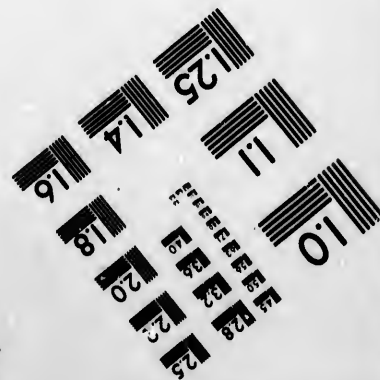
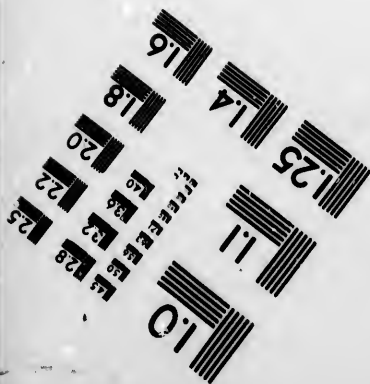
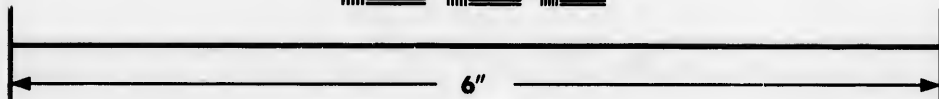
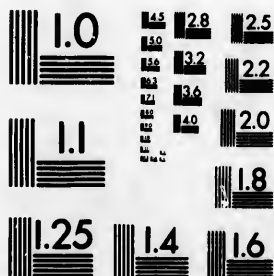


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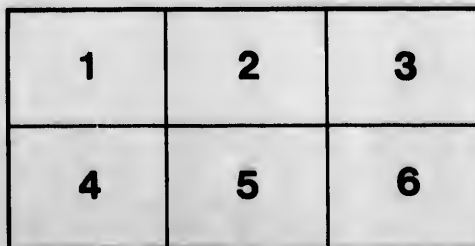
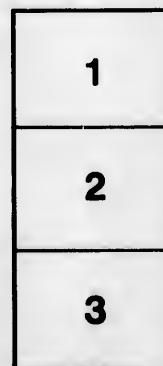
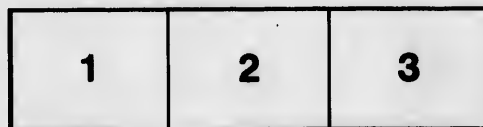
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# Demomania and Witchcraft.

BY JOSEPH WORKMAN, M. D.

[Read before the Association of Medical Superintendents of Hospitals for the Insane, at the Annual Meeting, in Toronto, June, 1871, and published in the *American Journal of Insanity*, for October, 1871.]

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## Demonomania and Witchcraft.

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I presume there is hardly a member of this Association who has had the good fortune to be unacquainted with that distressing form of insanity, which is known under the designation Demonomania; and I am sure none who have had to encounter it in some of its intense forms, will deny that it is one of the greatest difficulties presented to our specialty. I fear that in its treatment we seldom derive much valuable aid from the quarter to which we have some right to look for it; yet we should feel most thankful for even the most trifling assistance in our arduous work.

Belief in diabolic possession as an existing fact of the present day, may, I think, be said to be extinct, unless among the least educated portions of society. It is not to be expected, that a doctrine, which, less than two centuries ago, pervaded the whole of christendom, and was preached from every pulpit, and proclaimed from every bench of justice, could utterly die out among the uncultured masses in any very short lapse of time. I have myself met with persons, not insane, who have avowed their belief in its present existence. I well remember one instance in the institution under my charge, when I requested a clergyman to see, and, with a view to her mental relief, to converse with a poor woman who was suffering under that strange form of insanity known as *Lycanthropia*. She believed herself to be a wolf, or a dog, and she declared she was labor-

ing under hydrophobia. She used to spit, and grin, and snap her teeth, as if anxious to bite, and would tell us to stand off, or she would destroy us. My simple minded clerical friend went to her bedside, and spoke to her very soothingly. She responded to his address in a series of lupine, or canine demonstrations, which utterly horrified him. He fled from the room, and when he recovered his mental equilibrium, said to me, "O! Doctor! that woman is possessed!" I replied, she certainly was, but not of the devil; for I had opened too many bodies of deceased maniacs, to believe that there was any necessity for ascribing their delusional extravagances to any supernatural agency. The ascription of insanity, and other maladies which involve a pathological condition of the brain and nervous system, to demoniacal influences, was, with our ancestors, a very easy mode of solving the great question of causation, which even now so much perplexes the cultivators of psycho-pathology. Across the long and deeply indented peninsula which we are now endeavoring to explore and to fathom, inch by inch, they made a very convenient short cut, which certainly saved them a great deal of time and laborious investigation; but their conclusion did not tend to the alleviation of human misery.

