FOLIE À DEUX (?).

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It is not very unusual for husband and wife mutually to charge each other with insanity, and cases have occurred to me in which it was some little time before I could decide which was indeed the true patient. In the case I am about to describe, the difficulty was so unusually great that, of two practitioners who had examined the couple before me, and at whose instance I was consulted, one was prepared to certify the husband, while the other was equally convinced that the wife was insane.

They were Colonial people, who had come to London partly for sight-seeing and partly for self-improvement. For a short time they stayed at a well-known hotel, at which they had stayed before. They left this, and went to another large hotel close by. After some days they quitted this hotel, leaving some hundreds of pounds worth of jewellery behind them, and went into very respectable lodgings. The same night the lady rushed up to the landlady declaring that the husband was out of his mind, and was trying to murder her. The landlady went down, found the husband quite tranquil, and persuaded the wife to return. Next day the couple quitted this lodging for another, leaving all their clothes and belongings behind them. After two nights in the new lodging they transferred themselves to hotel No. 2, and the next day they both arrived at breakfast time at the house of some ladies, strangers to them, but friends of other members of their family. These ladies live a quiet life in a suburban town, and were so much embarrassed by the sudden irruption into their peaceful circle of this connubial thunderstorm, that they sent for assistance to their friend and medical adviser, Dr. C. On his appearance, the wife, in much excitement, declared that her husband was insane, violent, and dangerous, and implored him to be calm and restrain himself. The husband, much agitated, though the calmer of the two, did not protest against the charge, and, after an agitating and stormy scene, the whirlwind tore itself out of the house and returned to town, to hotel No. 2. The storm being passed, the elderly ladies resumed the tranquil life from which they had been so unexpectedly disturbed. Next morning, however, their early suburban breakfast was again interrupted by a tempestuous visit of the friends of their family. Again Dr. C. was requisitioned, and this time he decided to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm, guiding it to a neighbouring nursing home, where the gale abated, and the disturbed elements subsided into tranquillity. Still, however, there remained a ground swell after the storm. The lady was afraid to occupy the same room with her husband, and must be separately accommodated. At midnight she reappeared with her arms full of clothes, and declared that she could not bear to be separated from him. In the small hours of the morning she found that this arrangement was impracticable, and that she must resume her separate chamber.

In several interviews with Dr. C. each of them declared that the other was insane, the wife alleging that her husband, several of whose relatives were insane, was at times so violent that she went in fear of him, while the husband declared that his wife had been subjected to occult influence by a malefactor, until she had been bereft of her true individuality—she was no longer mistress of herself or responsible for her own actions. Puzzled as to which account was correct, Dr. C. called in the aid of his neighbour, Dr. P., who has had much experience, both as medical man and as magistrate, in cases of insanity. Dr. P. examined the husband, and decided that he, at any rate, was of unsound mind, and could, if it were desirable, be certified forthwith. About the wife he was not so sure. Excited she was, no doubt, strange in her manner and odd in various respects; but much allowance must be made for a woman, far from friends, from help and counsel, associated day and night with a husband who was insane and intermittently prone to violence. Dr. C., on the other hand, while admitting that the husband had behaved very strangely, and entertained notions that were, to say the least of it, very odd, yet regarded the wife as the more insane of the two; but then he had witnessed the extraordinary demeanour of the wife at the breakfast table of his patients, which Dr. P. had

not seen; and he had not heard the extraordinary statement of the husband to Dr. P., which will presently be recounted, about the singing of the wife. Meanwhile both husband and wife enjoyed being at the nursing home, and expressed no wish to leave it. They said it was perfect peace after the turbulent experiences through which they had recently passed. Under these circumstances I was asked to see them both, and to decide whether both or either, and if so, which, was insane, and what had better be done.

