

Grissom (E)

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THE
BORDER-LAND OF INSANITY:

WITH

EXAMPLES FROM THE ILLUSTRIOUS INSANE;

BEING

A POPULAR LECTURE,

DELIVERED BY INVITATION.

BY

EUGENE GRISSOM, M. D.,

SUPT. INSANE ASYLUM OF NORTH CAROLINA



RALEIGH:

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LECTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

There is a mysterious land unlike any upon which the sun shines. Its realms are as vast as the bounds of space, its thrones grander than the kingdoms of earth, its palaces more resplendent than the dreams of Aladdin; its rivers flow with eternal music, its forests wave in more than tropical glory, its oceans roll in the primeval grandeur that engulfed the ancient continents; its skies shine with auroras whose light and color the sun-light may not hope to rival.

Alas, there is close by a region of darkness profound, abysses of frightful depth, sounds and sights and fears of unimaginable woe, an-unexplored home of spirit and demon and goblin dark, of spectres and all imaginable horrors. Here men walk all their days in leaden gloom, or sullen striving, or frantic rage against their fate. Beckoned on by a ghostly hand, they enter this, the terrific plain of melancholy, to march on to a final grave within its caverns.

The former of these is the Kingdom of Genius, the latter is the Habitation of Madness. Between the two there lies a strip of unknown breadth, which we may term the Border-land of Insanity. Here narrow, there far away and peopled by adventurous spirits, who sometimes crossing in rapid flight, have turned with scorched wing and terror stricken-steps, or may-hap in their devious way now to hope and again despair, have gone down at last in endless night,

In this Border-land have dwelt great numbers of the marked men of their race—warriors, philosophers, kings, poets, prophets, artists, patriots and statesmen. The history of those of our fellows who have had glimpses into the greatest glories and the most frightful sorrows that may befall humanity, has for us a fascination beyond the wanderings of a Livingstone in equatorial wilds, or a Kane amid the frozen secrets of the arctic North.

Ever since man recorded his thoughts for brother man, the conception of the supernatural has accompanied his mental life. Consciously or unconsciously, we are striving again and again to pierce the veil about us, and know the ultimate reasons of things, and recognize their invisible causes. From the familiar demon of Socrates, or the attendant spectre of Descartes, to the witches of our ancestors and the spirit-manifestations of to-day, the human mind has ever been reaching out to alliance with the supernatural. To plunge into the depths of profound abstraction, to lose one's self in the inmost recesses of reverie, is a perilous journey, from which only the most gigantic minds like Homer and Shakespeare, can safely return.

If I present too sombre a picture to-night of the great, in their wanderings by Plutonian shores, I beg to say that the task you have flatteringly imposed upon me was accepted in the hope that I might teach, however feebly, a lesson for the times. I come not, therefore, to amuse you with flowers of rhetoric, or sallies of wit, but to address myself to the graver task of reading with you, some lessons from the shadowy side of life, often concealed from sight, glossed over by the historic pen or only darkly hinted, but which openly read and courageously considered, may not be without good to come.

Philosophers have delighted in distinctions between what they call the faculties of the mind, for the want of a better term. Thus they name the power which receives and registers impressions from without, by means of the senses, *Perception*—the power which compares these, and reasons upon them, *Intellect*—the power which is capable of response to outer influence and circumstances, *Emotion*, and the power which in turn, sets in action the answer of the mind—the *Will*.

But these are names after all, and a mere approach in expression to such and such a capability of the mysterious being within us, the one and really indivisible essence which we call the immortal mind.

For the younger part of my audience I must repeat some facts so well known, as now to be simple truisms—but these statements are indispensable in their relations to the conclusions, to which I would invite your attention.

The instrument with which the immortal part within us reaches

the material world, is the human brain. Thousands of facts tell us that from that centre, through what are called the nerves of special sense, and also from that prolongation of its substance which constitutes the spinal cord, by numberless minute branches of nerves to the remotest parts of the body, go the telegraphic wires which bear the mandates of the mind.

There has arisen at this day a school of philosophers who aver that the mind is the mere secretion of the brain, a force and nothing more, expended in the act, created anew for each operation, and necessarily dying with the body that gives it existence, in the dreary death of annihilation. This specious philosophy, this glittering solution of the complicated phenomena of the mental world, making men the automata of physical force, when pressed to its logical end, knows no conscience, no right or wrong, no Divine law, and indeed, no God in all the universe; only the likes and dislikes of atoms, and the blind whirlwinds of physical attraction.

This dream—for it is only a dream—is spread over the length and breadth of the land, in our papers and magazines, in contemporary addresses and poems, and is supposed to be entertained by many gentlemen of eminence in the medical world.

It has perhaps become necessary for the protection of the young, to show that the faith of our fathers is founded on the rock of truth, and impregnable.

The mind that dwells within us is a spark of Divine essence, destined to a life beyond the grave. Did I say that the nerves were the telegraphic wires of the system and the brain the central battery? True, but the operator is the mind, separate and independent from the machinery at its command, and the battery while sending forth currents of influence to the farthest wires, when the connection is unbroken, gives but the jangle of unintelligent motion until the directing power of the operator impresses thought upon its quiverings, or direction upon its force, and registers his will in intelligible language.

But if the wires are suddenly broken, or slowly rusted away, or in the lapse of time the currents of the battery grow feebler and die away finally for want of the feeding acids and metals, the play of whose mutual action is transmuted to electric force; or if the lightnings of Heaven seize and for a while range these

wires with uncontrollable power, in any and all these cases, the operator stands powerless to express his will, but he is nevertheless still existent and if the damage be not irreparable, he is ready to resume control, in so far as the delicate apparatus is re-adjusted and re-connected, and supplied again with the pure and efficient pabulum of its operations.

The proposition I assert, is that there is no such thing as a diseased mind, where the body is in perfect health, implying the brain natural in size, unaffected in its structure or functions by disease, and supplied with pure blood, unvaried by excess or diminution. The *mens sana* always resides *in corpore sano*.

Let any one of these conditions be destroyed by imperfect organization of the brain at birth, or its abnormal development by mechanical injury to its vessels, whether by violence or disease, or by poisoned blood circulating through its structure, and there comes a period when thick clouds envelope the spirit and obscure mental appreciation, or even directly interrupt its every day intercourse with men and things, and by degrees and insensible shades the man drifts into the catalogue of the insane.

We cannot too distinctly realize that insanity is purely a physical disease, and as such calls for sympathy and care, and restoration if possible. The time was when insanity was regarded as the personation of demons. As in the dark ages, the hospitals were attached to the monastic establishments, it was not unnatural in one point of view, that the discipline enforced among the monks for evil words and deeds, should be applied to the wretched patients committed to their hands.

Therefore, we observe that among the Franciscans, who enforced severe self-chastenings, each miserable lunatic received ten lashes per day to drive out the evil spirit. Stripes, chairs of restraint, tortures equal to the direst imaginations of the Inquisition, bleedings with the lancet, whirling chairs, whose gyrations reached a hundred revolutions a minute; iron cages suspended by chains over tanks of water so that the victims might be submerged to the neck—this frightful picture, which I will not further pursue, presents the system of treatment for these unfortunates lasting even to 1790, over a great part of the civilized world, within the lifetime of many living men.

But by the efforts of the wise and good, men have learned to know that this mysterious possession that for centuries blasted its victims and set them apart from their fellows as the objects of Divine wrath, or the playthings of devils and demons, was but a disease—one of the ills that flesh is heir to. Like other afflictions, sometimes insidious in approach, sometimes bursting on the sufferer with terrific suddenness, it is nevertheless, like them, a condition to be accounted for upon a physical basis, preventable within certain bounds and its cure, blessed be Providence, also possible, and even probable with favoring circumstances.

Can the mind suffer disease? Then it is pierced with mortal taint and will surely die, beyond hope of resurrection. Thousands of men come back to life and happiness, after even what some would call the death of mind. Why are they not new men, if the soul is a secretion of the brain? How is it possible that each man comes back to his own identity? Who has ever found himself or recognized another as a new being, gifted with a separate and independent mind after the passage through a season of lunacy, even of years. Voice, expression, language, views, tastes, education, whatever individualizes or differentiates one man from another, comes back to stamp him as such a creature of God his Maker, and no other one.

What constitutes insanity and how the change occurs, I will not attempt to discuss within the brief scope of this lecture. Hardly any two agree to-day upon precise distinctions in the former case and the latter is yet an unrevealed book.

But we do know its indications and accompaniments. Under ordinary circumstances, it is not the work of one generation. By this, it is not meant that the parent must necessarily present the phenomena that we recognize in this disease, but that he prepares the way for its development. And this he may do in a great many ways, but chiefly by abnormal and unnatural modes of life.

He may gorge the brain with stimulating drink for years; he may narcotize it with tobacco, or excite it by the fever of gambling at the card table or in the chances of speculative business; he may neglect the dictates of reasonable hygiene, and give his life to mental exertion, keeping the brain filled with blood to

its utmost endurance, in the intent study of an idea, forgetful of the needs of physical exercise; he may abandon himself to sensual excess, or neglect the demands of sleep, or pursue the rewards of political ambition, or the vanities of social extravagance, until he has no life to transmit his offspring, but that which carries with it impaired force and defective structure.