Of all the departments of diabolic sovereignty, none was so prolific in the literature of divinity and jurisprudence of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, as sorcery and witchcraft. Bodin, one of the most brilliant and profound juriconsults and historians that France ever produced, left a work upon each subject, which the most able writers of later times, have characterized as masterpieces of erudition; for Bodin renounces all claims to originality. He gives us the "opinions of a multitude of the greatest writers of pagan antiquity,

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and of the most illustrious of the fathers." In short he rests his whole argument on "*authority*;" the last resource, as all men in the present day know, of all writers who fail to convince their readers by force of reason, and an appeal to the ordeal of common sense. Shortly after the publication of Bodin's work on Sorcery, Wier, a physician of Clèves, in the middle of the 16th century, wrote a book, entitled, "*De Prestigiis Dæmonum*." He, as a doctor, (of medicine be it noted,) declared his conviction that many of the so-called victims of diabolic possession were simply *lunatics*; a verdict which, I am sure every member of this association, living and moving, as we do, among the same class of unfortunates in the present day, will most unreservedly indorse.

It was hardly to be expected that this writer would, at a bound, overleap the boundaries of popular error, and set at defiance that reverence for authority, which was then regarded as the cardinal virtue of all literature and all philosophy. He believed, (or affected to believe,) that the world was peopled by crowds of demons, who were constantly doing mischief; but he endeavored to reconcile their ubiquitous manifestations with the simple phenomena of corporeal disease; exactly that which we now do. He did not believe that the possessed ones had entered, as was then the universal belief, into any unholy compact with Satan, but that they were merely his passive subjects; nor that they were guilty of those evil deeds, of which many of them accused themselves; but rather that Satan had villainously persuaded them that they had actually, of their own free will and motion, so done.

If we should inquire what has been, among a moiety of the learned of the present day, the advance made by them on the theory of Wier, what might be the

response to our question? Wier did not, as James VI. of Scotland did, believe that witches raised terrific sea-storms, and wrecked noble argosies, nor ride through the air on broomsticks, to participate in the horrid orgies of their *Witch-Sabbath*, nor become, as James and other not less erudite authorities have told us, the concubines of Satan; yet he did believe that these poor demented beings were still the vassals of the Arch-Fiend.

Three editions of Wier's book were published in a short time, and it was translated into French in 1569. Its appearance in this language aroused the indignation of Bodin, who declared he could not find words meet to express his astonishment, that a puny doctor of physic should have dared to oppose himself to the authority of all ages; and to question the existence of the most notorious of all facts. He declared Wier's impiety to be even greater than his audacity, for he "had armed himself against God." He declared Wier's attempt to save from fire, those whom Scripture and the voice of the church had branded as the worst of criminals, the very climax of treason against the Almighty.

Bodin's second work was provoked by Wier's heresy, and it must certainly be one of the richest depositories of demoniacal erudition, and of Satanic inspiration, to be found in the whole domain of bibliography. Take as an example, the following deliverance, with respect to the best means of extorting from the accused, confessions of their guilt. "Sharp pincers should be inserted between the nails and flesh, such as are in use in Turkey." We shall see, by and by, that James VI., was not unskilled in this witch art. "Some magistrates are in the habit, Bodin tells us, "of employing counter-charms," which he declares to be a perilous course. He

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Wier's heresy, at depositories inspiration, to raphy. Take, with respect accused, confessed, should be inserted in use in Tur-ames VI., was magistrates are saying counter-our course. He

would have torture in *ordinary* cases only after failure of other means. He would first try terror, by letting them see the implements of torture, and hearing frightful cries, as if from one under the infliction. He tells of one functionary who had a countenance so terrific as to frighten all courage out of the guilty. This sort of experiment, he *naively* lets us know, is more proper towards timid than towards impudent persons. Spies who should feign being themselves accused of similar crime, he says, were most valuable witnesses.

