

LOCAL INSANITY.

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California, in proportion to its population, presents more cases of insanity than any other country. Scarcely a day passes but we hear of from one to two cases in some part of the State, and of the commitment of the unfortunate victims of this dreadful malady to the Insane Asylum at Stockton.

It may be asked, what is there to produce more insanity in this State than elsewhere? We have to look for the causes of this scourge in more than one direction. First, a large number of persons come to this State full of bright hopes and joyous anticipations. They leave home, friends and comforts, in the confident expectation of soon realizing here an independence. Too oft they find their expectations rudely blasted, their bright anticipations crushed; the golden bow of promise proves to be but a black cloud of despair. Disappointment and deprivations bring in their train loss of physical health and loss of mental vigor; trials and troubles drive Reason from its throne. Second, the too frequent use of intoxicating drinks, which in this country are but little if any better than rank poisons, has been the cause of much insanity; it fevers the blood, shatters the nerves and withers the brain. Third, the hurry and excitement which prevails throughout the State, and keeps the mind constantly stretched to its utmost tension, coupled with losses and crosses in business, in many cases produce the most melancholy results. By a constant strain the silver chord of reason is loosed—the golden bowl is finally broken at the fountain of thought, and the voice of the mind is hushed, intellect is overthrown, all the faculties which go to elevate man above the mere brute are scattered to the winds, and he who was but a day since full of hope and promise, is but a helpless wreck, floating about on the tide of circumstances without rudder or compass.

California has produced abundance of wealth; it has also been prolific in misery. Hundreds and hundreds have sought its shores in search of fortune, and have lost all that goes to make life pleasant or even supportable. It is, however, consoling to know that the State has done much to ameliorate the miseries of