History of Medicine

It is sobering to realise that as recently as the year in which On the Origin of Species was published, learned opinion was that diseases such as typhus and cholera were spread by a ‘miasma’, and suggestions that doctors should wash their hands before examining patients were greeted with mockery by the profession. The Cambridge Library Collection reissues milestone publications in the history of Western medicine as well as studies of other medical traditions. Its coverage ranges from Galen on anatomical procedures to Florence Nightingale’s common-sense advice to nurses, and includes early research into genetics and mental health, colonial reports on tropical diseases, documents on public health and military medicine, and publications on spa culture and medicinal plants.

Body and Mind

Yorkshireman Henry Maudsley (1835–1918) studied and built his medical career in London. From 1860 he specialised in psychiatry, working at hospitals and in private practice, and from 1863 to 1878 he was joint editor of the Journal of Mental Science. As one of the leading European ‘alienists’, he treated high-profile patients and became sufficiently wealthy to contribute £30,000 in 1907 towards the foundation of a specialist psychiatric hospital. In his many publications, he developed ideas of heredity derived from Darwin. His lecturing style was famous; Body and Mind contains his 1870 Gulstonian lectures, given before the Royal College of Physicians, and two earlier articles. Maudsley aimed to ‘bring man, both in his physical and mental relations, as much as possible within the scope of scientific enquiry’, and his preface dismisses ‘vague and barren disquisitions concerning materialism and spiritualism’ as futile compared to serious scientific enquiry based on physiology.
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BODY AND MIND.
BODY AND MIND:

AN INQUIRY INTO THEIR CONNECTION AND MUTUAL INFLUENCE, SPECIALLY IN REFERENCE TO MENTAL DISORDERS;

BEING THE GULSTONIAN LECTURES FOR 1870,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

WITH APPENDIX.

BY

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PREFACE.

The three lectures forming the first part of this volume were delivered before the Royal College of Physicians of London, to which I had the honour of being appointed Gulstonian Lecturer for this year; the latter part consists of two articles which, having appeared elsewhere, are reprinted here as presenting a completer view of some points that are only touched upon in the lectures; and the general plan of the whole, as thus constituted, may be described as being to bring man, both in his physical and mental relations, as much as possible within the scope of scientific inquiry.

The first lecture is devoted to a general survey of the Physiology of Mind—to an exposition of the physical conditions of mental function in health. In the second lecture are sketched the features of some forms of
degeneracy of mind, as exhibited in morbid varieties of
the human kind, with the purpose of bringing promi-


nently into notice the operation of physical causes from
generation to generation, and the relationship of mental
to other disorders of the nervous system. In the third
lecture, which contains a general survey of the pathology
of mind, are displayed the relations of morbid states of
the body to disordered mental function. I would fain
believe the general result to be a well-warranted conclu-
sion that, whatever theories may be held concerning
mind and the best method of its study, it is vain to
expect, and a folly to attempt, to rear a stable fabric of
mental science, without taking faithful account of physio-
logical and pathological inquiries into its phenomena.

In the criticism of the “Limits of Philosophical
Inquiry,” which follows the lectures, will be found reasons
why no attempt has been made to discuss the bearing of
the views, broached in them on any system of philo-
sophy. Neither materialism nor spiritualism are scientific
terms, and one need have no concern with them in a
scientific inquiry, which, if it be true to its spirit, is bound
to have regard only to what lies within its powers and to
the truth of its results. It would seem to be full time that
vague and barren disputations concerning materialism and
spiritualism should end, and that, instead of continuing
such fruitless and unprofitable discussion, men should apply themselves diligently to discover, by direct interrogation of nature, how much matter can do without spiritual help. Let each investigator pursue the method of research which most suits the bent of his genius, and here, as in other departments of science, let each system be judged by its fruits, which cannot fail in the end to be the best sponsors and sureties for its truth. But the physiological inquirer into mind may, if he care to do so, justly protest against the easy confidence with which some metaphysical psychologists disdain physiological inquiry, and ignore its results, without ever having been at the pains to make themselves acquainted with what these results are, and with the steps by which they have been reached. Let theory be what it may, there can be no just question of the duty of observing faithfully all the instances which mental phenomena offer for inductive inquiry, and of striving to realize the entirely new aspect which an exact study of the physiology of the nervous system gives to many problems of mental science. One reflection cannot fail to occur forcibly to those who have pursued this study, namely, that it would have been well could the physiological inquirer, after rising step by step from the investigation of life in its lowest forms to that of its highest and most complex manifestations, have entered
PREFACE.