It is a startling fact that this is the sin of the age—excess in one or many of these forms in this era of rushing social currents and conflicting destinies, and day by day retribution strikes her knell. One man is paralyzed; another on the couch of a babe with profound nervous prostration; another is epileptic; another falls under the lightning stroke of apoplexy, like Dickens, or die like Horace Greeley, the victim of insanity, while others again slowly drag out an intellectual night like that of the poet Charles Fenno Hoffman, for so many years past an inmate of an asylum, or in these words, (written by a maniac himself,) dwell in a land where, as he beautifully says:

"There is a winter in my soul,
The winter of despair;
Oh, when shall spring its rage control?
When shall the snowdrop blossom there?
Cold gleams of comfort sometimes dart
A dawn of glory on my heart,
But quickly pass away.
Thus Northern lights the gloom adorn,
And give the promise of a morn
That never turns to-day."

Insanity would appear to require both predisposing and exciting causes, where it is not the direct result of overwhelming violence to the brain. The great predisposing cause is left a heritage somewhere in the ancestry of the child. Thousands of years do not obliterate the Jewish nose, the Mongolian eye remains, the fair skin of the Northmen transplanted eight centuries ago, in secluded valleys in Italy, is yet preserved; nay, such a trifle as the Bourbon mouth, is retained for centuries. Who does not see the stamp of parentage in expression, in the very shape of a nail or tone of a voice? Who can doubt there is at least a similar tendency to transmit the acquired conditions of the brain and nervous system, and the more so, as this of the whole frame is the most impressible portion.

Just what changes in the structure of the brain invites the access of insanity, it may be impossible to tell. Sometimes there are enormous abscesses within its substance, or areas of hardened or softened convolutions; again it is studded with minute points of tuberculous or dead material, again there is but the faintest blush of inflammation; not unoften it defies the naked eye, and only after it has been artificially hardened, and a thin paper-like slice rendered transparent and colored with carmine, and exposed to long examination in the microscope, as some distinguished anatomists are doing to-day, does the minute degeneration of its tissue, or enlargement and false arrangement of its circulating vessels betray itself.

Yet the difficulties here, as brave and industrious as pathologists are, in the struggle to surmount the obstacles, are by no means greater than those which confront us on the threshold of inquiry in many diseases, and indeed in the final recesses of every physiological operation. What we call disease is after all but a collection of manifestations we term symptoms, hardly absolutely alike in any two cases.

If I must ask pardon for requesting you to follow me through the devious ways of philosophers in explaining the road to the goal I would reach, it is that I am ignorant of other modes of approaching it, and must ask you to tread this dry and dusty pilgrimage with me.

We have spoken of faculties, for convenience sake, entitled Preception, Intellect, Emotion and Will. Let us briefly trace the successive involvement of these, in the production of insanity.

Through preception, the mind takes knowledge of the objects around, and with the aid of memory, marshals them in their absence into a conception.

Unreal preception is illusion, the first step away from just observation and conclusion. This is as common as the affairs of every day life. Any disordered sense may give rise to it—to a jaundiced tongue, all things are bitter; in certain affections of the ear, bells are ever sounding or waves roaring. We pass along a road at night, and are suddenly startled by a white milestone, which assumes the shape of the white-robed ghost of our childhood. Reason soon assures us that this is a momentary dazzle and disturbance of the sense of vision from its true work.

But in some lives illusions by thousands chequer and disturb the whole course of existence. Let us go patiently on to observe.

A conception of an absent object is the revived impression which has been preserved in whole or part by memory. So a hallucination is an illusion that reason does not dispel, but which hangs about the mind seeking admittance into the domains of admitted truth. If we do not dismiss the momentary sight of the ghostly milestone as the glare of disturbed sense, but fly before it, and every moment turn to see it pursue, we are the victims of hallucination.

That which more distinctly illustrates hallucination as disordered conception, is the striking fact that men whose eyes are out may have hallucinations of dread visions before them, and so of the other senses.

Perhaps the hairs, breadth between the excitement of the sane mind and the beginning of the insane condition lies somewhere here—the one may still compare his hallucinations with past knowledge and refuse to accept their dominion over him, the other may submit without question and be lost.

Yet the question may be and has been asked—can the mind be both sane and insane at once—can these abnormal hallucinations be ever the legitimate children of a mind perfectly normal?

The next downward step is to absolute delusion—if pursued by the spectral hallucination which we have described, we some day in uncontrollable weariness and despair turn and strike down the monster by our side, and so unwillingly destroy a wife or a child at our feet, fixed delusion has done its work, and henceforth we are numbered among the hosts of maniacs. Who shall say where the subtle line was crossed—who shall say what under current of life drifted us into that malstrom?

The lamented Greisinger affirms ideas which briefly stated show that those whose fate it is to be stricken with a hereditary disposition to this disease turn imperceptibly to crooked paths which only lead downwards; their cerebral actions are different from those of a majority of mankind. The impressions of the outer world impinge upon an abnormally excited centre; uncommon conditions arise, unnatural dispositions are excited; bye and bye active irritation sets in, a tendency to weariness follows; im-

aginations which are for the moment the passing whims of healthy brains are cherished and maintained, by and by the dark and bitter side of life is all they see; the brain disease becomes fixed, its results are reflected in diminished and perverted nerve power throughout the system, and so by impoverished blood back again to the fountain head in circling rounds down to helpless dementia.

It is not the least extraordinary fact in this curious subject that what are called the primordial delusions of insanity are so well defined and constantly repeated. Great persecution, mighty elevation, everlasting condemnation, superhuman strength and wisdom, access to Divinity, these appear again and again in typical forms of disease. The famous man from whom I have quoted ascribes such recurring delusions not to emotional foundations as their source of production, but rather attributes their direct origin to cerebral disturbances. He beautifully illustrates, by comparing this with the contrast of the walk of the man in health, and that of him whose nerve force in the spinal cord has been impaired by disease.

“As the ganglion-cells of the spinal cord work together in the most exquisite manner, receiving exact sensitive impressions of the floor as touched by the foot in a regular motor manner, making complete harmony, so by such disease as shows anomalous action of the cells, there is produced, whatever may be the effort of the will, such a walk as exhibits the fatal mark of want of harmony.” This occurs in some of the most intractable cases that affect the frame of man.

By complete analogy, “the processes giving rise to imaginations, take place in the ganglion-cells of the outer surface of the brain; in the normal state, these actions, though numberless, work together in beautiful regularity—but by the anomalous action of the cells of the cortical substance of the brain, words and imaginations appear without a real existence.

We shall find that the great of this earth have often been the unhappy subjects of the most cruel hallucinations, and even the victims of confirmed delusions, ending not unoften in outbreaking mania or lingering melancholia.

We shall find to the confounding of those who would ignore the nobler part of man and reduce mind to the level of a mate-

rial secretion, that sages, philisophers and poets have given their grandest productions to the world between the attacks of disease, and during the interval, as it were, when the veil was withdrawn and the bars broken down that resisted the control of the immortal part over the poor frail shell, that subserves its uses in the fleeting present of this life.

I would not rashly say that all the great names to which I shall presently advert must be placed upon the rolls of the undoubtedly insane, but I will aver that there is not one whose life does not show at some time the evidence of perverted or impaired cerebral force—and in proportion as we discover a tainted parentage, a badly trained childhood, an intense mental strain, or extraordinary physical excess or disturbance, just so may we trace their wanderings into the mysterious Border-land that I have described to-night—the realm where genius and madness rule with divided sway.

In the language of Erskine, “To constitute insanity it is not necessary that Reason should be hunted from her seat; it is enough that Distraction sits down beside her, holds her trembling in her place, and frightens her from her propriety.”

It is Lord Brougham who declares that “the inability to struggle against a delusion constitutes unsoundness of mind.”

And in regard to partial insanity, he affirms that the disease is always present, and only not apparent by the accident that the proper chord is not struck at the time. It has often been proposed as a test, that it is indicative of the affection that there be a delusion, if but rarely manifested, and a state of mind incapable of mastering it.

Hallucinations take possession when the reason, having a cloud before it, cannot correct the misapprehension of the lower senses.

“It is a state of ideal intéllection,” says the celebrated Prof. Ordonaux, “in which the reason, after long struggling to maintain its ascendancy over the judgment, has finally yielded, but after yielding can still apprehend and compare correctly the relation of things. Thus even the insane rarely have hallucinations of more than two senses.”

It is a pregnant fact in this connection, that the original basis of hallucination often is prolonged reverie. Perhaps it is of little consequence whether the cerebral fullness that gives rise to dis-

ordered brain action be the result of congested brain without voluntary effort, or the sequel of long continued voluntary and strained attention, especially if the blood vessels by inheritance, have been weakened to the point of yielding. The melancholy result is the same.

Long ago Aristotle said:

“Nullum mangnum ingenium sine mixtura dementia,” and this has been a prolific text. Some writer, indeed, has ventured the observation that “All who have been famous for their genius, whether in the study of philosophy, in affairs of state, in poetical composition, or in the exercise of the arts, have been inclined to insanity or epilepsy, or one or the other of these diseases has existed in the same family.”

I will ask you now to consider with me some of the innumerable men of power or of genius who have signally exhibited the fate of humanity when hallucination or delusion leads it away into the Border-land of Unreason.

Charles IX of France, the impotent boy whose name ruled France, under the sway of his mother, goes to the Castle of Blois to welcome the Protestant chieftains after long and useless civil strifes. He agrees to the marriage between his sister Marguerite and Henry of Navarre his cousin, and cries; “I give my sister in marriage not only to the Prince of Navarre, but as it were, to the whole Protestant Party.”

