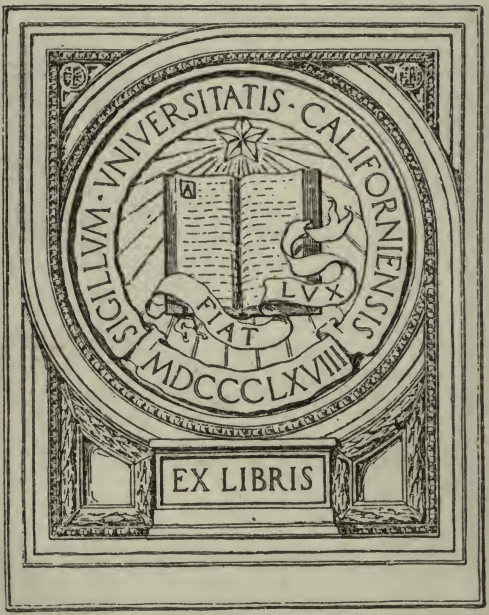

SHAKSPEARE'S DELINEATIONS

OF

INSANITY, IMBECILITY, AND SUICIDE.

BY

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TO

THOMAS P. BARTON, Esq.,

OF MONTGOMERY PLACE, ON THE HUDSON,

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE KIND INTEREST EXTENDED TO THE AUTHOR, WHEN A STRANGER, AND OF THE PLEASURE DERIVED FROM HIS SUBSEQUENT FRIENDSHIP.

State Asylum, Utica, Jan. 1866.

NOTICE.

THESE Essays were published in the "American Journal of Insanity," at various intervals between 1859 and 1864.

A better acquaintance with the delicate shades of mental disease as seen in the wards of a large Hospital for the Insane, has tended to modify the earlier views of the writer respecting some of Shakspeare's insane characters, and enabled him better to appreciate the fidelity of the great dramatist's delineations. No other excuse, therefore, is deemed necessary for the alterations that have been made in the original essays.

A. O. K.

State Lunatic Asylum, Utica, April, 1866.

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PART I.

SHAKSPEARE'S DELINEATIONS OF INSANITY.

LEAR.—MACBETH.

THE extent and accuracy of the medical, physiological, and psychological knowledge displayed in the dramas of William Shakspeare, like the knowledge there manifested on all matters upon which the rays of his mighty genius fell, has excited the wonder and astonishment of all men who, since his time, have brought their minds to the investigation of these subjects, upon which so much light has been thrown by the researches of modern science.

Shakspeare's knowledge extended far beyond the range of ordinary observation, and comprehended subjects such, as in our day, and we may suppose in his, were regarded as strictly professional and special. This fact has led some intelligent investigators and critics to believe that these immortal works were not the offspring of one individual mind, and that, from the very nature of things, the man who wrote "Lear" and "Hamlet" could not have written, unassisted, the "Merchant

of Venice." This argument has been maintained with much apparent plausibility. Its fallacy, however, is rendered sufficiently apparent by the fact, that the knowledge displayed was very far in advance of the age in which he lived, and, as we shall have occasion to show, was not possessed by any one in his time, however eminent in any special department of science to which he might be devoting himself; and many facts not known or recognized by men of his age appear to have been grasped by the inspired mind of the poet, to whose acute mental vision, it would seem from his writings, they were as clear and certain as they have been rendered by the positive deductions of modern experimental science. This power of entering into the deep and hidden mysteries of nature and the universe — of lifting the veil, and drawing thence facts not yet manifested to the world, and perhaps not to be made manifest until after centuries of patient scientific investigation and deduction — is a characteristic of what has been termed poetic inspiration; a power, we maintain, without fear of contradiction, more evident in the poet we have under consideration, than in any other who has ever written in the English language, and perhaps it would not be unsafe to add, in any other, ancient or modern. This power consists, without doubt, first, of an extraordinary faculty for close observation, and an acute perception of the nature and relations of all things which come up before the eye and mind; and in the second place, of a

wonderful faculty, only possessed by a few such persons in varied degrees, of calling up at will from the recesses of the memory with great distinctness, every perception there recorded, and of making such use of it as may seem fit.

Upon no subjects, perhaps, has this extraordinary faculty of the great dramatist been more curiously manifested than those we propose to consider in this connection, viz., physiology and psychology. In fact we believe a very complete physiological and psychological system could be educed from the writings of Shakspeare, — a system in complete accordance, in almost every essential particular, with that which we now possess as the result of the scientific research and experience of the last two centuries.

In the time of Shakspeare these sciences, like all others, were very imperfectly understood by men who devoted their lives to the investigation of them. Even the great discovery by Harvey of the circulation of the blood, which may be taken as the basis of all our present physiological knowledge, had not been given to the world; for Shakspeare died in 1616, and the discoveries of Harvey were first published in 1628. Yet many passages from his dramas seem to indicate a pre-existent knowledge, on the part of the writer, of this great physiological fact. Falstaff, speaking of the influence of a good "sherris-sack" upon the blood, says: —

"The second property of your excellent sherris is, — the

warming of the blood; which before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice: but the sherris warms it, and *makes it course from the inwards to the parts extreme.*"

Let us pursue further the physiological views of the fat knight, as set forth in the same famous encomium upon his favorite beverage, sack, in order to observe how strictly they accord with the universally recognized truths of modern physiology.

Speaking of Prince John, and contrasting him with his jovial friend Prince Henry, he says: —

"This same sober-blooded boy doth not love me; nor a man cannot make him laugh; — but that 's no marvel, *he drinks no wine.* There is never any of these demure boys come to any proof; for thin drink doth so overcool their blood, and making many fish-meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-sickness; . . . they are generally fools and cowards, which some of us would be too but for inflammation. A good sherris-sack has a twofold operation: it *ascends me into the brain*, dries up all the foolish, and dull, and crudy vapors which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes; which delivered o'er to the voice (the tongue) which is the birth, becomes excellent wit."

We would not wish to be held responsible for the morality of all the views held by the worthy knight on his favorite subject of eating and drinking, but if this "tun of man" could again "revisit the glimpses of the moon," like the ghost of murdered Denmark, and once more roll his huge bulk from tavern to tavern in London, and in his nocturnal perambulations, guided by the light of Bardolph's red nose, should, by any accident,

"roll" into a modern Exeter-Hall temperance-meeting, he would undoubtedly be as much puzzled to know what constituted it, as he was in the days of his earthly pilgrimage, to "remember what the inside of a church was made of"; and if a modern Gough occupied the platform, he would probably be held up as a most pitiful example of one who had pushed his physiological views to the very extreme of physical endurance. We confess, however, that we would cheerfully give a very respectable admission-fee to hear the worthy knight argue the point at issue with the modern reformer, on pure physiological grounds, and give his reasons *why*, if "he had a thousand sons, the first earthly principle he would teach them would be to forswear thin potations, and addict themselves to sack." We assert, at the risk of being considered anti-progressionist, or anti-teetotal, that much of the physiology set forth above by the worthy knight, is in strict accordance with the teachings of modern science; and though from its frequent abuse, as in his case, it may be looked upon as a dangerous admission, its truthfulness cannot be denied.

In "As You Like It," Shakspeare makes the old man Adam say —

> "Though I am old yet am I strong and lusty;
> For in my youth I never did apply
> Hot and rebellious liquors to my blood."

By "hot and rebellious liquors" are doubtless meant such drinks as whiskey and bad brandy, used to such a fearful extent in our day; — not

the "excellent sherris" which he puts into the mouth of Falstaff, which was a light Spanish wine. Shakspeare was too good a physiologist and moderate temperance man to teach that such "hot and rebellious liquors" are good for the blood of any healthy man. His works, as well as the imperfect history of his life, show that he was one of those moderate men whose physiological views were not pushed to extremes in any direction. Shakspeare contended for truth, not for the establishment of a moral theory; and modern science has demonstrated, moreover, that he has not gone very far astray in this matter.

Let us take a cursory view of some of the conflicting physiological doctrines maintained by eminent physicians, not only in Shakspeare's time, but long after, even down to the present century, when they were overthrown by modern scientific research, and replaced by a system which admits of positive proof, in order to observe whether the physiology of our own times, or that of the sixteenth century, best coincides with the expressed views of the poet. From the physiology of his own times it is quite evident that Shakspeare could have derived no assistance whatever. There was nothing which can now be regarded as approximating a correct scientific system. All that related to physiology or medicine was a confused, chaotic jumble of conflicting dogmas and doctrines, maintained by the rival sects of medical philosophers who flourished at that time. One sect, the

Solidists, referred all diseases to alterations in the solid parts of the body, and maintained that these alone were endowed with vital properties, and were alone capable of receiving impressions from external agencies. Even the vitality of the blood was denied, and this doctrine has been maintained and was prevalent until quite recently. The Galenical physicians, the Humoralists, asserted, on the contrary, that all diseases arose from a depraved state of the humors of the organized body, — the blood, chyle, lymph, &c. It is scarcely necessary to observe, in this place, that modern investigators have shown clearly that vitality is incident to both solids and fluids, — that the blood is particularly concerned in all vital processes; that all alimentary substances, fluid and solid, are restorative or nutritious by virtue of the supply, after digestion, of certain principles necessary to the healthy vital condition of the blood; and that most medicinal substances act on the system after finding their way into the blood by absorption. Shakspeare appears to have been well aware of this great physiological fact.

Take the following for example, from King John, Act V., Scene VII. Prince Henry, in speaking of the poisoning of his father, says: —

> "It is too late; the *life of all his blood*
> *Is touched corruptibly;* and his pure brain,
> Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house,
> Doth, by the idle comments that it makes,
> Foretell the ending of mortality."

The peculiar action of certain poisons upon the blood, and their influence on the organ of the mind, through the medium of the blood, are here distinctly pointed out.

Again, the Ghost, speaking to Hamlet of the manner of his death from poison, says: —

> "Thy uncle stole
> With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
> And in the porches of my ears did pour
> The leprous distillment; *whose effect*
> *Holds such an enmity with blood of man*,
> That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through
> The natural gates and alleys of the body,
> And, with a sudden vigor, it doth posset
> And curd, like aigre-droppings into milk,
> The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
> And a most instant tetter bak'd about,
> Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
> All my smooth body."

The fact now demonstrated, that certain medicinal substances and poisons induce, primarily, a change in the condition of the blood itself, and, in the second place, a leprous condition of the skin, is here pointed out clearly by the poet. The syphilitic poison furnishes a good illustration of this fact.

Again, Romeo asks the beggarly apothecary for

> "A dram of poison; such soon-spreading gear
> As will *disperse itself through all the veins*."

It is unnecessary to multiply quotations in illustration of the extraordinary amount of physiological knowledge possessed by Shakspeare. We

have brought forward enough to show that on this subject he anticipated the scientific discoveries and deductions of nearly two centuries. We now pass to the consideration of Shakspeare as a psychologist.

In relation to psychology, the wonderful prevision of the poet is still more astonishing to modern investigators. It was a remark of a late eminent physician to the insane, Dr. Brigham, that Shakspeare was, himself, as great a psychological curiosity as any case of insanity he had ever met; and he declared that in the Asylum at Utica he had seen all of Shakspeare's insane characters. To suppose that Shakspeare obtained his knowledge of insanity and medical psychology from his contemporaries, or from works on these subjects extant in his day, is simply absurd, for there were none in existence worthy of mention, and all the ideas of his contemporaries were vague and undigested. Yet, notwithstanding all this, after near two centuries and a half, we have little to add to what Shakspeare appears to have known of these intricate subjects. For his profound understanding of these and all other matters to which he alludes, — and there is scarcely a department of scientific knowledge that he has not enriched, — we can only account by supposing that he looked into the volume of nature with a glance, deeper and more comprehensive than that of any other mortal not divinely inspired; seeming almost to possess the "gift of prophecy," and to "under-

stand all mysteries and all knowledge," which he uttered "as with the tongues of men and of angels."

To illustrate Shakspeare's extraordinary psychological knowledge, let us glance for a moment at the ideas entertained of that intricate disease, insanity, by his contemporaries, in order to contrast them with his own, as set forth in his works. Insanity was uniformly regarded by the contemporaries of the poet as an infliction of the Devil. All the unfortunate sufferers from this dreadful malady were supposed to be "possessed" by Satan. This was not alone the vulgar opinion, but the opinion of some of the most distinguished medical writers. St. Vitus was sometimes invoked; spells were resorted to, and amulets worn. Even such profound philosophers as Lord Bacon believed in these. Sir Theodore Mayence, who was physician to three English sovereigns, and is supposed to have been Shakspeare's Dr. Caius, believed in supernatural agency in the cure of this and other diseases. One of the most common of remedial means in the time of Shakspeare was whipping. He seems to have been aware of this, as of most other things, for, in "As You Like It," (Act III., Scene II.) he makes Rosalind say to Orlando: —

"Love is a mere madness; and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do: and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too."

In opposition to these views of insanity so uni-

versally entertained by his contemporaries, Shakspeare, as his works conclusively show, believed, with enlightened modern physicians, that insanity was a disease of the brain, and could be cured by medical means, aided by judicious care and management: all which he points out as clearly as it could be done by a modern expert.

Falstaff, when outwitted by the Merry Wives, says: —

"Have I laid my brain in the sun, and dried it, that it lacks matter to prevent such gross o'erreaching as this?"

And again, when he had been induced by these same women, in order that he might be safely conveyed from the house when in danger of a broken head, to conceal himself in a basket of foul linen, under pretence of being carried to the laundress, he is, by their direction, taken and thrown into the Thames, he thus soliloquizes: —

"Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown into the Thames? Well, if I be served another such trick, I will have my brains taken out, and buttered and given to a dog for a new-year's gift."

Laertes, on seeing Ophelia deranged, exclaims: "O heat, *dry up my brains!*"

Othello, when racked by jealousy, and goaded by the insinuations of Iago, was supposed to be insane. Hence Lodovico asks: "Are his wits safe; is he not light of brain?"

Jacques, in "As You Like It," (Act II., Scene VII.) speaks of the brain of a fool, as being "dry as the remainder-biscuit after a voyage."

In Macbeth, Shakspeare has given us in the dagger scene (Act II.) one of the most admirable illustrations of hallucination to be found. Previous to the incident described in this scene, the mind of Macbeth had been wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, short of actual mania, by the importunities of Lady Macbeth, and the contemplation of the bloody deed he was about to undertake, and its consequences. Finally, after goading him to the verge of distraction, and having, as she says, "screwed up his courage to the sticking point," he exclaims:—

> "I am settled, and bend up
> Each corporeal agent to this terrible feat!"

Although his purpose was determined, his mind was evidently far from being "settled." He had dwelt so long on the act, and the means by which it was to be accomplished, that his thoughts were taking a material shape, and the creations of his excited imagination had become to him embodied realities, and stood out before his eyes as clearly and palpably defined as real bodily existences.

This condition of the mind, to which much attention has been given by modern psychologists, is most admirably set forth and illustrated in the famous dagger scene. On first perceiving the image of the dagger, his reason, yet intact, leaves him to doubt the evidence of his eyes, and he seeks to confirm the visual impression by the more accurate and trustworthy sense of touch; and what follows is most profoundly interesting and truthful

in a psychological point of view, and illustrates the true theory of apparitions now, after two centuries, just beginning to be understood by scientific men.

> "Is this a dagger which I see before me,
> The handle towards my hand?
> Come, let me clutch thee:
> I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
> Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
> To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
> A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
> Proceeding from a heat-oppressed brain?"

Looking again intently at the vision, and striving to comprehend it by the help of reason, now beginning to stagger from prolonged and excessive mental excitement, he exclaims: —

> "I see thee yet, in form as palpable
> As this which now I draw.
> . . . . . .
> Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
> Or else worth all the rest."

Finally, after a struggle, reason succeeds in correcting the evidence of the visual sense, and he exclaims: —

> "There 's no such thing.
> It is the bloody business which informs
> Thus to mine eyes!"

After the accomplishment of the bloody deed, Lady Macbeth seems to have a presentiment of the consequences to her own mind and that of her husband, from the prolonged excitement, and from dwelling upon the awful circumstances their guilt has brought upon them. And here follows that

beautiful apostrophe to sleep, the great preventive and restorative remedy in mental disease. She says to Macbeth: —

> "Consider it not so deeply.
> . . . . . .
> These deeds must not be thought
> After these ways; so, it will make us mad."

Macbeth, in reply, alludes to another hallucination, that of the sense of hearing, and says: —

> "Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!
> Macbeth doth murder sleep; the innocent sleep;
> Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
> The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
> *Balm of hurt minds*, great nature's second course,
> Chief nourisher in life's feast.'
> . . . . . .
> Still it cried, 'Sleep no more! to all the house.
> Glamis hath murdered sleep: and therefore Cawdor
> Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!'"

So great was Shakspeare's intuitive psychological knowledge, that everything in his characters is in perfect keeping. If he wishes to draw insane characters, he first exhibits them as surrounded by the predisposing and exciting causes of the disease, and insanity follows as the natural result of what has preceded it.

Neither Macbeth nor Lady Macbeth appear to have had the predisposition to insanity as strongly marked as we observe it in Lear or Hamlet, and though the *exciting* causes were brought to operate powerfully upon both, still they were not sufficient to bring it about completely.

Neither could be called at any time insane, though Macbeth suffered hallucinations of sight and hearing, and Lady Macbeth was a somnambulist, and talked in her sleep of the murder, and strove to cleanse her hands of the imaginary blood-stains; yet she was rational enough when awake. Each, however, feared the occurrence of the disease in the other.

In Act V., Scene III., Macbeth appears to think Lady Macbeth deranged, and in reply to the physician's remark that she is

> "Troubled with thick coming fancies,
> That keep her from her rest,"

says —

> "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
> Raze out the written troubles of the *brain?*"

Nothing could be more true to nature than the mental disquietude and remorse of conscience incident to guilt, depicted by the dramatist in Act V., Scene I., where Lady Macbeth is first introduced to us as a somnambulist.

In this state of imperfect sleep, she gives vent to the thoughts which agitate her mind so powerfully during her waking moments: — thoughts she would fain conceal in the deepest recesses of her spirit.

She walks about with lighted taper, her eyes open, but they convey to her mind no impression of external things; but to the ~~inward~~ sense, the "mind's eye," the scenes and circumstances connected with the murder are painfully vivid. With

this *inward sense* she sees the bloody mark upon her hand, and crying, "Out, damned spot!" strives in vain to wash it away. With this inward sense she smells the blood, and in her anguish exclaims: "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! oh! oh!"

This scene closes all that relates to Lady Macbeth, and she is not again introduced. The dramatist knew when, and where, and how to withdraw his characters from the scene, and also, that the prolonged exhibition of such mental anguish as is shadowed forth in the somnambulism of Lady Macbeth would be unfavorable to dramatic effect.

In none of Shakspeare's plays, if we except Hamlet, is the psychological knowledge of the dramatist more admirably exhibited than in Lear. "The case of Lear," says a late distinguished psychologist, "is a genuine case of insanity from beginning to end, such as we often see in aged persons."

The very first act of Lear, exhibited by the dramatist, evinces that well-known imbecility incident to old age, and which frequently results in confirmed, senile insanity. Incapable alike of perceiving the hollow pretensions of affection on the part of Goneril and Regan, the truthfulness of Cordelia, or the disinterestedness of Kent, he makes over his kingdom to the former with all its revenues, retaining only "the name, and all the additions to a king," and making such stipulations only as

are in perfect keeping with his mental state, and that madness first glanced at by Kent, which was hanging over him.

With great psychological exactness Shakspeare has from the first endowed Lear with those mental peculiarities and eccentricities which experienced medical psychologists recognize at once as the forerunners of confirmed mental disease, but which are usually overlooked by ordinary observers, or not regarded as pathological phenomena, but merely the ebullitions of a temper and disposition naturally fiery and irritable perhaps, and now rendered unbearable through the infirmities incident to age.

This seems to have been the view of Lear entertained by his daughters, as also by those modern critics who, far more ignorant of psychology than the poet who wrote two hundred years before them, have regarded the insanity of Lear as caused solely by the ingratitude and unkindness of his daughters. In answer to a remark of Goneril, respecting the changeableness of their father's disposition, Regan says: "'T is the infirmity of his age, yet he has ever but slenderly known himself."

"The best and soundest of his time has been but rash," says Goneril. Regan replies: "Such *inconstant starts* are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment."

However this may have been looked upon by them, and many of Shakspeare's commentators of the last century, considered in the light of modern psychological science, it must be regarded as a

premonition of the disease which followed, and was undoubtedly so intended by the poet.

Time and the change in Lear's outward circumstances bring about no change for the better in his disposition or mental state, and the next thing we hear of him is, that in a paroxysm of rage, he has resorted to open violence, "broken the peace," and beaten one of Goneril's gentlemen for chiding his fool.

Her remarks upon the transaction show how rapidly the disease is advancing, before he has received any marked unkindness from her or her sister: —

> "By day and by night he wrongs me, every hour
> He flashes into one gross crime or other,
> That sets us all at odds."

All through Scene IV., Act I., we trace a gradual increase of the mental excitement of Lear, rendered worse by the injudicious treatment he receives; and towards the conclusion, after the interview with Goneril, where he is reproached by her for the riotous conduct of his train, and requested to diminish it, which request is accompanied by a threat in case of non-compliance, he becomes quite frantic with rage.

This barefaced outrage upon the kingly dignity he has reserved to himself puts him in a towering passion: —

> "Darkness and devils!
> Saddle my horses — call my train together.
> Degenerate bastard! I 'll not trouble thee:
> Yet have I left a daughter."

Striking his head with rage, and pouring out such epithets as "Detested kite!" upon her, he gives vent to his insane rage in that blasting curse, that withering imprecation, which reminds one so strongly of what is frequently heard from the mouths of highly excited patients in the wards of a lunatic asylum. With an ingenuity and a refinement of malice worthy of an insane man, he seizes upon the weakest and most vulnerable point in her female nature, and to that point he directs his attack. After pouring out the vials of his wrath upon her without stint, his rage finds vent in tears, and he says: —

"I am ashamed
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus."

The first intimation Lear himself gives of his own apprehensions of insanity we have at the conclusion of Scene V. After amusing himself for a time with the Fool he becomes more calm, and apparently more capable of taking a survey of his mental condition.

In reply to the Fool, who reminds him that he should not have been old before he was wise, he says, apparently abstracted: —

"Oh let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!"

It is one of the most common things in the world to find a man decidedly insane, and yet conscious of his infirmity. A premonition of the impending malady, a certain consciousness that it is approach-

ing, frequently seizes the doomed subject, as is apparent above in the case of Lear.

Thus far the whole character is psychologically consistent, and the wonderful skill and sagacity manifested by the great dramatist in seizing upon these premonitory signs, which are usually overlooked by all, even the patient's most intimate friends, and the members of his family, and weaving them into the character of his hero as a necessary element, without which it would be incomplete, like those of inferior artists, is a matter of wonder to all modern psychologists.

We next find Lear before the Castle of Gloster, where, instead of meeting with that kind reception and welcome which he expected from his other daughter and her husband, his mind and feelings are destined to receive another sad shock.

Here he finds his messenger and faithful attendant, Kent, in the stocks, placed in this degrading position by the orders of his son-in-law and daughter. He is so much astounded by the outrage and disrespect heaped upon him by their treatment of his messenger, that he can scarcely believe the palpable evidence of the insult before him, and declares that they could not, dare not, and would not do it; and when the circumstances attendant upon the act are clearly laid before him by Kent, and his mind grasps the full extent of his degradation, and he finds himself spurned, insulted, and forsaken by those upon whom he has heaped such great benefits, at the expense of his own dignity,

crown, and kingdom, his outraged feelings are admirably set forth in what follows : —

> " O, how this *mother* swells up towards my heart!
> *Hysterica passio !* down, thou climbing sorrow,
> Thy element 's below ! — Where is this daughter ? "

At every step through this wonderful play we find evidence, like the above, of Shakspeare's great medico-psychological knowledge, — a knowledge scarcely possessed by any even in our day, except those few who devote themselves to this special department of medical science.