The law of evidence, as laid down by Bodin, is so grotesquely ludicrous, that it would be impossible to restrain our laughter, did we not know that this famous jurisconsult's deliverances, on this subject, became a text authority, even more abiding than the commentaries of Blackstone, Coke, or Littleton, and that thousands were under its dictation consigned to the flames.

First and strongest among the proofs of diabolic possession, he places the notarial document between Satan and his witch disciple, which, as it appears, needed not the sign manual of the former, but only that of the latter. The great German poet Göethe, in the preliminary arrangement between Faust and Mephistopheles, shows us that the signature of the endowed must be written with blood, for, says his high-commissioners hip,

“*Blut ist ein gauz besondres Saft.*”

Bodin does not seem to insist upon *red* ink. Indeed it is probable that in the days of Bodin not many of the witches were competent in the art of penmanship, and therefore their signatures, in full, could hardly be insisted upon. They could not, however, have signed by the mark of the cross, for so orthodox a catholic as Bodin was, would well know, that this form of subscription would have upset the whole arrangement.

He tells us that a second indisputable proof is, if the accused speak to the devil, and he, though invisible, answers. How many asylum physicians, were the jurisprudence of to-day the same as in the time of Bodin, would be found most valuable corroborative witnesses, in this direction! Could we not tell very marvellous tales of the interviews and colloquies which some of our patients assure us they have had with Satan, or his emissaries?

It is also, says Bodin, a valid proof, if the witch has been found absent from her bed, when all the doors were locked. In this case she must have gone out through the key-hole, which, unless she really was a witch, she certainly could not do.

Bodin describes fifteen detestable species of crime perpetrated by sorcerers, or witches, some of which must, in the age of credulity in which he wrote, have appeared atrocious beyond all measure of punitive retribution. One of these was doing homage and sacrifice to the devil; and of this an unobliteratable proof remained in the mark of the "*osculum in tergo*," which I may be excused from rendering into plain English. All readers of witch history are well aware of the abominable indecencies involved in this judicial tenet.

The last of Bodin's fifteen diabolic crimes, and the most tremendous of all, was that of sexual intercourse with demons, and the procreation of juniors, who, if we may believe all that has been recorded of them, were by no means unworthy of their illustrious sires: some indeed of the writers on the subject of demonology, seem to think the stock was enriched by this crossing-out process.

In support of this theory of multiplication of the race of demons, Bodin, who never wrote unauthorizably, quotes freely from the early fathers, especially from Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, and St. Augustine.

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The publication of Bodin's treatise gave a new and tremendous stimulus to public zeal in the discovery and extirpation of witches, and as he strongly advocated the punishment by burning, the result was an incalculable amount of human agony from this terrible infliction.

The most illustrious demonologist in our mother country was the British Solomon, James VI., of Scotland, and I. of England. He published his brochure on witches at Edinburgh in 1597, and shortly after his accession to the throne of England, he deemed it expedient, by a second edition in London, to enlighten his new subjects on the recondite science of which he was so profound a master. In his introduction he tells his readers that "the fearful abounding at this time, in this country, of those detestable slaves of the devil, the witches, or enchanters, has moved him of conscience to resolve the doubting hearts of many, both that such assaults of Satan are most certainly practiced, and that the instruments deserve most severely to be punished." He was not slow in following up his philanthropic purpose, for in the very first year of his English reign, he secured from a parliament overpowered by the forcible logic of his treatise, the enactment of the celebrated Witch Act,—a law more bloody and more lasting than was the code of Draco, for it remained unrepealed until the middle of the last century. James had received from the witches of his native country much provocation. His conjugal alliance with the house of Denmark came very near frustration, in consequence of a terrific storm raised by the witches, during the voyage of James and his bride, to Scotland.

