near her.

January 17th, 1902.—She saw lights in the sky which were intended to mesmerise her. She heard a voice in the workhouse which told her not to speak, and she remained dumb for a considerable time (true). Does not know whose the voice was. They are always trying to mesmerise her through trap-doors in her bedroom ceiling and through the dormitory window. She says she heard one of the medical officers planning with a couple of nurses how she was to be mesmerised.

February 17th, 1902.—Her meat is horses' flesh; she knows by its peculiar taste; there is chloroform in her tea and on her meat; she knows by the smell. Chloroform is also administered to her at night through a trap-door in the ceiling.

March 17th, 1902.—Chloroform is nightly administered to the patients, who are then suffocated and brought away to have post-mortem examinations made on them. The coroner comes here every day to assist at the autopsies.

April 17th, 1902.—Searchlights flash through the sky, referring to her. People tell her they are employed to mesmerise her. The B. V. M. spoke to her and foretold many things that have come to pass. The medical officers smell of chloroform as they pass her. The night nurse influences her so that patient sneezes all the time they are near. Tells the nurses that she is the Duchess of Devonshire and of great talent, etc.

June 17th, 1902.—Is "the Spanish duchess," the "Duchess of Devonshire," "was born in Spain." She wears a drooping cap and a sash like a peasant in an opera, and says this is her native costume.

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Nurse A. B. tries to drug her—"Whenever she comes into the w ard I become unconscious." "It is like the effects of an anæsthetic I get for a dental operation—chloroform." She will, however, eventually rule this asylum, and put down the devilish work of doctors and nurses.

September 17th, 1902.—It is noted that she is quite tranquil in her behaviour and works usefully in the sewing-room. Is of Spanish descent, and so dresses as far as she can operatically. She is drugged by nurse A. B., so that whenever the latter passes her anywhere strange feelings come over her.

December 17th, 1902.—Says she is married to one of the assistant medical officers, who is a Spaniard, and about to be a prince. She writes this gentleman love-letters, which it should be said are not of a salacious character.

Such was her progress during the first year of her stay in the asylum. Hallucinations of smell, vision, and hearing; strong sense of occult influence; appearance of exalted delusion complementary to and not destructive of fundamental persecutory delusion.

Early in 1903 she began to accuse Dr. Norman of "influencing" her. He made her stupid and impeded her speech when he passed by. She "did not know" but "thought" this was by mesmeric means. Said that he stood behind her one day; in consequence of a sensation she experienced, she turned round and beheld that he had thrust his hand in the tail-pocket of his coat; ever after she experienced a sharp pain in the back of her chest on the left side whenever she saw him. Later on, things got worse. She complained, without any particular reason, of mitral valve disease, and also of pain in the cardiac region. It appears that one day as Dr. Norman passed by he asked her "how was the pain?" pointing with his finger towards her heart. She said nothing then, but afterwards she said that he had caused her dreadful pain by pointing at her, and had influenced her heart so that she fainted three times next night. By this manœuvre he had established a fatal influence over her; she felt ill whenever she saw him, and had pain in her heart, and sometimes all over, as if she was being prodded with pins. Furthermore, Dr. Norman influenced her so that she could hardly speak. When she tried to speak her tongue and her heart caught. (It may be mentioned, by the way, that she neither suffered from fainting nor from any perceptible difficulty of speech.) Finally, Dr. Norman was always annoying her through some mesmeric or hypnotic

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influence. It affected her in speaking. It was as if there was a wire from her heart to her throat. Something also was given her in the night, for she felt stupid on waking in the morning, and had a bad taste in her mouth.

April 15th, 1904.—Makes a long statement as to her condition; says she has lost her will power. Dr. Norman was always influencing her by mesmeric and hypnotic powers. He knows everything that goes on in her mind, all her thoughts, all her acts, all her wishes. At night when she is in bed and he is in his own house, half a mile away, he influences her heart, and she feels something like a reel winding up in her chest. When she strives to speak he winds up this reel and prevents her. He has influenced her mind, her feet, her heart, every part of her. He is always making her think of things she should not think of, day and night. Says that she got a command once not to speak and did not speak for six weeks. Asked whose was the command, replies: "It might have been the voice of God or Dr. N—'s voice," then adds, "It must have been Dr. N—'s." Questioned, "But if it was Dr. N—'s, why did you obey it?" answers: "I had to do so when he had me under his influence." Question: "How did he get such influence over you?" Answer: "*He asked somebody to get my handwriting. I wrote a letter to a girl who is a friend of mine. They got it and gave it to him and once he had my writing and my signature he could influence me by that as he wished, and it was from this it all came*—all that followed, I mean. I was then in his power. He could do what he liked when he had my signature to work on."