The influence also of bodily disturbances upon the mental faculties is very truthfully set forth by Lear in the following : —

> " We are not ourselves
> When nature, being oppressed, commands the *mind*
> To suffer with the *body*."

If a modern psychological writer, with all the knowledge of our own times at his command, was laboring to convey to the minds of his readers the manner in which insanity is induced in those predisposed by nature to the disease, in order that such persons and their friends might guard against the malady, he could not do better than point out the conduct of Goneril and Regan towards Lear, as set forth in Act II., Scene IV., of the play. All the feelings of his generous nature are outraged and trampled upon. The waywardness manifested as the result of impending disease, meets with none of that forbearance we are accustomed to

expect from the native gentleness of woman and the affection of daughters, but selfishness and ingratitude reign supreme in their hearts. Would that this were only an isolated or imaginary case! Sensible of his great wrongs, and apparently conscious of what was being wrought by them in his own generous and confiding mind, already staggering under the stroke of disease, he exclaims: "I pr'ythee, daughter, do not make me *mad!*" Before quitting their presence, to encounter the storm without, he again alludes to the state of his mind: —

> "I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
> Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
> Or ere I 'll weep. — O fool, I shall go *mad!*"

We next meet Lear on the heath, in the midst of the storm. Nothing in the whole range of dramatic literature can excel this, either in sublimity of conception, grandeur of description, or psychological interest. In fact, we conceive it is the psychological element infused into the scene which gives it its peculiar intensity — the howling and raging winds, the "spouting cataracts," the "oak-cleaving thunderbolts," and thought-executing fires: — in short, that external commotion of the physical elements seems merely thrown in as a background to that terrible picture of mental commotion which reigns within the mind of the old man. These elements are but

> "servile ministers,
> That have with two pernicious daughters joined."

These he taxes not with unkindness; he never gave *them* kingdom, or "called *them* children." *They* "owe him no subscription," — therefore they can "let fall their horrible pleasure," and join

> "Their high-engendered battles 'gainst a head
> So old and white as this."

The one absorbing thought, the ingratitude of his daughters, shuts out, as far as he is personally concerned, all idea of physical suffering. It is a well-known fact, that, when the mind is swayed by intense emotions, the sensibility even to intense bodily pain is often completely suspended. The physical endurance manifested by the insane under certain circumstances is truly astonishing, — even delicate females have been known to undergo with impunity what might be supposed sufficient to destroy the most vigorous physical constitution. This fact is most beautifully and concisely set forth by Lear in allusion to the suffering of his companions in the storm upon the heath, when they urge him to take shelter in the hovel.

> "Thou think'st 't is much, that this contentious storm
> Invades us to the skin: so 't is to thee;
> But when the greater malady is fixed,
> The lesser is scarce felt.
> . . . . . .
> *When the mind 's free,*
> The body 's delicate; the tempest in my *mind*
> Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
> Save what beats there."

This brings round again the ever-recurring thought of filial ingratitude, and after casting a

few words of bitter reproach upon Goneril and Regan, he suddenly checks himself, conscious apparently of the dreadful consequences to his already shattered mind, which would result from dwelling upon it, with the exclamation : —

> " O, that way *madness* lies ; let me shun that ;
> No more of that."

The tempest which pours its fury upon his " old white head " is of little moment when compared with that which reigns within. In fact, he appears to regard the former as a blessing, because it

> " Will not give me leave to ponder
> On things would hurt me more."

But perhaps the most ingeniously constructed scene in the whole play is that in which the poet brings together Lear, now an undoubted madman, Edgar, who assumes madness for purposes of disguise and deception, and the Fool. What results are to be anticipated from the operation of the extraordinary psychological machinery, now set in motion by and under the direction of the great artist, none but the master-workman himself can foresee. Here, however, all things work together harmoniously. Everything is consistent. The appearance of Edgar, ragged, forlorn, a miserable picture of wretchedness and woe, serves only, like the elements in the former scene, to arouse the predominant idea in the mind of the madman ; and filial ingratitude, nothing else, could have brought him to this state, and recognizing in him

a counterpart of himself, his first question is, "Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?"

The warm, sympathetic nature of Lear is strongly aroused by the pitiful object before him, whom he regards as a fellow-sufferer from like causes, and though not a king, like himself, he is nevertheless a "philosopher and most learned Theban"; and respectfully craving the "noble philosopher's" company, and essaying to enter into scientific discourse, asks him his studies, and gravely inquires "the cause of thunder." How beautifully true all this is to nature, those who are at all acquainted with insanity can furnish ample testimony; as, also, how admirably the genuine disease contrasts with the counterfeit, with which it is here brought in contact.

In the scene in the farm-house the ideas of Lear appear still more fantastic, yet the dominant thought, the ingratitude of his daughters, is ever present. Edgar, his companion in misery, is now no longer a "noble philosopher," a "learned Theban," but a learned "justicer," and the thought of arraigning his daughters before a tribunal made up by him, the Fool — his "yokefellow in equity" — and Kent, is presented to his wayward fancy. Lear himself appears as a witness for the prosecution.

Goneril is first arraigned in his imagination, before this extraordinary tribunal, and then follows the testimony of Lear: —

"I here take my oath before this honorable assembly, she kicked the poor king her father. She cannot deny it."

After a momentary excitement caused by the imaginary escape of one of the culprits, he seems to suppose sentence to have been passed, and exclaims: —

> "Then let them anatomize Regan,
> See what breeds about her heart."

Scenes quite as ludicrous as the one set forth above are of daily occurrence in the wards of all extensive establishments for the insane, and those familiar with them can scarcely divest themselves of the idea that the poet has given in this an exact transcription of nature, without assistance from his imagination.

The next information we have of Lear comes to us through Cordelia and the Physician, (Act IV., Scene IV.) he is represented as

> "Mad as the vexed sea; singing aloud;
> Crowned with rank fumiter, and furrow weeds."

Cordelia immediately takes occasion to ask the Physician

> "What can man's wisdom
> In the restoring of his bereaved sense?"

The reply of the Physician is significant, and worthy of careful attention, as embracing a brief summary of almost the only true principles recognized by modern science, and now carried out by the most eminent physicians in the treatment of the insane.

We find here no allusion to the scourgings, the charms, the invocation of saints, &c., employed by

the most eminent physicians of the time of Shakspeare, neither have we any allusion to the rotary chairs, the vomitings, the purgings by hellebore, the showerings, the bleedings, scalp-shavings, and blisterings, which, even down to our own times, have been inflicted upon these unfortunates by "science falsely so-called," and which stand recorded as imperishable monuments of medical folly; but in place of all this, Shakspeare, speaking through the mouth of the Physician, gives us the following principle, simple, truthful, and universally applicable: —

> "There is means, madam.
> Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
> The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
> Are many simples operative, whose power
> Will close the eye of anguish."

The "means" set forth by the Physician, we learn at the conclusion of Act IV., were used successfully in the restoration of Lear. He is thrown into a deep sleep, and from this he awakes convalescent.

Here follows another most important consideration, which is not overlooked by this wonderful medical psychologist.

He leaves nothing incomplete, therefore the danger of *relapse* must be taken into consideration, and the means to prevent it are pointed out with his usual truthfulness and accuracy. This we have in the advice given by the Physician to Cordelia. He says: —

"Be comforted, good madam. The great rage,
You see is killed in him; [and yet 't is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.]
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more,
Till further settling."

The late distinguished physician to the insane, Dr. Brigham, remarking on the above, says: "Now we confess, almost with shame, that although near two centuries and a half have passed since Shakspeare wrote thus, we have very little to add to his method of treating the insane as thus pointed out. To produce sleep, to quiet the mind by medical and moral treatment, to avoid all unkindness, and when the patients begin to convalesce to guard, as he directs, against everything likely to disturb their minds and cause a relapse, is now considered the best, and nearly the only essential treatment."

HAMLET.

IF Lear and Macbeth have served to impress us deeply with the extraordinary intuitive psychological knowledge of Shakspeare, yet even these, wonderful as they are and so infinitely above everything else in ancient or modern dramatic literature, cannot be taken as a gauge by which we are to measure the powers of that intellect from whence they emanated; for the exhibition of the complete plentitude of these powers seems to have been reserved for the tragedy of Hamlet, that wonderful play, which of all he has left, gives us the most exalted notions of, and the most profound reverence for, the genius of the man. Nothing he has left us exhibits so completely the wonderful versatility of his powers, and the universality of their range, as this play. All the deepest subjects, those which individually have engaged the most profound powers of the human mind in all ages, are here grappled with, and in each the poet has shown himself preëminent. Wit the most sparkling, humor the most genuine, pathos the most touching, metaphysics the most subtle, philosophy the most profound, are here brought together in complete and harmonious union. Well may such

an one be called the "myriad-minded." As might be expected, no other of his plays has given rise to so much speculation, regarding the purposes of the dramatist, and the true character of the personages he has represented. Some of the most profound critics of the last century, and down to the present time, have here found an enigma which they have by no means been able to solve, and which has been to them a stumbling-block and perpetual rock of offence. Schlegel, one of the most profound of German critics, who devoted some of the best years of his literary life to the study of Shakspeare, and who has poured upon the pages of our great dramatist the light of a most profound and philosophical criticism, and done more perhaps than any other man to give us a true conception of his powers, has not been able to analyze the character of Hamlet with anything approaching to psychological accuracy. In fact, the idea of Hamlet as a genuine madman, seems never to have entered his mind, and hence his perplexity, and labored and unsuccessful efforts to unravel the mysteries and apparent contradictions he meets at every step, and the extraordinary manifestations of character which he finds in his hero.

"This enigmatical work," says Schlegel, "resembles those irrational equations in which a fraction of unknown magnitude always remains, that will in no way admit of solution. He *acts the part of a madman* with unrivalled powers, convincing the persons sent to examine into his supposed loss of reason, merely by telling them unwelcome truths, and rallying them with the

most caustic wit. But, in the resolutions he so often embraces and always leaves unexecuted, his weakness is too apparent; he does himself only justice when he implies that there is no greater dissimilarity than between him and Hercules. He is not only impelled by necessity to artifice and dissimulation, but he has a *natural inclination* for crooked ways. He is a hypocrite towards himself; his far-fetched scruples are often mere pretexts to cover his want of determination, — thoughts, as he says on a different occasion, which have 'but one part wisdom, and ever three parts coward.'

"He has been chiefly condemned both for his harshness in repulsing the love of Ophelia, which he himself had cherished, and for his insensibility at her death. He is too much overwhelmed with his own sorrows to have any compassion to spare for others; besides, his outward indifference gives us by no means the measure of his internal perturbation. On the other hand, we evidently perceive in him a malicious joy, when he has succeeded in getting rid of his enemies, more through necessity and accident, which alone are able to impel him to quick and decisive measures, than by the merit of his own courage, as he himself confesses after the murder of Polonius.

"Hamlet has no firm belief either in himself or in anything else. From expressions of religious confidence he passes over to sceptical doubts — he believes in the ghost of his father as long as he sees it, but as soon as it has disappeared, it appears to him almost in the light of a deception. He has even gone so far as to say there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. With him the poet loses himself here in labyrinths of thought in which neither end nor beginning is discoverable. (?)

"A voice from another world, commissioned it would appear by Heaven, demands vengeance for a monstrous enormity, and the demand remains without effect. The criminals are at last punished, but as it were by an accidental blow, and not in the solemn way requisite to convey to the world a warning example of justice. Irresolute foresight, cunning, treachery and impetuous rage, hurry on to a common destruction: the less guilty and

the innocent are equally involved in the common ruin. The destiny of humanity is there exhibited as a gigantic sphinx, which threatens to precipitate into the abyss of scepticism all who are unable to solve her dreadful enigmas."

We have brought forward this extract from one of Shakspeare's most able critics, to illustrate how vain are all efforts to solve the "enigma" which the poet has furnished us, and to unlock the profound mystery with which he has surrounded the character of his hero, without the true key, which is at once furnished by the supposition of the *real* madness of Hamlet, which, to the experienced medical psychologist is quite as evident, notwithstanding what he himself says about "putting on an antic disposition," as that of Ophelia or Lear. To the unprofessional critic, this is the "fraction of unknown magnitude," which, so long as it remains, will not allow him to solve his "equation," and, until this is known and recognized, we quite agree with him, that "no thinking head who anew expresses himself upon it, will entirely coincide with his predecessors." Admit the real madness of Hamlet, and it is readily perceived why this "Prince of royal manners," this man of highly cultivated and deeply philosophical mind, this man naturally endowed with the finest sense of propriety, "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," so susceptible of all that is noble in human nature, becomes, in the language of the critic, a "hypocrite towards himself," and possessed by a "natural inclination for crooked ways." With the supposi-

tion of real madness, and only with this supposition, can we account to ourselves for the harshness, the insensibility, the heartless cruelty of one who loved with more than the love of "forty thousand brothers," towards the gentle being who was the cherished idol of his heart.

But, until after taking a view of the peculiar form and character of Hamlet's madness, we forbear farther comment upon the criticism of the learned and philosophical Schlegel, and pass to that of another German still greater than he.

Who is more worthy to be heard than Goethe, the poet and philosopher, the father of "the higher literature of Germany," "which," says Carlyle most truthfully, "is the higher literature of Europe?" Yet even he, with all his profound and philosophical insight, is almost as far as Schlegel from forming a true estimate of the psychological character and mental condition of Hamlet, and the strange bearing and conduct which results from it, as the following eloquent criticism which we translate from his "*Wilhelm Meister*," abundantly proves. Both fail in their estimate of the character of Hamlet, from one and the same cause, as we shall endeavor to show: namely, a want of that medico-psychological knowledge, which none but a Shakspeare is supposed to possess intuitively.

"Imagine to yourself a prince whose father dies unexpectedly. The desire of honor and love of power are not the passions which animate him; it is sufficient for him that he was the son of a king, but now is he under the necessity of observing care-

fully from a distance, the difference between the king and the subject. The right to the crown was not hereditary, yet a longer life of his father might have made the claim of his only son stronger, and the hope of the crown more secure. Now, on the contrary, he must attain it through his uncle, and, notwithstanding the apparent promise, perhaps he is forever shut out from it. He now feels himself poor in graces and goods, a stranger in that which, from his youth up, he was accustomed to regard as his own by right. Here his spirit receives the first heavy stroke. He feels that he is no more than, indeed not so much as, any nobleman. He regards himself as a servant of all. He is not courteous, not condescending; no, rather bowed down and abject. Upon his former circumstances he now looks as upon a vanished dream. In vain does his uncle encourage him, and endeavor to show him his situation from another point of view; the perception of his nothingness never leaves him.

"The second stroke he receives wounds him yet more, bows him yet deeper. It is the marriage of his mother. To him, a true and tender son, there remains after his father's death a mother, and he hopes in company with his noble mother left behind, to do honor to the heroic form of the great one departed. But he also loses his mother, and in a manner far worse than though death had torn her from him. The perfect ideal which a well-bred child so readily forms of his parents, vanishes; from the dead there is no help, and from the living no support. She is also a woman, and from the common frailties incident to her sex she is not exempt. Now for the first time he feels himself truly bowed down, and no fortune in the world can again restore unto him that which he has lost. Not melancholy, not naturally reflective, melancholy and reflection become to him heavy burdens. Imagine vividly to yourself this young man, this princely son; figure to yourself his circumstances, and then observe him when he perceives the appearance of his father's form. Stand by him on that terrible night when the venerable spirit himself walks before him. Huge terror and amazement seize upon him. He speaks to the wonderful figure, sees it

beckoning, follows, and hears. The terrible complaint resounds in his ears, calling for vengeance, and the pressing and oft-repeated entreaty, 'Remember me.' And when the spirit has vanished, what do we see standing before us? A young hero that pants for vengeance? a born prince that deems himself fortunate in wreaking vengeance upon the usurper of his crown? No; astonishment and sadness fall upon the lone one. He becomes bitter against the smiling villain, and swears not to forget the departed, and concludes with the significant expression, 'The times are out of joint, woe unto me that I was born to set them right!' In these words lies the key to the whole conduct of Hamlet, and to me it is clear that Shakspeare would have pictured a great deed imposed as a duty upon a spirit that was not equal to that deed. This idea seems worked out in the entire plot. Here is an oak planted in a delicate vessel that should only have contained flowers; the roots strike out, and the vessel is destroyed.

"A beautiful, high, noble, pure, moral being, without the mental strength which makes the hero, travels under a burden which crushes him to the earth, — one which he can neither bear nor cast entirely from him. Every duty is sacred to him, but this is too heavy. The impossible was demanded of him; not that which was in itself impossible, but that which was impossible to him. How he writhes and turns, filled with anguish, strides backwards and forwards, ever being reminded, ever reminding himself, and at last losing sight of his purpose without ever having been made happy."

Here evidently are causes sufficient to induce insanity in minds far less susceptible to the invasion of the malady than that of Hamlet; and simply because early in the progress of the disease, he speaks of "putting on an antic disposition," we are not to suppose, in face of all the evidence which follows, that we have to deal with a case of feigned insanity, and that the poet has, in produc-

ing the counterfeit, done more than he intended, and made the stamp so perfect, that he has been able to "deceive the very elect" themselves. Upon other occasions, where the evidence of the poet's intention was quite palpable to all, and where he most certainly intended to produce a counterfeit, he has succeeded, as in everything he undertakes, and we *have truly a counterfeit*, such as needs no "expert" to detect.

Shakspeare, in the plentitude of his knowledge, — a knowledge derived not from books and the accumulated experience of others, but from the closest observation of what he must have seen in actual life, — recognized what none of his critics not conversant with medical psychology in its present advanced state, seem to have any conception of; namely, that there are cases of melancholic madness, of a delicate shade, in which the reasoning faculties, the intellect proper, so far from being overcome or even disordered, may, on the other hand, be rendered more active and vigorous, while the will, the moral feelings, the sentiments and affections, are the faculties which seem alone to suffer from the stroke of disease. Such a case he has given us in the character of Hamlet, with a fidelity to nature which continues more and more to excite our wonder and astonishment, as our knowledge of this intricate subject advances.

Within the last few years our knowledge of the various shades of insanity has been so much advanced, that what we conceived to be the true

view of the character of Hamlet appears now to be well established, and whether Shakspeare himself was conscious of what he was producing, matters little; the delineation is so true to nature that those who are at all acquainted with this intricate disease are fully convinced that Hamlet represents faithfully a phase of genuine melancholic madness.* Whatever may have been the intention of Shakspeare, one thing is evident, he has succeeded in exhibiting in the character of Hamlet a complete revolution of all the faculties of the soul, by the overwhelming influence of the intense emotions excited in it; and whether the resulting condition of the mind be one of health or disease, sanity or insanity, (and the line of demarkation is by no means accurately defined,) the phenomena exhibited are, psychologically con-

* The late Dr. Brigham, who had seen and treated more than four thousand cases of insanity, declared that he had more than once seen the counterpart of Hamlet, as well as of all Shakspeare's insane characters, and he describes with his usual clearness and brevity the peculiar characteristics of each. Dr. Isaac Ray, the accomplished superintendent of the Butler Hospital, in a most able, elegant, and classical essay on "Shakspeare's Delineations of Insanity" (see *Journal of Insanity*, Vol. III.), a paper which we could hold up with no small amount of national pride to our professional brethren of other countries, as an example of American medical literature, also takes this view of the character of Hamlet, and in our estimation has set forever at rest the vexed question of his real or assumed madness, and solved satisfactorily that enigma to which Schlegel refers, and which has so long vexed and discomfited all Shakspeare's non-medical critics. The distinguished Dr. Connolly, in his little book entitled "A Study of Hamlet," lately published, also maintains this view, and to the psychologist has left nothing to be desired — having, as we think, fully established the position of Hamlet's real madness.

sidered, of the most profound interest. We are convinced that the change wrought is so great, that the resulting condition of mind must, in the present state of our medico-psychological knowledge, be regarded as of a pathological character, and that Hamlet, with Lear and Ophelia, must be admitted into the ranks of that "noble army of martyrs" to a mind diseased, too many of whom, alas! are found in the walks of every-day life. But we must by no means forget that the term "mind diseased" does not necessarily imply a mind destroyed, or even a mind deranged in all its faculties, but one changed in its normal operations; a change which sometimes consists in a preternatural operation or excessive activity of some of its nobler faculties, while others are more or less paralyzed. Such a change Shakspeare has exhibited in a masterly manner in the character and conduct of Hamlet, as shown throughout this most extraordinary play, which change we shall now proceed to trace, and attempt to analyze the mental and moral phenomena exhibited in the course of it.

Upon our first introduction to Hamlet, (Act I., Scene II.,) the idea we form of his character is quite at variance with the view which Schlegel has maintained, viz. that the hero is a hypocrite towards himself, and naturally inclined to crooked ways, and more in accordance with that entertained by Goethe, who, as we have seen, regards him as a prince of most noble, pure, affec-

tionate and highly moral nature. His keen penetration pierces the mask of hypocrisy and lying deceit assumed by the king, his "uncle-father," and the first expression we have from his lips evinces his utter contempt and detestation of it. When he first addresses him with mock tenderness as "cousin" and "son," he turns aside and gives utterance to the caustic sarcasm, —

> "A little more than kin, and less than kind."

He also perceives with keen anguish of spirit, the heartlessness of his "aunt-mother," and when she reminds him that death is "common," —

> "That all that live must die,
> Passing through nature to eternity," —

he replies significantly: "Yes, madam, 't is common," — and when she presses him to know why it "seems" so particular to him, he hints directly at his own real woe, as contrasted with those outward, hypocritical expressions of sorrow which surround him, in what follows: —

> "Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not seems.
> 'T is not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
> Nor customary suits of solemn black,
> Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
> No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
> Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,
> Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,
> That can denote me truly. These, indeed, seem,
> For they are actions that a man might play:
> But I have that within which passeth show;
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe."

This is certainly not the language of one who is a "hypocrite towards himself," or one who has a natural inclination to, or love for hypocrisy and crooked ways, or delights to recognize those traits of character in others; whatever we may observe in him afterwards, as the result of disease.

The keen arrow of affliction first pierces his soul when death suddenly and unexpectedly takes away his kingly father. Time, however, would have healed this wound, but it is torn open and made to bleed afresh by the sudden and too precipitate marriage of his mother with his uncle. His keen moral nature cannot but regard this union as incestuous, and the disgrace reflected upon himself buries the arrow yet deeper, and its rankling is perceptible in the language he utters immediately after the interview with the king and queen, glanced at above. The disgrace of this hasty and incestuous union, reflected, as we have said, upon himself, seems to cause him to despise even his own flesh and blood, and engenders in him the wish to be free from its encumbrance: —

> "O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!"

Dark thoughts of self-destruction enter his mind, yet his high moral nature, as yet untainted by disease, appears to revolt from suicide as a sin against God and Nature, and in the deep anguish of his soul, he continues, —

> "Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
> His canon 'gainst self-slaughter."

Then, very naturally, he seeks to shift the sore burden of his afflictions over to the general account of the world and humanity: —

> "O God! O God!
> How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!
> Fye on 't! O fye! 'tis an unweeded garden
> That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature
> Possess it merely."

Let us now follow him, bearing his sore burden of affliction, into the scene which follows between him, his friend Horatio, and the officers of the watch. A new excitement is here prepared to stir up his already overburdened mind, and the extraordinary revelations made by them respecting the apparition they had seen, excite in him the most painful curiosity, and his mind appears to become giddy with the intense excitement without at all losing its balance. After interrogating them keenly and closely in the exciting dialogue as to the appearance and manner of what they had seen, he says, evidently under the most intense excitement of mind: —

> "If it assume my noble father's person,
> I 'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
> And bid me hold my peace. . . . .
> My father's spirit in arms! All is not well;
> I doubt some foul play: 'would the night were come!
> Till then sit still, my soul."