I found them sitting tranquilly in the garden, the gentleman, an anaemic man of 38 or so, with a weak face and an air of weariness and indecision, reading a book; while the wife, a plump little woman of about the same age, with bright eyes and intelligent but unsatisfied expression, was doing some needlework. The gentleman at once assented to my suggestion that I should interview his wife alone, and took himself off. The lady's account was that they had been married ten years, and had had no children. No trouble like the present had ever occurred before. This was not their first visit to this country. They came, not to see the sights, but for self-improvement—her husband to learn languages, while she took singing lessons. She had lately become convinced that she was wasting her life, and that she ought to pay more attention to her spiritual development. She could not quite explain what she meant by that. No, it was not devoting herself to good works—at least it was that, but it was much more. She found that her singing lessons helped greatly towards her spiritual development; they elevated her spiritually. She found that her singing master was a great spiritual force, and that in all his lessons there was a double meaning. When he spoke of the upper resonance and the lower resonance, that applied to her voice, no doubt, but it also had a spiritual meaning of great significance. She could not explain what the meaning was. It applied to her moral nature; it was spiritual. At first she thought she ought to pursue her spiritual development, regardless of the cost to herself, or her husband, or any one else; and she had tried to convert her husband to the higher life; but now she recognized that she ought to make her spiritual development harmonize with his welfare and comfort, and carry him along with her. Sometimes her faith had failed, but she was thankful to say it was now restored to her, and it would never fail again. She would be spared that sin. She had been living without an object in life, and now she had the greatest of all objects. Yes, her husband had been violent with her, and she was afraid he was out of his mind. It was in his family. She had feared him, but she did not fear him now, because she felt she had an inner strength, and as long as she did not lose faith she would be able to overcome him. He had been very violent at lodging No. 1; and again at hotel No. 2, at 4 o'clock in the morning, he had rushed at her and held her by the arm and the chest. She was at first afraid he would injure her. But she felt an inward conviction of her own strength, and as long as she had that and held to her faith, he could do her no harm. It was after this fracas that they decided to visit these old ladies, the friends of their family.

There was no very definite insanity in all this. It is the sort of trash that we hear from members of the Society for the Investigation of Spooks. One hears the same kind of thing from plenty of other silly weak women who have not enough to do, not enough interests in life, and who, for want of healthy occupation and interests, become sentimental and emotional, and plunge into mysticism. She evidently belonged to the class of women who go into convents when they are disappointed in love; who become devotees; who fall under the influence of high-church curates, and embroider for them slippers and braces; who wear hair-cloth chemises; take their tea without sugar to mortify the flesh; and go without breakfast to attend "matins" and "prime." Should they fall in with designing spiritualists they fall an easy prey. They are the kind of people who constitute the triumphs of the revival meeting. They are the objects of endless hilarity to their profane brothers; and of sympathetic pity to the understanding physician; but they are not insane.

From her I went to her husband. I was prepared to find him a weak, unpractical kind of creature, without much harm or much sense in him; and I was not far

wrong. He had come to this country, it appeared, to study "psychic" phenomena, and to join in "psychic" research, so called. He had fallen into the slough, and become a convinced believer in "occultism," and various kinds of trash; when, to his horror, his wife followed his example, and, his eyes being opened to the perniciousness, though scarcely to the humbug, of the thing, he had wrenched himself out of it; and then had the misery of recognizing that his wife was captivated, and that his connubial happiness and comfort were like to be wrecked by it. She had been taking singing lessons of a well-known and worthy professor, and had erected the unwitting man, first into a spiritual guide, philosopher, and friend; then into a demigod and medium between her and the spiritual world; and at length had confided to her husband that her music master was a reincarnation of Christ himself. Inexpressibly shocked and horrified, the husband tried with frantic eagerness to free his wife from the domination of a man whom he now looked upon as a veritable Svengali, who had the power to work upon the wife a supernatural metamorphosis. It was the expression of this belief that led Dr. P. to the conclusion that the husband was insane. "My wife was having a singing lesson," said Mr. X., "when I heard a new and magnificent voice, that I had never heard before, sing in the most superb and entrancing manner. I said to myself it was not fair to my wife that such a voice should be brought into contrast with hers, and that the professor had no business to bring such a singer, and then make my wife sing after her. I went upstairs to remonstrate, and found that this extraordinary singer was my wife herself. When the professor was gone, her ordinary voice returned." Mr. X. was convinced, not only that the professor had a supernatural power over Mrs. X., and used it, but that he used it for the very nefarious purpose of exploiting Mr. and Mrs. X., and making money out of them. In corroboration of this view, he told me that, on one occasion, the professor had seriously assured him that Mrs. X. was on the verge of an attack of brain fever, and that Mr. X. had better not thwart her desire to continue her singing lessons, or she might have a serious illness. Moreover, the professor had the power of "drawing" Mrs. X. to him, wherever he or she might be; for, one evening, Mr. X. had left Mrs. X. temporarily, and, when he returned to his room, she was gone—gone without leaving word whither, and without assuming her proper out-of-doors attire (she was not without hat and boots, however). In a short time she was brought home in a cab by the professor, to whose house she had "been drawn." I pointed out that the professor had not been far wrong about Mrs. X.'s state of health, and elicited that he had suggested that, while her singing lessons had better continue, they might very well be given by some one else. As to her being "drawn" by him, it appeared that she had indeed gone to him, as, with her peculiar view of his nature and powers, was not unnatural, but there was not a tittle of evidence that he was an active, or even a consenting, party to her excursion. Moreover, he seemed to have acted the part of the Good Samaritan in bringing her home at the time of his own dinner hour, instead of putting her in a cab, and sending her home by herself. This view of the matter seemed to bring great relief to Mr. X. He then went on to explain some of the events of the last few days. About the transfer from hotel No. 1 to hotel No. 2 he was reticent, and gave me to understand that there were private reasons. From hotel No. 2 to lodging No. 1 they went to facilitate the singing lessons. No sooner had they arrived at the lodgings than Mr. X. recognized that his wife was fallen completely into the toils of her Svengali; and, upon making this discovery, Mr. X. determined that he must "fight fire with fire"—that he must exert his authority, dominate his wife, oust the intruder, and compel her, by the power of a stronger will, to return to her allegiance. Unfortunately, a weak man cannot assume strength by the mere effort and desire to do so. His method of dominating his wife by superior power seems to have been to storm at her; and, so foreign to his usual nature was this mode of treating her that, instead of substituting his influence for that of Svengali, she rushed up to the landlady and screamed that he was gone out of his mind. He did not reduce her beneath the power of his will, but he succeeded in scaring her into hysterics. No lion so dreadful as a *brébis furieux*. After this they were reconciled. Mr. X. won his