One Dr. Fian, was accused as the ringleader of a witch-circle comprising some 40 or 50, who were all duly disposed of, according to the jurisprudence of the time. He confessed, under the torture, as did many a wretched

witch, to his guilt, but he, immediately after, retracted his confession. "Every form of torture was then in vain employed to vanquish his obduracy. The bones of his legs were broken into small pieces in the iron boot. All the tortures that Scottish law knew of were successively, but wonderful to say, not successfully applied. At last the King, (that "*most dread sovereign*,") who presided in person over the tortures, arising like "*the sun in his strength*," suggested, (having no doubt read Bodin's treatise,) a new and more horrible device. "The prisoner who had been removed during the deliberation, was brought in, and, in the words of the record of the trial, "his nails upon all his fingers were riven and pulled off with an instrument called in Scottish a turkas, which in England we call a pair of pincers, and under every nail there was thrust in two needles over, even up to the heads; but so deeply had the devil entered into his heart, that he utterly denied all that which he before avouched, and he was burnt unconfessed."

Scotland has done due honor to many of her gifted sons; but I am not aware that she has yet erected a monument in commemoration of this noblest of her martyrs.

It is hardly to be supposed that a monarch who was so highly eulogized by the most eminent and learned divines of his time, would fail to impress all classes with a strong conviction of the necessity of a vigilant enforcement of his Witch Act. It assuredly did not remain a dead letter on the statute book. Witch drowning, hanging, and burning soon became familiar facts in the land ruled by his "*Dread Majesty*:" and yet witches did not decrease in number. On the contrary they seemed to spring up, phoenix like, from the ashes of the destroyed ones. It is a fact well known to

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British sportsmen, that hares are always most numerous in those parts where they are hunted. I remember once spending a considerable time, constantly out of doors, in a district where there was no hunting. I never saw a single hare there; but when my field duty brought me nearer to the hound kennels, then I would see one in almost every field. Indeed I knew of two sagacious old ones who resided in a meadow close to a kennel. It was said by skilled persons that these creatures, knowing that the hounds were never cast off so near home, had concluded that they would have quieter lodging here than further away from their persecutors. Whether a similar state of matters obtained in the days of witchdom, I am unable to state. It is however an unquestionable fact, that wherever and whenever witches were most actively hunted after, they were most abundant. In the short period of Cromwell's usurpation, (and in justice to the illustrious house of the Stewarts, the fact should not be withheld,) more witches were destroyed in England, than in all the rest of the period during which the witch mania prevailed.

It has been calculated that from 1603 to 1680, the total put to death by regular legal process alone, was about 70,000, and if in the ten years of exclusion of the Stewarts from the throne, over 35,000 witches were destroyed, the annual number must have been over 35,000, or nearly 10 per day, Sundays not excluded. In those days the office of witch-finder was one of no small distinction. In the county of Suffolk, one of this class of public functionaries, seems to have done keen service. His name was Matthew Hopkins. Butler in that imperishable depiction of Puritanical hypocrisy, ignorance, and superstition, his *Hudibras*, alludes to the efficiency with which this gifted personage performed his task. (*See Canto III., of part 2, line 139 et postea.*)

"Hath not this present parliament  
 A ledger to the devil sent  
 Fully empowered to treat about  
 Finding revolted witches out?  
 And has not he within a year  
 Hanged three score of them in one shire?  
 Some only for not being drowned,  
 And some for sitting above ground  
 Whole days and nights upon their breeches,  
 And feeling pain, were hanged for witches,  
 And some for putting knavish tricks  
 Upon green greese and turkey chicks."

But "transient is the smile of fate," for Butler a little farther on tells us, this adept witch-finder

"After proved himself to be a witch  
 And made a rod for his own breech."

Even the most zealous opponent of capital punishment might hesitate to say it was here inadmissible.

Among the sixty Suffolk victims of that fearful year, was an unfortunate episcopalian clergyman of eighty years old. The pious Baxter calls him an "*old reading parson,*" and informs us that he confessed to being possessed of two imps, a good and a bad one; a circumstance in which I imagine he pretty much resembled ourselves. The one was always prompting him to evil deeds; but the other faithfully restrained him from them, until one unlucky day as he was walking on the sea-shore, he saw a ship at a distance. The evil imp urged him to sink the ship, and he did so, too promptly for the good imp to interpose. Have you, gentlemen, not met with men quite as potent in sinking ships as was this old doting "reading parson?" Verily you have, many such. I have under my care a man who built our asylum at Boston, and transported it to Toronto by means of a huge balloon, and this feat was but a trifle compared with hundreds of others done by

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him. Poor old Parson Lewis saw the ship, and he believed he could sink her, though many miles from him. She at once disappeared, therefore he had sunk her. It is too probable that when some of us reach four score years, we may have similar visual experience, but it is to be hoped we may not be similarly deceived; and it surely is no trivial blessing that we live in an age when natural phenomena are more rationally interpreted than they were in that of Cromwell.