Let us now stand by and observe him in the struggles of that terrible night he here longs for, and then endeavor to estimate the effect upon his

mind and feelings, of the startling disclosures made by the ghost of his father, and which constitute apparently the crowning excitement under which a will, hitherto intact, and a strength of character which has hitherto sustained him in all his severe trials, the highest and strongest manifestations of which we here perceive, appear to give way under the burden now imposed upon them, rendering all his subsequent struggles impotent and vain. As this extraordinary scene appears to constitute the turning point in his mental and moral career, and serves more than any other to mould the subsequent character of his mind and feelings, we deem no excuse necessary for dwelling at some length upon it, and bringing forward what appears necessary to illustrate our position.

The scene opens by furnishing us another illustration of that native, high-toned moral feeling, which is so characteristic of him, and so much at variance with that by which he is, and ever has been surrounded. His reply to the interrogatory of Horatio, who inquires the meaning of the noise which celebrates the bacchanalian revels of the court, asking if it is a "custom," is peculiarly graceful and characteristic of the man: —

> "Ay, marry is 't;
> And to my mind, though I am native here
> And to the manner born, it is a custom
> More honored in the breach than the observance."

And here follow some pertinent remarks upon the influence of these things upon individual and

national character, which remarks are interrupted by the entrance of the ghost. When he first perceives the approach of the wonderful figure, huge terror and amazement naturally seize upon him, and after recovering himself, he addresses it in language, the terrible grandeur of which never has been equalled.

"Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damned,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
Be thine intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee. I 'll call thee, Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane. Oh, answer me.
Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst these cerements! Why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurned,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,
So horridly to shake our disposition,
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?"

He sees the ghost beckoning him to a distance, and while his companions are quaking with terror, he seems to know no fear; expresses his contempt for life; declares it cannot hurt his soul, "being a thing as immortal as itself"; and feeling

"Each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve,"

tears himself from his companions, who hold him back lest he may meet with some terrible fate, or be driven to madness; threatens to make ghosts of them if they do not "unhand" him; follows and hears. After a few exclamations of pity, surprise, and horror at what is announced; after expressing his determination to sweep to his revenge on

"Wings swift as meditation, or the thoughts of love,"

he listens with dumb astonishment to the awful revelation of crime which the ghost pours into his ears. After the appearance vanishes, the first words he utters give the clew to his mental and physical state, and it is quite evident that the cord which has been stretched to its utmost tension, here snaps suddenly, and the consequences are immediately apparent, and are evinced throughout his whole subsequent career. Here enters the pathological element into his mind and disposition, and the working of the leaven of disease is soon apparent, for it changes completely and forever his whole character. Up to this time we see no weakness, no vacillation, no want of energy, no infirmity of purpose. After this, all these characteristics are irrecoverably lost, and though some faculties of his great spirit seem comparatively untouched, others, as we shall see, are completely paralyzed. His first exclamation, as we have said, seems to foreshadow this: —

"O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? — O fie! — Hold, my heart;
And you, my sinews, *grow not instant old*,

But bear me stiffly up! — Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe."

Yet immediately after making the discovery which has so much agitated him, that his mother is a "most pernicious and perfidious woman," and his uncle a "villain, smiling, damned villain," he takes out his tables as though it were necessary to make a memorandum, lest he forget that, "in Denmark at least, one may smile, and smile, and be a villain."

What follows in the scene when he returns to his friends, evinces strongly the effect upon his mind of the volcanic upheaving and commotion it has experienced in the interview with the ghost, and savors strongly of disease. Instead of clasping his old friends to his bosom, and seeking from them that sympathy, support, and consolation he had a right to expect from them, and which they, though animated with the most intense curiosity and excitement, seem ready to give, he tells each to go about his own especial business, offers them a parting hand, and as for himself, he says, —

"Look you, I 'll go pray."

Well does his friend Horatio exclaim, —

"These are but wild and whirling words, my lord."

His manner of speaking to the ghost, whom he hears below when he is swearing his friends to secrecy, so different from the tone of awe and reverential respect he had previously adopted, is

very significant, and seems to indicate something more than a healthly reaction from intense excitement. "It betrays," says Dr. Ray, "the excitement of delirium, the wandering of a mind reeling under the first strokes of disease."

When he first hears the word "swear" pronounced by the ghost from below, he exclaims, in language which appears to indicate something more than mock levity: —

> "Ha, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, true-penny?
> Come on, — you hear this fellow in the cellarage, —
> Consent to swear."

When he hears the word "swear" pronounced a second time from below, he says: —

> "*Hic et ubique!* then we 'll shift our ground."

A third time the word is pronounced, and he exclaims: —

> "Well said, old mole! can'st work i' the ground so fast?
> A worthy pioneer!"

A fourth time he hears it, and assuming the language of command, he exclaims, —

> "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!"

The intimation that he conveys in this scene that he may think it "meet to put an antic disposition on," and upon which the theory of feigned madness is mainly built, is quite natural, and quite as consistent with the theory of real as feigned madness, and may, in the commotion of his mind, have resulted as much from a vague consciousness of

what was impending, as from any intention to act a part. This is quite clear to the "expert," though he may not succeed in making it so to those critics who take an opposite view of it, and who, having no practical knowledge of the more delicate shades of mental disease, quite mistake the character of Hamlet, regarding it, like Schlegel, as a riddle not easily solved, or like Goethe, as an illustration of natural imbecility of will and purpose, as we have seen, or perhaps, what is worse, can only see with Dr. Johnson in the "pretended madness" of Hamlet, a cause of much mirth.

The next knowledge we have of Hamlet comes to us through Ophelia and her father Polonius, and it is evident that in the interval his already shattered mind and crushed feelings have received another sad blow. The gentle and lovely being whom in the ardor of his nature he had loved with more than the love of "forty thousand brothers," prompted by parental duty, and in obedience to the express will of her father, does violence to her own deep, cherished feelings, and repels his letters, and denies him all access to her. The burden of his former sorrows it would seem was sufficiently heavy, but this is greater than all, and what results is just what we might expect, and nothing else; and to suppose, with most of Shakspeare's critics, that this is a piece of consummate acting, — a drama so admirably played as to deceive her who was accustomed to read the inmost thoughts of his heart, — seems to border upon the absurd. Besides,

we can perceive no adequate motive for such extraordinary conduct, even were he acting a part, and not really frantic. Had he wished to break the connection as incompatible with the heavy duty imposed upon him, he certainly would not have resorted to such measures in the first instance: such an act would have been too revolting to his nature, and his conduct as well as his personal appearance in her presence, as delineated by herself, is very indicative of the true state of his mind and feelings.

His mind, as we have seen, had been made to reel and stagger by the contending emotions excited in the former scene, but it has not been at any time so completely overthrown as to deprive him, even temporarily, of self-control, until it experiences the shock imparted to it by her refusal to see him, or receive his letters. This, however, together with what has preceded, is more than it can bear, and he becomes for the time being quite frantic. He rushes unbidden into her presence, quite regardless of his personal appearance,—

> "With his doublet all unbraced;
> No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
> Ungartered, and down-gyved to his ankle;
> Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
> And with a look so piteous in purport,
> As if he had been loosed out of hell,
> To speak of horrors."

When there, so great are the overwhelming emotions of his soul that the power of utterance is denied him. Feelings which no words can express

rend his bosom. "Thoughts which are too deep for tears," rush like a whirlwind through his already shattered mind, and he can only seize her by the wrist, look earnestly and wildly into that face which was wont to beam upon him with the light of love and the most tender feminine affection, as though he would there read the mystery of her conduct, and the change which had come over her, prompting it. Then heaving a sigh, —

> "A sigh so piteous and profound,
> That it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
> And end his being" —

he retreats as unconsciously as he had entered, his eyes to the last fixed upon that countenance in which he had striven to read the inmost thoughts of her soul. Ophelia could not, and as it is quite evident, *did not* mistake the import of all this, and if we are to regard it as a well-acted *sham*, then let us forever cease to draw a distinction between art and nature; the two are identical, one and the same.

In Hamlet's first interview with Polonius, (Act II., Scene II.,) though now quite calm and collected, the evidence of disease is abundantly manifest, as also the keen penetration and capability of discerning the motives of others, so characteristic of certain forms of madness. From the contempt he shows for Polonius and the keen irony he heaps upon him, and also from the way he alludes to his daughter, it is quite evident that the old courtier

is, in his estimation, the cause of the altered conduct of Ophelia, and her refusal, as formerly, to countenance his advances. Either instinctively or by positive information, he seems well aware of what has taken place between Ophelia and her father in a former scene. He appears to regard him, as all lovers, sane or insane, are apt to regard a fond and perhaps too judicious parent, who stands between them and their cherished idol, as a meddlesome old fool, over anxious as to consequences, and quite incapable of appreciating their motives and feelings. In this view of the case, the keen wit and irony he pours out upon the old courtier are most amusing. When the old man asks if he knows him, he replies: —

"*Ham.* Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. I would you were so honest a man. . . . . To be honest, as the world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Pol. That 's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion, — Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i' the sun. Conception is a blessing; but not as your daughter may conceive — friend, look to 't."

He seems to take a morbid delight in annoying the old man Polonius. Nothing is more natural than for the insane to fix upon some one individual, from whom they have, or imagine they have, received some slight or injury, and endeavor to tease them by every means their insane ingenuity can

devise. After pouring out his satirical spite upon old men in general, and Polonius in particular, he thanks him for leaving his presence, telling him that he could take away nothing that would please him better, "except my life, my life."

He meets his old friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern cordially, and a lively dialogue ensues, brought about apparently by old associations; yet in a moment this becomes tinctured with the prevailing melancholy of his mind, and the hue of his misanthropic feelings. He scouts the idea that the world is getting honest, calls Denmark a prison, and when they hint that it is a prison to him, because too narrow for his ambitious views, he utters a remark quite significant of what is hanging over his mind: —

"O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space; were it not that I have had bad dreams."

Restlessness, imperfect sleep, and dreaming are peculiarly incident to the initiatory stages of most forms of mental disease, and this remark forms another link in the chain of evidence respecting the real state of his mind. He interrupts the short metaphysical disquisition on ambition which follows, with a remark which shows that he feels that his mind is not in a fit state to reason on certain things, and can only act as it is directed by the disturbed current of his feelings. "By my fay, I cannot reason," says he; yet in the direction these lead, see how he can discourse: —

"I have of late (but, wherefore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, — this brave o'erhanging firmament, — this majestic roof fretted with golden fire, — why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors."

Then follows his famous and well-known apostrophe to man, and many no doubt will think these are hardly the thoughts to emanate from a mind at all tinctured with insanity; but such have yet to learn that the peculiar form of madness delineated by Shakspeare in the character of Hamlet, is quite compatible with occasional outbursts of grand poetic inspiration. Such will no doubt persist in believing him when he says, "I am but mad north-northwest; when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw." Those, however, who are familiar with the halls of an asylum for the insane, and have repeatedly heard patients scout the idea of their insanity in language almost identical with the above, will persist in holding a contrary opinion.

At the conclusion of Act II. he furnishes us with the clearest evidence yet given of that paralyzed will, the first signs of which we began to perceive shortly after his interview with the ghost.*

* A young lady, aged twenty years, of great talent for piano-forte playing, which had been assiduously and successfully cultivated, was quite recently a patient of the writer with melancholia, to which she has inherited a strong natural tendency.

In a late letter to me, speaking of her health, she says: "I am sorry to say that I have not felt well, bodily, for some time, — I feel tired and

Here we find him deploring his weakness, quite conscious of his utter inability to sweep to that revenge he had so solemnly sworn to execute. As keenly conscious as ever of the great wrong done him by his uncle, the only power left is the power to rail against him, "to fall a-cursing like a very drab, a scullion," and this he does with a hearty good will, a "science," so to speak, thoroughly understood, it has often seemed to us, only by the insane themselves. Hear him rail at himself for his infirmity of will and purpose:—

"Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat?
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha!
Why, I should take it; for it cannot be,
But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall
To make transgression bitter; or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance! . . . . .
Fye upon't! foh! *About, my brain!*"

How different is all this from the language used in the scene with the ghost, and from that lion-

languid, as if I could not exert myself. I am busy, and try to overcome these feelings, *but my will, once strong, seems to have nothing to do with it.* I shall not give up again, come what may. I am determined to succeed in what I have undertaken." This determination to be occupied, and thus to divert her mind from the morbid state of her feelings, will no doubt go far in warding off her malady; and we shall watch with much interest the struggles of the diseased will in this gifted girl.

heartedness with which he breaks from his friends and follows it. And what a change does it indicate, wrought by disease in the character of the man. He then, as a mere pretext and excuse for his want of energy, pretends to doubt if even the ghost was an honest ghost; suggests that it might have been the very devil himself, seeking to assail him through his "weakness" and "melancholy," in order to damn him; and in the true spirit of his disease devises a scheme to test the matter by means of the play. The successive steps in the progress of his disease now become more and more marked, and we next perceive an upheaving and overthrow of those deep moral feelings and affections, so peculiar to his character before the invasion of the disease. And here let those who maintain the theory of feigned madness be careful to observe, that the very feelings and faculties of his soul which have been most intensely exercised, are the very ones which first give way and become most completely upset by the diseased reaction which follows. This they may regard, if they choose, as a mere coincidence; it will, however, be somewhat difficult for them to show that it was more easy, natural, and convenient for Hamlet to assume this form of madness than a form more readily calculated to deceive others, — one more easily feigned to carry out his purpose of deception. To us it appears that Shakspeare has, as usual, "held the mirror up to nature," in making his faculties become diseased in the very direction in which

they have been most intensely exercised; whether that direction be, as he says, "north-northwest," or towards some other point of the intellectual compass.

His will, courage, and energy of purpose had been put to the utmost test in the interview with the ghost, and the result we have seen. Let us now see what has been the consequence of excessive exercise of the moral feelings and affections of his ardent nature. In illustration of this, let us glance for a moment at his remarkable interview with Ophelia, in Act III., Scene I., of the play. From what we have observed in former scenes, it is abundantly evident that Hamlet had loved the gentle Ophelia with all the intensity his ardent and affectionate nature was capable of, and which love, it is also evident, had been abundantly reciprocated. The first blow to this comes through her, prompted by her father, and it falls upon him when his mind is sadly unprepared to receive it. Writhing as he was under his other sorrows and their diseased reaction, as we shall see in this scene, the blow rebounds upon her with a weight so crushing, that all our sympathies are enlisted for the gentle being, and these are made more lively by the remembrance that she has not called down all this upon herself by her fickleness and feminine caprice, but that it has been instigated by parental duty. In the midst of that grand soliloquy, in which, prompted by the melancholy of his mind and the dark misanthropy of his feelings, he places

so insignificant an estimate upon human life when weighed in the balance against the cares, perplexities, and sorrows incident to it, and where, quite forgetting the axiom he has previously advanced, that "there is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it," he spurns it, and casts a fearful glance towards the mysteries of the grave and eternity, also tinged with the dark hue of his thoughts, and in which he thinks "perchance" there may be "dreams" more terrible than the sad realities which now surround him, — he is interrupted by the entrance of Ophelia. The first sight of her appears to awaken in him all those tender emotions he was accustomed in health to indulge towards her: —

> "Soft you, now!
> The fair Ophelia: — Nymph, in thy orisons,
> Be all my sins remembered."

To her first greeting he replies thankfully and respectfully, and if not affectionately and cordially, in a manner suited to the state of mind in which she has found him. She then takes occasion to restore him the gifts he has made her, intimating that he had ceased to love her. In an instant the demon of disease slumbering in his mind is roused up and let loose upon her, to lacerate most unmercifully her already crushed and bleeding heart, and he does his work with that refined cruelty which only such a demon is capable of. She attempts to reason with the monster, and as was to be expected from its true nature, it only becomes

more and more cruel, and ceases not to rend her till its mad rage is expended, and she stands before us trembling in every limb, her heart bleeding from many deep and sore wounds, and "like Niobe, all tears," an object of the deepest commiseration.

Surely they must be blind to dramatic propriety who can perceive in all this nothing more than a well-acted sham, in which the actor does violence to his own best feelings, and wounds and lacerates fearfully those of her whom he had loved so tenderly, when the deception which he is thereby supposed to attempt is attainable at so much less cost. Ophelia, certainly no incompetent judge under the circumstances, seems as before to have placed the proper estimate upon his conduct. The lynx-eyed vigilance of woman's love could not be deceived, and she has read correctly the riddle which has so perplexed all Shakspeare's critics down to the present time. When he leaves her presence after this harrowing scene, with the cutting words, "Get thee to a nunnery" upon his lips, she says: —

"O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mold of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh;
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth,

Blasted with ecstacy: O, woe is me!
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

In the first part of Scene II. (Act III.) in giving his instructions to the players, and also his ideas as to what should be the true character of theatrical performances, he is quite calm and collected, his mind and feelings apparently undisturbed, and to have met him now no one would have supposed him either insane or feigning. This is quite natural, and consistent with the form of madness under which he suffers; "a form," says Dr. Brigham, "under which the mind only occasionally suffers, while the feelings are greatly disordered by disease." Strangers to insanity, on passing for the first time through the halls of an asylum which are devoted to the better classes of patients, are frequently much surprised at the rational conversation, apt remarks, and gentlemanly bearing and conduct of some, and can scarcely believe them insane, and often, as we have frequently seen, manifest much curiosity in questioning the medical officers in charge as to how the disease which they are unable to perceive, manifests itself. Farther on in the scene, when the court enters to witness the play, he is quite calm, as though he had braced up his mind and curbed his feelings to observe carefully its effect upon the king and queen. Yet even here, there is a kind of childishness, a juvenility of mind manifested, which is quite unlike the real Hamlet of Act I. or the insane Hamlet of Act II. The demon within is now slumbering, and towards the

gentle being he so lately lacerated is now quite changed, throws himself down at her feet, and like a little child asks to be permitted to lay his head in her lap. Throughout this entire scene, even after the developments brought about by the effect of the play upon the king, there is a peculiar levity in his manner and conduct which savors strongly of mental and moral unsoundness, and we are quite ready to believe him when he says to Guildenstern: "I cannot make you a wholesome answer, my wit's diseased." Such are the varied phases of madness, and how wonderful is that power of observation in our great dramatist, which has enabled him to draw them so minutely and accurately. His knowledge of the human heart and mind, under all circumstances and in all forms, whether of health or disease, is so accurate that he never makes a mistake, and when he appears to do so, we should strongly suspect that we do not understand him, and wait humbly and labor patiently for a more accurate knowledge of his purposes and intentions.

The next appearance of Hamlet, of importance in illustration of our position, is at the conclusion of Scene III., where he finds the king alone and at his attempted devotions. Here was an excellent opportunity for him to wreak his vengeance upon him, and he saw it. "Now might I do it pat," says he; but he does not, for the impulse under which alone he can act efficiently is not upon him, and his diseased will and infirmity of purpose are

not sufficient for it; and framing a flimsy excuse, such as the fear that if he sent him into eternity while praying he would not be damned, and his revenge would be incomplete, he allows the opportunity to slip from him. He can make great resolves, but he can only execute by a diseased impulse, and this never serves him at the right time. That speedy vengeance which was the sworn purpose of his life is here prevented by his infirmity, and a mad impulse in a subsequent scene causes him to plunge his sword into the heart of poor old Polonius, instead of the heart of the real culprit, his uncle.

We now come to the extraordinary interview between Hamlet and his mother. (Act III., Scene IV.) Perhaps no scene furnishes to the non-professional reader such strong evidence as this in favor of the theory of feigning. To us, however, he appears like one who, being really and truly insane, has summoned all his powers for the accomplishment of his purposes, one of which is to convince others that he is not mad. He can feign either sanity or insanity, as best suited his purposes at the time. Here, in the true spirit which animates him, he asserts in plain words that he is not mad, only in "craft," and in spite of all internal evidence to the contrary, most of his readers and critics are ready to believe him.

"It is not madness I have uttered; bring me to the test." Unfortunately the test he relies upon, though once considered infallible, is not now re-

garded as positive; indeed, as applicable to his case it is quite worthless. It strikes us as rather strange too, that one who is really feigning for a purpose, should take so much pains to make others believe he is not doing so. He speaks rationally, yet sometimes wildly and obscurely, and the unmerciful manner in which he harrows up the feelings of his mother, blameworthy as she was, and so deserving of his severe censure, is in perfect keeping with his conduct towards Ophelia in a former scene. The reappearance of the ghost, now visible only to himself, shows the deep agitation of his mind, and with all his self-possession he is not able to suppress the emotions caused by this mental apparition.

In Scenes II. and III. of Act IV., we see another phase of his malady. That peculiar levity of conduct evinced by the insane in view of the dreadful circumstances which they have brought upon themselves by their insane acts, — circumstances which would cause the guilty sane to quake with fear, — is here admirably shown, as also that waywardness and perversity peculiar to certain forms of insanity. He appears to have concealed the body of Polonius, whom he has slain in an insane impulse, merely out of pure perversity, and not from any fear as to the consequences to himself from the deed. In answer to the question of Rosencrantz, "What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?" he says, quite significantly, "Compounded it with the dust, whereto 't is kin."

In the next scene, when the king asks him where is Polonius, he answers: "At supper. ... Not where he eats, but where he is eaten; a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet;" and he continues to rally the king with the most caustic sarcasm, showing him the ultimate identity between a fat king and a lean beggar.

Again, when the king puts the question, "Where is Polonius?" he evades in a most provoking manner: "In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself."

We next find him bewailing his own imbecility of purpose in view of the expedition of young Fortinbras, quite conscious apparently of his infirmity, yet wholly under its influence and totally unable to overcome it.

We now come to Scene V. Act IV., in which we find another and very different form of insanity in the case of Ophelia. Ophelia, of all the creations of Shakspeare's genius, is certainly one of the most charming and exquisite. The gentle being, occasional glimpses of whom we have caught in former scenes, gliding before us for a moment and disappearing like a vision of loveliness and purity, weeping in the heaviness of her heart over the misfortunes which have befallen her lover, and bewailing the change which his sad disease had wrought in his feelings and conduct towards her, is now doomed to fall a victim to another, and if possible

more painful form of the same malady. With true feminine fortitude she has borne meekly and patiently all that the mental disease of her lover has inflicted upon herself, and in childlike obedience to the will of the politic old courtier, Polonius, her father, whom, notwithstanding all his follies, she appears to have loved with the tenderness of a daughter, faithful and true, she has tried to smother, if she could not entirely quench, the pure flame which glowed in her bosom towards Hamlet. This, no doubt, cost her a sad struggle, yet in obedience to duty she could make the attempt. But when under an impulse of disease this lover plunges his sword into the heart of her beloved parent, the measure of her sorrow is full and running over. Her gentle heart, which had been so often and so sorely wounded, is now crushed forever, and her pure and delicate mind at once becomes a wreck. Its native delicacy, though sadly shattered by disease, is not wholly lost, and though a maniac she is not wild, but the same gentle, loving, kind-hearted, affectionate Ophelia. Sad is the picture which the poet has here given us, yet the records of womanly experience teach us that it is only too true. After the mournful exhibition she furnishes us of crushed feelings and a mind in fragments, we are quite prepared, indeed we feel a kind of relief, when death interposes to take her away from the sorrows and perplexities of her short and melancholy career.

We next meet Hamlet in the churchyard, with that same levity of character and conduct which

we have before glanced at as one of the characteristics of his disease. He jests with clowns, and moralizes over dry bones. Here, with all his own sorrowful experiences of human life fresh in his memory, and surrounded with the solemn evidences of the vanity of all earthly things, in the true spirit of madness he makes himself merry with things most grave and solemn. A skull "grins with a ghastly smile" upon him, and he in return smiles upon it, supposes it to have been the skull of a lawyer, and asks what has become of its "tenures" and its "tricks," and wonders why it does not bring an action for battery against the clown for knocking it about with a dirty shovel. Here he utters that terrible sarcasm against "men made of money":—

"*Ham.* Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?
Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calves-skins too.
Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that."