The scheme effected, and the Protestants safely ensnared in the city of Paris, upon the occasion of the wedding solemnities, the wretched boy gives the signal to the alarm bell that tolls two o'clock on the morning of Sunday, 24th August, 1572.

Old men, terrified maidens, helpless infants, venerable matrons, all are stricken down in their blood. Trembling at the very sound of the deep echo to the alarm, he cries to stop, but too late. Beacon fires have lit their baneful glares, and alarm bells are sending the signal to the remotest corners of France. Recovering from his terror, fury seizes him—his eyes glare with frenzy, he shouts to the assassins, and grasping a gun, he joins the work of death, shooting from the window of the palace, the wounded and the flying. Torches are held on high, that his own body-guard may slaughter in the very court yard of the palace, the fugitives who stream to the King for protection.

“Let not one Protestant be spared to reproach me!” was his mad shout. What pen can ever picture the terrors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew which spilled the blood of a hundred red thousand Frenchmen!

The world was struck with horror. Geneva, to this day commemorates it with fasting and prayer. Elizabeth hung her court in mourning. The pulpits of Scotland rang with the tale. John Knox declared,

“Sentence has gone forth against the murderer, the King of France, and the vengeance of God will never be withdrawn from his house.”

And the day of retribution did speedily come. The echo of the world’s indignation was in the heart of Charles. He, who had, with sublime hypocrisy, told Admiral Coligny, when suffering from an assassin’s wound: “Father, you received the wounds, but I the sorrow;” and yet who had seen that venerable body dragged through the streets three nights after and hacked to pieces in his very presence, was overcome now, not by the fear of man but with a frightful indescribable nervous horror. Everywhere around him he saw the spectres of the gory slain, showing their gaping wounds and attended by threatening demons. He became morose, gloomy and finally completely silent. He left all society and month after month the scorpion fangs of remorse gnawed his heart.

Finally, his very bed clothes were crimsoned with a sweat of mortal agony. His aspect of profound misery drove off all human companionship. He groaned and wept and forever cried, “Oh what blood!” He is deserted by all but his nurse, and he calls out with despairing eyes, “What blood have I shed,” and dies—cut off at twenty four. The very courtiers turn away from a corpse so accursed, and but three gentlemen in all France are found to accompany the body to its tomb in the vaults of St. Denis.

The history of royalty is full of proof that the brain whereon the crown rests is often no more fit for royal cares, than that which plaited straw surrounds in yonder poor maniac’s dream.

Thus, read a page or two of the life of Frederick the Second of Prussia, the father of Frederick the Great.

For a dozen years before his death, and after long and repeated seasons of the extremest debauch, the King's health gave way; what the world recognizes as hypochondria, set in—a state of profound despondency and bodily suffering. He became as austere in religious observance as before he had been wild in excess. All conversation in the royal family was forbidden, except upon religious topics; he compelled all its members daily to read sermons and sing hymns. He obliged the prince and his sister to eat most nauseous dishes—would even spit in their food—he addressed them always in severe language, and struck at them with his crutch. His disease was plainly exhibited when he tried to strangle himself, but his life was saved by the Queen.

Having beaten Prince Frederick more than once to the point of exhaustion, he seized him finally by the hair and threw him to the ground, (for his physical strength was great) beat him as long as it gave him satisfaction, when he dragged him to the window in maniacal fury to throw him headlong, but was happily prevented by those who came to the rescue.

Failing in the effort to secure a renunciation from the Prince of his right of succession, he allowed him to attempt to escape, in order that he might obtain sentence of death upon him, by a court martial, and that he tried to anticipate by running him through the body with his own sword.

Failing in the sentence of death, he condemns both the Prince and his sister, his child and tender daughter, to the cold cell of a prison, and begins a course to convert them to christianity.

Writing a letter to the prisoners' chaplain, he betrays the long cherished delusion that had mastered his brain. He knew, he said, that his son had a heart of iron, and was a puppet in the in the fangs of Satan. All this was to drive out the demon and convert his unhappy boy to a reasonable being. The Prince was confined in a miserable room, and on the very edge of starvation for a great length of time. The King never recovered his reason, yet such was the ignorance of that day, and the sacredness of power, that he grasped the crown to the very last. It may even be doubted if the child of so much persecution, the great Frederick, did not himself exhibit the deep mark of his father's malady, in a thousand minute details which we will not stop to reckon here.

Indeed, so far from peace and health and strength as the heritage of the imperial purple, the dazzling seat of power has always held some uneasy, toppling wretch, whose sceptre was half unreal in his nerveless grasp. Philip of Macedon was once insane—King Saul is clearly pictured so—Mahomet was an epileptic, given to magnificent visions—Cæsar another epileptic, and as Cassius says, like a sick girl when the fit was upon him. Napoleon believed in his star as ruling his destiny—he is reported also to have suffered from epilepsy, twin-sister of madness—he is known to have lost a great battle when in much bodily suffering and confusion of ideas from a fit of indigestion; he was not unoften surprised in profound solitude watching some airy figure of his brain, and holding his hand to the retreating shade.

On the other hand his antagonist, Castlereagh, the architect of the Union of Ireland with England with one legislative body, whom Parliament thanked for his labors in the settlement of Europe, after the fall of Napoleon, became shattered in mind from the great labors of the session of 1822, and when known to be in a fit of insanity, his physicians allowed him to go to his seat in Kent, where he soon took his own life.

Peter the Great, whose exploits have been the wonder of our childhood, and whose powers of administration, and superb executive energy challenge the admiration of all men, paid alike the inevitable penalty of a vicious ancestry and a disordered life. He gave himself up to the control of evil passions and the most debased sensual excesses—history abounds with the strange freaks that will occur to every reader. He sees his son Alexis condemned to death; at another period, he remains three days and nights fasting, upon the death of Peter, his favorite son, and his own life was despaired of. Again for maladministration, he flogs with the *dubina*, (his cane of Spanish reed), the person of the celebrated Menzikoff, prime minister of the realm. Finally the paroxysms of an obscure disease which physicians recognize as exceedingly painful, ushered in outbreaks of wild mania, and he went to the grave.

Victor Amadeus I, of Sardinia, was a victim of that affection which has been termed *kleptomania*. King as he was, he could not resist an overpowering inclination to steal, to commit the most petty thefts of valueless trifles.

Queen Francisca, of Portugal, is another monarch whose insanity was so complete as to remove her from the throne, in the early part of this century.

But probably no page of royal calamity possesses the interest to the American people, which hangs about that which recounts the misfortunes of George III.

This monarch, it has been said by distinguished authority, was one who might least have been expected to fall into insanity, by hereditary predisposition, or bodily constitution. But will not a full examination of his history rather indicate the contrary opinion?

The father of the Hanoverian line, Duke William of Lunenburg, called William the Pious, was deprived by fate of sight and reason. "Sometimes, in his later days," says Thackeray, "the good Duke had glimpses of mental light, when he would bid his musicians play the psalm tunes which he loved. One thinks, says he, of a descendant of his, two hundred years afterward, blind, old, and lost of wits, singing Handel in Windsor Tower."

The fifteen children of William the Pious, had but a small inheritance, and the sons drew lots to determine which should marry and continue the line of Guelphs. Upon the sixth brother, George, the fortunate lot fell. You are familiar with the fortunes of his descendants, how after Queen Anne's death, the English throne went to the distant Elector of Hanover, who did not even know the English tongue. He seems with his court, to have spent his days in plundering his subjects—his worthless and criminal wife, it is well known, was a state prisoner for thirty-two years. The son, George II, knew no law but his passions. It was he who challenged his brother, King of Prussia, with sword and pistol, to settle a great transaction; day and seconds were chosen—only the fear of the ridicule of Europe stopped them. He lived among women unfit to touch the hem of the garments of the pure, the life of a Turk in his Seraglio. At sixty years of age he tainted society by bad example; gross and low, from youth to hoary age.

The son whom he hated, and drove from his house, without his own children to accompany him, was Frederick, who died before reaching the throne, leaving a son, who was George III.

George II was found dead, it was said, in an epileptic fit. Yet the new King never mentioned his father Frederick. What could he have been, hated and forgotten by parent and child?

George the III was a dull boy, of little brain, brought up without much education, by a very domineering and narrow-minded woman. The child was kept in loneliness and gloom, deprived of pleasures, and filled with prejudices. The hard and cruel mother, once seeing the young Duke of Gloucester unhappy, sharply demanded why he was so silent. "I am thinking," said the poor boy. "Thinking, sir, of what?" "I am thinking if I ever have a son I will not make him so unhappy as you make me."

After his marriage with a plain but excellent German girl, the King lived a quiet country life, but the penalty of the transgression of former generations must be enforced. He was insane five times, first in 1765, when he was but twenty-seven. This followed immediately after a cure of a chronic eruption on his face. In 1778 his malady returned with fearful power. All the gestures and ravings of the maniac appeared and the wild howlings of a beast. He attempted to throw himself from the window, and for a time it was thought life would give way. It lasted about five months, when he resumed the reins of power. The fact is a touching one, that an early act upon recovery was to visit a poor house and examine the new rooms being prepared for the more comfortable accommodation of lunatics, and express his gratification at the work of charity.