upon his investigations of mind without being hampered by any philosophical theories concerning it. The very terms of metaphysical psychology have, instead of helping, oppressed and hindered him to an extent which it is impossible to measure: they have been hobgoblins to frighten him from entering on his path of inquiry, phantoms to lead him astray at every turn after he has entered upon it, deceivers lurking to betray him under the guise of seeming friends tendering help. Let him take all the pains in the world, he cannot express adequately and exactly what he would—neither more nor less—for he must use words which have already meanings of a metaphysical kind attached to them, and which, when used, are therefore for him more or less a misinterpretation. He is thus forced into an apparent encroachment on questions which he does not in the least degree wish to meddle with, and provokes an antagonism without ever designing it; and so one cannot but think it would have been well if he could have had his own words exactly fitting his facts, and free from the vagueness and ambiguity of a former metaphysical use.

The article on the "Theory of Vitality," which appeared in 1863, is now reprinted, with a few, mainly verbal, alterations. The aspect of some of the questions discussed in it has been somewhat changed by the progress
of inquiry and thought since that time, but it appears to the Author that, great as discussion has been, there are yet considerations respecting vitality that have not been duly weighed. Whether living matter was formed originally, or is now being formed, from non-living matter, by the operation of physical causes and natural laws, are questions which, notwithstanding the lively and vigorous handling which they have had, are far from being settled. Exact experiment can alone put an end to this dispute: the one conclusive experiment, indeed, in proof of the origin of living from dead matter, will be to make life. Meanwhile, as the subject is still in the region of discussion, it is permissible to set forth the reflections which the facts seem to warrant, and to endeavour to indicate the direction of scientific development which seems to be foretokened by, or to exist potentially in, the knowledge which we have thus far acquired. This much may be said: that those who oppose the doctrine of so-called spontaneous generation, not on the ground of the absence of conclusive evidence of its occurrence, which they might justly do, but on the ground of what they consider special characteristics of living matter, would do well to look with more insight into the phenomena of non-living nature, and to consider more deeply what they see, in order to discover whether
PREFACE.

the characteristic properties of life are quite so special and exclusive as they imagine them to be. Having done that, they might go on to consider whether, even if their premisses were granted, any conclusion regarding the mode of origin of life would legitimately follow; whether in fact it would not be entirely gratuitous and unwarrantable to conclude thence the impossibility of the origin of living matter from non-living matter. The etymological import of the words physics and physiology is notably the same; and it may be that, as has been suggested, in the difference of their application lies a hidden irony at the assumption on which the division is grounded.

9, Hanover Square, W.
November 5, 1870.
CONTENTS.

LECTURES.

1. ON THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF MENTAL FUNCTION IN HEALTH ........................................ 1

2. ON CERTAIN FORMS OF DEGENERACY OF MIND, THEIR CAUSATION, AND THEIR RELATIONS TO OTHER DISORDERS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM ........................................ 40

3. ON THE RELATIONS OF MORBID BODILY STATES TO DISORDERED MENTAL FUNCTIONS ........................................ 77

APPENDIX.

1. THE LIMITS OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY ........................................ 115

2. THE THEORY OF VITALITY ........................................ 143
LECTURES.

1. ON THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF MENTAL FUNCTION IN HEALTH.

2. ON CERTAIN FORMS OF DEGENERACY OF MIND, THEIR CAUSATION, AND THEIR RELATIONS TO OTHER DISORDERS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

3. ON THE RELATIONS OF MORBID BODILY STATES TO DISORDERED MENTAL FUNCTIONS.