This scene with the grave-diggers is not merely rich in wit, humor, philosophy, and morality, but it possesses a profound psychological interest, and it is evident that Hamlet acted very unnaturally under the circumstances, supposing him to be sane or feigning; or supposing him to be insane, acted in the true spirit of his disease, very naturally. The latter supposition is the more reasonable.

In the midst of this singular scene in the graveyard, the funeral procession, bearing the remains

of Ophelia, enters. And here we are furnished with the poet's views respecting the obsequies paid by the church to the bodies of those unfortunates, who, in a paroxysm of the most dreadful of human maladies, commit suicide. He is evidently at issue with the priestly prejudicies of his times, remnants of which have descended to, and are even now occasionally manifest in the midst of the enlightenment of our own. The poet seems to have felt instinctively that the bodies of those, who, urged by a paroxysm of disease beyond the power of self-control, have perished by their own hands, should have the same sad rites as those who have perished from any other cause, and that withholding them could do no possible good, and inflict much unnecessary injury upon the feelings of friends: —

"*Laer.* Must there no more be done?
Priest. ..... No more be done!
We should profane the service of the dead,
To sing sage *requiem*, and such rest to her,
As to peace-parted souls.
Laer. Lay her i' the earth;
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh,
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling."

The wild manifestations of sorrow on the part of Laertes at the grave of his sister, which Hamlet has observed at a distance, very naturally excite in him a paroxysm of his malady, and his conduct here establishes beyond all question the existence of genuine madness. At times he could control

himself completely, and act and talk rationally, yet ever since the interview with the ghost, even during these intervals, we can detect the genuine manifestations of that disease, which is ready to burst out in marked paroxysms upon occasions of unusual excitement like this. He here rushes forward, leaps into the grave, grapples with Laertes, and disputes with him the position of chief-mourner; and his language as well as his conduct leads us to coincide with the queen when she says, —

> "This is mere madness:
> And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
> Anon, as patient as the female dove
> When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,
> His silence will sit drooping."

Alternately calm and excited, we find him, in the next scene, relating with great circumspection the means he adopted to circumvent his transportation to England, and to devote his treacherous companions to the same fate they had, in concert with the king, intended for him. He also expresses his regret that the "towering passion" into which the grief of Laertes had put him, should have made him forget himself at the grave of Ophelia.

The wild confusion of the last scene furnishes us a fitting denouement of what has preceded. It was not to be expected that a drama in which the principal actor is an undoubted madman, should end as one in which other materials are employed. The mental malady of Hamlet was of such a character as to influence deeply the whole

plot, and in the end we see the irresolution, feebleness of will, and want of foresight resulting from it, bringing about just what was to be expected, a complete chaos. Each dies as it were by accident, and by the means intended for the destruction of another. These means seem like the "times" "out of joint," and hobble on to the accomplishment of purposes, vague, indistinct, and uncertain. Vengeance indeed falls upon the head of the chief culprit, not however in the solemn manner to give it a character suited to his enormous guilt, but just as we might expect from the nature of the instrumentalities employed; the only way in fact it could have been brought about, with the perservation of the complete dramatic consistency of the plot; the whole furnishing another evidence of the wonderful sagacity of the poet, and the truthfulness to nature, and consistency with which he works out whatever he undertakes.

OPHELIA.

OF Ophelia, we have already said a few words, in treating of the character of Hamlet, with whose mad career her own sad destiny was so intimately interwoven. Of all the poet's characters, we may say truly that there is not one that so thoroughly enlists the best and most profound sympathies of the human heart as Ophelia. There are others whose circumstances have been quite as sad, and whose end, to a superficial view, quite as tragic; but every one who studies this character with that carefulness which its exceeding loveliness demands, feels that there is a certain something here, not easily defined perhaps, causing it to differ from all others in the amount and intensity of the sympathy excited.

Of all Shakspeare's female characters, Ophelia is, *par excellence*, the most feminine; and in her, it strikes us, we perceive a closer approximation to the "divine perfection of a woman," than is to be found in any other of the poet's delineations. The daughter of a courtier, bred amid the vices, the arts, and the intrigues incident to court life, she escapes all contamination by the innate purity of her natural character, and to the end maintains

that artless and childlike simplicity so essentially characteristic of the true woman. This, however, is not the simplicity of ignorance, but, as we have said, of innate purity. All she knows about the "primrose path of dalliance" is by hearsay and rumor; but she has never trod its deceitful and treacherous windings, neither has she wandered there in thought, nor even in dreams. The love she bears towards Hamlet is so pure, so free from the slightest trace of any base alloy, either of passion, pride, or selfishness, that it seems in very truth "not of the earth, earthy," but an effloresence of that divine nature with which she has been so highly endowed, — a nature in which pride, selfishness, or ambition, had no part or lot whatever. The high social position of her royal lover she regards with fear and trembling, inasmuch as this may prove an insurmountable barrier to the possession of that which was the most cherished desire of her gentle heart. Yet this desire, pure, holy, unselfish, as she felt it to be, she is ready to sacrifice at whatever cost to her own feelings, and yield it up in childlike obedience to the expressed wishes of her father. Duty to her parent, with her, was paramount to all else, and the thought of disobedience seems never to have entered her mind. Ophelia is so unselfish and pure-minded, that she is slow to suspect that others can be actuated by impure or selfish motives. The unaffected simplicity, the *naïveté*, of her replies to her father and brother in Act I., Scene III., show the exceeding

beauty of her natural character and disposition from the very first. She is unwilling to doubt the affection or motives of her father or brother, and she is equally unwilling to doubt the honesty and truthfulness of her lover's protestations; and, with conflicting emotions, she is "perplexed in the extreme," like Othello, not knowing what to do, or think, or believe; and when her father calls her a green girl, and asks her if she believes the protestations of Hamlet, her reply is singularly beautiful: "I do not know, my lord, what I *should* think."

The advice which her brother bestows upon her in taking his leave, good and wholesome as it is, is quite unnecessary, though received in the kindest manner, and she tells him: "I shall the effect of your good lesson keep, as watchman to my heart." Yet all the time we are made to feel that it is far more important for him to remember the gentle, modest, and loving admonition of her reply, than it is for her to remember his advice, which, we are led to believe, he has framed from his own practical experience of the world: —

> . . . . . "but, good my brother,
> Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
> Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
> Whilst, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
> And recks not his own read."

The scene between Ophelia and her father, "touching the lord Hamlet," furnishes an admi-

rable exhibition of obedience to parental authority, and further serves to set forth the extreme truthfulness and loveliness of her natural character and disposition. When her father tells her, that of late she has "of her audience been most free and bounteous," in conscious innocence she evades nothing, and in answer to his demand to "give up the truth" as to what is between them, she answers: —

> "He hath, my lord, of late, made many tenders
> Of his affection to me. . . . . .
> . . . . . He hath importuned me with love
> In honorable fashion — . . . .
> And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
> With almost all the holy vows of heaven."

Here we feel that the demand is fully answered, and that we have the truth, and the whole truth; and when he tells her that these vows are not "sterling,"

> "But mere implorators of unholy suits,
> Breathing life sanctified and pious bonds,
> The better to beguile,"

and lays his commands upon her to avoid in future these frequent interviews with the prince, she does not presume to argue the matter with her father, or to defend the motives of her lover, or her own conduct, but replies simply and beautifully in the language of a dutiful and affectionate daughter, —

> "I shall obey, my lord."

It is here that her pure spirit receives the first heavy blow. How much this resolution of obedi-

ence cost her, is known only to herself and those gentle spirits (and their name is legion) who have been placed in like circumstances. They stagger under the stunning blow, but they do not fall; hope has not fled forever, but still lingers to sustain and comfort, and a sublime faith in the divine order of things, known only to themselves and their like, points to something beyond the dismal present. They *know* that they are beloved, and this they feel like an "everlasting arm" beneath them, and they cannot sink until it is removed.

Whatever may be the opinion of others, Ophelia is fully persuaded in her own mind that her lover is not playing false with her; and while such impassioned words as the following are treasured up in the depths of her confiding heart, they are all-sufficient, and come what will, she is happy.

"To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia:

Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt, that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.

"O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

"Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, Hamlet."

We next meet Ophelia in Act II., Scene I. From what we gather in the interview between her and her father in this scene, it is evident that the heart of the doomed one has received another

and still more stunning blow, in the first frightful meeting with Hamlet, after she has, by her father's express commands, repelled his letters and denied him all access to her presence. In the interval, since their forced separation, her lover has become a frightful maniac, not a feigning imposter as some believe, but a real confirmed melancholic madman, from causes we have heretofore discussed. It is evident from the anxious inquiries of her father, and from her replies, that she has been greatly shocked and frightened by this interview, which Hamlet, following the instinct of his love, and the promptings of his disease, so rudely and informally forced upon her as she was sewing in her closet. The thought, too, that she has been the innocent cause of this mental overthrow, makes her

"Of ladies most deject and wretched;"

though, as she says to her father, she has given him no "hard words," — a thing impossible to her nature, — but has simply obeyed, as in duty bound, the strict injunctions of her parent.

With all her gentleness, Ophelia was a woman of strong character, and to crush her entirely, as she is doomed to be, required blows both heavy and repeated. She has been greatly agitated and frightened by the strange conduct of Hamlet, who, though he utters not a word, has, by his insane bearing and appearance, harrowed up her inmost soul, not so much with fear as with pity and regret,

— pity, that, perhaps, "a noble mind is here o'erthrown," and regret most poignant that she may have been the innocent instrument in the hands of others in accomplishing it.

The air of truthfulness, the calm dignity and precision of her description of this silent interview with her lover, exhibit the native strength of her mind and character, and show clearly that she was by no means the "green girl" her father calls her; he indeed seems to have been convinced of his own weakness and mistake, and admits that he is sorry for what he has done, and in his agitation invites her to go with him at once to the king, and lay the whole matter before him.

"*Pol.* I am sorry that, with better heed and judgment, I had not quoted him."

Notwithstanding the strangeness of this silent interview, which has so greatly frightened her, and in spite of the hasty suggestions of Polonius as to the mental condition of Hamlet, Ophelia seems not yet to be fully persuaded of the insanity of her lover, which, indeed, is yet in its initiatory stage. She only fears, and these fears even she would like to question as long as possible, and in answer to her father, who asks if he is mad for her love, she says, with her accustomed modesty: —

"My lord, I do not know,
But truly I do fear it."

In her next interview with Hamlet, Act III.,

Scene I., these fears are only too fully confirmed by the unmerciful manner in which he lacerates her already bleeding heart. The blows which here fall upon the doomed one are more stunning than any she has yet received; but still she does not sink under them, and the gentle pleadings, questionings, and remonstrances which she employs, the plaintive wail which bursts from her heart at the conclusion of the scene, when she is made to perceive fully that he is insane, are affecting in the extreme. The touching character of the scene in which she seeks to return his gifts would be greatly modified if we could feel that she acts as she does from feminine caprice, to annoy her lover, or from a natural desire to test the sincerity of his protestations. But we cannot bring ourselves to think that this is the case, for it is contrary to her character, and quite opposed to her confiding nature. On the contrary, we are conscious throughout the whole scene that she is acting from the promptings of another, obedience to whom she regards as a paramount duty, to which all her own most cherished feelings must be held in complete and sovereign subjection. That Ophelia was, at least in the opinion of Hamlet, acting from an impulse imparted by her father, seems evident from the manner in which he alludes to Polonius in this scene, and where he speaks of shutting him up at home, that he may "play the fool nowhere but in his own house." Be this as it may, there is no modification of the blows he so unmercifully lets fall upon her

in his paroxysm of insane violence. This scene is so illustrative of the character and disposition of Ophelia, that we cannot forbear quoting from it at length. When Hamlet first perceives her, at the conclusion of his grand soliloquy, he seems for a moment to forget the relation in which he now stands to her, and all his old cherished feelings seem uppermost in his heart and mind: —

> . . . . . "Soft you, now!
> The fair Ophelia. Nymph, in thy orisons
> Be all my sins remembered."

Yet immediately after her kind and respectful greeting, and inquiry after his welfare, the thought of their present relation seems to return, and he replies with a cold, cutting dignity: —

> "I humbly thank you, well."

Ophelia then proceeds to the discharge of the heavy and painful duty imposed upon her: —

> "*Oph.* My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
> That I have longed long to re-deliver;
> I pray you, now receive them.
> *Ham.* No, not I; I never gave you aught.
> *Oph.* My honored lord, you know right well, you did;
> And with them, words of so sweet breath composed
> As made the things more rich. Their perfume lost,
> Take these again; for to the noble mind,
> Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.
> There, my lord.
> *Ham.* Ha! ha! Are you honest?
> *Oph.* My lord?
> *Ham.* Are you fair?
> *Oph.* What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into its likeness; this was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived."

In this scene, with an ingenuity, and a refined sarcasm worthy of the form of insanity under which he is suffering, he pours out his invective upon her in a manner which those best acquainted with this disease in all its variable forms, can most readily appreciate. The first object he selects for attack is the one which of all others he feels in his inmost soul to be the most dear to her, namely, himself; and as though with one blow he would dash to the earth all the fond hopes he has led her to cherish, and there trample upon them, he says to her, —

"Get thee to a nunnery; why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?"

He then seeks to reveal to her that this idol of her heart, this Hamlet, is the very "chief of sinners," and so black that "it were better that his mother had not borne him;" and, after enumerat-

ing his many vices, he repeats his harsh demand, "Go thy way; get thee to a nunnery." He then opens his batteries upon the object next dear to her, namely, her father, and in a few words disposes of him, as we have already seen, in a manner best calculated to wound her feelings.

> "Oh, help him, you sweet heavens!
> Heavenly powers, restore him!"

is the deep prayer of her bruised heart, and all she can utter in reply.

After disposing of Polonius, his mad rage falls upon Ophelia herself; the intense bitterness and cruelty of his words, and the awful sarcasm he launches at the gentle and unresisting creature before him, are worthy the madman, and call forth the deepest commiseration for the victim. How torturing are these words, coming as they do from one whose love she had cherished so fondly.

"If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry. Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. . . . . Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them."

As though this were not enough to crush and humble her, he must torture her with certain disagreeable personal peculiarities, evidently false, and quite contrary to the simplicity and native dignity of her character. But madness of the kind here delineated is never scrupulous in the choice of means for the accomplishment of its purposes: —

"I have heard of your paintings, too, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another; you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to; I'll no more of it; it hath made me mad. . . . . To a nunnery, go."

The plaintive wail which bursts from her heart in view of the awful malady which has called down all this upon her, is truly most affecting:—

"Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of time, and harsh;
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth,
Blasted with ecstacy. Oh, woe is me!
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!"

At the play her lover is in a better mood of mind, in view of the revelations he expects to bring forth by means of the players, and this appears to have reacted upon herself, as was quite natural, so that for a moment she is again happy. This, however, is but a treacherous lull in the awful tempest which has hitherto blown her about, and which is again to burst upon her with increased and destructive violence.

When we next meet Ophelia, Act IV., Scene V., the last heavy blow has descended upon her;

her gentle, confiding heart, which has hitherto withstood so many shocks, is now crushed completely, and her pure mind is in fragments — hopelessly destroyed. That insanity which, under all ordinary circumstances, is justly regarded as the most dire of human calamities — more fearful even than the king of terrors — here comes like a ministering angel, and even the shadow of its dark wing hovering over her, is a species of relief to us; for it shields her from the consciousness of the terrible calamities that have befallen her, till, in great mercy, death bears her beyond the reach of all earthly sorrows.

This last sad blow which she suffers, is the violent death of Polonius, her father, by the hand of Hamlet. The previous calamities, though in themselves sufficiently heavy to crush a less hopeful and confiding spirit, she has borne up under; but this is too much. The bitter cup, which might not depart from her, has been drained, and she sinks at once into a form of mild mania, the hopeless character of which is recognized at once by all who have any practical acquaintance with mental disease. To such, the delineation is so perfect that we feel that in no instance has the poet "held the mirror up to nature" more carefully. The language used is almost identical with what is heard daily in the wards of all asylums. Coherence and incoherence are here strangely, but most truthfully, intermingled; yet throughout the whole, the truthfulness, gentleness, and loving kindness

of her nature are manifested. We perceive this in the first words which she utters when in this state, — "Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?" These words, and those which follow, fall upon the ear with a sad, melodious sweetness, than which nothing in the whole range of dramatic literature is more pathetic; and were it not that they manifest utter unconsciousness of her own great misfortunes, would be altogether too painful for dramatic effect.

Throughout her incoherence, as is most common in such cases, there are one or two dominant thoughts, tortured though these be into all manner of curious shapes. These thoughts twine fantastically round her dead parent, with once or twice an obscure allusion to her lover: —

> "How should I your true love know
> From another one?
> By his cockle hat and staff,
> And his sandal shoon."

This stanza seems to have been suggested by some vague thought of her lover, but the dominant thought is of her dead father, and is expressed in the stanza which follows. In answer to the queen's question, — "What imports this song?" she replies, as if not quite conscious of what is said of her: —

> "Say you? nay; 'pray you, mark. (*Sings.*)
> He is dead and gone, lady,
> He is dead and gone;
> At his head a grass-green turf,
> At his heels a stone;

White his shroud as the mountain snow,
Larded all with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go,
With true-love showers."

Nothing could be more natural than the complete incoherence of her reply to the greeting of the king: —

"*King.* How do you, pretty lady?
Oph. Well, God 'ield you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!"

How perfectly natural the above incoherence, to such as are afflicted with this form of disease, those best acquainted with insanity can bear ample testimony.* The obscenity of the lines beginning

"Good morrow; 't is Saint Valentine's day,"

though shocking to the polite ears of modern times, is also quite natural, even when we remember that it comes from one whose lips, previous to disease, have ever been most pure, and her ears quite unused to such enunciations. These utterances fall

* This day the following words were noted down, *verbatim*, by the writer, as they fell from the lips of one whose case has many points of resemblance to that of Ophelia: —

"*Phy.* — Good morning; how do you do?

Patient. — Very well, thank you. My cow has jumped into the Lord's pasture. I am driven about from pillar to post. They mean to kill me; wonder how my brains will taste?"

In reply to the salutation of another person, and inquiry as to her welfare, she said, — "I 've a pain in my side; some one must have killed a cat; is n't there one dead in the garret?"

unconsciously, like most words which escape from their mouths, and when so regarded, they are robbed of much of their force. Even persons quite young, and who have been carefully secluded all their lives from such language, are found indulging in obscene expressions when insane; and parents are struck dumb with astonishment, and wonder where they could have been learned. This is only one of the many curious phenomena attendant upon mania. All this obscenity is, perhaps, followed immediately by the sweetest utterances that can fall from the lips of innocence. Witness the following, for example, from Ophelia: —

"*Oph.* I hope all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night." *

* The late distinguished Dr. Brigham, than whom no man in modern times has observed the insane more carefully, asserted that he had seen all of Shakspeare's characters in the wards of the Utica Asylum, of which he was physician-in-chief. "Here, too," says he, "is Ophelia, past cure, past hope, sitting at the piano and singing the songs of Moore and other modern poets, as the Ophelia of Shakspeare sang the songs of the poets of her own times." We think we know to whom he refers, and have quoted her words in the preceding note. Yes, twenty years since she was here, and here she is now, "the observed of all observers, quite, quite down;" and though the snows of some sixty winters have settled upon her head, she still bears traces of that extraordinary beauty for which she was once celebrated. The causes, too, of her insanity are known to have been similar to those of the Ophelia of the poet, namely, domestic sorrow and blighted affections. At times she is obscene; though, like her great prototype, apparently as unconscious of this now as she is of all her early sorrows. She decks herself fantastically, constructs the most curious and fantastic things, and will sit at the piano, and, with

When we next meet Ophelia, she is fantastically dressed with straws and flowers, and though still more maniacal, if possible, than before, the dominant thought — the death of her father — is still uppermost in her mind, and she sings: —

"They bore him barefaced on the bier;
Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny;
And in his grave rained many a tear; —
Fare you well, my dove! . . . . .

"You must sing, Down-a-down, an' you call him a-down-a. Oh, how the wheel becomes it; it is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter. . . . . There 's rosemary, that 's for remembrance; 'pray you, love, remember; and there is pansies, that 's for thoughts. . . . . There 's fennel for you, and columbines; — there 's rue for you, and here 's some for me; — we may call it herb o' grace of Sundays; — you may wear your rue with a difference. — There 's a daisy; — I would give you some violets; but they withered all when my father died. — They say he made a good end, ——

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy." — [*Sings.* 22

With great truthfulness, Laertes adds, —

"Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself, she turns to favor and to prettiness."

The burden of her last song is the same, — her dead parent; and how plaintive, and what desolation of heart does it exhibit: —

much taste, sing the songs of brighter days, together with her own strange and wild improvisations. And so her life is gliding away, if not happily, at least without the consciousness of the early sorrows that have overthrown her.

"And will he not come again? [*Sings.*
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead;
Go to thy death-bed,
He will never come again.

His beard was white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll;
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan;
God a mercy on his soul!
And of all Christian souls! I pray God. God be wi' you!"

This is the last utterance of Ophelia which falls upon our ears; and all the knowledge we have of her subsequently, comes through others. The poet has given us an exhibition of supreme loveliness, and upon it has called down an intensity of sorrow, calculated to enlist the most profound sympathy of which humanity is capable — a sorrow so crushing that a prolonged exhibition of it would be too painful. He seems to have been well aware of the effect he has produced, and, in wisdom, closes the scene.

The last calamity which can befall the doomed one has passed, and death now comes like an angel of mercy, and the dark pall is made to descend upon her as gently as was possible, in the nature of things; and though this sweet vision of the poet has passed away, the memory of its loveliness will linger fresh and green till the very end of all earthly things. For this and for all that he has

given us, humanity is thankful; and that portion of humanity, the best, most truthful, most loving, and most sorrowing, whence he has taken this character, will, in all coming time, "rise up and call him blessed."

JAQUES.

THOSE who have observed carefully the phenomena of mind as warped by the more delicate shades of disease, — shades so delicate perhaps as to be scarcely recognized by the ordinary observer, — must have remarked that in certain cases there are mental conditions which appear at first sight almost incompatible and contradictory.

This is most frequently illustrated in those more mild, but nevertheless marked cases of incipient melancholia, underlying which may frequently be found a vein or substratum of genuine humor; so that the expression "wrapped in a most humorous sadness" is neither contradictory, nor by any means paradoxical. How frequently have we observed even confirmed melancholics, persons so depressed at times as to be strongly suicidal, "setting the table in a roar" by the quiet piquancy of their humor, their countenances at the same time so expressive of the genuine sadness, the fixed sorrow that brooded in their hearts, that we hardly knew whether to weep or smile; indeed were almost ready for both. Of this class was the poet Cowper, who, in the midst of profound melancholia, as is well known, could write one of the

most humorous poems in the English language. The instance of the comedian who consulted Abernethy for melancholy, and, unknown to the doctor, was advised to go and hear himself, is a familiar one. But it is not necessary in this place to multiply illustrations, as such will occur to the reader, who will, no doubt, be able to recall examples of what is here referred to, from the experience of life.

Shakspeare, who observed everything, has furnished us some notable examples, none more so, if we except perhaps Hamlet, than Jaques, the character we now propose to consider.

In the character of Jaques it is very evident that Shakspeare intended to represent a certain delicate shade of incipient melancholia. He is called the "Melancholy Jaques" by one character in the play, and another, Rosalind, tells him he is regarded as a very "melancholy fellow." He speaks of himself as one who is sometimes "wrapped in a most humorous sadness," and one who can "suck melancholy from a song as a weasel sucks eggs." At the same time he seems to regard his melancholy as something quite unique and peculiar to himself.

When pressed by Rosalind to describe it, he finds himself unable to say in what it consists, yet of this he is certain, it is something very delicious, and a thing he cherishes, and "loves better than laughing."