The poor "old reading parson," was, to the entire satisfaction of Baxter, subjected to the ordeal of water; in which he was more expert than he believed the ship had been, which he said he had sunk; but to escape drowning was but the most certain step to hanging, and he was hanged accordingly. It booted not that he had been for fifty years, an exemplary minister of religion. Poor man! he shared in the superstition of the times; he confessed to his own demoniac possession; and in those days this was enough. Who knows but that he may himself, ere while, have lent a hearty coöperation in the destruction of witches? It would be an almost wondrous fact that he had not. I have not given in full the details of this poor man's sufferings. It is almost impossible to restrain one's risible proclivities, in the perusal of the worse than lunatic records of the judicial proceedings of our sapient ancestors, in witch cases; yet the subject is certainly not one at all harmonizing with merriment. Would that we could erase from our history the entire record! but we cannot; perhaps it is best so, for who can say how nearly now we approach the domain of mental darkness, and puerile credulity? Until we shall have outlived the marvels of table-jumping, spiritualistic telegraphs between living experts and departed disciples, the inscrutable untyings of Davenport knots, and

the hundred and one other supernaturalities which follow one another in a succession which threatens to be as interminable as human gullibility, we shall do well not to laugh at the follies and faults of our forefathers. At the close of the 17th century the belief in witchcraft had, partially at least, died out. A few trials and executions took place in the first 20 years of the 18th century, but unless among the very ignorant and a small section of the clergy, the doctrine seemed to have become obsolete. Though Chief Justice, Sir Matthew Hale, sentenced witches to death without compunction, and took advantage of the occasions for delivering to his audiences very learned and lengthened expositions of the reality of witchcraft and diabolism generally; and though Blackstone was a believer, and has told us that Addison also was of the number; yet, the superstition had to die, and to leave the poor witches to live. A judge of assize at the trial of one Jane Wenham, about the time last mentioned, had the hardihood to charge the jury strongly in the poor woman's favor; but he was a little in advance of the men whom he addressed, for despite his charge they brought in a verdict of *guilty*. The judge, however, readily obtained from government a reversal of the sentence which he had been reluctantly obliged to pass. But, poor man! now came *his* terrible trial—one of the witnesses for the prosecution had been the parson of Jane Wenham's parish; and he swore "on his faith as a clergyman he believed the woman to be a witch." The judge laid the birch on his parsonship rather smartingly; and he *felt* it. His brethren took up the cudgels, and waged a tremendous pamphlet war. They finally drew up a declaration of their unabated faith in witchcraft, which they closed with the portentous words, "*liberavimus animas nostras.*" Thus did

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they ease their consciences. Assuredly the doctrine did not die in silence. From 1691 to 1718, when its moribund condition had become manifest, immense efforts were made to resuscitate it. Twenty-five books of various bulk, were published in its support, in England alone. One of these was written by the celebrated Richard Baxter. He was prompted to this labor of love by reading Cotton Mather's narrative of the Massachusetts witch trials. Baxter was much edified by the details, and did his best to stir up the English public to an imitation of the efforts of Mather and his twin assassin Parris, whom many of you, gentlemen, will recognize as the grand centre of that sewing circle, by virtue of whose hysterical and maniacal evolutions and revolutions, the witches' hill at Salem was so fearfully enriched with victims. I may be allowed to pass over in silence this afterpiece to the great European tragedy. You are, no doubt, better read in its history than I am; and yet I can not help saying, I wish I knew less of it; for it exposes to view the weaknesses, and wickedness of a few men belonging to a valuable class whom no good Christian desires to lower in popular esteem; yet it is my honest conviction that parson Parris, of Salem, was one of the greatest scoundrels that ever gave notoriety to the witch mania. But the very enormity of this man's exploits, in all probability, brought the witchcraft mania to a much earlier close on this continent than otherwise it might have had. His victims were, as an able writer in the *Flinburgh Review* for July, 1868, has truly said, "the wisest, gentlest, and purest Christians his parish contained." Had they not been such, who can say how long the murderous superstition would have survived; for the colony of Massachusetts was founded in the time of James I., who had given his royal patronage and exalted scriptorial support, in prop-