Perhaps a single anecdote may be admissible here concerning his treatment. Although he soon became calm, and never evinced any disposition to strike or injure any person or furniture, he was subject to mechanical restraint to increase his self-control. No patient, not even the humblest wretch, would be subject now to the ordeal which he underwent. A writer relates that while walking through the palace during his convalescence, accompanied by an equerry, they observed a strait-jacket lying in a chair. The equerry, averting his look as if to conceal some embarrassment, the King said: "You need not be afraid to look at it. Perhaps it is the best friend that I ever had in my life."

The famous Dr. Willis was his physician and asserted that the attack came from "weighty business, severe exercise, too great

abstemiousness and little rest." To illustrate his character, it is said that when Burke once asked Willis, in a parliamentary investigation, what he would have done if the King had become violent, when on one occasion Willis had allowed him a razor against the advice of the other medical attendants—the reply at once was, "There, sir, by the Eye! I should have looked at him thus, sir—thus!" Burke is said to have averted his head instantly, and to have made no reply. George III was again seized in 1801; for a few months in 1804; and for the last time in 1810, as he remained in that condition until his death in 1820.

Among his delusions, was one that he could preserve an intercourse with the dead. Once in the council, addressing himself to two friends long in the grave, Sir Henry Hallford, the court physician, reminded him that they were dead. "True," was the reply, "they died to you and to the world in general, but not to me. You, Sir Henry, are forgetting that I have the power of holding intercourse with those whom you call dead. Yes, Sir Henry Hallford, it is vain, so far as I am concerned, that you kill your patients." When he had been several years a patient in Windsor Tower, he was found by the Queen one day singing a hymn and playing on the harpsichord. When he had finished, he knelt, prayed for his family and the nation, and implored the restoration of his mental powers. Suddenly he burst into tears, and the veil between him and his kind had fallen again.

His entire reign was the era of the bitter strifes of Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Burke, and all the immortals of that age of British oratory. The poor dull King, with the common people at his back, arrayed himself against the patricians. He said he knew he wanted his people's prosperity; so whoever did not think with him, and stand ready to obey, must be a traitor.

Hence his war upon the colonies, which the approaching Centennial brings back anew to every patriot. The Americans were petulant rebels, who must be taught to fear God and honor the King, much as his stern mother had disciplined him, and he succeeded, and war was declared and prosecuted until overruled by Providence, for our national separation and the blessing of all mankind. The poor mad King, who bore a disease-stricken frame for eighty years, cried at last for mourning to wear, when he heard a funeral knell, for, said he, "Poor George III! I know he is dead."

May we not hear again the parting words of the greatest writer of English in our day, who had himself known the partner of his bosom rent from his own side by insanity, and whose pure spirit has since gone to rest, with but a single gasp, on the quiet bed of sleep—Thackeray, who says, of the tale I have told you:

“What preacher need moralize on this story; what words save the simplest are requisite to tell it? It is too terrible for tears. The thought of such a misery smites me down in submission before the Ruler of Kings and men, the Monarch Supreme over empires and republics, the inscrutable Dispenser of life, death, happiness, victory.”

“O, brothers,” I said to those who heard me first in America, “O, brothers; speaking the same dear mother tongue. O, comrades, enemies no more, let us take a mournful hand together as we stand by this royal corpse and call a truce to battle! Low he lies, to whom the proudest used to kneel once, and who was cast lower than the poorest; dead, whom millions prayed for in vain. Driven off his throne; buffeted by rude hands; with his children in revolt; the darling of his old age killed before him ultimately; our Lear hangs over her breathless lips and cries:

“Cordelia! Cordelia! stay a little!”

“Vex not his ghost—oh, let him pass—he hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world,
Stretch him out longer!”

Hush! Strife and quarrel, over the solemn grave! Sound trumpets, a mournful march. Fall, dark curtain, upon his pageant, his pride, his grief, his awful tragedy.”

Turning from the royalty of place to that of human genius, and high fame, we are literally bewildered amid the throng of those upon whom brain disease laid its mark, whether lightly as the touch of a child, or even like the fiery brand of the executioner.

Among the ancient worthies, great Socrates himself did not escape; Plato and Xenophon, both speak of the familiar *daimon*, which he averred always accompanied him, and when it made its voice heard, always guided his plans. This has been supposed a hallucination of hearing. And what a man was the great philosopher, carrying his head in a strange position, with no occupation but preaching in the markets and shops, and pouring

his relentless irony upon friend and foe, perhaps to return upon the world what he bore from his own wife. He is said by Diogenese Laertius to have remained an entire day, in a trance, in one position, standing and hearkening to a celestial voice, at the siege of Potidea.

Yet this is the man, whose sublime doctrines, by ancient and modern alike, are confessed to be first in the heathen world.

I will not dwell upon the references in ancient lore to the madness of Hercules and Ajax, Ulysses and Lysander, Bellerophon and Plato himself.

But, in the more modern times, we find *Tasso*, the immortal author of "Jerusalem Delivered," shut up for years, a victim of the wildest delusions.

Benvenuto Cellini, the artist, sees a resplendent light hovering over his own shadow.

Raffaello himself declared that while painting the Transfiguration, that magnificent creation of human genius, he might well have been considered an enthusiastic madman. He forgot himself absolutely, and the whole action passed before his eyes.

Pascal, whenever in intense thought, beheld a fiery gulf open by his side. If his attendants placed a chair between him and the precipice, composure might return, as he beheld an obstacle between himself and danger. So portentous is the power of diseased imagination.

Descartes, whom I need not characterize as one of the greatest minds known to fame, was followed, as he supposed, by an invisible person, calling on him to search for truth.

Metastasio, who described in his exquisite writings the sensations of incipient madness, drew it from his own unhappy experience.

Cruden, the author of the famous Concordance to the Bible, wrote it while insane. He was three times within an asylum, once before he was twenty years of age.

Joan of Arc, the maid of France, suffered from a physical disorder, which any physician recognizes now as the forerunner of insanity, and a thousand facts show that this maiden of poetry was a victim of a form of insanity, in which there is the full conviction of the possession of supernatural power.

Kean, the actor, died from mental strain, in personating Othello.

Rousseau, was followed by a life-long delusion that he was persecuted by the entire world.

Jerome Cardan, greatest physician and natural philosopher of his time, was tormented with hallucinations, as was *Paracelsus*, also.

Pascal, to whom I have already referred, and whose mathematics were only second to Newton, after he had broken down his physical frame by fastings and vigils, and overworked his weary brain, actually wore an amulet against the demoniac visitations that destroyed his peace.

Indeed "overwork of the brain" it has been justly said, "is unlike an excess of labor when demanded of other organs. They refuse to discharge their functions when overtasked, or gradually gaining rest, are at last enabled to accomplish the task. Overworking the stomach destroys the appetite, and the duty is no longer imposed. Overworking the muscular system does not break down that, but rather the nervous system with which it is so nearly connected. The overworked lungs throw part of their work on the liver, and the overworked liver on the kidneys. But the overworked brain finds no helpmate in the economy of the organism."

Lest one appear to judge rashly, let us look more closely to the record.

Torquato Tasso, whose "Jerusalem Delivered," alone ranks with the *Paradise Lost*, the *Iliad*, and the *Divina Commedia*, the four great epics of mankind, was born in 1544, and was the son of the poet, Bernardo Tasso. To scan his life in few lines, his young brain was tortured with Greek and Latin, at seven years. At seventeen he had written an epic. It was in 1565 that he met Lucretia and Leonora, sisters of the Duke of Ferrara at the court. With them he lives in close friendship, and for them he entertains the loftiest admiration. While at the ducal court he hears that his great poem has been published by stealth in an Italian city, without his authority or the corrections he designed. This unmans him, he imagines himself pursued by enemies, and even draws his sword upon the peaceful servant of the Duchess of Urbino. He is arrested, but his condition speaking for itself, is given to the care of a physician. Soon he grows worse—he leaves even his beloved

manuscripts behind and flies. Bye and bye he begs to be allowed to return, but the evil recurs, and he once more roams away to Mantua, Padua, Venice, everywhere fleeing an imaginary pursuer.

At last he ventures again to Ferrara, and no one noticing the poor wretch, he abuses the Duke in the presence of his court. For this he languishes long years in a prison cell at St. Anne's Hospital, while all through the Italian peninsular six editions of his wonderful poem are enriching the publishers and delighting the people to such a pitch that, until this day, the very peasants know and repeat his musical stanzas.

Seven years of dreary confinement ensued long after apparent restoration, but the malady recurs at Florence and also at Rome. For just as he had reached the fruition of his hopes, and by a solemn act, the Pope had decreed his coronation with the poet's laurel on the 25th of April, 1595, that very day the exhausted frame succumbs, and the garlands of honor fall upon the brow of death.

In tracing the history of extraordinary men who have lived in extraordinary delusions, the name of Emanuel Swendenborg must not be forgotten. This celebrated philosopher, a geologist and man of scientific learning, filled many offices of distinction in Sweden, from which he voluntarily retired when, as he says, he was introduced to the spiritual world, while in London in 1743. For about thirty years he spent his time alternately in Sweden and England, holding converse, as he believed, with heavenly spirits and receiving their revelations. He imagined that he maintained long conversations with the most eminent of the dead of antiquity. He described with minute detail the form and fashion of the abodes of blessed saints in Heaven, and his works fill many volumes. In private life he was honest, learned, virtuous and a profound thinker.