"It is not the scholar's melancholy," says he, "which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is

fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all these," but it is a "melancholy of his own," which is "compounded of many simples, and extracted from many objects," and one which frequently "wraps him in a most humorous sadness."

The melancholy of Jaques is not so much a fixed condition of disease, as the gradual ingravescence of the melancholic state, that condition so admirably delineated below by old Burton.

"Generally," says Burton, "thus much we may conclude of melancholy, that it is most pleasant at first, *blanda ab initio*, a most delightful humour to be alone, dwell alone, walk alone, meditate alone — lie in bed whole days dreaming awake, as it were, and frame a thousand fantastical imaginations unto themselves; they are never better pleased than when they are so doing; they are in paradise for the time. Tell him what inconvenience will follow, what will be the event, all is one. *Canis ad vomitum*, 't is so pleasant he cannot refrain; so, by little and little, by that shoehorn of idleness, and voluntary solitariness, melancholy that feral fiend is drawn on."

When the disease becomes fairly fixed, the genuine melancholic is the greatest of egotists. All his thoughts run in the one turbid stream which wells up from the dark depths of feeling within him, when the fountain is stirred by disease and

morbid impulse. He has no sympathy whatever with anything external to himself; he cannot force a genuine smile even at the most ludicrous things, though perhaps he may be able to induce others both to smile and weep.

With such, however, Jaques has no part or lot whatever. And though he is called a "melancholy fellow," he is nevertheless a most delightful dreamer, and the very prince of contemplative moralizing idlers; a species of intellectual and emotional epicurean, if we may use the expression, whose *mental* appetite is the most dainty imaginable.

Everything in external nature, it matters not what, which can in any way administer to his intellectual and emotional gratification, he lays hold upon; and when once within his grasp, he converts it into a most delicious, healthful, and life-giving intellectual aliment; not like the confirmed melancholic of the more advanced stages, who, by his morbid imagination, converts it into a poison. Indeed, after a careful examination of him, we confess our inability to discover anything more really morbid in his mental or moral organization, than what is glanced at above as belonging to the initiatory stage of this disease.

His love for lounging and moralizing "under the greenwood tree, and by the babbling brook," and his ability to laugh at a fool "an hour by his dial, *sans* intermission," or until his lungs do "crow like chanticleers," is but one of the conditions peculiar to this initiatory stage of melancholy.

The first introduction which we have to Mons. Jaques is in the forest of Arden, and the first words he utters are in commendation of that delightful little song of Amiens's, which it strikes us is anything but melancholy or suggestive of sadness:—

> "Under the greenwood tree,
> Who loves to lie with me,
> And tune his merry note,
> To the sweet bird's throat," etc.

Well may Jaques cry "more, more," for the kind of melancholy he could suck from such a song, was about as luscious to his feelings and intellectual appetite, as is the fresh egg to the palate of the egg-sucking weasel.

Jaques, though at times he appears to assume the garb of cynicism for the gratification of an intellectual freak, is never egotistical or misanthropic, but manifests the keenest sympathy with everything. "His sullen fits," as they are called, in which, according to the Duke, he is so "full of matter," are not so much the sad introspective musings of the confirmed melancholic, as the quiet contemplative musings upon the nature and essence of surrounding objects. With what keen sympathy can he moralize the spectacle "of a wounded stag into a thousand similes."

> "First, for his weeping into the needless stream;
> 'Poor deer,' quoth he, 'thou mak'st a testament
> As worldlings do, giving thy sum for more
> To that which had too much.' Then, being alone,
> Left and abandoned of his velvet friends,

> 'T is right,' quoth he, 'thus misery doth part
> The flux of company.' Anon, a careless herd,
> Full of the pasture, jumps along by him,
> And never stays to greet him. 'Ay,' quoth Jaques,
> 'Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens;
> 'T is just the fashion. Wherefore do you look
> Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?'"

Confirmed melancholics are not given to such moralizing as this; they have no sympathy with humanity, much less with inferior creatures, but are wholly wrapped up in themselves and their own real or fancied ills, and can scarcely be said to moralize at all; they theorize much, however, upon these ills, and speculate continually on their imaginary misfortunes. All their ideas centre in themselves, and to this focus they seek to concentrate the thoughts of those who approach them. Jaques, on the contrary, never alludes to himself for the purposes of enlisting the sympathies of others in his behalf. When,

> "Most invectively he pierces through
> The body of country, city, court," etc.,

he does it more as a moralist than as a cynical misanthrope, or melancholy egotist, — "more in sorrow than in anger," and because in the kindness of his heart, he has little sympathy with the abuses which he sees about him in every direction. All the superficial conventionalities of life not founded upon genuine feeling, he heartily despises, — he "pierces through" the hollow pretences of courtiers, the false flatteries of the world, with the

keenness and certainty of instinct, and vents his opinion of them. He feels sympathy for all genuine and refined emotion; for this he experiences, cultivates, and cherishes; but to him, "that they call compliment, is like the encounter of two dog-apes."

He shuns the company of the Duke, because he looks upon him as a man of many words and few thoughts, — a character not at all in accordance with his ideas and feelings. "The Duke," he says, "is too disputable for my company; I think of as many things as he, but I give Heaven thanks and make no boast of them." Jaques has no companions equal to his own thoughts. When he is told by Amiens that the Duke "has been all this day to look you," he replies in a most significant manner, that he "has been all this day to avoid him." When, at last, he discovers himself to his friends, he had been laughing an hour by the fool's dial, "*sans* intermission," and the quiet yet significant irony he pours out upon Lady Fortune, the Duke, and the miserable world, in his rhapsody over this motley fool he has met in the forest, is most edifying and characteristic. The fool has made the profound discovery of "the way the world wags," — that as ten o'clock is preceded by nine, and followed by eleven,

> "So, from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
> And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot,
> And thereby hangs a tale."

The irony expressed in the lines which follow in reference to the amusement afforded him by the fool, is about as rich in its way as anything that can be found:—

"When I did hear
The motley fool thus moral on the time,
My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,
That fools should be so deep-contemplative;
And I did laugh, *sans* intermission
An hour by his dial. — O noble fool!
A worthy fool! Motley's the only wear."

To the Duke's question, "What fool is this?" he answers that he is a "worthy" fool, and "one that hath been a courtier," and therefore, as a matter of course, a genteel, if not a philosophical fool, that can make the most profound observation ever conceived by a brain "as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage," namely, that,

"If ladies be but young and fair,
They have the gift to know it."

His greatest ambition, he professes, is to be a fool, that he may utter his sentiments without giving offence to any one, that he may "rail on Lady Fortune in good terms, in good set terms," and utter what he thinks, in a pleasant way, without being called to account for it.

"Oh, that I were a fool!
I am ambitious for a motley coat. . . . .
Invest me in my motley; give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through

Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine."

But here, let it be observed, he would be a fool only on certain conditions, which conditions, it strikes us, are highly creditable to both his head and his heart. He will be allowed the license of a fool only, and, —

" Provided, that you weed your better judgments
Of all opinion that grows rank in them,
That I am wise. I must have liberty . . .
To blow on whom I please ; for so fools have :
And they that are most galled with my folly,
They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so ?
The *why* is plain as way to parish church.
He that a fool doth very wisely hit,
Doth very foolishly, although he smart,
Not to seem senseless of the bob. If not,
The wise man's folly is anatomized
E'en by the squandering glances of the fool."

But he would not like to indulge in personalities, and " therein tax any private party," or hurt any one's feelings ; for this he is too gentle, and his character in this respect contrasts most favorably with that of the Duke, who indulges in the grossest personalities towards him, and thereby shows that, if the one is the nobleman, the other is, in this respect, much more the gentleman : —

" *Duke.* Fie on thee ! I can tell what thou would'st do.
Jaques. What, for a counter, would I do but good ? "

The Duke replies in a tirade of most ungentlemanly personalities, and the way these are received

and replied to by Jaques is characteristic of him, and highly creditable to his temper and disposition. How charmingly he eschews all personalities, and a disposition to injure the feelings of individuals, in his innocent railings, in what follows: —

> " Why, who cries out on pride,
> That can therein tax any private party ?
> Doth it not flow as hugely as the sea,
> Till, that the very, very means do ebb ?
> What woman in the city do I name,
> When that I say, the city woman bears
> The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders ?
> Who can come in, and say, that I meant her,
> When such a one as she, such is her neighbor ? "

Thus does he answer the coarse railings and gross personalities of the Duke. He does not stoop to reply in the same strain, and the disposition of Jaques is nowhere shown to better advantage than in this scene. The charge of libertinism and sensuality, made in such a way, he deems unworthy of an answer, but he sets forth the *animus* which calls out his invectives against the world, and shows that he deals in generalities. If, in the language of the Duke, he " disgorges into the general world," unlike him, he is never grossly personal or discourteous.

> " *Jaques.* Let me see wherein
> My tongue hath wronged him ; if it do him right,
> Then he hath wronged himself: if he be free,
> Why then, my taxing like a wild goose flies,
> Unclaimed of any man."

Some one of Shakspeare's critics has made the remark, that the character of Jaques seems to have been intended by the poet as a satire upon satirists. If Jaques was intended as a satirist in any sense, he certainly appears to us the most gentle of his crew. His railings, though they may be "in good set terms," are always kindly, and show that he is sound hearted, and possessed of many generous feelings and gentle impulses. Neither the sting of abusive words, nor the attempt of Orlando to rob him of his meal when famishing in the forest, call forth any violence of speech or action; nor does his conduct here leave upon the mind the impression of cowardice, but of forbearance and a kindly consideration for the wants and distresses of others similarly situated. When suddenly set upon with a drawn sword, his words are significant, and quite in accordance with previous manifestations. His language is not the language of fear, but simply of quiet concession to the wants of others, perhaps more pressing than his own: —

> "An you will not be answered with reason,
> I must die."

He cares little for eating or drinking, only that thereby he can live, and dream, and moralize everything "into a thousand similes." And these philosophical moralizings of his seem to have culminated in the famous passage in Act II. Scene VII.:

> "All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players.

> They have their exits and their entrances;
> And one man in his time plays many parts,
> His acts being seven ages."

To Jaques, as to Prospero, everything external was merely a mockery, a show, "an insubstantial pageant," fading, if not faded, and thought, the only thing really enduring, and in the end strictly substantial; as the sensualist says to himself, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," so, to both these dreamers, we are *really* "such stuff as dreams are made of," and as finally, our "little life" is to be "rounded with a sleep," therefore, in their philosophy, the true way to pass off even this "little life" is in moralizing, thinking, and dreaming. This may not be sound practical philosophy, but we find in it little trace of anything morbid, melancholic, or egotistic. There is, perhaps, a certain delicate shade of sadness, which borders on melancholy, but as yet there is nothing really morbid. Everything is strictly within the bounds of physiological soundness.

Jaques, like all of Shakspeare's characters, is complete in his way, and undoubtedly just what the poet intended him to be. He does "after his kind" exactly what he is expected to do, and nothing more nor less.

Viewed as a phase of human character, he is, as we have said, complete; but viewed as a model of humanity, he is, in his mental and moral organization, most incomplete and inharmonious, but none the less genuine. One great mainspring in

his mental and moral machinery has either been broken and destroyed, or left out originally. That the former was the case, we are led to believe, not only from his general characteristics, as shown in his "walk and conversation," but from the words of the Duke, which we have already referred to. Like Falstaff, he had no genuine love for the sex. This was not in the nature of the latter originally, as shown in the forced attempt in the "Merry Wives," to represent him in love, and which attempt, we are told, was made by order of the poet's mistress, Queen Elizabeth, and could not, with consistency, be shown in any other way than it was in this play. When the Duke says to Jaques,

> "Thou thyself hast been a libertine,
> As sensual as the brutish sting itself,"

we are forced, reluctantly, to believe him, not only from the fact that Jaques does not so much as give the assertion a simple denial, but from the evidence furnished by his contemptuous manner of dealing with the tender passion, whenever and under whatever circumstances he comes in contact with it — whether it be in Audrey, Touchstone, Rosalind, or Orlando. To him the clownish love, courtship, and marriage of Audrey and Touchstone is quite as interesting and romantic as that of Rosalind and Orlando. The sharp dialogue between him and Orlando in Act III. Scene II., shows that he has far less sympathy with unfortunate swains smitten by the arrows of Cupid, than for the stag, smitten

by the arrow of the hunter in the forest of Arden. He can laugh at the one as heartily as he can weep at the other. In the true spirit of the bachelor, he begs Orlando to "mar no more trees by writing love-songs on their barks"; annoys him by telling him he does not like the name of his love, and when Orlando replies so prettily to his question about her stature, telling him that she is "just as high as his heart," he pours ridicule upon him by asking him if he had not "been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, and conned his pretty answers out of rings." He tells Orlando that his worst fault is being in love, and ends by hinting that good Seignior Love is a fool.

In the famous love-scene between Touchstone and Audrey, in Act III. Scene III., which Jaques witnesses unobserved at a distance, it has often struck us that a sight of his countenance, as he contemplated the amorous farce before him, would have furnished any one but a confirmed melancholic with material sufficiently ludicrous to cause him to laugh an hour by the dial "*sans* intermission"; and Jaques seems to have entered into the scene with sufficient zest. After the entrance of Sir Oliver Martext to perform the marriage ceremony, and when the sport is like to be cut short by the want of some one to give away the bride, Jaques steps forward and offers his humble services. "Proceed, proceed; I'll give her. . . . Will you be married, Motley?" It strikes us that the countenance of Jaques at this precise point was ex-

pressive of emotions about the opposite of melancholy. In fact, we think it has been sufficiently shown that Jaques is no confirmed melancholic, in the strict sense of the term, and as it is now used by modern psychologists; but that this most curiously unique of the poet's characters is more of a humorist, or gentle satirist, and that his melancholy is initiatory, and consists in a profound love for contemplation and moralizing. This he can do, as he can laugh, by the hour, "*sans* intermission." What is better, we are never tired of him; but like the Duke, are glad to "cope him in his sullen fits," when he is so "full of matter;" and, what is more, the world will never tire of him. Already, nearly three centuries with their generations have passed away, and much that these years have produced has passed with them into utter forgetfulness "and mere oblivion." Much more which now clamors loudly for earthly immortality will follow; but that extraordinary gathering in the forest of Arden will never be scattered. The old man Adam, though nearly famished when we last saw him, yet lives. Touchstone is there; he too, thank Heaven, will never take his departure. Celia, Orlando, and Rosalind are yet there, in all the freshness of immortal youth. Jaques still lingers in the forest, moralizing, laughing, and weeping, and there we leave him, where the generations of the earth will find him, in all coming time, "under the greenwood tree" and by the "babbling brook." We shall not stop to inquire the precise geographical position of

the forest of Arden, as this would be a species of topographical criticism for which we have little taste or inclination; but content ourselves with the thought, that wherever it is, it yet "waves above them its green leaves," and though "dewy with Nature's tear-drops," will never be found "weeping" that the shadows of its immortals have passed forever away.

CORDELIA.

THIS character, though perhaps not presenting as many points of profound psychological significance as some others, is, nevertheless, so intimately interwoven with another about which so much of this peculiar interest is gathered, and, besides, is so illustrative of the true spirit which should guide, govern, and direct all who are thrown in contact with the insane, in whatever capacity, that it comes properly within the scope of our inquiry.

The stern and humane principle, the gentleness, patience, and forbearance which should characterize all intercourse with those afflicted, as was her father, with the most dire of human calamities, is nowhere so admirably set forth as it has been in the delineation of the character of this noble, queenly woman. Shakspeare has placed the character of Cordelia in immediate juxtaposition with two others so diametrically opposite in all things, that it is made to appear the more striking by the mere force of contrast; for the truthfulness, humanity, and tender love of Cordelia is brought into immediate contact with the selfishness, duplicity, and untruthfulness of her two sisters, Goneril and Regan.

The first words she utters give us the key-note to her whole character.

In the state of extreme senility of her father, she seems to feel at once that she is no match for her sisters in the contest for his favor and affections, and after the hollow-hearted words of Goneril, in which she feigns so much love for Lear, she asks herself sadly and plaintively,

"What shall Cordelia do?"

For the answer she looks into the depths of her truthful heart, and it finds expression in the short but significant phrase,

"Love, and be silent."

Here spoke the true woman. While others were to receive wealth, honor, and preferment for their duplicity, an unrequited love was apparently the only reward for her truthfulness; but like one of old, she had "chosen the good part which should in no wise be taken from her," as the sequel abundantly proves. Her love was indeed "cast upon the waters," but, in strict accordance with that promise which cannot be broken, it was to be found again, "after many days."

Yet, though caring little apparently for what she is to lose in a material point of view, she is, like all true women, sensitively jealous of her good name, and shrinks appalled from the thought that the fact of being utterly disinherited and cast off by her father may even for a moment lead an uncharitable world to cast its cruel and unjust

aspersions upon her honor; and before taking leave of her weak and misguided parent, she prefers the dignified and plaintive appeal which follows: —

> "I yet beseech your majesty,
> (If for I want that glib and oily art,
> To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,
> I'll do 't before I speak,) that you make known
> It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
> No unchaste action, or dishonored step
> That hath deprived me of your grace and favor;
> But even for want of that, for which I am richer, —
> A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
> That I am glad I have not, though not to have it
> Has lost me in your liking."

To the cruel reply of Lear to this plaintive appeal for the protection of her character and innocence,

> "Better thou
> Hadst not been born, than not to have pleased me better,"

she utters no word of remonstrance, but shrinks back in silence and sorrow, choosing to bide her time — "to love and be silent."

She is little moved apparently when told by Burgundy, her betrothed, that the loss of father and fortune must necessarily entail the loss of a husband, and replies with characteristic dignity, —

> "Peace be with Burgundy;
> Since that respects of fortune are his love,
> I shall not be his wife."

The farewell she takes of her sisters is equally characteristic and dignified. She indulges in no bitter words of reproach, though in commending her father to their "professed bosoms," she intimates, with dignity, that their duplicity is not unperceived: —

> "*Cor.* The jewels of our father, with washed eyes,
> Cordelia leaves you; I know you what you are;
> And, like a sister, am most loath to call
> Your faults, as they are named. Use well our father;
> To your professed bosoms, I commit him.
> But yet, alas! stood I within his grace,
> I would prefer him to a better place.
> So, farewell to you both, ...
> Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides;
> Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.
> Well may you prosper."

We hear no more of Cordelia until in Act IV., Scene III., the gentleman in attendance upon her as queen of France, relates to Kent the impression made upon her by his letters, detailing the sufferings of her father; and the deep, yet dignified and undemonstrative grief evinced is in complete accordance with what we have previously seen in the character of this noble woman. She does not multiply words, shows no bitterness of feeling, nor manifests any undue excitement; yet it is abundantly evident, from the short, abrupt ejaculations which she could not entirely suppress, that her heart is surcharged with sorrow.

In answer to Kent's questions as to the impres-

sion made upon her by his letters, the gentleman replies: —

"*Gent.* She took them, read them in my presence;
And now and then an ample tear trilled down
Her delicate cheek. It seemed, she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.
Kent. Oh, then it moved her.
Gent. Not to a rage; patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears
Were like a better way. Those happy smiles,
That played on her ripe lips, seemed not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropped. In brief, sorrow
Would be a rarity most beloved, if all
Could so become it.
Kent. Made she no verbal question?
Gent. 'Faith, once or twice, she heaved the name of *father*
Pantingly forth, as if it pressed her heart.
Kent. Cried, *Sisters! sisters! — shame of ladies! sisters! Father! sisters!* what i' the storm? i' the night?
Let pity not be believed. There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamor moistened; then away she started
To deal with grief alone."

When we meet her again at the opening of Scene IV. of the same Act, she has evidently received more definite information as to the mental condition of her father, and her words are so descriptive of a condition of mind, which all conversant with the forms of insanity must have observed, that we cannot refrain from quoting them.

"Alack, 't is he; why, he was met even now
As mad as the vexed sea; singing aloud;
Crowned with rank fumiter, and furrow weeds,
With harlocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn."

She then inquires earnestly of the physician, —

"What can man's wisdom do
In the restoring his bereaved sense?"

The reply of the physician is so fraught with wisdom, and so expressive of Shakspeare's views of the treatment of the insane, that it should be deeply pondered by all. "Repose," the "foster nurse of Nature," which the old worn body and distracted brain so much needed, is the first thing to be sought after, and, to induce this, the physician says, most truly, there are "means" and "simples operative" whose power will "close the eye of anguish."

With implicit trust in the wisdom manifested by the physician, Cordelia urges that these "means" be put to immediate use, —

"Lest his ungoverned rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it."

Or, in the professional language of our times, before he sinks irrecoverably from exhaustive mania.

To prevent this is now the sole object of her thoughts, and with womanly and characteristic self-sacrifice, she says, —

"He that helps him, take all my outward worth.
. . . . All blessed secrets,

All you unpublished virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant, and remediate,
In the good man's distress."

How "many a time and oft" has the same heart-felt aspiration been breathed into the ear of the physician to the insane, by the loving and devoted wife, or daughter, as, with crushed heart and streaming eyes, they have committed with a Cordelia's trust and confidence to his care all they hold most dear upon earth, in "trembling hope" that the "bruised reed" will not be utterly "broken."

When the messenger enters, informing her that

"The British powers are marching hitherward,"

the only interest she manifests in the important intelligence is connected with her father, and the redress of his great wrongs, and she replies calmly, and apparently without a thought as to her own personal safety and the sad destiny that hung over her, —

"'T is known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. — O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning, and important tears, hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right."

Here, though her mind is apparently fully occupied with her father's misfortune, she does not forget, in the first instance, to express her heart-felt gratitude to Kent, for his noble, humane, and self-sacrificing devotion to him: —

"*Cor.* O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me."

She then turns to make anxious inquiries of the physician touching the condition of her father. And here, let it be observed, that the physician, as depicted by a few master-strokes of this never failing pencil, seems to have been one fully deserving of the confidence bestowed upon him. There is none of the charlatan about him; he does not multiply words, or seek to make a vain display of his medical lore; he makes no ostentatious exhibition of "means and appliances"; neither do we perceive about him, strange to say, any of the curious notions and fantastic doctrines and ideas concerning the insane which belonged to the sixteenth century; had he lived in the nineteenth, his principles could not have been more simple, natural, and scientific. Kind care, nourishment, sleep, and rest, during the course of the disease, and, more especially during convalesence; the avoidance of everything tending to excite the mind of the patient by turning it back towards what it had previously dwelt upon, or the supposed exciting causes, are the principles inculcated. These principles are now regarded as universally applicable by the best physicians of modern times, and, indeed, seem to embrace nearly all species of treatment not now obsolete.

Cordelia, who was a woman of strong common sense, perceives instinctively the character of her

medical adviser, and casts the care of her father upon him with implicit confidence. Her conduct here is a lesson to be well pondered by all who are so unfortunate as to have friends afflicted as was Lear. She never manifests the slightest inclination to run counter to his advice, and, even though this should lead in a direction quite opposite to her own feeling, inclinations, or affections, we are made to perceive, that as a fond child, she would without questioning submit to all reasonable "means" for the good of him she so much loved. Although she never questions the means employed and the skill, judgment, and humane intentions of her medical adviser, she wishes, as was eminently right and proper, to know all about his condition; and here again the physician, as was to have been expected from his high character and keen sense of duty, gives her all the satisfaction in his power.

"*Cor.* How does the King?
Phy. Madam, sleeps still.
Cor. O you kind Gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature,
The untuned and jarring senses, oh! wind up,
Of this child-changed father."

The manner in which this simple piece of information, that he sleeps, is conveyed by the physician without comment, and the reply of Cordelia, show what curative importance was attached to this condition.

"*Phy.* So please your majesty,
That we may wake the King? he hath slept long."

This question and the reply are significant. The question was evidently prompted by courteous respect for her rank and her relations to the patient, and in full confidence that the good sense of Cordelia would not in the least embarrass him, or lead her to set up her own will and inclinations in opposition to his.

