

Mental Derangements

A recent sensational trial in New York showed how hopelessly at variance were the opinions of mental experts, who were called as witnesses. There was a total absence of agreement amongst them as to what constituted mental derangement. Now there are three words which refer to mental derangements, and their meaning is not always clearly understood by the bulk of the public. These words are hallucination, illusion, and delusion. An hallucination (says a writer in an English magazine) is a mental condition where one imagines he sees something, or hears something, or touches something, or tastes something, when there is in reality no external foundation for his supposition. In cases of hallucination a man imagines he sees people, or animals, or venomous reptiles, near him or moving towards him. Nothing of the sort exists. It is simply a disordered condition of his own mind. The brain cells which would naturally be affected by such sights, are thrown into functional activity by some congestion or irritation inside of the brain. He thinks he sees these things, but there is no cause except such cause as exists in his own brain. Such condition is properly called hallucination.

An illusion is slightly different from hallucination. In cases of illusion, the victim does really see something. He sees a cow, for instance, and imagines it is a bear. He sees the moon, and imagines it is a ball of fire. He sees a moonbeam shining on the wall or on the carpet, and imagines it is a ghost. An illusion, therefore, is a mistaken notion of what one really does see. There is some ground for an illusion, external to the patient's mind.

As to the word delusion, this word is entirely different from hallucination or illusion. Delusion is a false conception. The subject may see things exactly as they are. He may not be troubled with hallucinations or illusions at all. But he makes a wrong inference from what he sees. He sees two people talking together, very busily, very earnestly, and imagines they are talking about him, and becomes afraid. This is a delusion. There is an eclipse of the sun or moon, and he imagines the world is coming to an end. That is a delusion. He is subject to somnambulistic conditions of mind, in which he has mental experiences quite out of the ordinary, and he imagines that he is inspired. This is a delusion. A delusion, therefore is a false inference from things which may be correctly perceived.

A delusion is false reasoning. An illusion is a false inference from what is seen. An hallucination is a false perception of some kind. In cases of hallucination the perceptions are fictitious. In illusion the conclusions reached from perceptions are faulty. In delusions the reasoning faculties are absolutely untrustworthy.

Many people who are considered perfectly sane are subject more or less to hallucinations, or illusions, or delusions. It is only when such people become mischievous or dangerous to themselves or to others that they are judged as insane. Both inside and outside of the insane asylum are to be found many people whose only fault is that they reason wrongly from what they see. And there are other people who really do not see what they think they see. Traced back to their real origin, all these conditions are diseases just as much as dyspepsia and Bright's disease are diseases. They should be treated as diseases, and the victim of them deserves the same consideration and sympathy as if he were afflicted with any other disease.

Novel Way of Paying Church Debts

The numbers of bazaars and sales of work which are held annually to pay the interest on mortgages, etc., due on Church property, without ever reducing the capital debt, bring to mind (writes a correspondent of the Edinburgh 'Catholic Herald'), a suggestion made a good many years ago by six gentlemen, members of a congregation of a city church, who agreed to insure their lives for £1000 each, and to pay the annual premiums on same, in order that their particular church would benefit at their death by the above sum, and the church would then be free from debt. Of course, they would assign the policy to the then rector or his successors.

The suggestion was not accepted, as it was thought at the time.

It Would be Trafficking in Men's Lives.

At the time of writing four of the six have died, and the original debt would, if the offer had been accepted, have been reduced to a very small sum. Could

this way of reducing church debts not come into force, as there are no doubt members of various congregations who would not be able to bequeath such a large sum, but by paying a small annual premium, would be able to accomplish the good work they have at heart?

Our representative interviewed a distinguished clergyman of Birmingham, and one who has had a great deal to do with reducing a large debt on a church, who gave his opinion on our correspondent's letter as follows:—

'The proposal to make provision from the very beginning for the extinction of mission debts is most important. Nothing kills the enthusiasm and generosity of a congregation so effectively as the heart-breaking task of raising annual interest for fifteen or twenty years on

A Debt which Never Grows Less.

The insurance idea has been run very successfully and on a large scale in the United States. It is perfectly simple—and quite unobjectionable, provided the right sort of benefactors can be found to undertake the extra burden in addition to their share in the ordinary expenses of the mission.

'Another idea is to borrow as municipalities do, that is, for a definite number of years, paying interest at a higher rate so as to extinguish principal and interest together at the end of thirty or fifty years.

'To be successful, a scheme of this kind should be diocesan. It is said that something of the sort is working well at the present time in the diocese of Liverpool.'

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

April 13.

The Rev. Father Cahill, of Carterton, intends holding a bazaar in aid of the church funds. It will open on April 24, and will continue for four days. Some lady workers of Wellington are to assist in the undertaking.

During the week Andrew Mack and his talented company have been delighting large audiences with 'The Way to Kenmare,' in which as Dan Maguire he sings and acts in a manner that fairly enraptures his hearers.

At the Church of St. Joseph, Buckle street, on Tuesday, Miss Mary Clifford Ward, second daughter of Mr. Thomas L. Ward, of the Tax Department, was married to Mr. W. R. S. Hickson. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Father Venning, assisted by the Rev. Father Herring. The honeymoon is being spent in the south.

It is pleasing to note the increase in the number of Catholic students attending lectures at the local University College, many of them being ex-pupils of St. Patrick's College. At the annual meeting of the University Debating Society, held on Thursday evening, Mr. E. J. Fitzgibbon, LL.B., and Mr. F. P. Kelly were elected unopposed to the positions of chairman and vice-chairman respectively. Another of our young men, Mr. H. O'Leary, was elected as a member of the committee.

The initial meeting of the Catholic Young Men's Literary and Debating Society was held on Monday evening. The Rev. Father Kimbell will again preside over the meetings of the society, and in this members are fortunate. Mr. J. McGowan has been re-elected secretary, and Messrs. A. H. Casey and P. J. Moran are members of the committee. The society did splendidly last season, and should do so again. The meetings are held weekly, and the public are always welcome.

At the eighth annual championship and handicap tournament of the Wellington Provincial Lawn Tennis Association, held here during Easter week, representatives of the Catholic Club were very successful in the second grade handicap events, Mr. P. Clarke winning the men's handicap singles, Mr. F. Eller reaching the semi-final. Mr. Clarke showed great dash and proved quite superior to his opponents. In the ladies' handicap doubles Misses A. Williams and M. Davis were successful after some exciting games. In the combined handicap doubles, for which there were thirty entries, the club's representatives, Miss A. Williams, and Mr. P. Clarke, succeeded in reaching the semi-final. These successes are highly gratifying, and should prove a stimulus to further effort on the part of members next season.

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