These revelations were received while he was in long bodily trances, not much unlike the state the pathologist recognizes in various unhappily disordered constitutions. He died of sudden brain disease, apoplexy, in 1772. You say perhaps, that he only differed from other lunatics, by a purer life and more intense mentality, and has long been forgotten. No indeed, his church is to-day one of the recognized religious denominations of this

country, and there are edifices for Swedenborgian services, in many of the largest and most intelligent cities of the United States.

Some of his prophecies have been regarded as wonderfully correct, such as predicting a great fire at Stockholm at the very hour of its occurrence. But to one who would inquire farther, it is only necessary to say, that angel and saint and demon, all talk in his books, as ordinary men of the eighteenth century did, and all the minute explanations of natural phenomena, alas, are based only upon the rude conception of a century ago, and none of his revelations anticipated the truth even as it is known to-day. Yet, to this day a million or two of people are enthralled by the fascination of a maniac's dream!

I approach the name of the Colossus of English literature with profound reverence. Never was the truth more deeply illustrated that the mind's great powers lie behind and beyond and immeasurably above the miserable accidents of bodily organization, and yet never was the dividing wall that in the play of fitful disease cuts off the communion of the nobler part, with fallen man, more sadly, but vividly displayed, than in Samuel Johnson.

Samuel Johnson the great essayist, the formative artist of late English, the author of the exquisite *Rasselas*, the compiler of the first Dictionary of our tongue, which has been a mine of wealth for all its successors—Johnson, the good and great, who bore the ills of fate with such fortitude, maintained his integrity in the sorest temptation, and became the very arbiter of the tongue he spake, by universal consent, *him* we have known, but how is our sympathy increased when we know his inner life. It is full of lessons to illustrate what I would say to-night.

His father was beyond fifty and his mother over forty when they were married. The father was afflicted with melancholy, and only saved from absolute insanity by constant horseback exercise. With a sedentary life, he at once relapsed. Samuel was himself scrofulous, and was even taken to London, prayed over, and touched by Queen Anne, but unfortunately it was of no avail. He was blind in one eye, the result of his disease, and subject from his earliest years, to moods of the deepest gloom. We are told by his biographer in significant language, that "his

malady broke out before he left the University, in a cruel form." In his twentieth year it came upon him in a dreadful manner. It happened at Litchfield in the college vacation of 1729, and he was never perfectly restored. He declared long after that all his labors and enjoyments were "mere interruptions of its baleful influence."

Sometimes he was unable to tell the hour by the clock. He walked to Birmingham and back again, frequently, in hope to drive it away by forcible exertions. He placed his medical supervision in the hands of his god-father, Dr. Swinfen, and was mortally offended when the Doctor revealed the truth to his own daughter. Again and again, he touchingly laments his constant hovering upon insanity. In writing of the unfortunate poet Collins, who was in confinement, he says: "Poor Collins! I have often been near his state, and have it therefore in great commiseration."

He would place his hand on all the posts set by the sidewalk in the streets, and if by chance he missed one, he was unhappy until his steps were retraced. He would shut himself up for days, to walk from room to room sighing and groaning; to go out of doors he must take a certain number of steps, and with a certain accustomed foot, in a definite place.

His grimaces, gestures, and mutterings terrified strangers. At a dinner table, he would stoop down, and twitch off a lady's shoe. He would conceive an aversion to a particular street, and could not be induced to walk there. The poet Christopher Smart, it is well known, who was afterwards committed to an asylum, exhibited his mental disturbance, by falling on his knees to say his prayers in the street. Like him, Johnson would suddenly call out sentences of the Lord's prayer while in a crowded drawing-room, and in the gayest company.

With senses morbidly asleep, and imagination morbidly active, his life was one long torture. Many a man, so wretched, would have shot or hanged himself. He had the appetite of a beast of prey; were the meat spoiled or the butter rancid, so much the better, he would devour until the veins of his forehead swelled to repletion. Hallucinations of hearing pursued him,—miles away, again and again, he thought he could hear his mother call him by name.

Yet he struggles manfully, he feels that he is lost, unless by stern self control, he may stay the on-rushing tide. He drinks less wine, and never at night any more; he struggles to moderate his appetite, seeks exercise, and keeps his mind busily employed.

Shall I tell you whom he marries? With all courtesy to the sex, he marries a widow, as old as his own mother, short, fat, coarse in manners and in features, painted, deeply dressed in gaudy colors, and void of grace. But with his one eye, and that short sighted, he pronounces her lovely, is a true and loving and noble husband, and long after he buries her in her sixty-fourth year, speaks of her to his friends, as "Pretty Creature!"

He writes *Rasselas* to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral. As the years go by, oblivion creeps over him, and he is wrapped in complete idleness and despondency. When in Kent, September 18th, 1768, he writes: "I have now begun the sixtieth year of my life. How the last year has been passed I am unwilling to terrify myself with thinking. I was disturbed at church this day in an uncommon degree and my distress has had little intermission. This day it came into my mind to write the history of my melancholy. I know not whether it may not too much disturb me.

Eight years after, he writes: "When I survey my past life, I discern nothing but a barren waste of time, with some disorders of body, and disturbances of mind very near to madness, which I hope He that made me will suffer to extenuate my many faults."

He had the gait of one in fetters; his habits were uncouth, voice loud and imperious, temper violent, and a great readiness to take offence. He advises *Boswell* against melancholy in these words, good for all times: "If you are idle, be not solitary; if you are solitary, be not idle."

He loved poor *Savage*, another wretched poet and unhappy man of genius. The wildest romance would barely equal this man's real fate. As a famous writer says: "An Earl's son, and a shoemaker's apprentice, he feasted among blue ribbons in *St. James' Square*, and lay with fifty pounds weight of iron on his legs in the condemned ward of *Newgate*. He dined on

venison and champagne when he might borrow a guinea; to-morrow he appeased the rage of hunger with scraps of broken meats, and lay under the piazza of Covent Garden, or as near as he could get in the ashes of a glass house. When these sons of misfortune parted, it was in tears; Johnson to his long internal strife, Savage to die heart broken, in the West of England, in Bristol Jail.

In 1784, Dr. Johnson left his friends at Litchfield one morning, and set off at an early hour, returning at night weary and drenched with rain. There was a silence—no one ventured to ask the reason. After a solemn pause, he said that fifty years before, during an illness of his father's, he had refused that father's request to ride to Uttoxeter market and take his accustomed place at the stall where he sold books—all out of boyish pride. To do away with this sin, he said, that day he had stood in the market place bareheaded in the pelting rain for one hour, before his father's ancient stall, exposed to the jeers of the populace, performing solemn penance in the sight of Heaven.

Monumental marble now represents him in that act of filial devotion. The end was soon to come—rapidly recurring fits of anger and melancholy are succeeded by a stroke of paralysis; for a while he cannot speak and cannot write. Dropsy, so common with the insane, closed the scene. The next year, December 13, 1784, the fatal moment, which had been an unutterable dread all his life, came to find him in serene frame, patient and gentle, his noble mind, his true self, ready for translation to a world of peace, with the dark clouds of a life-time rolled away forever.

The temptation to dwell upon the characteristics of those whom we may well term the *Illustrious Insane*, may carry us too far, but in certain cases, it is indispensable to the faithfulness of the picture, to portray the details thereof.

The case of the renowned Dean Swift I need not dwell upon. Of him it was said:

"Rich in unborrowed wit, thy various page
By turns displays the patriot, poet, sage."

He was afflicted through life with vertigo—the result he says, of cerebral congestion, caused by eating an hundred golden pip-pins at one time—irritable, strange, gloomy—at last he went

months without speaking. His great cruelty too, and extraordinary perfidy to the women who loved him, foreshadowed his future. With prophetic hand he wrote:

“ See here the Dean begins to break,
 Poor gentleman, he droops apace,
 You plainly find it in his face;
 That old vertigo in his head
 Will never leave him till he's dead.”

St. Patrick's Hospital for lunatics was built and endowed by him for the people of Dublin, at a cost of eleven thousand pounds. This institution still exists, yearly working out its share of blessing, while its great founder moulders in the grave. For the last four or five years of his life, he fell into a state of idiocy, locking his lips in the silence of the tomb.

The names of Johnson and Swift suggest that of Pope, whose fame will last as long as the Universal Prayer remains as it is, one of the most superb expressions of thought in our language. Is it possible that there was anything abnormal in the constitution of Alexander Pope, the friend of wits and statesmen, the keen satirist, and the model of English poetry for two generations? What says the stern historic muse?

Dr. Johnson says, Pope had disease of the stomach and liver, from which came absolute hypochondriasis. “Feeble at the best, he finally required perpetual female attendance. So great was his sensibility to cold, that he wore a fur doublet, under a shirt of coarse woven linen. He was placed in a bodice of stiff canvas when he arose, and could hardly hold himself erect until it was laced. Then came a flannel waistcoat. His slender legs required three pairs of stockings, and he could not dress or undress without the help of the maid. Often he was a picture of misery complete, quarreled with his friends—symptoms of pressure on the brain appeared, and he sighed for death to end his physical and mental agony. By the active medical aid of Sir Samuel Garth alone, was his mind restored to a healthy tone after these attacks.

I cannot forbear to note a discovery of very recent date, that bears all the marks of an insane act. Prompted by the inordinate vanity that often appears in cerebral disease, he ardently desired to publish his correspondence during his own life-time,

and determined to use the petty artifice of concealing the truth, by making it appear, that the publication was forced upon him through the unprincipled conduct of others whom he pretended, gave to the public garbled fragments of it.