wife over to his view of the matter; and, holding each other's hands, they together asseverated, with great solemnity, "*We will throw off this evil influence!*" This was one of the occasions to which Mrs. X. had referred when she told me she had once or twice lost faith, and sinned by doubting. Determined to act at once, to sever themselves from Professor Svengali, and begin a new life, they had walked straight out of their lodging, to which they had been recommended by him, and went to another. So urgent was the necessity, that they waited not to pack their belongings nor to say farewell. They stood not on the order of their going, but went at once. The so-called assault, at 4 a.m., in hotel No. 2, was explained thus:—Mrs. X., in a state of great excitement, rushed to the bell, and her husband held her hands to prevent her from disturbing the house without reason. The visit to the suburban family seems to have been prompted by the craving, in their forlorn bewilderment, to seek somewhere, anywhere, that support and succour which their poor weak natures so sorely needed. In the nursing home they have found a haven of rest in which they can shelter themselves, and cling to the strength of others, while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is nigh.

My researches did not disclose any insanity in either of them. The man was weak and silly, and the woman was silly and weak. They were neither of them fit to be trusted in the streets without a dry nurse. The heads of both of them were stuffed with spiritualistic rubbish, and they seemed to me like boy and girl, who had never before been beyond the precincts of some dame's school, suddenly set down in the great world to fend for themselves. I advised them to rest at the nursing home until they had recovered their morale and become reconciled to each other, and then to return to their native land. Here I recommended they should carry out a project, often discussed between them, and adopt a child, since they have none of their own. I assured Mrs. X. that if she had a child to dress and undress, to wash and bathe, to feed and cherish and care for, she would soon forget her aspiration to "develop her spiritual nature," which was after all merely a perversion of, and a poor substitute for, her unsatisfied maternal instinct.

"If you, Mrs. X., had had a floor to scrub, this barrier between yourself and your husband; this aspiration to develop your spiritual nature; this deifying of a matter-of-fact teacher of singing; these migrations and quarrels, and strivings and yearnings after you know not what, would never have happened. You are suffering from emptiness of life. Get something to do, if it is only scrubbing floors, but get something to do."

She caught eagerly at the notion; she jumped at it. She was ready then and there to drop on her knees and scrub the gravel path if by so doing she could rid herself of her morbid incubus, and resume her place in her husband's affection and her own esteem. At this point I took an abrupt leave of them, lest I should be installed in the place of spiritual director, vice Svengali, dismissed the service.

THE GALTON-BERTILLON SYSTEM IN PORTUGAL.—A law for the institution of a regular anthropometric system has just been passed in Portugal, and is likely to come into effect immediately. In all individuals who have been condemned for criminal offences, as well as in any case where the legal authority considers it advisable, a form of the Bertillon system is to be employed. Four separate classes of bureaux are organized—the central, the local, the special, and the penitentiary. The first speaks for itself, the local are in connexion with the district courts, the special with the reformatories, and the last class with the penitentiaries of Lisbon and Coimbra. The identification of males below 25 and above 45 years of age, as well as of all women, is carried out by Galton's method with the modifications of Henry. Males between 25 and 45 are registered by a process which is a combination of Bertillon's and the Galton-Henry system, though when the head of a post considers it necessary, he can order complete measurements and records to be taken. The local bureaux normally employ only the Galton-Henry finger-prints, though tattoos are also registered. On being taken, the record is sent at once to the central office, where it is duly classified. The special bureaux are principally intended to record the effect that correctional education produces, and, similarly, the bureaux in connexion with the Lisbon and Coimbra penitentiaries will, it is hoped, throw some light on the results obtained from the penitentiary methods.