Since that she has frequently repeated the above statement. I have not been able to trace any probable source from which she can have picked up the notion, which I am inclined to think is primordial in her case. It is a perfect return to an old witchcraft idea which looks odd in its association with the modern jargon of "loss of will power," "hypnotism," "mesmerism," etc., but harmonises remarkably well with the mental tone of the hallucinatory paranoia, full of suspicion, full of mystery, and possessed of that curious hallucinatory sense of mental action which is controlled by something outside the patient's ego.

CASE 21,530.—Admitted May 11th, 1903. Male, æt. 32, single, plumber, Roman Catholic. No history of hereditary taint was obtain-

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able, nor any detailed personal history, further than that he had been a hard drinker and that he had been about two years insane. On admission no organic visceral disease could be discovered, but he looked pale and worn, and appeared older than his stated age. He had numerous pieces of string tied round his fingers. He said they were "to prevent shocks." He gets shocks in his teeth: it often struck him it might be electricity. He complains of being tightened up. He feels his testes quite tight.

There was a couple living near him and their very movements meant something, for he often heard them working something like a battery. He also saw them carrying a jar and can (for the battery). "It is a curious-looking thing to see a woman carrying up a jar of water and it corked." He believes that they used to work on a photograph of himself with the battery and so affect him. He has seen animated pictures going round his room. On one occasion, about three years ago, he heard a voice and got a peculiar smell, but not recently.

May 12th, 1903.—Questioned about his health, he makes somewhat vague statements about his "private parts." He had "stoppages of water," and "burning pain in the passage," and a feeling as if he was "caught" in that region and "chucked" (? spasms of the levator ani). He has been to doctors and hospitals but has never been catheterised. Denies self-abuse, but professes not to have ever heard of it before. Questioned about shocks and electricity of which he spoke on admission, he is inclined to be reticent and is a little incoherent. Thus, he "knows it is all electricity: electricity is everywhere"; he knows nothing about electricity: he does not think of these things at all or let them bother him, and so forth. Again, he knows somebody was electrifying his head, but cannot tell who it was or why it was done: neither will he describe how he knows he was electrified. He denies pains of a darting or indeed of any other character. Questioned about voices, he at first denies them, then says, "Of course, I often heard voices; in a big town you would often hear people talking," but on a little pressing, he admits that people talk to him at night. He does not know who they are: he saw no one, but heard voices which he did not recognise; they talk "vile filth; abominable, you would not believe that anybody could talk so foully unless they were out of their mind." They sometimes say "Give him the cat." He does not know what "the cat" is, but he thinks it means something bad, and he knows it refers to him, because this is said when he is getting up, or when he is going to pass water, or on some such occasion. Asked about "animated pictures," says he often saw them when alone in his room. They moved about as if they were on the walls: they were just like the cinematograph pictures he saw once in the Empire Music Hall. They were all kinds of pictures, but mostly figures of people. He describes them as "thrown before" him; believes that this was done by some kind of machinery, but does not know who did it. Says: "Of course, animation is well understood; if any enemy of yours gets hold of your photograph, they can use it in animation to injure and torment you. They may have got hold of my photograph for all I know." He looks haggard and ill. Admits sleeplessness "from shocks."

May 14th, 1903.—Somewhat more definite in his statements.

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"They" (does not know who "they" are, but they must be enemies of his)—"*they have got hold of the dry plate of my photograph, and they put that in animation by working on it with an electric machine.*" By this process he explains visions are thrown before him, foul voices abuse him; he is made to suffer various distressing sensations (tightening, "chucking," etc.), and he has been made to smell foul smells. "The whole thing is done for annoyance and torment, and they work it on the dry plate of the photograph."