He robbed himself of his own letters, conveyed them piecemeal and by feigned hands to the publishers, and accused others of the theft—among them Dean Swift, who was then imbecile and shut up from the world. Having prepared the literary circle for what he called his genuine correspondence, as published in his own name, he now wrote and gave forth a fictitious one; letters which his correspondents returned at his own request, were re-written, re-dated, and re-addressed to personages that seemed more likely to bring him credit.

A late English reviewer happily compares this proceeding to the detective's story in *Oliver Twist*, relating to the keeper of a public house, who gave out that he had been robbed of three hundred pounds, and was relieved by liberal subscription from his neighbors. He went so far as to have an officer in his house, who, for a long time saw nothing at all, and listened to everything without seeming to, which showed that he understood his business. But one morning he walked into the bar, and taking out his snuff-box, said :

“Chickweed, I've found who's done this here robbery.”

“Have you,” said Chickweed; “oh my dear Spyers, only let me have vengeance, and I shall die contented.”

“Come,” said Spyers, offering him a pinch of snuff, “none of that gammon—you did it yourself,” and so he had, too, and a pretty bit of money he made by it.

Pope was a sickly boy, without brother or sister to correct his morbid tendencies; he grew up without healthy control, intensely self-conscious, petted, spoiled, vain, indelicate, even malignant, and perhaps the key-note of his life was that this puny skeleton was a parody of the men of the world and of pleasure about him.

But in the survey of the vast field before us, probably no fact will more astonish the casual reader than the constant and recurring proof of brain disease and abnormal organization in a long line of British poets for more than a century and a half just past.

To begin with Gray, the sweet singer, whose music echoes in our hearts, "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day"—how rude the shock to know that this child of a father of violent passions and brutal manners, was a prey to feebleness, indolence, trivial derangements of mind and body, with numberless little affectations, absurdly sensitive, and disputations. He changed his home of twenty years (Peter House at Cambridge) on account of a silly joke of the college boys upon his peculiarities. His life passed in visions of immortal labors that never saw the light.

Darker and sadder was the fate of Collins, his cotemporary, a lyric poet of the first rank, whose ode on the Passions is to-day in every choice selection wherever English is read. When first published, his works were unread and unappreciated. Receiving a legacy from a rich uncle, he paid voluntarily all the losses of the publisher, and burned the unsold edition. Insanity came on, he traveled to shake it off in foreign lands, but only to return to the Lunatic Asylum, such as it was in that day,—how terrible a home for such a spirit. Pathetic is the account of the scene at Islington. When Dr. Johnson visited him in its dreary wards, he was holding a book in his hand, having given up earthly hopes and fame. Said he, with trembling speech: "I have but one book now, but it is the best." It was the New Testament.

He died at thirty-six, and after he had gone, his odes steadily rose in esteem until a hundred years after, they were pronounced the best in our literature. They have been said to partake of the enthusiasm of Tasso, the magic wildness of Shakespeare, the sublimity of Milton, and the pathos of Ossian. Too late, that judgment, for the fevered brain and broken heart.

Next in time, but greater in importance, is William Cowper, the first of the modern school poets, the bold genius who threw off the thraldoms of Pope and all the classical school, and in a single poem, and almost in a day, revolutionized English thought, and prepared the era of Byron, Scott and Wordsworth. His calamity is more widely known and acknowledged than that of any other of this galaxy of the poets, but it is not without deep interest.

It is a mournful life over which many have wondered at the

suffering of the man, and the vitality of the poet. The delicate child of a Hertfordshire parson, he was articled as an attorney, but abandoned it. Twelve years he spent in the Temple—appointed to a clerkship which required a public appearance in the House of Lords for one occasion only, he fancied the clerks against him, and was overcome in the struggle to fit himself for its duties. He hopes he will go mad or die, and in going mad, attempts to commit suicide. One time he will drown himself, but some one in the way prevents; he has the poison at his lips, but is interrupted; he tries to stab himself, and finally does hang himself, but the garter breaks. For the time, the shock restores him. The office abandoned, the excuse of his insanity is religion. He is not one of the elect, and the angry eyes of the Almighty are forever watching him. For two years he is placed under restraint at St. Albans, under care of Dr. Cotton. For a time he loves his cousin Theodora Cowper, but her father objects. "If you marry William Cowper, what will you do?" "Do, sir," the intrepid girl replied, "wash all day and go out to ride upon the great dog at night." She spent a lifetime faithful to Cowper, in loneliness and solitude; but, he alas! forgot her in the selfishness—the intense self-consciousness of his life. In the words of a great writer:

"Beautiful and amiable as his character was, the capacity of strenuous loving might have been its salvation. A man who is able to throw himself into the existence of another, to seek with vehemence the welfare of another, has the strongest safeguard ever given by God against all the evils that result from brooding over and becoming absorbed in the sufferings of self. In all the combinations of human circumstance, true love is well nigh the only combatant strong enough to overthrow that last and subtlest enemy of man."

He goes to Huntingdon, and boards in the family of Mr. Unwin, after whose death, he still remains for many years the close friend and inmate of the widow's house—the Mary Unwin whose patient devotion and unselfish kindness will live as long as Cowper's fame. It is a life of monastic seclusion, hymns and prayers and sermons, with an occasional evening walk, occupy their days and nights—the Rev. John Newton being their neighbor and friend. Cowper renounces all his former friends, the

gloom thickens, and the storm bursts suddenly again, while he was one day at the vicarage—although so near his home, with their gardens adjoining, he was then eighteen months before he could be moved to Mrs. Unwin's.

He recovers like a child after long illness, builds chairs and bird-cages, and tames his hares. He tries a little drawing and returns, at last, to books. It was then that Mrs. Unwin suggested that he write a poem.

Accepting this thought eagerly, he writes and published "The Progress of Error," but as his old friends take no notice of it, he quivers with wrath and indignation. Lady Austen tells him the story of John Gilpin's Ride, at which he laughs all night, and writes his famous verses, so irresistibly comic. When he begs her for another subject, she suggests "The Sofa," with a smile, and straightway he composes "The Task," hardly dreaming that he would accomplish a revolution in a day. Says a writer:

"England had fancied herself to have outlived the lofty melody of blank verse. She discovered now that the old strain was her favorite—that it could charm her ear, as well as rouse her soul. She found out that nature was as sweet as it had been in the days of Milton, the English fields as fair, the rural sights and sounds as fresh and tender. This worn and sick man, growing old, fanatic, half madman, half recluse, drew the veil from her eyes, and threw open to her a new, sweet, dewy, fragrant world. It is difficult for us to imagine the surprised delight with which the nation felt the sweetness of this voice, which was so familiar, so homelike, so unpretending. Poetry had been for a century a thing of the coffee-houses and the wits. Cowper sprang at a bound into a place more deeply set in the popular heart than Pope ever attained."

His work well nigh done, the shadows crept up from the autumnal fields. In the last glimmerings of evening light, when Mary Unwin had already felt the warning touch of paralysis, he writes his most perfect productions—strange anomaly of genius. These were the "Verses to My Mother's Picture" and "To Mary."

In 1794, Mary Unwin falls into dotage, and Cowper in turn, becomes the nurse. What a solemn picture! One imbecile bab-

bling and laughing in her weakness, the other sitting still and silent as death, speaking to no one, asking nothing, dwelling in a visionary world of diseased fancy. She dies, but in his gathering stupor he knows it not. They take him to a quiet parsonage in Norfolk where he sits with wild sad eyes, listening to the moan of the sea. Three years of darkness he survives, writing the "Castaway," last and saddest of his poems, in the last year of his life. In the closing year of the century he dies in despair, but we may trust to wake in hope.

The lover of his literature is irresistibly attracted by the group of the Lake Poets, as they are called, and their friends, whose history is forever associated with peaceful Westmoreland, Wordsworth and Southey, Coleridge, Lloyd Lovell and Charles Lamb. If one pronounces that the mark of brain disease was upon all of them, the reader is startled and declares that enthusiasm is carrying judgment beyond its bounds. But what are the facts?

Three of these married sisters, and all, were engaged in a scheme to found a new Society on the Susquehanna, which should show mankind how to live. In later days, Lloyd became a raving maniac, and escaping from control in England, is arrested in France, and dies in a Parisian Asylum. Coleridge, with perhaps the grandest metaphysical intellect ever bestowed upon man, and the author of a fragment which no man that ever lived could finish, the wonderful "Ancient Mariner," after showing signs of the evil to come, finally accelerated his ruin and went to utter wreck with opium. De Quincey, who has written for us the horrors of opium eating, says:

"It was a fine saying of Addison that Babylon in ruins is not so affecting a spectacle, or so solemn, as a human mind overthrown by lunacy. How much more awful then, and more magnificent a wreck when a treachery of his own will, and the conspiracy as it were, of himself against himself.

Southey, the poet and historian, died of lingering cerebral disease. Wordsworth, the cool, calm, reflective poet, the last man to have such a thought associated with him, we are told by his sister in mysterious language, was overwhelmed by a nervous attack, at the sights of the French Revolution in Paris, whither

he had gone, and we all know that his later days were passed in mental oblivion, for he died of softening of the brain.