The temptation to have her father awakened prematurely was great, and to one constituted like herself, and situated as she then was, almost irresistible. His loved voice she had not heard perhaps for years, and its last sad accents had fallen upon her ear in mad chidings and unjust complaints, the last glance of his eye had been cruelly unnatural and scornful. The physician had assured her that he had no doubt when the patient was awakened he would be calm and "temperate," yet she is in no haste, but calmly leaves all to him. She has applied to him because he has more knowledge and experience in the matter than herself, and she is bound not to interfere with him, or set up her own queenly will to embarrass in any way his proceedings. We commend her conduct here, and the words which follow, to the careful consideration of all friends of the insane: —

> "*Cor.* Be governed by your knowledge,
> And proceed in the way of your will."

When told by the physician that now, when he had slept so long, it would not be improper to

arouse him, and that she might be present, and even accomplish this herself, she is not slow to take advantage of the liberty allowed her; and the manner in which she proceeds is eminently feminine, and characteristic of the genuine woman.

"*Cor.* O my dear father! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made! . . . .
Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
To be exposed against the warring winds?
[To stand against the deep, dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch (poor perdu!)
With this thin helm?] Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; and was 't thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, Alack!
'T is wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all."

As soon as Lear is awake, the physician perceives the danger of exciting his enfeebled mind by having it directed to former scenes of sorrow and trouble, whether real or imaginary, through which he has passed; and tenderly and modestly he breaks in upon Cordelia, who, with her accustomed good sense, heeds at once the admonition:

"*Phy.* Be comforted, good madam. The great rage
You see, is killed in him, (and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.)

> Desire him to go in; trouble him no more,
> Till further settling."

Though her father had, when fairly awake, conversed quite rationally, she breaks away at once from what they have been speaking about, and, evidently seeking to direct his mind into another channel, asks him to walk away with her.

Would that all friends of the unfortunate insane were alike sensible, tractable, and confiding; and, we may add, all physicians equally as judicious as was Lear's. Many sad relapses and much suffering would be spared; and much anxiety, care, and perhaps, fruitless effort saved, while the work of restoration would be none the less complete.

PART II.

SHAKSPEARE'S

DELINEATIONS OF IMBECILITY.

BOTTOM.—DOGBERRY.—ELBOW.—SHALLOW.

In former essays we have attempted to point out the extraordinary accuracy and facility manifested by the great dramatist in the delineation of mind as warped and influenced by disease, and to show that in drawing the characters of Lear, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ophelia, and Hamlet, he has exhibited a knowledge of the operations of mind, thus influenced, far beyond that of his own times, and quite equal to that of the most accomplished psychologists of our own. Nothing connected with the operations of the human intellect in any form, whether of health or disease, seems to have escaped the observation of this "myriad-minded" man; nothing has been too high for his sublime and philosophical contemplation, nothing too low for his minute and careful observation. He has traversed the whole realm of human intellect, as a sovereign prince makes a triumphal tour through a conquered province; while philosophers and moralists, physicians and metaphysicians, statesmen,

lawgivers, and poets, have fallen humbly at his feet, to do him homage; for in the province of each he has been acknowledged worthy to reign supreme. In that of the physician and medical psychologist, we think we have already given sufficient evidence of his deserved supremacy, and what is applicable to this our peculiar province, we believe to be applicable to all, and that proof of this would not be difficult to furnish.

To multiply instances and bring forward illustrations would not come within the scope of these papers. One illustration, however, we are tempted to adduce in this place, which must suffice. So great was Shakspeare's knowledge of law-forms and law-terms, (see Lord Campbell's *cum multis aliis*,) that nearly every lawyer who reads Shakspeare carefully is ready to maintain that the poet must have been a lawyer, or at least a law student, at some period of his life, and as one once remarked to the writer, was only driven from the legal profession into poetry and the drama by the force of his great genius. If the validity of such evidence is to be admitted in proof of his having been a lawyer, we see no reason why, on the strength of the proofs we have already adduced, we should not be allowed to claim that the great bard must once have been a physician to the insane; for we think we have shown conclusively that he understood insanity in all its varied forms; and perhaps it would not be more difficult to show that Shakspeare was once physician-in-chief to Bed-

lam Hospital, than to establish many other things that have been asserted respecting his early career. Such, for example, as his horse-grooming and deer-stealing.

But, unlike our brethren of the law, we seek to set up no special claim to him as one of our number, but content ourselves with regarding him as the common property of all thinkers in each and every department of literary effort and scientific research; and proceed at once to consider another phase of this great intellectual luminary of the sixteenth century, namely, his delineations of the innumerable shades of mental obtuseness and mental imbecility in the characters of his fools and clowns.

In the illustration of the varied and innumerable shades of folly, mental obtuseness, and mental imbecility naturally incident to humanity, our poet is incomparably rich, and every degree and order of mental manifestation is represented with a truthfulness and vigor which has never been equalled, and perhaps never will be to the end of time. He has given us a type of everything bearing the shape of humanity, however remote, and the class of characters we now have to consider, like all his others, do not stand up before us as creatures of the imagination, but as real bodily existences, so that we cannot divest ourselves of the idea that such must at some period of time have walked or "crawled between heaven and earth." Many of them we have seen; and those that we have not, we

feel that we might and should have seen "if our eyes had been opened" like those of the poet.

Of imbeciles and clowns —*fools* as they are generically termed — he has an almost endless variety, and the very names which he gives them are sometimes so strikingly significant and characteristic, that the mere mention of them forces a smile.

Let us take a few examples by way of introduction, and see if we can suppress a smile when the mere name of some of them is called out from the presentation rôle. Bottom the Weaver, Peter Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Joiner, Snout the Tinker, Flute the Bellows-mender, Starveling the Tailor, Christopher Sly the Tinker, Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Ague-cheek, Froth, Dogberry, Malvolio, Launcelot Gobbo, Touchstone, Simple, Slender, Shallow, Speed, Dull, Costard, Caliban, Elbow, Lucio, Moth, Mouldy, Shadow, Feeble, Bull-calf, and Wart; and lastly, as the curious procession must end somewhere, comes Launce, leading his interesting dog Crab.

Here we have presented to us a galaxy of fools such as is nowhere else to be found, and every shade of folly, imbecility, and mental obtuseness is represented; and the portraiture of each, as delineated by the bard, is well worthy of the cognomen bestowed.

First in the motley procession we see Bottom the Weaver, the very embodiment and quintessence of self-conceit, and of everything, in short, necessary to constitute a perfect human ass. It was not suf-

ficient for him simply to be "writ down an ass" in the record, like Dogberry, but the diadem which crowned him prince of all his tribe must be placed in due form upon his head, and when first led in by Puck after his coronation, the poet must certainly have chuckled over his own workmanship, and said quietly to himself, — "O all ye tribes of human asses, that are, ever have been, or ever will be, behold your king! from this time henceforth and forever, let no one of you deny my anointed." And to all posterity he seems yet to say, "Behold the perfection of conceited blockheads, the *asinorum asinalissimus*, *par excellence!* From henceforth and forever let no man dispute *my* workmanship. Doubt if you will that moonshine can be personated by a man holding a lantern behind a thorn-bush; that a lion can modulate his voice so sweetly that he shall roar you as 't were any nightingale or sucking dove; that a wall can be personated by a man plastered over with lime and rough cast; but while Bottom, wearing his ass's head, can, by his conceit which makes all things possible, believe this, let no one deny that he is the crowned and anointed king of Donkeys."

And by what a court is this strange potentate surrounded and worshipped!

First we see Peter Quince the Carpenter and Playwright. If Bottom is prince of donkeys, Quince takes the first place of honor in his court and his title, prince of playwrights, like that of Bottom, cannot be disputed.

O all ye tribes of playwrights, wherever ye are, — ye Knowleses, and Shees, and Maturins; ye Gillparzers, Klingemanns, and Kotzebues; many of you cunning men in your handicraft,—behold your king, Peter Quince, the anointed of the poet! And whomsoever *he* anoints and crowns let none of you seek to depose.

And you, ye "periwig-pated players," who, whether ameteur or professional, can "tear a passion to tatters," to very rags; ye who are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb show, and noise to "split the ears of the groundlings"; who "strut and bellow, having neither the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christians, pagans, or men, — products of Nature's journeymen," — those mechanics who "imitate Nature so abominably," remember your great antecessors, those histrionic mechanicals of the poet, Snug the Joiner, Starvling the Tailor, Flute the Bellows-mender, and Snout the Tinker.

So extensive, varied, and rich is Shakspeare in his illustrations of the almost endless forms of metal imbecility, that it would be impossible to give each more than a passing glance in this connection. He has taken his subjects for portraiture from all ranks and grades of life, high and low, rich and poor; and almost every trade, profession, and calling has furnished material aid. With this mere glance at such as he has selected from his own calling, the histrionic, we pass on to take a view of his official imbeciles.

Of this class of mental impotents we hardly

know which to select to head the list,— whether Dogberry, Justice Shallow, or some other, as each seems to claim preëminence. With all due deference to others, however, we consider we shall not go far astray in selecting the first.

Dogberry is not so much an imaginary character as a type of a class of bungling judicial impotents to be found in real life, through whose clumsy and cowardly imbecility many a thief has escaped the penitentiary, and many a murderer the gallows. The outskirts of civilization in all new countries furnish too many such. A justice of this kind, who had allowed the chief of a trio of murderers to escape, we once saw in the witness-box at a court of Assize, held before one of the most learned and eloquent judges on the bench; and the answers to the questions put to him by the judge would have done ample justice to Dogberry himself. "Is it possible," said the judge, at the conclusion of his examination of the witness, "that *you* are a justice of the peace?" "Yes, and I has been for more as fifteen years, your honor," was the reply. "God help the country!" said the learned judge, as he dismissed him contemptuously from the stand. Shakspeare, with a few vigorous touches of his never-failing pencil, has given us a full-length portrait of such a character in Dogberry. (See Much Ado About Nothing, Act III., Scene III., and Act IV., Scene II.)

The downright stupidity, ignorance, and donkeyism shown in Act III., Scene V., and the ludicrous

misuse and misconception of terms peculiar to worthies of the Dogberry and Verges stamp, is rich in the extreme.

"*Leonato.* What is it, my good friends?

Dogberry. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little of this matter — an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

Verges. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man and no honester than I.

Dogberry. Comparisons are odorous; *palabras*, neighbor Verges.

Leonato. Neighbors, you are tedious.

"It pleases your worship to say so," says Dogberry, (evidently not comprehending the term tedious, but mistaking it for a commodity of value), "but we are the poor duke's officers; but, truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all on your worship.

Leonato. All thy tediousness on me! ha!

Dogberry. Yes, and 't were a thousand times more than 't is;" etc.

The following, as a sample of drivelling senile imbecility, can scarce be matched, and is from the mouth of Dogberry, where he speaks of Verges, and in which (quite oblivious, of course, as to his own stupidity) he patronizingly and with great self-satisfaction bewails the infirmities of his brother official.

"*Dogberry.* A good old man, sir; he will be talking; as they say, When the age is in, the wit is out; God help us! It is a world to see! — Well said, i' faith, neighbor Verges: — well, God 's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth, he is, as ever

broke bread; but God is to be worshipped. All men are not alike; alas! good neighbor!"

When Leonato reminds him that indeed his friend comes very far short of himself, what self-satisfaction and conceit is embodied in his short reply.

"Gifts," says he, "Gifts that God gives!" quite unconscious that *his* greatest gift is like that conferred on Bottom, the gift of an ass's head.

But the climax of bungling imbelicity, ignorant officiousness, and self-conceit, we have in Act IV., Scene II., where Dogberry presides at the court of inquiry held over Conrade and Borachio; and the laughable record of proceedings, in which everything is so curiously jumbled together, — where everything which is impertinent is carefully noted down, and everything incident to the inquiry as carefully excluded, and where terms the most dissimilar are confounded, — furnishes, in its way, a model of judicial procedure. The first blunder he makes is simply the confounding of himself and his brother official with the culprits to be examined before him: —

"*Dogberry.* Is our whole dissembly appeared? . . .
Sexton. Which be the malefactors?
Dogberry. Marry, that am I and my partner.
Verges. Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine."

After duly recording the names of his prisoners, the first question he puts to them is certainly most pious and pertinent, considering the characters he is supposed to address: —

"Masters," says he, "do you serve God?"

"*Con. and Bora.* Yes, sir, we hope.

Dogberry. Write down — that they hope they serve God; — and write God first; for God defend but God should go before such villains!"

The idea soon strikes the Sexton that the proceedings are somewhat informal, and that witnesses and proof were necessary.

"*Sexton.* Master constable, you go not in the way to examine; you must call forth the watch that are their accusers."

Dogberry, whose dignity is hard to offend, and who is totally unsuspicious that any one should ever presume to question his knowledge and intelligence, seizes at once upon the suggestion, as though it was something of minor importance, however, that had escaped him in the most casual way. He says: —

"*Dogberry.* Yea, marry, that's the eftest way. — Let the watch come forth. — Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men."

The first witness testifies that one of the prisoners called Don John a villain. Dogberry immediately orders Don John to be put down a villain in the record, and pronounces the calling a man villain flat *perjury*. The second witness testifies that the other prisoner had declared that he received a thousand ducats from Don John for accusing a lady wrongfully. "Flat *burglary*," says Dogberry, "as ever was committed."

"*Verges.* Yea, by the mass, that it is. . . .

Dogberry. O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this."

The Sexton suggests that the prisoners be bound and removed. Dogberry, acting upon the hint, immediately orders them to be "opinioned," when one of them, resisting, calls him a coxcomb. This does not seem greatly to disturb his equanimity. Perhaps, as usual, he does not fully comprehend the import of the word coxcomb; for he calls the prisoner simply a naughty varlet, and orders the Sexton to write down the prince's officer a coxcomb in his extraordinary record of procedure. The other prisoner is more clear and explicit. The term he applies to Dogberry is by no means ambiguous. "You are an ass," says he, emphatically, and repeats it, "You are an ass." The import of the term ass Dogberry has no difficulty in comprehending; *that* is quite clear, and he immediately throws himself back upon his offended official dignity, and the terms in which he asserts this are most ludicrously characteristic: —

"*Dogberry.* Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? Oh, that he were here to write me down an ass! — But, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved on thee by good witnesses. I am a wise fellow; and, which is more, an officer; and, which is more, an householder; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina; and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had leases; and one that hath two gowns, and everything handsome about him. — Bring him away. Oh, that I had been writ down — an ass!"

Another official of the Dogberry stamp we have

in constable Elbow, in "Measure for Measure." As with Dogberry, much of the humor of this character rests upon his ridiculous misuse and misconception of the most common terms.

"*Elbow.* If it please your honor, I am the poor duke's constable, and my name is Elbow. I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here before your honor two notorious benefactors.

Angelo. Benefactors? Well, what benefactors are they? are they not malefactors?"

The meek simplicity of the reply, and the donkey-like unconsciousness with which he contradicts himself, is worthy of the most accomplished of our poet's long-eared officials.

"*Elbow.* If it please your honor, I know not what they are; but precise villains they are, that I am sure of; and void of all profanation in the world, that good Christians ought to have."

A little farther on he makes other most ludicrous blunders in the use of the king's English; which blunders, aided by the humor of the clown, are near calling in question the character of his own wife. When Elbow is asked by Escalus by what authority he gives the clown and his employer, Mistress Over-done, such an infamous character, he replies: —

"My wife, sir, whom I detest (protest) before Heaven," &c. . . . "I say, sir, I will detest myself, also, as well as she, that this house, if it be not a bawd's house, it is a pity of her life, for it is a naughty house." . . .

"First, and it like you, the house is a respected (suspected) house; next, this a respected fellow; and his mistress is a respected woman.

Clown. By this hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all.

Elbow. Varlet, thou liest; thou liest, wicked varlet; the time is yet to come, when she was ever respected with man, woman, or child.

Clown. Sir, she was respected with him, before he married with her.

Elbow. O thou caitiff! O thou varlet! O thou wicked Hannibal! I respected with her before I was married to her! If ever I was respected with her, or she with me, let not your worship think me the poor duke's official; — Prove this, thou wicked Hannibal, or I 'll have my action of battery on thee."

This whole scene in " Measure for Measure," (Act II., Scene II.,) is exceedingly rich in illustration of our subject. The amusing circumlocution of the clown in telling his story in defence from the charge brought against him by Elbow is also very characteristic.

The next worthy we select from our list of imbeciles is Shallow, or, as he designates himself and is described by his scarcely less interesting cousin Slender, " Robert Shallow, Esquire, in the county of Gloster, justice of the peace and *coram* and *custalorum*, and *ratolorum*, a gentleman born, who writes himself *armigero* in all warrants, obligations, &c., and has done so any time these three hundred years, as all his successors gone before him have done, and all his ancestors that come after him may do." As with other worthies of his class in real life, who have " a plentiful lack of wit," a plentiful supply of titles and cheap honors is necessary to complete his personality. When

Nature is niggardly in her gifts, Fortune sometimes steps in to make in her way ample restitution, and a "plentiful lack" of brains is compensated by a plentiful supply of bonds, and the lack of wit and wisdom by "land and beeves." Among worthies of this class, Robert Shallow, Esquire, of Gloster, holds an eminently respectable, if not honorable position; and though his antecedents, as given by Falstaff, are not the most flattering, as we shall see, this matters little. Like other "respectables," he is only under the necessity of remembering such as are suited to his present circumstances and condition in life.

Shallow, like a true scion of a genuine English family of parvenues, has gone through the forms necessary to a liberal education. He has shown above that he has some Latin, and when Bardolph tells him that the soldier Falstaff is better accomdated than with a wife, he adds, after a little circumlocution: "Accommodated, that comes of *accommodo;* very good, a good phrase." What little Latin he has, he is ready to display upon every convenient, and sometimes inconvenient occasion, like all superficials. Like his cousin William, he may have been at Oxford to the great "cost" of some one, bringing home with him, as the natural fruit of this "cost," a cherished and ever-abiding remembrance of his wildness and folly. "I was once," says he, "at Clement's Inn, where I think they will talk of mad Shallow yet."

How very natural is the boasting which follows! It might have come from the mouth of any one

" of all the kind of the " Shallows, as well as from Robert Shallow, Esquire, of Gloster : —

" By the mass, I was called anything; and I would have done anything, indeed, and roundly too. There was I, and little John Doit, of Staffordshire, and black George Bare, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele, a Cotswold man, — you had not four such swingebucklers in all the inns of court, again; and I may say to you, we knew where all the bona-robas were, and had the best of them all at commandment."

The crouching obsequiousness and lack of dignified self-respect in their intercourse with superiors in rank and station in life, so characteristic of the whole family of Shallows, wherever found, (and every one must have met some of them in the journey of life,) is admirably delineated in the scene where he bores Falstaff with his vain, officious, and bustling hospitality,— a hospitality based entirely upon vanity, and a desire to show off his own importance, and to " have a friend at court."

" *Shallow.* Nay, you shall see mine orchard, where in an arbor, you will eat a last year's pippin of mine own graffing, and a dish of carraways, and so forth."

The silly affectation of his reply to the knight's compliment to his rich dwelling is also quite characteristic, — " Barren, barren, barren; beggars all, beggars all, Sir John!"

Notwithstanding this affectation of poverty and beggary, it is plain to all, and to none more so than Falstaff, that the Shallows are a thriving family. If he is an adept in finesse, Shallow is infinitely his superior in finance and domestic econo-

my; shrewdness in these matters is, as a rule, quite characteristic of the Shallows, wherever they are found. Indeed, the most worldly thoughts are apt to creep in and disturb their most solemn musing; sometimes it is to be feared, their very devotions. When Silence reminds Shallow of the uncertainty of life, he replies: —

"Certain, 't is certain, very sure, very sure; death, as the Psalmist saith, is certain to all; all must die. How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair?"

Even in the midst of his excitement at the arrival of the "man-of-war" and his suite, and his bustling endeavors to entertain them suitably to his own dignity, and to their importance as coming from the court, he can stop to give directions in matters of business and domestic economy to his man Davy: —

"Marry, sir, thus; — those precepts cannot be served: and, again, sir, — Shall we sow the headland with wheat?

Shallow. With red wheat, Davy? . . .

Davy. Yes, sir. — Here is now the smith's note for shoeing and plough-irons.

Shallow. Let it be cast, and paid. — Sir John, you shall not be excused.

Davy. Now, sir, a new link to the bucket must needs be had. — And, sir, do you mean to stop any of William's wages, about the sack he lost the other day at Hinckley fair?

Shallow. He shall answer it," &c.

How descriptive is all this of a class of characters to be met with every day; they are fools, and acknowledged to be such by the world, yet in

money transactions and matters of domestic economy they are "wise as serpents." And yet in these matters of finance and economy their serpent wisdom is not always a match, however, for the hawk-eyed vigilance and shrewd wit of the spendthrift, who, taking them in an unguarded moment, and understanding well their weak points, by a stroke of policy relieves them at once of the hard earnings and niggardly savings of years, as Falstaff relieved Justice Shallow of his thousand pounds.

Who is there that has not met some one or more of this family of Shallows? It is a known fact in psychology that a man may be "stark mad" on one or two subjects, and to all outward appearances quite sound on others. Upon precisely the same psychological principles we may suppose that a man may be wise on some one or two subjects, and in the sense in which the term is applied to Shallow, a fool on all others. Indeed our experience and observation of life teach us that it is so.

Another characteristic of the Shallows is admirably illustrated in Act V., Scene I., namely, their manner of dealing with domestics and dependents. Towards the weak, like William, who lost the sack, they are overbearing and cruel, while, unconsciously to themselves, they are completely ruled and led captive by those who are cunning and strong of will and purpose, like Davy, who in reality is the justice in all but name, and on such familiar terms with his nominal master that he

presumes to dictate the manner in which he is to dispense his judical favors.

"*Davy.* I beseech you, sir, to countenance William Visor of Wincot, against Clement Perkes of the hill.

Shallow. There are many complaints, Davy, against that Visor; that Visor is an arrant knave, on my knowledge.

Davy. I grant your worship that he is a knave, sir; but yet, Heaven forbid, sir, but a knave should have some countenance at his friend's request. An honest man, sir, is able to speak for himself, when a knave is not. I have served your worship truly, sir, these eight years; and if I can not once or twice in a quarter bear out a knave against an honest man, I have but a very little credit with your worship. The knave is mine honest friend, sir; therefore, I beseech your worship, let him be countenanced.

Shallow. Go to; I say, he shall have no wrong," &c.

But for a climax to every description of the character of Justice Shallow we must resort to Falstaff. It would be impertinent to look for such elsewhere. The fat knight, whose brain was by nature as plethoric of wit and worldly wisdom as was the rest of his huge body of capons, sack, and sugars, measures at once the mental calibre of the lean justice and the depth of his purse, and shapes his course accordingly. "I do see the bottom of Justice Shallow," says he; and if he had never told a greater lie, or made a more unreasonable boast, he would not have been Jack Falstaff. But let us come at once to his descriptive climax of Justice Shallow: —

"If I were sawed into quantities, I should make four dozen such bearded hermit's-staves as Master Shallow. It is a wonder-

ful thing to see the semblable coherence of his men's spirits and his; they, by observing of him, do bear themselves like foolish justices; he, by conversing with them, is turned in a justice-like serving man; their spirits are so married in conjunction with the participation of society, that they flock together in consent, like so many wild geese. If I had a suit to Master Shallow, I would humor his men, with the imputation of being near their master; if to his men, I would curry with Master Shallow, that no man could better command his servants. It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught as men take diseases, one of another; therefore, let men take heed of their company. I will devise matter out of this Shallow, to keep Prince Harry in continual laughter, the wearing out of six fashions, (which is four terms, or two actions,) and he shall laugh without *intervallums*. Oh, it is much, that a lie with a slight oath, and a jest with a sad brow, will do with a fellow that never had the ache in his shoulders. . . .