From May, 1903, to the present time (November, 1904), there has been no change of interest for our present purpose. The monthly notes indicate that he is generally tranquil, and works on the farm, though he will not work at his trade. He is silent and rather dull, with occasional episodes of mild excitement, due, he says, to the annoyance to which he is subjected, or his feeling of the injustice of his detention. He sometimes denies his delusions point blank, though always with an air of untruthfulness. He often replies, "I never think of such things." Usually, however, with a little patience, he can be induced to talk quite freely over them. He is annoyed ("chucked" and "turned round") by electric shocks, suffers from foul smells, visions, voices; had to be moved from one ward to another because the billiard-table in the former "puts animation" upon him. "I understand perfectly well what is going on—it is going on in the city every other day." "Animation is started first by a photograph." He is tormented "by animation and by pass." "You can work animation (when it has been started from a photograph) afterwards by electricity, by arc lamp, or telephone. The arc lamp or telephone-pole would be a pass." When I questioned him three or four days ago, he retained the belief that "they" had first worked upon the dry plate of his photograph and thus put him in animation. At first he had not known that he was in animation, "because you can be electrified just as you can be mesmerised without knowing it."

In this "dry plate of the photograph," operated upon by electricity and producing sufferings of various sorts in the original of the photograph, we have a singularly close reproduction in very modern language of the old belief of the waxen image pierced or melted to make its original suffer.

CASE 19,868.—Male, æt. 39, single, butcher, Roman Catholic, a hard drinker. A sister is said to have died of water on the brain. After this patient was admitted one of his brothers became insane and

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is a patient in the asylum. The patient we are now considering was about sixteen months ill before his admission in July, 1900. He had meanwhile been confined in a private asylum near Dublin. It would appear that his illness was first noticed when he declared that his engagement to a certain young lady had been broken off through the action of the man with whom he lodged, whom he accused of having printed patient's letters to this girl and strewn them about the street. Patient then said that his engagement was broken off through the hostility of the public. It is probable that his amour was entirely ideal, for he himself now states that he was "nearly engaged, but we never could understand each other and had never spoken of love!" On admission, he stated that he had "flash communications" with a woman, whom he does not know, but who talks to him incessantly about his private affairs. Asked what are "flash communications," he answers, "communicative force," "supernatural force." The voice of the woman refers to his love affairs. This keeps him awake at night. The flash light has the power of warning him by bells and voices of impending danger, and also of transmitting his thoughts to other places. Even the horses' hoofs have the power of calling out his name under the bidding of this electric power. On one occasion a couple of persons appeared in the phonogram above the bed when the flash was on. On another occasion he saw a well-known surgeon passing before his eyes during the flash. He stated that he heard the flash voices chiefly (and he sometimes said altogether) in his left ear. He is deaf of the left ear, owing to chronic middle-ear disease.

He had odd hypochondriacal notions about his health, the action of his bowels, and so forth. He was tranquil in behaviour, somewhat sullen in manner, solitary in habits, excessively suspicious, and mysterious. He was able to work on the farm, but generally loafed in a pre-occupied way, muttering to himself.

His state appeared virtually unchanged when his friends removed him from the asylum in November, 1900.

During his stay on this occasion he made no reference to phonograms except what is mentioned above, and, as he was carefully studied and noted by my colleague, Dr. Forde, I do not think any reference of the kind would have escaped observation.

December 31st, 1902.—Was re-admitted. Presented no signs of visceral disease, but he was pale and somewhat puffy about the face. He had been drinking hard since his discharge as long as his money lasted. Expression at once harassed and self-important. Somewhat jerky in movements and tending to roll his eyes in an affected way; left pupil slightly + : K. J.s + ? He talked tranquilly in a hurried undertone. Sexual hypochondriacal delusions. Says he is not a man, and has had to play a masculine part: "I had to wear a truss when I was young; I am between a man and a woman; I am in a most peculiar position." Owing to the cruel conduct of his relations, who refused to give him money, he had to go to the workhouse. While there he received supernatural messages of great importance by phonograph. "It all began through the phonograph. *Some years ago when the phonograph was new I was asked to speak into the phonograph that I might hear my own voice. I did so, and they have got hold of my phono-*

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gram and are always interfering with it. I was sent here because my phonogram was exposed to the public and everybody could work upon it."