Charles Lamb, the remaining one of the friends,—who does not love the picture of shambling ungainly form, but yet the kindly eye and the generous hand, and the courteous gentleman and the most delightful essayist that ever handled pen? His was a consecrated life, ever shadowed by the disease that wrought such havoc in his family. Born of a paralytic mother, he was himself confined in 1796, in an Asylum, at Hoxton. Mary Lamb, his devoted sister, killed her own mother by stabbing, in a sudden access of insanity, and from the moment Charles devoted himself to her life-long care. Renouncing his love and all thought of marriage, he determined to live for her. Whenever the seasons of insanity approached they took their solitary way to the Asylum, she packing her clothes, with the garments of restraint and all. Joyfully receiving the signal of her improvement, he was wont to go back to lead her home again. Beautiful lesson of devotion and brotherly love!

In Byron's *Childe Harold* appear these lines:

"I have thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'er wrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame;
And thus untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poisoned."

George Gordon Byron was the son of a wild roue, known as Mad Jack Byron, who lived a life of libertinism. His great-uncle, William Lord Byron, killed his relative, Mr. Chaworth, with the sword in a fit of passion. Byron's mother was a high-tempered Highland woman, driven half mad by a spendthrift husband. Once an heiress, but ruined in purse, and temper and nerves, by turns she fondled and scolded her solitary, weak, club-footed, and epileptic boy. At eleven he becomes Lord Byron, and from the deepest poverty they pass to the elegance of Newstead Abbey. For fear of the termagant mother, his guardian stands aloof, and the unhappy boy enters life without discipline, with no one to respect, and no one that he loves. A trifling book of juvenile poems is harshly criticized, and he springs to the arena, the Minerva of his genius full born, with a quiver of

poisoned arrows. The whole earth shook with the onset, and fame was made. He has no friends—he takes his seat in the House of Lords a stranger. With disappointment in his soul he flies to the East. When he returns, Childe Harold has made him the lion of London, and he finds himself, says Moore, “among its illustrious crowds, the most distinguished object.”

In the meantime, he lost his mother—she, poor thing, although she could not agree with him, really loved him, and believed in his genius. And he—the moment the funeral procession leaves the door—when all but those too of that household, had gone to the grave for the last solemn rites over the ashes of his mother, he goes to work with his boxing-gloves and has a violent sparring match with his servant.

It was a wild physical outburst of dumb misery and defiance—that defiance of pain and of better emotions that distinguished his whole life.

We need not recount the miserable story of his marriage and separation, nor the recital of his dark vices; nor have we time to comment upon the kindly acts his better soul would command, as related by Countess Guiccioli. His long line of brilliant poems the world knows by heart. Unhappily the memoirs were destroyed, which would have revealed to the world more fully the nature of the vulture that preyed upon his life. From time to time recurrent attacks of his epilepsy appeared, the last happening in the Spring of 1822, when in Greece, upon his expedition to aid the patriots in recovering their freedom. Riding out in bad weather, before he recovered from the prolonged prostration of his last dreadful seizure, he succumbed and died after a brief illness. The epitaph has been pronounced upon him:

“Never was life less happy nor more forlorn, nor an end more pitiful. Thus all was ended upon earth of a man who had received every gift which heaven could bestow, except the control of the glorious faculties that God had placed in his hands.”

What a contrast is he to Walter Scott, who, when he is involved deeply in debt by his kindness to others, rallies his brain to labor, and in less than three years, alone by the work of his pen, pays a hundred and forty thousand dollars of the sum. He cries out, “Oh, invention, rouse thyself—may man be kind, may

God be propitious. The worst is," he sadly adds, "I never quite know when I am right or wrong. He bears up under two strokes of paralysis. Still, like galley-slave, he labors. Confusion of thoughts by day, unutterable weariness and pain by night. When friends tell him his last book (Count Robert) is a failure, he only says, pitifully: 'God knows I am at sea and in the dark, and the vessel leaking too, I think. I have suffered terribly, and I often wish I could lie down and sleep without waking.' But I will fight it out if I can. Did I know how to begin I would begin again this very day, though I knew I should sink at the end."

He struggled until the light went out. His wife died by his side when he most needed help. With one faithful child by him, he toiled on. He makes a journey of despair to Italy and returns to meet his doom. The greatest works of his genius, it well has been pronounced, pale before the work of his life.

Scotland holds him the type of her race, the flower of her genius, the noblest, truest and most gifted of all the Scots who glory in the name.

The poet Shelley, some compassionate hand has described as "a wild and wayward figure, like the Faun of the imagination, or those strange and beautiful beings dwelling between earth and heaven, on the heights of Gothic fancy."

He was a spirit of the intermediary world—a wandering genie,—nothing more. Before twenty years of his young life had gone by, he had cut himself off from his family, and ruined his career. He was a spirit of the race of Ariel.

At Eton, aged fifteen, his one idea is resistance to God, to man, to laws, to authority, to whatever opposed him. This, indeed, is the central idea of his greatest poem, Prometheus.

He leaves his classes to study electricity under a Dr. Lind, when he and his preceptor indulge in bouts of blasphemy, striving each to curse the heavier, the one his father, the other the King—often at midnight he sallies forth in hope to call up the evil spirit.

At Oxford, see him a slim lad with unnaturally brilliant eyes, stooping shoulders, and strange voice, like a peacock's cry—he lives amid his crucibles, feeds upon bread almost entirely, which he tears from the loaf as he walks, lingers for hours to throw

stones in ponds, or sailing paper boats. That was his passion all his life, and he has been known to use a fifty pound note, when no other paper was near. Engaged in zealous debate, he would suddenly stop, fall like a cat on the rug, and sleep for hours with his little round head exposed to the fiercest heat.

He imagines, and tells everybody, when he was expelled, that it was for publishing a book on Infidelity, a pure delusion, for he had only read it. The sentence really was, on account of his scurrilous letters to eminent men, who were strangers to him.

His sisters sent him money by Harriet Westbrook, their schoolfellow. She hates the tyranny of school, and he marries her in his sympathy—one sixteen, the other not nineteen, to go roaming through England, Scotland and Wales. Finally they drift to Ireland—and for what, to issue pamphlets and speak for Catholic Emancipation. Returning to Wales, he imagines some one has fired at him and put a hole through his gown. He utters a breathless cry to his friends for breathing time and twenty pounds. They pay it and smile, but he declares all the after fluctuations of his health were due to that shock. In this year, 1813, *Queen Mab* was written. This, the most celebrated of his works, is to investigate what he called the horrors of Religion, the falsehood of Revelation and the cruel fiction of Christianity.

Next year he falls in love with Mary Godwin, and reveals it in a strange scene within St. Pancras' churchyard, by the grave of her own mother—he told her if supported by her love, he would enrol his name among the wise and good. He abandons his wife at the cottage in Brockwell, his child, the baby Ianthe, and his unborn babe, to fly to the continent with Mary, never to see wife and children again.

Yet he speaks in quiet friendliness of this abandoned wife, this desolate mother, not yet twenty, and proposes to a lawyer that Harriet be invited to join his new household in the capacity of humble friend to himself and Mary, and can hardly be brought to see the impossibility of such a proposal. Despite his sweet amiability, the betrayed wife bore her sorrows two years and then drowned herself.

Now he marries Mary, and going to Switzerland, where they meet Byron, a dark episode in their lives ensues, upon which the

pen refuses to touch—let it be buried in night! How could such a man write

"Life like a dome of many colored glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity!"

He rages against English law, because now he is rich, the custody of the children is denied to him who murdered their mother—children whose home he has passed many a time, and never once turned to look upon—the unnatural father.

Driven by a delusion that the child of Mary will be taken from them by the law, he hastens to Italy. There that hateful poem is given to the world, "Beatrice Cenci."

Strange anomaly, that the brain which conceived that hideous dream, should have produced the "Sky-lark."

He wanders from Pisa to Rome, from Venice to Naples, making romances to himself of lovelorn ladies following him afar off. His thirtieth year was not completed when his frail pleasure yacht went down in the Bay of Spezzia, and his washed up corpse was burned by his friends with a theatrical show of incineration. Poor wandering voice, absolutely dead to the distinctions of right and wrong, to true love for kindred, or reverence for God.

Yet his admirers, the Swinburnes and Rossettis of to-day, call him "the greatest English poet since Milton, and the greatest Englishman of his time." Who can doubt, that but for accident, the torch of life would have burned out with the glare of madness.

I feel that this sad catalogue should come to a close, and will but briefly say that among the great number whose names belong here, are the melancholy poets, Pollok and Young, Harrington, the author of the famous "Oceana," whose madness was extreme; Simon Browne, the celebrated divine, whose delusion was that his soul was annihilated; Robert Boyle, the philosopher, who could barely refrain from suicide; Metastasio, the father of Italian opera, and Robert Hall, of whom Prof. Sedgwick declares, "For moral grandeur, for Christian truth and sublimity, we may doubt whether his sermons have their match in the sacred oratory of any age or century."

Observe that Robert Hall read Butler's Analogy and Edwards

on the "Will" at nine years of age, wrote religious essays at ten, became a Baptist minister at sixteen, and laboring at mental work twelve hours a day, soon was conveyed to the ward of an asylum, and upon recovery and rash excess in work again, was sent once more to its friendly walls. The great critic Dugald Stewart, endorsed by the Reviews, affirms: "Whoever wishes to see the English language in perfection, must read the writings of Robert Hall."

