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WHAT IT'S LIKE INSIDE

Seven months in an asylum, and not mad. It sounds like something from Charles Reade, and recalls, in any case, the bad old days, when interested persons could have relatives or wards committed to the madhouse merely to get possession of their property. But William Seabrook, the well-known world-traveller and experimenter in strange practices, asked for it. Finding that he had become a confirmed drunkard, and would inevitably end insane, he induced friends to secure his detention at one of the largest mental hospitals in the United States, and there underwent treatment which effectively removed the craving that threatened to ruin him. Though surprises awaited the patient, he found this institution an asylum, in the original sense of shelter, sanctuary, and, like others, really felt loathe to leave it. The very personal and minute account of his experiences—his "adventures," since he is a professional adventurer—is therefore called "Asylum," and it constitutes as remarkable and honest a narrative as was Aleister Crowley's once widely-read description of the means by which he was cured of drug-taking.

The huge institution in which Mr. Seabrook spent such an interesting time was run on the most modern lines—no strait-jackets or formal restraint of any kind—insanity in its myriad forms being regarded as a remediable disease and so treated. Psycho-analysis, for example, did the writer himself so much good, brought such helpful self-knowledge, that he was able to face the world afterwards with renewed confidence and go back to work, in which he had begun to fear himself a failure. The treatment for partly-deranged people and his own case consisted mainly of the removal of all responsibilities, and a sort of kindergarten supervision. Becoming as children again, the men gradually lost all nervous terrors, began to recover balance, and even enjoyed the maternal attentions of the stalwart nurse. Mr. Seabrook penetrated other sections of the asylum too, and describes their occupants, but never with any intention of making fun of the unconsciously comic unfortunates, though there is plenty of humour. The patients ranged from millionaires to

tramps, and were of all interests and occupations. Two who absorbed Mr. Seabrook's attention were a brilliant college graduate, who wrote convincing Joyce and a Socratic questioner, who was the most embarrassing sometimes, in his quest for information. The author found a new world of characters here, and conceived a great admiration for the staff, who so wholeheartedly give themselves to the work they perform. Names, of course, are suppressed or changed.