father in knowledge and in skill. In all departments of life the same holds good. Conversely, a wise environment may cancel a perverse predisposition. The near relations of lunatics have hoped that the taint may be diluted in their offspring if, before children are born, their life has been well-ordered. The hope may or may not be delusive. But even a considerable predisposition to insanity in a child may be cancelled by a careful upbringing, quite certainly, and so, in virtue of his environment, he may evade his inheritance.

Granted then a good environment—a healthy influence from existing institutions, traditions and customs, public opinion and personal teaching—all that is necessary to insure the future of the species is amenability to the influence of the "not ourselves." In physiological terms—and to the physiology of the subject we must be faithful to the end—the *summum bonum* of individual development is not a great initial activity in this brain-centre or in that, but rather a general plasticity of cortical structure, a capacity for relational differentiation in any or all of the cerebral organs. Training will do the rest.

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*Heredity in Mental Disease.** By J. F. BRISCOE, M.R.C.S., F.R.G.S.

Mr. Briscoe gave an account of hereditary influences affecting reproductive processes, entering into details relative to syphilis and temperaments. He held that deviation from a normal standard of mind and body must indirectly affect the reproductive processes. He thereafter traced the life history of a typical neurotic in a series of clinical pictures. Mr. Briscoe illustrated his paper by photographs of a skull which he had brought from East Africa. The skull was also submitted for examination, and was described as having belonged to a child six years of age, to be generally five-eighths of an inch thick, with completely obliterated sutures. The whole was porous (osteoporosis), and the new cancellous tissue of a columnar appearance, and superimposed upon the original bone. Mr. Briscoe was of opinion that it might be useful to compare such a cranium with deformed palates in relation to brain growth. The heredity of direct mental weakness was then discussed, and Mr. Briscoe was of opinion that 90 per cent. of the insane have a heredity of insanity.

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