agation of this article of Satanic faith. The Puritan fathers who fled from the Devil, in the shape of bishops, in England, still found his ubiquitous Highness in even more multiform manifestation in the New World. Every red Indian, who lurked and skulked around their clearings through the day, and at night ruthlessly fired their dwellings, and spared neither age nor sex, was surely to them no other than a missionary from hell; and when they found suitable opportunity they dealt with him as such. It was short logic, to ascribe all their terrible trials and sufferings to Satan. Had they continued to recognize his agency only in this relation, they would have escaped the honors of Salem witch-hill; but in those days no department of human affairs was considered exempt from Satanic domination.

Mr. Parris unfortunately got into a little altercation with some of his flock, on the delicate questions of salary, firewood, and the homestead title. All who opposed him, or spoke of him irreverently, he speedily catalogued, and by the aid of his little girl circle, and his two servants, John, and Tituba his wife, he managed to rid his congregation of not a few of these children of iniquity.

It must have been a scene infinitely richer than any of our modern spiritualistic circles can extemporize, when Mr. Parris assembled all the divines he could collect at his parsonage, and made his troop of girls go through their performances; for when they had ended their farce, a general groan issued from the reverend spectators, "over the manifest presence of the Evil One, and a passionate intercession for the afflicted children" was made. These children were suffering under the evil practices of the witches; that is to say, of those naughty people who grudged Mr. Parris a good salary, abundance of firewood, and his personal ownership of the parsonage.

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It was a fearful thing in those times to be called a bad name by a parson. It is very unpleasant even in the present day, to be met with harsh epithets, where we might hope for calm discussion. We must not, however, be over angry with those who have recourse to such weapons; for they would not wield them had they any better at command; and the rational world now regards all recourse to this sort of battle, as but tantamount to an acknowledgment of utter defeat.

The repeal of the witch laws in England, in 1738, was an anomalous constitutional fact, which in the present day could not occur there, nor in this country; for it was a measure in utter antagonism with popular sentiment. The mass of the people, and the almost entire body of the clergy of all denominations, were opposed to it; and, for long years after, strenuous efforts for the restoration of the former *régime* were put forth. In 1768 John Wesley lamented the shocking decadence that had befallen "the belief in witches and apparitions." I shall not venture to quote his words, lest they might sound offensively; suffice it to say they were more earnest than discreet. Five years after Wesley's protest, "the divines of the associated Presbytery of Scotland passed resolutions, declaring their belief in witchcraft, and deploring the skepticism that was then general." (Macaulay; Hist. VIII., p. 706.)

We surely should not be surprised to find that, even now, only a century from the above declarations of men who have left on the world abiding and deep marks of their genius and influence, the belief in witchcraft and diabolic possession still lingers among the uncultured portions of society. In September, 1863, a man was beaten to death, by a mob of 70 mechanics and small tradesmen, in the county of Essex, England, because they believed he was a witch. Some six months ago, at New-

market, England, a man who had agreed to expel a witch or some such unearthly thing, from a haunted house, was obliged to take legal process to recover the amount of the contract—some £18 or £20. The Bench directed that he should be paid ordinary laboring-man's wages. How shameful! The defendant did not deny that the witch, or ghost, had been expelled. He must, therefore, have been benefited to the extent of the rent; so that if value was not given, it certainly was received. Perhaps the Judge had some suspicion that the ghost was of the Bryan O'Linn stamp.

"Bryan O'Linn had no watch to put on,  
So he scooped out a turnip, to make him a one;  
He slipped in a cricket, clane under the skin,  
"They'll think it is tickin'," says Bryan O'Linn."