The day after his admission he said he received important "flash messages," but could not be got to explain whether these were visual or auditory. The notes of the next two months contain references to flash messages. At the end of February he stated that he heard messages, also that he had phonographic visions. Subsequently he stated to me on one occasion that he was conscious of messages communicated to him by working upon his phonogram, though he neither saw nor heard them. Again, in September, 1903, he is noted as saying, "When I speak my breath flashes words to me." In December: "I hear the phonograph day and night; it sends me constitutional messages." (This phrase seems to mean messages about his health and sex, etc. He retains the notion that he is not a man. He often complains that his bowels do not act for months, and he has some obscure ideas about food, that it is wrong to eat much—or little—that he must be careful about his food, and obey the messages he receives relating thereto.) At the same time he said, "I see faces; I see my father's face, though he died nineteen years ago." Another time he said, "My thoughts were exposed on the phonogram plate."

In the midst of a good deal of incoherence and confusion he always returns to the notion that the beginning of all his trouble and of all his "messages" and mystic communications was the exposure of his phonogram and the fact that his phonogram got into the hands of his enemies. He once said to me, "You can do anything with a man's phonogram by putting it into an electrical battery."

Here again that very personal thing "a man's phonogram" plays the part which "the dry plate of the photograph" played in the previous case and the autograph signature in the first. In all we have so striking a coincidence with the machinery of witchcraft that it is difficult to believe that we are merely in face of an accidental resemblance. Either there is a tendency in the human mind, sane and insane, to a belief in this form of vicarious agency, or else such a belief belongs to insanity alone. In the latter case it became associated with the witchcraft superstitions because the unhappy "witches" were mostly insane and spoke of these strange agencies in their confessions. The frequency of these confessions, notoriously unavailing as they were, strongly suggests the insanity of those who made them. That reputedly sane people believed these confessions, which were wont to be stuffed with incredible absurdities, is probably to be accounted for by the circumstance that such wise folk, while they thought they were acting under the dictates of reason, were really the blind instruments of that hatred of the mentally unsound which seems as natural to man in all but

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the most recent phases of civilisation as is the instinct which bids the gregarious animals destroy one of a herd who is diseased.

(1) Read at a meeting of the Irish Division on November 4th, 1904, in Dublin. (2) "I love to lose myself in a mystery, to pursue my reason to an *O altitudo!* . . . I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian: '*Certum est quia impossibile est*'" (*Religio Medici*, i, 9).—(3) Thus the lover in Göthe's song, *Lebendiges Andenken*, tells us other swains have received tokens from their loves—ribbons, veils, kerchiefs, garters, rings, and these—

Sind wahrlich keine kleinen Dinge;
Allein mir sind sie night genug.
Lebend'gen Theil von ihrem Leben,
Ihn hat nach leisem Widerstreben
Die allerliebste mir gegeben,
Und jene Herrlichkeit wird nichts.
Wie lach'ich all der Trödelwaare!
Sie schenkte mir die schönen Haare,—U. S. W.

A coarser application of the same notion is perhaps to be found in the homelier words of the historian of Sir Hudibras, where he says—

For as when slovens do amiss
At others' doors . . . .
The learned write, a red-hot spit
B'ing prudently applied to it,
Will convey mischief . . . .
Unto the part that did the wrong.
(Part I, Canto 2, line 235.)

DISCUSSION.

Dr. DRAPER said he had had one or two patients who had a firm belief in witches. One was a policeman who believed in the Banshee, and thought that his wife was possessed. Insanity took its colour from the spirit of the age, and nowadays we did not hear of witchcraft delusions because we had grown out of this belief. The inspirations of the insane were now taken from modern developments of electricity, phonograph, etc. These patients were living in a past age; they had not developed normally, and so retained these old beliefs.

Dr. LEEPER said that witchcraft had at one time received the sanction of Holy Writ—for example, the witch of Endor. This was looked on as an established fact, and in our speculations on the subject we should not forget the considerations which induced those people to hold such beliefs.

Clinical Notes and Cases.

A Case of Amaurotic Family Idiocy. By JAMES BURNET, M.A., M.B., M.R.C.P.Edin., Senior Clinical Tutor, Extra-mural Wards, Royal Infirmary; Registrar, Royal Hospital for Sick Children; and Physician to the Marshall Street Dispensary, Edinburgh.

CASES of amaurotic family idiocy are sufficiently rare to warrant me in placing the following notes before the readers of this Journal.

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