Who that heard it forgets the thrill through Christendom when the world knew that Hugh Miller had taken his own life. By constitution superstitious, and morbidly suspicious, the child of a sea-faring man lost in a storm, his mother filled the boy's mind with weird Celtic tales, the ferment of superstitious fears. Battling in after days between skepticism and truth, he cut himself fearful back strokes; all his life a terrific intensity of mental vision characterized him, and the victim of misunderstandings among friends, and the chimeras of his fancy, he died at his table by his own hand, in a dark hour when reason had left her throne.

Paganini, the violinist, whose execution has never been equalled by mortal man, was a being with an intensely susceptible nervous system, often deprived of the powers of speech, with a pale, bony face, frequently of livid green—at times it was said he seemed to be out of the body. His contradictions he could not himself explain—dashing from city to city with utmost speed, with all the windows of the carriage closed even in the hottest weather, he entered no inn, nor spoke when he was addressed. Arrived at his hotel he removed his clothes, and threw open doors and windows for what he called his air bath. He lay on the sofa, passed days without eating, drank his camomile tea and sat in perfect darkness at night until his hour for sleep. Sixty people have been waiting to see him, but he took no notice of knocks, and sat, lost in trance.

No wonder the mob believed him a murderer whom the evil spirit had taught to play upon one string with such wonderful music, when a convict in the condemned cell. After astonishing a world he gave his dying moments to the feeble notes of his violin in the moonlight, by the blue Mediterranean, with the breeze waving softly in the trees, as he expired broken-hearted,

to know his spell was over. Dying without the sacraments, his body was refused Christian burial, and it lay above ground five years, until the vulgar stories of ghostly violins playing about the coffin, impelled the son to pay large sums of money to obtain the privilege at last to bury his father in the village near his home, where his ashes were finally laid to rest in May, 1845.

We will turn aside to read some passages from the career of Junius Brutus Booth, the most eminent actor that America ever produced.

From his memoirs, as penned by his own daughter, we learn that he had undoubted periods of madness. To use her language:

"The calamity seemed to increase in strength and frequency with maturer years, and sometimes assumed very singular phases. From childhood, we learned from our mother, the devoted and unwearying nurse of him who endured these periodical tortures of mind, to regard these seasons of abstraction with sad and reverent forbearance."

So completely did he merge his own identity into that of the character he assumed, that most of his fellow actors dreaded to face him as Richmond on the stage, in the last struggle of Richard, lest he should really take their lives, for frequently he had to be reminded that he was personating a character, and must allow himself to be slain.

His salvation from utter wreck, for many years, was his love of the soil, the happy retirement to the work of his garden in the open air, away from the feverish excitement of the theatre.

On one occasion, while on a voyage South, he spoke of the actor Conway, who had committed suicide by leaping into the sea. As the vessel neared the spot, Booth cried out that he had a message for Conway, and jumped into the ocean; but a boat was lowered at once, and he was saved. Yet the suicidal impulse was so quickly over, that he called out, when once safe in the boat, "I say Tom, you are a heavy man—be steady. If the boat upsets, we are all drowned."

It is well known, that in Charleston, after he had played Iago one night, and returned to their room, with his friend Flynn, who had been the Othello of the evening, that he attacked him fiercely with his drawn sword, crying:

"Nothing can or shall satisfy my soul,
Till I am even with him—life for life."

Flynn, to save his life, grappled the fire-poker, and struck Booth in the face, breaking his nose. On another occasion, he came near sacrificing the life of the actor Eton, in the same play.

He was supposed by turns a Jew, for he knew Hebrew, revered the Kalmud, and attended the Synagogue, joining the worship in the Hebraic tongue. He was familiar with the Koran, and again he was a devout Catholic. It is related, that while a Catholic, he once walked from his house in Harford county, Maryland, to Washington, with leaden inner soles to his shoes, by way of penance for some sin.

Few of his eccentricities were more remarkable than his desire to leave the stage at three hundred dollars a night for the post of light-house keeper at Cape Hatteras, for three hundred dollars a year, when thousands hung upon his lips, and money and fame were his everywhere. We learn that this memorandum exists, in his handwriting:

"Spoke to Mr. Blount, Collector of Customs, about Cape Hatteras light-house. He offered it to me, with the dwelling house and twenty acres of land, and a salary of three hundred dollars per annum, for keeping the light; government providing the oil and cotton; a quart per diem. Grapes, melons, cabbages, potatoes, carrots and onions grow there; rainwater the only drink, a cistern on the premises for that purpose. Abundance of fish and wild fowl; pigs, cows and horses find good pasture. Soil too light for wheat or corn. The office is for life, and only taken away through misbehavior. Light requires trimming every night at 12 o'clock; no taxes, firewood from the wrecks. Strawberries, currants and apple trees should be taken there; also a plough, spades, and a chest of carpenter's tools. Pine tables the best. Mr. Blount is to write me word if the office can be given me, in April next, from his seat in Washington, N. C."

It is needless to say that theatrical managers broke up the plan at headquarters.

Booth permitted no animals to be killed on his place, ate no animal food, nor allowed it in his house, for many years. It is said that when a grave and respectable Quaker once pressed

dish after dish of meats upon him, at supper, on a steamboat, and finally offered something for which Booth had a special abhorrence, he fixed his deep eyes on the Quaker, and said with profound earnestness: "Friend! I only indulge in one kind of flesh—human flesh!—that I take raw!"

Once, in Boston, after a long scriptural argument against the use of animal food, and the reading of the "Ancient Mariner" to the Rev. Mr. Clark, he exhibited a bushel of wild pigeons on a sheet, which he asked to have buried in the cemetery to testify in a public way against man's barbarity. Upon refusal, a day or two after, he did actually place them in a coffin and conveyed them to a lot he had purchased in another cemetery, with all the solemnities of a funeral. Yet, he was acting every night in his usual marvelous style. Finally, the actors everywhere grew afraid of him. Terribly in earnest on the stage, when he passed off he sat behind the scenes, looking sternly at the ground and speaking to no one.

He would often disappear when in no manner intoxicated, but his family avoided questioning him, and respected the sanctity of his struggles and his seasons of darkness. With him certain colors and metals were sacred for certain days. Strange as it may seem to some, this world-renowned actor was a good man, humble and devout before his Maker, and his last words were Pray! Pray! Pray!

Time warns me to pause. All these illustrious victims of disease, save the last, are those of children of the old world. There are reasons why it may not become the speaker to dwell upon the infirmities of our own countrymen from James Otis, the revolutionary patriot, to Horace Greeley, the late candidate for the highest position in the gift of the American people.

Reviewing this mighty mass of human misery, we see everywhere a degenerate ancestry, or gross physical habits, or overwhelming labors thrown upon a young and tender brain. Some fall at the first onset, others bravely resist, and manage to secure all that life can give. Yet again and again we have seen the immortal mind rising above the trammels of the body to assert its kinship with Divinity.

The lesson is one of the greatest of the hour to us as a people. The war has not left us all its legacies—the next generation,

will bear its cruel stamp. Excess in all its forms, is a national sin; in eating and drinking, in gambling and extravagance, in the rush of social emulation, and the mad excitements of wealth and ambition. Men are dropping around us every day, with paralysis and apoplexy. Hundreds are yearly added to the rolls of the insane, whose families are ruined, their wives broken-hearted, their children thrown as waifs on the tossing sea of destiny.

Let us take comfort that science can do so much to heal the wounds of the brain, and break down the barriers between the mind and body. The venerable Dr. Chipley utters these words of consolation and of hope:

“There is in fact a power in man to prevent or control insanity, and it fails chiefly when it has been misdirected in the earlier periods of life.”

It is rarely efficient unless it has been developed and strengthened by education, and hence the poor and unschooled are the greatest sufferers from the most terrible of all human afflictions.

For example, the educated and the uninstructed are alike the subjects of illusions, but the trained mind of one will recognize their true character, and adopt suitable measures to correct the morbid condition on which they depend; while the other, unable to reason, will accept them as real. The illusions may be precisely the same, yet the one subject is sane, and the other insane. The difference is in the organ of self-control. Vagaries intrude themselves upon all minds, but the man of self-control represses them, and seeks fresh impressions from without—the weak man yields to them, and is lost.”

Let our children be brought up in sound and healthful habits of mind and body. Let us rein in the passions that would enslave us. Let us not flee the wretched lunatic as one accursed of God, the object of curiosity or of horror, but rather enfold him in the arms of a charity and a sweet compassion, whose great Exemplar did not disdain to “heal the sick.”

In parting, will you pardon me that I repeat words addressed to your representatives, for we have seen that it is true, “No rank can shield, no wealth exempt from, no genius escape, no loveliness can charm away, no innocence avert the destroyer; with a firm reliance on the blessing of Providence, upon the in-

struments of combat placed in her hands, the State must stand forth protector, guardian and Savior."

" Art thou a wanderer? hast thou seen
O'erwhelming tempests drown thy bark?
A shipwreck'd sufferer hast thou been,
Misfortune's mark?

Though long of winds and waves the sport,
Condemn'd in wretchedness to roam,
Live! thou shalt reach a sheltering port,
A quiet home.

There is a calm for those who weep!
A rest for weary pilgrims found:
And while the mouldering ashes sleep
Low in the ground;

The soul, of origin Divine,
God's glorious image, freed from clay,
In Heaven's eternal sphere shall shine,
A star of day!

The sun is but a spark of fire,
A transient meteor in the sky;
The soul, immortal as its Sire,
Shall never die."