" Lord, lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying. This same starved justice has done nothing but prate to me of the wildness of his youth, and the feats he hath done about Turnbull Street; and every third word a lie, duer paid to the hearer than the Turk's tribute. I do remember him at Clement's Inn, like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring; when he was naked he was for all the world like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved on it with a knife; he was the very genius of famine, yet lecherous as a monkey. . . He came ever in the rearward of the fashion, and sung those tunes to the over-scutched huswives that he heard the carmen whistle, and sware they were his fancies, or his good-nights. And now is this Vice's dagger become a squire; and talks as familiarly of John of Gaunt as if he had been sworn brother to him; and I 'll be sworn he never saw him but once in the Tilt-yard; and then he burst his head for crowding among the marshal's men. I saw it, and told John of Gaunt he beat his own name; for you might have thrust him and all his apparel into an eel-skin; the case of a treble hautboy was a mansion for him,

a court; and now hath he lands and beeves. Well, I will be acquainted with him, if I return; and it shall go hard but I will make him a philosopher's two stones to me. If the young dace be a bait for the old pike, I see no reason in nature but I may snap at him. Let time shape, and then an end."

MALVOLIO. — BARDOLPH. — NYM. — PISTOL.

WE have frequently had occasion to remark that whatever Shakspeare does is always complete in its way, and leaves nothing to be desired. The ass and the fool which he depicts are ever the ass and the fool *par excellence*, and he has been no less successful in drawing a fantastic and a fop; for if Bottom, as we have seen, is prince of donkeys, Malvolio is prince of fops, and his title is also not to be disputed.

Malvolio, of all Shakspeare's impotents, has always appeared to us the most contemptible and least interesting, unless to make a man supremely ridiculous is to cast about him a certain amount of interest from this very reason. The other fools we have glanced at, have all some redeeming qualities, and there is not one of them for whom we should not feel more pity if placed by his folly in the circumstances in which Malvolio finds himself, in Act IV., Scene II., "Twelth Night," where he is confined for supposed lunacy, and "Sir Topas, the curate, comes to visit Malvolio the lunatic." Dogberry, Shallow, Bottom, and his companions are all imbeciles in their way, but the most we can do is to pity the fools and smile at their folly; but for

Malvolio we feel a sort of contempt, for he is not simply a fool, he is also a fantastic, the very sublime of coxcombs and affected fops. Dogberry, as we have seen, is an ass and a fool, but he at least *thinks* he is a "wise fellow," and one that "knows the law." Let others think as they will of him, he himself believes that he has some brains, and the same remark is applicable to Shallow. This sort of conceit, applying as it does to certain intellectual qualities, for which, if not possessed, it shows at least a respect and a desire, commands our sympathy. Even Bottom the Weaver, the prince of donkeys, is not contemptible; he believes that he is the very perfection of histrionics, for he is told so by Peter Quince, and worshipped as such by the motley crew that surrounds him, and we smile at the delusion and pity the deluded, but feel no contempt for him. Indeed, the very faculties in him which prompt him to covet these high histrionic honors prevent this. Not so, however, with Malvolio, the fop *par excellence;* for, like all his tribe, *he has not so much as the conceit of anything intellectual.* As to whether *he* has wit or wisdom — whether like Dogberry *he* is a "wise fellow" who "knows the law," or like Shallow can write Esquire or *armigero* to his name — is all a matter of very small importance to him. Indeed, as to whether he has an excess or deficiency of brains, is a question which never troubles him; for, like the genuine fop, his external personal qualities are with him all-sufficient, all in all. To Mal-

volio, indeed to all the family of Malvolios, what is the mind of a Newton, a Shakspeare, or a Leibnitz, or an intellect rich in all the philosophy of a Plato, or the learning of an Erasmus? Has he not what will more than compensate for the lack of all these? Has he not a most magnificent pair of legs, which, garnished with yellow stockings and cross-gartered, must be quite irresistible to all the rich Olivias in the world? Besides, has he not a splendid set of teeth, and is not his smile in the presence of his mistress quite overpowering? Like all brainless fops, his smile he regards as the chief weapon with which he subdues hearts; that continuous, affected, unmeaning, half-idiotic smile, always ready to garnish the face, in season and out of season, having no soul, spirit, or life behind which prompts it, and which, to the genuine smile springing from all these and lighting up an intelligent countenance, is as the dim light of a night lantern to the Aurora Borealis, or the heat lightnings of a summer evening. See how he opens his batteries upon his mistress, in Scene IV., Act III:—

"*Olivia.* Where is Malvolio?

Maria. He 's coming, madam; but in very strange manner. He 's sure possessed, madam.

Olivia. Why, what 's the matter? does he rave?

Maria. No, madam, he does nothing but smile: . . . Sure, the man is tainted of his wits.

Olivia. Go, call him hither. . . . How now, Malvolio?

Malvolio. Sweet lady, ha, ha. [*Smiles fantastically.*

Olivia. Smilest thou? I sent for thee upon a sad occasion.

Mal. Sad, lady? I could be sad; this does make some obstruction in the blood, this cross-gartering. But what of that? if it please the eye of one, it is with me, as the very true sonnet hath it, 'please one, please all.'

Olivia. Why, how dost thou, now? What is the matter with thee?

Mal. Not black in my mind, though yellow in my legs," etc.

Like all Shakspeare's characters, Malvolio is a being of real life. No one can walk from the Battery the length of Broadway without meeting more than one Malvolio, — men who scarce have a thought not derived from their tailor, hatter, boot-maker, or posture-master, and who, like Malvolio, think of nothing but their externals, and how these are to be made to dazzle the eyes of some rich Olivia, of whom, in their own estimation, none is so worthy as themselves. The yellow stockings of Malvolio have indeed disappeared, giving place to the flashy vest; and the obstruction of blood by tight cross-gartering, which pained Malvolio and made him sad, is now brought about by very tight boots. As a specimen of their meditations as they strut along the pavement, stroking their beards, twirling their canary-colored canes, and looking both wise and foolish, or like him "practice behavior to their own shadows," we take the following from the mouth of their great prototype: —

"'T is but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me; and I have heard herself come thus near, that, should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that

follows her. What should I think on 't? To be Count Malvolio; — There 's example for 't; the lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe. Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state, — Calling my officers about me in my branched velvet gown; . . . And then to have the humor of state; and after a demure travel of regard — telling them, I know my place, as I would they should do theirs — to ask for my kinsman Toby: — Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make out for him: I frown the while; and, perchance, wind up my watch, or play with some rich jewel. Toby approaches; courtesies there to me: — I extend my hand to him thus, quenching my familiar smile with an austere regard of control: — Saying, Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me upon your niece, give me this prerogative of speech: — You must amend your drunkenness," &c., &c.

We doubt much if a more complete personification of self-love could be drawn than has been by Shakspeare in the character of Malvolio. This sentiment is here developed in all its perfection, and we believe that the closest scrutiny and most complete analysis of the character could not discover anything beyond the most consummate egotism in the whole machinery of his mind. This is the mainspring which sets all in motion. He is "sick of self-love," and this causes him to taste everything with a "distempered appetite." Everything which can in any way satisfy his vanity is devoured greedily, and without questioning the quality of the aliment, or the source whence it has been obtained. To this distempered appetite his folly is chief purveyor. When the forged letter which intimates to him that his rich mistress is in love with him is left in his way, he scarcely allows

himself to question its genuineness. "By my life," says he, "this is my lady's hand; these be her very C's, her U's, and her T's." He is so much in love — not with her, but with the vain idea — that he will not allow that there can be any mistake about the matter. Therefore, says he, "it is evident to any formal capacity. Daylight and champaign discovers not more." And as he swallows the bait which has been so cunningly prepared for him, see how he swells himself and gloats over it: —

"I will be proud, I will read politic authors, I will baffle Sir Toby, I will wash off gross acquaintance, I will be point-device, the very man. I do not now fool myself, to let imagination jade me; for every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me. She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my leg being cross-gartered; and in this she manifests herself to my love, and, with a kind of injunction, drives me to these habits of her liking. I thank my stars I am happy. I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings, and cross-gartered, even with the swiftness of putting on. . . . Jove, I thank thee. — I will smile; I will do everything that thou wilt have me."

Everything, as we have observed, turns upon his vanity and egotism. The pains he takes to preserve order in the household, disturbed by the druken revels of Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Ague-cheek, is more from a desire to show off the importance of his stewardship in the eyes of his mistress and others, than for any love he has for her or the household. Indeed, any other kind of love than the love of self would be quite inconsistent with his whole character.

With all the desire he has to marry his mistress,

which causes him to make such an ass of himself, and others to make such a fool of him, we see not a trace of love for her. No; it is the idea of *her* love for a man of his complexion — for Malvolio, the exquisite in yellow stockings, the fop who can bow so elegantly, and the fool that can grin so incomparably — that fills him to overflowing; not *his* love for her, to which scarcely an allusion is made.

Need we ask the reader if he has ever seen the counterparts of Malvolio in real life? individuals into whose bosoms the sentiment of love for another could not possibly enter, while their vanity and self-love are so great as to lead them to believe themselves quite irresistible, and that, for their mere external, personal qualities every one must love them at first sight as well as they love themselves?

In Ancient Pistol we have another and very different kind of fool from any we have hitherto considered; but he is also a prince in his way, and his realm is that of bombast and "buncombe." Pistol is the perfection of swaggering, cowardly impotents, or, to use another expressive Americanism, the prince of "tall talkers," and his title, like the others, is not to be disputed. Pistol is in his way a merchant prince, a wholesale dealer in fustian, and his capital stock in trade is unlimited. His mother English is quite inadequate to express his lofty and swelling emotions, and, like others of his tribe, when this fails him, he lays murderous hands upon Latin or French.

"I will cut thy throat," says Nym. "*Coupe le gorge*, that's the word," says Pistol; and what a medley of the mock-sublime and vulgar we have in the following, which appears to be a slight ebullition of jealousy: —

> "O hound of Crete! think'st thou my spouse to get?
> No; to the spittal go,
> And from the powdery tub of infamy
> Fetch forth the lazar kite of Cressid's kind,
> Doll Tear-sheet she by name, and her espouse.
> I have, and I will hold, the *quondam* Quickly
> For the only she: and *pauca*, there's enough."

Like others of his kind in real life, Pistol is very fond of exhibiting his classical lore, both in season and out of season. When he comes to Falstaff in the house of Justice Shallow, swelling with the important news of the death of the old king, and his high-sounding sentences are interrupted by Master Silence, who, being maudlin and musical, sings out, —

> "And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John,"

he exclaims in most classical bombast, —

> "Shall dunghill curs confront the Helicons?
> And shall good news be baffled?
> Then, Pistol, lay thy head in Furies' lap!"

And again, when he informs Falstaff that his favorite Mistress Tear-sheet is in "base durance and contagious prison," he employs another high-sounding classical allusion: —

"Rouse up revenge from Ebon den with fell Alecto's snake,
For Doll is in; Pistol speaks naught but truth."

When, however, he finds that his master Falstaff is not "on fortune's cap the very button," and that all of them, both fools and knaves, are ordered by the chief-justice to the fleet, his plumes droop at once, and he exclaims in most demure Latin, —

"*Si fortuna me tormenta, spero me contenta.*"

Pistol's force, like that of all swaggerers, spends itself in high-sounding words. His acts are ever pusillanimous and mean, and his whole character cannot be better drawn than it is by the boy in Act III., Scene II. ("Henry V.")

"For Pistol," says the boy, "he hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword; by the means whereof 'a breaks words, and keeps whole weapons." Upon all occasions, where there is even an approach towards putting him upon his "metal," he shows himself a weak-hearted, spiritless craven; yet when fully persuaded that there is no personal danger, no one can swagger like him; as for example, when he is set upon by Corporal Nym for the payment of the eight shillings lost in betting. He is not so much a fool as not to perceive that Nym is as great a coward as himself, and that his "sword is an oath" merely, like his own; and the words in which he repudiates the debt show that his honor is quite on a par with his courage: "Base is the slave that pays."

The manner in which the poet brings together

Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol, in Act II., Scene I., is admirably calculated to show up their individual parts. The two latter, it would seem, had aspired to the high honor of the hand of Dame Quickly, the hostess; but, as in all contests of the kind, the quiet fool, being no match for the blustering fool, is compelled to see the latter carry off the prize; and the very quiet way in which Nym acknowledges himself a coward, and in the same breath hints at the revenge he may take, when occasion serves, on Pistol's throat, is one of many rich things of our bard: —

"*Nym.* For my part, I care not. I say little; but when time shall serve, there shall be smites. *I dare not fight, but I will wink and hold out mine iron.* It is a simple one, but what though, *it will toast cheese.* . . . Faith I will live so long as I may, that 's the certain of it. . . Men may sleep, and they may have their throats about them at the same time; and, some say, knives have edges."

Nym is in one respect the very opposite of Pistol. Both are imbeciles and cowards, yet the former is a quiet fool, using but few words; but he evidently attaches quite as much importance to the few and simple, as Pistol does to the many and boisterous. Nym's character is also admirably sketched in a few words by the boy.

"For Nym," says the boy, "he hath heard that men of few words are the best men; and therefore he scorns to say his prayers lest 'a should be thought a coward. But his few bad words are matched with as few good deeds; for 'a never broke any man's head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk."

No newsboy or printer's devil was ever more shrewd or quick-witted than this youth, Falstaff's page. He is the prince of sharp boys, and Falstaff himself never got off a better piece of wit at the expense of Bardolph's glowing nose, than he does when he summons him to his sick master, shaking, as Mrs. Quickly says, of a *quotidian tertian.*

"He is very sick," says the boy, "and would to bed. Good Bardolph, put thy nose between the sheets, and *do the office of a warming-pan.*"

Pistol, like all swaggering fools, is ready to stand upon his dignity, whenever he thinks he can do so without being in danger of a broken head.

When Falstaff desires him to carry the letters to Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, he throws himself back upon his offended dignity.

> "*Pist.* Shall I, Sir Pandarus of Troy become,
> And by my side wear steel?
> Then Lucifer take all."

His objection to the term "steal," shows how much more importance he attaches to words and phrases than to things and acts. When Falstaff dismisses Bardolph from his train because he was not an adroit thief, his filchings being, like an unskilful singer, "out of time" — and he had not the skill to "steal at a minim's rest" — Pistol objects to the term steal. "*Convey* the wise it call," says he. "Steal! foh! a *fico* for the phrase." To the *act* of stealing *per se* he makes no objection, but the *term* by which it is expressed is evidently in his view not quite respectable. If he steals he

would not be called a *thief*, but simply a "*conveyancer*."

These worthies, Nym and Pistol, like others of their kind in real life, are not destitute at times of a certain species of vulgar wit and mental astuteness. Nym's observations in view of Bardolph's change of vocation are rich, when we consider the calibre of the mind from whence they emanate. He evidently believes in the doctrine of hereditary transmission, even of the qualities, mental or physical, which lead to drunkenness in the offspring.* When Bardolph is about to assume the office of tapster, which he has so long desired, and in which he thinks he shall "thrive," Nym says, in allusion to his enormous imbibing capacities, — "*He was gotten in drink — his mind is not heroic*," &c.

Of the two fools, Nym and Pistol, the latter "hath the more excellent wit," vulgar and pompous though it be. When Falstaff gives so graphic a description of the bearing of Mrs. Ford towards him, which caused him to "spy entertainment in her," Pistol's remark is like one of those shrewd observations which sometimes fall, as if by accident, from individuals of his mental capacity : —

"He hath studied her well," says he, "and translated her well, *out of honesty into English*."

And again, when Falstaff speaks of the interest with which she regards his huge belly, his reply, though inclining to the vulgar when uttered in

* In this matter of hereditary propensity to drunkenness, we are not prepared to say that Nym is altogether in the wrong.

modern ears, is nevertheless shrewd, sarcastic, and to the purpose: —

"Then did the sun on dunghill shine!"

"My honest lass," says the huge-bellied knight, "I will tell you what I am about" —

"*Two yards and more*," says Pistol. Shakspeare knew well that a peculiar kind of low wit, flashing at times even from such acknowledged fools as Nym and Pistol, is by no means inconsistent or unnatural.

The war of words between Mistress Tearsheet and Pistol at the Boar's Head, when the billingsgate of the bawd on the one hand is matched with the bombast of the fool on the other, is most ludicrously characteristic and natural. The billingsgate of the bawd we pass by, but a little of the bombast of the fool will not be out of place in this connection. Pistol sober, it would seem, was not sufficient for our poet, who leaves nothing incomplete; therefore we must have Pistol "charged" with a cup of sack, and a little tipsy, as he appears to be in this scene, to complete the psychological delineation. The mental characteristics remain substantially the same, only, as is usual in this state, a little more strongly marked. His folly is made somewhat more foolish, his "tall talk" a little more elevated, the bombast still more bombastic than usual, and the classic allusions more frequent and far-fetched. When urged by Bardolph and the boy to go down-stairs, and

retire from the windy contest with the bawd, he says: —

"I 'll see her damned first; — to Pluto's damned lake, to the infernal deep, with Erebus and tortures vile also. Hold hook and line, say I. Down! down, dogs! down, faitors! Have we not Hiren here?" . . .

"Shall pack-horses,
And hollow, pampered jades of Asia,
Which cannot go but thirty miles a day,
Compare with Cæsars, and with Cannibals,
And Trojan Greeks? nay, rather damn them with
King Cerberus; and let the welkin roar!"

He calls for another cup of sack, and goes on with his classical bombast, "piling Ossa upon Pelion": —

"Fear we broadsides? no, let the fiend give fire.
Give me some sack; — and, sweetheart, lie thou there."
[*Lays down the sword.*

When urged to extremes, and, taking up the sword, he is about to assume the appearance of a gladiator, he brings in, after a few more "tall" words, his grand allusion to the three goddesses of the distaff and thread, who preside over the destinies of men; and the mock grandeur with which he resigns himself to the fates is worthy of the hero: —

"*Pist.* What, shall we have incision? shall we imbrue? —
Then death rock me asleep, abridge my doleful days!
Why then, let grievous, gaping, ghastly wounds
Untwine the sisters three! Atropos, I say."

"So dies a Hero adorable." [*Robbers.*

Not so, however, dies ancient Pistol, for after this most valiant and windy contest with the bawd — after a slight prick in the shoulders from Falstaff's rapier, he suffers himself to be thrown down stairs by the *quondam* soldier, but now tapster, Bardolph, and whether the journey is made more speedy by an impulse imparted from the boot of the latter, we are not told. Neither, however, die of "grievous, ghastly wounds," the one being reserved to hang for stealing a Pix, and the other to plead his cause with his accustomed grandiloquence.

These worthies, Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol, turn up again in "Henry V.," where they are brought together in the battle-scene. (Act III., Scene II.) Here Bardolph is the only man that does not play the coward, for while he pushes on, Nym declares that it is "too hot" for a man that has not "a case of lives," and Pistol sighs in doleful measure for safety, and "an alehouse in London;" and when driven on by Fluellen to the breach, the terms in which he begs him to desist, and cries for mercy are ludicrous in the extreme.

"*Pist.* Be merciful, great duke, to men of mould. Abate thy rage," &c.

In view of his cowardly conduct upon this occasion, the impudence with which he presumes to plead for Bardolph, the only man of the three who has shown any bravery, and the fire of whose nose was about to be quenched forever by the halter, for

this desecration of the church, is amusing, and quite characteristic of the man; and also the insolence shown his captain when his suit is refused. "Die and be damned!" says he, "and *fico* for thy friendship."

Pistol seems never to have forgiven Fluellen, either for driving him up to the breach and into danger, or for refusing to interfere in behalf of Bardolph, but remains vindictive to the end; for in Act IV., Scene III., where he meets the king, whom he takes for a Welshman, he desires him to tell his countryman Fluellen, that he will "knock his leek about his pate on St. David's day." When, however, he meets his man, in Act V., Scene I., he comes off second best, like all cowards, and the leek is thrust down his own throat. Cudgelled and insulted, he swears revenge, at first loudly, but makes no resistance, offers no personal violence. While Fluellen, laying on the cudgel, forces him to eat the leek, telling him insultingly it was "goot for green wounds" and "broken coxcombs," how meekly, demurely, and with what a cowardly, craven spirit, does he beg him to desist: —

"Quiet thy cudgel," says he; "*thou dost see I eat!*"

As soon, however, as his adversary is away, Pistol "is himself again." Like a cowardly spaniel who has just escaped with his life from the jaws of the bull-dog, he can now bristle up his courage, and, all danger past, bark loud and look threatening. How different is the tone of what follows

from that we have just quoted above, when he was under Fluellen's cudgel! How grandly he can threaten now, when all danger is past! "All hell shall stir for this," says he.

This, however, is Pistol's last explosion — the last thunder-tone which escapes from the empty-headed, hollow-hearted, deep-throated Pistol. This "roaring devil 'i the old play" has roared out his last note. He is now desolate. Falstaff, about whom he hung so long, is dead, his friends Nym and Bardolph are both hung for stealing, and his cowardice alone is all that has saved him from a like fate. His Nell is "dead in spital of malady of France," and there his "rendezvous is quite cut off." He is now old, and "from his weary limbs honor is cudgelled," and he asks sadly, "Does Fortune play the huswife with me now?" Reformation is out of the question. So old a sinner would make but a sad saint, and, conscious of this, his resolution is soon taken. Let us not quarrel with him for taking the only course which seemed open to him: —

> "Well, bawd, I 'll turn,
> And something lean to cut-purse of quick hand.
> To England will I steal, and there I 'll steal;
> And patches will I get unto these cudgelled scars,
> And swear I got them in the Gallia wars."

Adieu, ancient Pistol! Though your face may never be seen in the flesh, *your spirit*, together with the hundreds raised by the mighty wand which has now been broken for more than two

hundred years, like the fabled Hebrew wanderer, still walks the earth, and will never be suffered to rest while time shall endure; though the great magician himself, who called you up from the "vasty deep" and sent you forth upon the earth, now sleeps soundly and sweetly on the banks of the Avon.

LAUNCE.

ANOTHER shade of mental obtuseness and imbecility has been exhibited by the poet in the character of Launce, the clown *par excellence*, in "Two Gentlemen of Verona." Launce is not a character manufactured by a playwright — one of "Nature's journeymen," to serve a particular purpose, but is a product of Nature's own handiwork, and if not the most cunning, still none the less genuine.

The close companionship which exists between him and his interesting dog Crab is evidently one based upon a moral and intellectual fitness in the characters of the two. The clown is such by natural organization, and no education or change of circumstances or condition could make him otherwise. So the dog Crab, even with the "gentleman-like dogs" among whom he has thrust himself, under the Duke's table, is nevertheless the cur which Nature made him; and we can scarcely conceive that even the cultivation of "three generations," which some high authorities have contended for as necessary to make a gentleman, would suffice to make either a courtier of the one, or a gentleman-like dog" of the other. Like Justice Shallow and his serving men, the spirits of the two are

so "married in conjunction" by constant intercourse, that the one has come to conduct himself, in all companies, as a curlike clown, and the other as a clownish cur, among all kinds of gentlemanly and well-bred dogs, whether spaniel, terrier, mastiff, or poodle.

Next to the human associates whom a man takes into his confidence, nothing seems to furnish a more correct index to his character than the species of the canine race which he selects as his companions. The grim-looking, fighting bull-dog is found at the heels of the bully and prize-fighter. The dignified mastiff and gentlemanly Newfoundland, guard carefully the vaults and premises of the stately banker. The gaunt hound is found in the train of the active, vigorous, fox-hunting squire. The poodle or spaniel, who trusts to his good looks and fawning manners to carry him through, is the combed, washed, and petted companion of my lady, or the dandy who "capers nimbly in my lady's chamber," but the *cur*, who seems to be a combination of the evil qualities of all these, your "*yaller dog*," so graphically described by the inimitable Autocrat in "Elsie Venner," is found at the heels of the clown, and the nature of the relationship is nowhere so admirably depicted as by the poet in his delineations of Launce and his dog Crab. The one is as much the prince of curs as the other is the prince of clowns, and the inimitable curtain-lecture which is bestowed by the clown upon the cur in Act IV., Scene IV., has shaken the sides of all christendom

for the last two centuries, and will continue to do so until a sense of the ludicrous ceases to be a characteristic of mankind.