The world abounds in Bryan O'Linn crickets, and if the Newmarket ghost was not one, I am sure it very easily might have been. What, however, has become of the great family of the witches? One would reasonably suppose that after they ceased to be exterminated, they must have multiplied with fearful rapidity. It is not on record that, like the Kilkenny cats, they ate each other up; yet they died off as soon as they ceased to be killed. Seventy thousand, we are informed by history, were destroyed in England in a little over seventy years. At the present day there are in England, Ireland and Scotland about this number of insane persons lodged in asylums. Is there one of you, gentlemen, who live among this afflicted class in this country, who doubts that in the time of witch hunting and burning and hanging, at least one-half of the 70,000 lunatics whose support costs so much to the already over-taxed people of the United Kingdom, would have been far more cheaply disposed of? We protect, and house, and feed, and clothe, and soothe the poor witches,—yea, and by

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these simple means, do we not expel the Devil out of a great many? We do! and is it not marvellous that kindness is so potent, even over this wretch? Unkindness had utterly failed to exorcise him; but since, the true Gospel of Him who restored to a distracted father, an epileptic lunatic son, sane in mind and sound in body, has been, not merely preached in frothy words, but acted out in heavenly deeds, what a change has come over the dream of witchdom! Thousands and thousands of unreal, innocent sorcerers and enchanters were burned and hanged, in former times; but the greatest of all the modern tribe escaped—and that man was *Pinel*. *He* drove out Satan, by unchaining him. The brute could not look *Pinel* in the face, for heavenly charity beamed from *his* bewitching eyes. Wonderful yet to say, *Pinel's* head was saved from the block, by one of the possessed whom he had loosed from the bonds of Satan!

I am sure, gentlemen, you every one know how irresistible is the charm by which *Pinel* subdued Satan; for I know it is the one almost sole, curative agency by which our statistics are enriched—and certainly the statistics of American institutions for the treatment of insanity, need not blush under comparison with those of any other country.

Should it be alleged by critics of the outside world, less familiar than we are with the delusions of insanity, and with the terrible mental sufferings attendant upon some of them, that a brief exposition, such as this paper, of an antiquated and exploded fallacy, is at this day, before an association of alienistic physicians, unconstructive and uncalled for, I would simply observe, that very few of the delusions of the insane spring up indigenously. If we carefully and closely investigate the early training, and the past domestic and social forma-

tive influences, which have moulded the moral and intellectual characters of our patients, and have implanted in their minds those persistent habits of thought which become the semi-instinctive leaders and directors of maturer life, I think we shall not rashly conclude that their ravings are all of spontaneous generation. Certainly there is not one of us who would not be gratified with the knowledge that the seed of these tares had never been sown. To root them out, and avoid injuring the wheat, is our task, and it is truly an arduous and a delicate one. I can think of no more distressing position for a physician to be placed in, than that of the responsible charge of an afflicted fellow-being, laboring under the delusion of having committed the unpardonable sin, because of his having become possessed by Satan. You all know how commonly this mental condition is associated with persistent suicidal propensity.

I could, as you are well aware, exhibit a multitude of details confirmative of this fact; but such expositions of the frailties and sufferings of our patients, though attractive to the sensational and empty-headed classes, are by no means pleasant exercises to the writers; and assuredly they must prove very painful to those amongst our hearers, or readers, who have stood in close relation with the unhappy ones alluded to.

That there may be, or are, fulminating pulpit orators, who will not be admonished by anything short of the *experimentum crucis*,—who will not believe, before they have, as Thomas, thrust their fingers into the pierced side, and into the nail prints of their victims, I question not; for they are not unknown to me.

Is there not, gentlemen, a great lesson to the sane world, to be learned among the insane? If men require to learn the omnipotence of kindness, do you know of

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a better school than the modern lunatic asylum? If they require to be taught that unkindness, and cruelty, and terror, effect no real change of conduct and character,—but on the contrary always render the subjects of them more obdurate and vicious than before, then let them take up their abodes for a sufficient time, among the inmates of *our* institutions. There they would be the right men in right places, and both themselves and the community at large would be immense gainers by the probation.

I have abstained from details of the atrocities resulting from the witchcraft superstition in the continental nations of Europe; not because they were less horrid than those perpetrated in our mother country, or because protestantism was more guilty, in this relation, than the olden church; but simply because the limits of a paper, for such an occasion as the present, preclude a wider excursion; and to tell the *whole* truth, I do not think that the confession of our neighbor's sins, instead of our own, is either a commendable, or a useful virtue, though we all know it is a very prevalent one.

Whether any good may result from the remarks which the experience of the members of this association may enable them to offer on the general subject of Demonomania, I dare not anticipate; but I can see no possibility of injury to the *victims* of this terrible form of mental alienation likely to proceed from them; and whithersoever duty calls us, thither unfalteringly *we* are bound fearlessly to advance.

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