The clown and his cur are first introduced to us in Act II., Scene III., where the former depicts vividly and dramatically the parting scene between himself and his family, and contrasts his own and their grief with the stoical indifference of the cur. He first calls especial attention to that extreme tender-heartedness which is a marked characteristic of the Launce family, and measures by the hour the time it will take to do his weeping.

"Nay, 't will be this hour ere I have done weeping. All the kind of the Launces have this very fault."

These Launces are all "soft people." In other words, there is a "soft spot," or a "screw loose," somewhere in the minds of all of them; yet they are simple, good-hearted, amiable, harmless people, who cannot suffer to see a dog abused, even for such undignified behavior as Crab was guilty of when among the "gentleman-like dogs" under the Duke's table.

Launce, in his extreme goodness of heart, would sooner be kicked himself than see a "dumb brute" suffer, even though guilty. In a humane society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, all the Launces would be "burning and shining lights," and ever ready to suffer to shield the brute, as Launce suffered for Crab.

"Nay, I'll be sworn, I have sat in the stocks for puddings

he has stolen, otherwise he had been executed; I have stood on the pillory for geese he hath killed, otherwise he had suffered for it." (Act IV., Scene IV.)

The invective which the clown pours out upon the cur for his ingratitude, and the imperturbable stoicism in refusing his sympathy and tears in the parting scene, so touchingly and dramatically described in Act II., Scene III., is richly humorous. His old grand-dam, "having no eyes, had wept herself blind;" his mother had gone on "like a wild woman;" the maid had howled, and the cat wrung her hands, yet the surly and imperturbable cur, being "one not used to the melting mood," sheds not a tear nor speaks a word. A decent, intelligent, "gentleman-like dog" might reasonably have been supposed to show emotion of some kind, for the scene, as depicted by the clown, must certainly have been sufficient to "make a horse laugh," if not to cause a dog to grieve. But perhaps Crab may have had the sagacity to perceive that after all, the weeping and wailing were only the manifestation of a very superficial sorrow, a grief quite shallow, like the minds of those affected. At all events, he must be a "prodigious son" indeed, and affected with a most prodigious sorrow, who can employ such figures in giving so minute and graphic a description of it. When he takes one old shoe to personate his father, and another with a "worser sole" to represent his mother, and his staff, "because it is long and white," to represent his sister, and his hat to represent Nan the maid,

and makes use of such grand hyperbolical figures, such as laying the dust with his tears, filling the channel of the river with them if it were dry, so that it would float his boat, the sails of which he could fill with his sighs, etc., we have a pretty correct gauge of the depths of sorrow of which such an imbecile is capable. Like many in real life of the same mental proportions, Launce is endowed with a certain kind of wit and humor, and this, as a careful and minute examination of Shakspeare's delineations will show, is ever entirely consistent with the general mental characteristics of the individual, and is made to flow naturally and easily from its source.

We are ever made to feel that the wit belongs to the character, as a natural and essential ingredient, and is not, as is sometimes the case with inferior artists, something merely engrafted upon it, for effect. The wit of Shakspeare, if we may use the expression, is always filtered through the mental alembic of the character he is depicting, and comes forth unalloyed,— something which is recognized at once by all who have the knowledge necessary to examine carefully, to be a genuine product, — and yet, though this is an object aimed at by all delineators of character, none have been so eminently successful, in whatever they have attempted, as our great dramatist. His characters always appear to think their own thoughts and speak their own words, without giving us the faintest impression that these thoughts and words are put into their

minds and mouths by another. They are *their* thoughts and *their* words by natural, mental evolution.

Some critics assert, we are aware, that Shakspeare sometimes causes his heroes and heroines to utter sentiments not consistent with their general, mental, and moral characteristics, making them the media for the utterance of what has more the appearance of his own divine inspiration than the thoughts of his characters. This has more than once been pointed out as a blemish, or, in the language of the critics, one of those "spots" to be found on the face of the great intellectual luminary. We think, however, that a more careful study and examination of his characters will go far to remove this objection. It is only within the last few years that several of his higher creations have been at all understood, from a want of that scientific knowledge absolutely necessary to the proper understanding of them; and since, it is to be hoped, the reign of critical ignorance has well-nigh ceased, the numerous "spots" upon the face of the "luminary" have one by one disappeared; and this leads us to think that time and knowledge may cause the whole to vanish. The history of the critical investigations into the characters of Lear and Hamlet alone would furnish some curious illustrations of this.

Shakspeare was too good a metaphysician and psychologist to make any glaring errors of the kind referred to; and so great is our confidence in the

keenness and accuracy of his metaphysical and psychological perceptions that, at the risk of being charged by such critics with a blind adoration of his great genius, we venture to assert that such psychological inaccuracies are scarcely in the nature of things, and in a large majority of instances arise more from critical misconception than from any error or mistake of the artist.

Shakspeare has ever been far in advance of all his critics, and if, as has been sufficiently shown, it has taken two centuries for them to discover a mere fractional part of what he appears to have known, we may reasonably suppose that it will yet take some decades at least, if not centuries, of critical, scientific, and intellectual development to comprehend the whole. Experience has amply shown, that, though humiliating, it is far safer to acknowledge our weakness and the imperfection of our own vision as compared with his, than to employ ourselves in seeking to discover and point out the "spots" upon the face of the great luminary. In his works, like those of a still higher and more divine order of inspiration, much that is hard to comprehend must be reserved for the future to develop, for now the feeble-eyed critic can scarcely "behold him face to face," but must contemplate him through the dim and obscure glass of his own comparatively imperfect perceptions.

But to return, after this digression, to the character we have been examining.

The humorous and bull-headed obstinacy, in

Scene V., Act II., with which Launce refuses to give Speed any knowledge of his master's amours, except the same is wrung from him by a parable, is exceedingly characteristic of his lubberly nature. After much circumlocution, and much teasing of his impertinent and curious questioner, he "caps the climax" of his mulish obstinacy by referring the whole matter in question to Crab, his interesting, intelligent, and ever-present canine companion: —

"*Speed.* But tell me true, will 't be a match?

Launce. Ask my dog; if he say, ay, it will; if he say, no, it will; if he shake his tail, and say nothing, it will.

Speed. The conclusion is, then, that it will.

Launce. Thou shalt never get such a secret from me, but by a parable."

His humorous punning and play upon words is also quite characteristic, and shows that this faculty may be possessed in quite an eminent degree by those of very inferior mental calibre, like Launce. The play upon the word "understanding," in the scene just quoted, though not the most brilliant, is nevertheless eminently worthy of the source from whence it proceeds: —

"*Speed.* What an ass thou art; I understand thee not.

Launce. What a block thou art, that thou can'st not. My staff understands me.

Speed. What thou sayest?

Launce. Ay, and what I do too. Look thee, I'll but lean and my staff understands me.

Speed. It stands under thee, indeed.

Launce. Why, stand under and understand is all one."

But Launce's most choice humor is always spent upon Crab, his boon companion, and the standing butt of his ridicule and invective. The dog appears to have possessed naturally certain very unamiable qualities, even for a cur, which qualities the "precise" education of the clown seems to have been insufficient to correct. "I have taught him," says the clown, "even as one would say, precisely thus would I teach a dog." He had diligently sought to have him "one that takes upon himself to be a dog indeed; to be, as it were, a dog at all things." But alas, the inherent cur-like qualities, natural to the brute, are ever prominent, and always thrust forward to the great annoyance of his master, upon every occasion when they should not be.

The unfeeling nature of the brute, and the ingratitude he manifests for all the kindness lavished upon him by Launce, who "saved him from drowning when three or four of his blind brothers and sisters went to it," is always brought prominently forward by the clown in a manner so serious as to render the whole exceedingly comical. The clown's play upon the word "tide," in reference to the disposition of the dog, is about as rich and characteristic as anything: —

"*Panthino.* Away, ass, you 'll lose the tide, if you tarry any longer.

Launce. It is no matter if the tied were lost, for it is the unkindest tied that ever any man tied.

Panthino. What is the unkindest tide?

Launce. Why, he that is tied here, Crab, — my dog."

But the character of Launce would not have been complete if the poet had neglected to give us an insight of his amours. This he has taken care to do in the latter part of Scene I., Act III. If, as we have already shown, the mental and moral characteristics of the clown have been most curiously illustrated in the selection of his canine companion, they have been none the less so in the selection of his mistress, who, if we may judge from that curious "cat-log" of her qualities produced by the clown and submitted to the inspection of his friend Speed, appears to have been about as well adapted to Launce as was Crab himself. The principles which guided him in making his selection of a mistress, appear to have been the same as would have actuated him in the selection of a dog, or a horse, or a piece of property of any kind. In this respect, we fear the character of Launce, the clown, is by no means unique. The same presiding principles have undoubtedly actuated many a "marriage of convenience" among those who regard themselves, and are regarded by the world, as possessing far greater mental and moral proportions than Launce, and who indeed would think themselves hardly dealt by if all the characteristic virtues of genuine Christians were not attributed to them. Launce first proceeds to make, most systematically, a comparative estimate of the qualities and characteristic virtues and vices of his mistress, and here he lets slip a very quiet, yet significant inuendo, in respect

to the kind of Christians here alluded to. "She has more qualities," says he, "than a water-spaniel, which is much in *a bare Christian.*" "Here is a cat-log," continues he, pulling out a paper, "of her conditions. Imprimis, she can fetch and carry. Why, a horse can do no more. Nay, a horse cannot fetch, only carry, therefore she is better than a jade." A most generous admission, certainly, as well as characteristic comparison, for, in the mind of the clown, a horse, dog, and maid are readily associated, and it is hard to say which would take the first place in his affections. Launce appears to have chosen his mistress as the Vicar of Wakefield chose his wife, less for the eminence of her intellectual characteristics than for the durability of such gifts and qualities as were capable of being turned to some practical account in the conduct of life.

That she had had "gossips," and that her only title to "maid" was that she could "milk," and that she was "her master's maid and served for wages," appears not to have troubled him, as was to have been supposed. With him this small "drawback" would not signify, when weighed in the balance, against her practical qualities. She could "sew," she could "knit," and she could "spin," and this last faculty would enable him to "set the world on wheels," for she could "spin for a living." She could "wash and scour," and this was a "special" virtue, for then she "need not be washed and scoured." And moreover, "blessings on her heart," she could "brew good ale," which, in

the eyes of the clown, was her most shining virtue, and one which he could turn to great practical account, for his appetite for *ale* was like to be one of great permanence, and therefore this most valuable quality must not be set down with those "nameless," those "bastard virtues," which have no fathers, but as a most especial offset to all these. And then as to her "vices, following close on the heels of her virtues," we will allow him to speak for himself, to show how his love, such as it was, could transform all these into most especial virtues: —

"*Speed.* Item. She is not to be kissed fasting, in respect to her breath.

Launce. Well, that fault may be mended with a breakfast. Read on.

Speed. Item. She has a sweet mouth.

Launce. That makes amends for her sour breath.

Speed. Item. She doth talk in her sleep.

Launce. It is no matter for that, so she slip not in her talk.

Speed. Item. She is slow in words.

Launce. O villain! that set this down among her vices. To be slow in words is a woman's only virtue. I pray thee out with it, and place it for her chief virtue.

Speed. Item. She is proud.

Launce. Out with that too; it was Eve's legacy, and cannot be taken from her.

Speed. Item. She hath no teeth.

Launce. I care not for that, neither, for I love crusts.

Speed. Item. She is curst.

Launce. Well, the best is, she has no teeth to bite.

Speed. Item. She will often praise her liquor.

Launce. If her liquor be good, she shall; if she will not, I will, for good things should be praised.

Speed. Item. She is too liberal.

Launce. Of her tongue she cannot, for that 's writ down she is slow of; of her purse, she shall not, for that I 'll keep shut. Now, of another thing she may, and that cannot I help. Well, proceed.

Speed. Item. She hath more hair than wit, and more faults than hairs, and more wealth than faults.

Launce. Stop there, I 'll have her; she was mine and not mine twice or thrice in that last article. Rehearse that once more.

Speed. Item. She hath more hair than wit.

Launce. More hair than wit; it may be I 'll prove it. The cover of the salt hides the salt, and therefore it is more than the salt; the hair that covers the wit is more than the wit, for the greater hides the less. What next?

Speed. And more faults than hairs.

Launce. That 's monstrous. Oh, that that were out.

Speed. And more wealth than faults.

Launce. Why, that word makes the faults gracious. Well, I 'll have her; and if it be a match, as nothing is impossible."

Launce, like many in real life, of far greater Christian pretentions, and of far greater intellectual, if not moral proportions, appears not to have been unsusceptible to the influence of money in the formation and direction of matrimonial alliances. With him as with others, wealth appears to have been a cloak whose ample folds were sufficient to cover a multitude of vices, for though she have "more faults than hairs," the wealth was all powerful to "make the faults gracious."

The last act of Launce's clownish imbecility is shown in Act IV., Scene IV., where the "foolish lout," as he is designated by his master, is sent to deliver the lap-dog to Madam Silvia, his master's

mistress, and where, after he has suffered the hangman's boy to steal the gift from him in the market-place, the brilliant but dangerous expedient of substituting his own insufferable cur Crab, and offering him to the lady in place of the lost poodle, occurs to his mind: —

"*Launce.* Marry, sir, I carried Mistress Silvia the dog you bade me.

Proteus. And what says she to my little jewel?

Launce. Marry, she says your dog was a cur, and currish thanks is good enough for such a present.

Proteus. But she received my dog?

Launce. No, indeed, did she not; here have I brought him back again.

Proteus. What! did'st thou offer her this cur from me?

Launce. Ay, sir, the other squirrel was stolen from me by a hangman's boy in the market-place, and then I offered her my own, who is a dog as big as ten of yours, and therefore the gift the greater."

After this Launce disappears forever, amid the fierce blaze of his master's indignation at his clownish stupidity, but happily not till he has uttered his famous soliloquy over his dog, at the opening of Scene IV., Act IV., commencing, "When a man's servant shall play the cur with him," &c., which, as a specimen of low clownish humor has never been approached, and perhaps never will be; not indeed, until, in the eloquent words of the late Dr. Maginn, "The waters of some Avon, here or elsewhere, (it is a good Celtic name for rivers in general,) shall once more bathe the limbs of the like of him who was laid for his last earthly sleep under a

gravestone bearing a disregarded inscription, on the north side of the chancel in the great church at Stratford."

The disregard of the inscription upon the humble tablet reared above the last resting-place of all that was earthly of the bard is of little moment, when we remember, that while the dust it was meant to commemorate was animated by the spirit, there was reared, as it were unconsciously, a monument far nobler than the huge piles which mark the resting-places of Egyptian kings, a monument of enduring thoughts and immortal words, and one which shall stand, not only when the "great church at Stratford" shall have crumbled into dust, but when all the "cloud-capped towers," the "gorgeous palaces" and "solemn temples" which now adorn the proud isle which claims him as her master-spirit, shall be numbered among the things that were, having passed forever away,

> "And like an insubstantial pageant, faded,
> Left not a rack behind."

CALIBAN.

THIS is a character of the poet which we have always been taught to regard as out of the range or circle of ordinary humanity, something *infra-human*, a being as much below the common standard of humanity as Ariel and some others are above it; an opinion based upon the same ground as that which in times passed placed the insane among the possessed of devils, altogether out of the pale of ordinary humanity, and consequently belonging to a class of beings not to be governed by humane laws, but whom, in the language of Prospero, "stripes may move, not kindness," — *gorillas*, perhaps, not *gifted* with language, but *taught* to speak like some of the inferior creatures, and whose exact position in the scale of being naturalists have not yet fully determined. Caliban says to Prospero, —

> "You taught me language; and my profit on 't
> Is, I know how to curse."

By the poet he is designated as a "savage and deformed slave." His physical deformities, as is ever the case, render him an object of loathing and disgust to the unthinking and unfeeling, while his ignorance and mental imbecility make him the

sport of all superior intelligences, and the tortured slave of their cruelty and inhumanity. Like most degraded and ignorant imbeciles, he is vindictive and revengeful. He never forgets the wrongs inflicted upon him by his torturing enemies, yet for those who treat him kindly and considerately he manifests, like the lower creatures, a genuine affection, and is ever ready to serve and requite them by every means his instinctive ingenuity can suggest. While Prospero treated him kindly, he could appreciate it and love him in return.

"*Caliban.* When thou com'st here first
Thou strok'dst me and made much of me; would'st give me
Water with berries in't, and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night, *and then I loved thee,*
And showed thee all the qualities of the isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren places and fertile."

But upon Prospero, the tyrant, who, not without some shadow of excuse from the brutal conduct of the creature, has made him a beast of burden, and whom Caliban supposes, in his ignorance and weakness, capable of tormenting him by his black and mysterious art, he vents fearfully his deepest curses.

"*Caliban.* As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed
With raven feather from unwholesome fen
Drop on you both! a southwest wind blow on ye,
And blister you all o'er, . . . All the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you! . . .
The red plague rid you, for learning me your language."

In the character of Caliban it has sometimes

struck us that the poet, in his contemplations of the chain of being, might have intended to shadow forth one of the gradations through which the human intellect may have been destined to pass, in its gradual progress upwards from a state of degradation, characteristic of the intellectual life of inferior orders in the universe. In the progress of human society we may observe the successive steps from the rudest and most uncultivated states, up to the highest refinements of civilization. The passage from brute to man, and from man to a yet higher order of intelligences, unseen yet revealed, is but a gradation of being, and the lessons of humility taught by the contemplation of our connection with one extremity of the chain, are accompanied with the glowing aspirations inseparable from our connection with the other.

The poet has taken upon himself to exhibit not only the intermediate links, but others, not many removes from both terminations of this great chain of beings. If the poet himself, — if "Hamlet" and some of the higher creations of his genius, seem to exhibit unto us something we feel almost constrained to regard as superhuman, and belonging to a higher order of intelligences, although allied to our common humanity, revealing unto us, as it were, the last and uppermost link in the great chain which binds our humanity to the throne of the Eternal, — Caliban, if not the connecting link in the lower extremity, is certainly not many removes from it. His physical deformity is so great that he

barely approaches the *status* of humanity. Prospero speaks of him as a Tortoise, and when Trinculio first encounters him, he seems to doubt where to place him in the scale of beings.

"*Trinculio.* What have we here, a man or a fish? he smells like a fish: a very ancient and fish-like smell; a kind of, not of the newest, Poor-John. A strange fish! legged like a man! and his fins like arms! I do now let loose my opinion, hold it no longer; this is no fish, but an islander that hath lately suffered by a thunder-bolt."

Comparisons between men and beasts, as is known, have been made in the earliest times, even in those of Moses. Socrates, the wise philosopher of antiquity, says, satirically, "Between the most uncultivated of men and the brute beast, there is but a slight difference"; and further, "Man is a fair blooming animal with his surroundings poisoned." Plato, who has penetrated deeply into the intellectual life of animals, says, "Man has the same brutish lusts in his spirit as are possessed by animals"; and he speaks of man as a tamed beast, who, under proper culture, is the most God-like of tame animals, but who, under bad breeding, becomes the wildest.

In the character of Caliban we have a painful exhibition of a combination of beastliness and a type of human imbecility and degradation, though not of that low form characteristic of idiocy or cretinism, rendering the individual quite irresponsible for his conduct.

One of the first of his acts set forth, is his at-

tempt upon the innocence of Miranda, and the only regret which he exhibits for this is, that he was foiled by her father in the accomplishment of his diabolical purpose. This is apparently the only act that can be brought forward in justification of the harsh and cruel treatment of Prospero, who is represented to have been so much incensed by this act of the man-beast, that he brings the full force of his dark and mysterious art to bear in tormenting him, and further punishes him by making him a beast of burden. The degree of mental and moral capacity which, as we have said before, makes him responsible for his acts, renders him also conscious and appreciative of both kindness and cruelty. We feel that much more might have been made of him but for those "poisoned surroundings," spoken of by Socrates, which have ever encompassed his path, drawfing and warping his mental, moral, and physical capacities. Prospero says, in allusion to the condition in which he found him, when first cast upon the island, —

"I pitied thee, took pains to *make thee speak*, taught thee each hour one thing or other when thou did'st not, savage, know thine own meaning, but would'st gabble like a thing most brutish. I *endowed thy purposes with words*, that made them known. But thy vile race, though thou did'st learn, had that in't which good natures could not bide to be with."

If we were allowed to judge Caliban by the light of modern science, we might perhaps say that, like many of ignorant, imbecile, and perverted minds, he appears to have suffered from and been influ-

enced by his delusions or hallucinations. These give rise to the language used below, in speaking of the supposed vexings of Prospero's tormenting spirits, and which evidently appear to him in the light of most disagreeable and painful realities.

"*Caliban.* His spirits hear me
And yet I needs must curse, but they 'll nor pinch,
Fright me with urchin shows, pitch me i' the mire,
Nor lead me, like a fire-brand in the dark,
Out of my way, unless he bid them, but
For every trifle are they set upon me;
Sometimes like apes that moe and chatter at me,
And after bite me, then like hedgehogs which
Lie tumbling in my barefoot way, and mount
Their pricks at my foot-fall; sometimes am I
All wound with adders who, with cloven tongues,
Do hiss me into madness."

When he first meets with Stephano and Trinculio, he regards them as the cruel emissaries of his master, Prospero, and appears to expect from them only the same tormenting unkindness he has been accustomed to receive. His first impulse is that of craven animal fear, which prompts him to seek to escape observation. When discovered, he calls out repeatedly, to these supposed spiritual emissaries of his master, not to be tormented.

"Do not torment me, pr'ythee,
I 'll bring my wood home faster."

But he is quite mistaken in the characters he now has to deal with, and the great psychological remedies, kindness and forbearance, are brought into requisition in taming him, and their never-fail-

ing potency is soon apparent in rendering him quite docile. Stephano, the jolly butler, aside from his philanthropy, is a far better medical psychologist than the great Prospero, with all his magic art. The butler soon recognizes his condition, and his universal and all-potent remedy, the *bottle*, with other "appliances and means to boot," is brought to bear successfully in taming and treating the man-monster.

"*Stephano.* He is in his fit now, and does not talk after the wisest; he shall taste of my bottle; if he have never drank wine before, it will go near to remove his fit. If I can recover him and keep him tame, I will not take too much for him."

The never-failing influence of kindness and humane treatment is soon apparent. His fears are quieted, his confidence, as is apparent in the language which follows, is partially, if not wholly, secured, and the wonder and astonishment he manifests at the treatment he receives, so unlike anything he has ever been accustomed to, have been witnessed in hundreds of instances by the humane and philanthropic, in their intercourse with such degraded beings, whether savage, imbecile, or insane: —

"*Caliban.* Thou dost me yet but little hurt;
Thou wilt anon, I know it by thy trembling."

Stephano perseveres in the use of his remedies, both material and psychological, with full confidence in their efficacy: —

"*Stephano.* Come on your ways; open your mouth; here is

that which will give language to you, cat; open your mouth; this will shake your shaking, I can tell you, and that soundly; you cannot tell who is your friend; open your chaps again."

The means work out the desired effects, and their potency is soon apparent in the change wrought upon Caliban, who now begins to appreciate them fully: —

"*Caliban.* These be fine things, and if they be not sprites, that 's a brave god, and bears celestial liquor. I will kneel to him. I 'll swear, upon *that bottle*, to be thy true subject; *for the liquor is not earthly.*"

As his blood warms up under the influence of the kindness and the wine of the benevolent butler, he comes to regard his benefactor as something superhuman, and the manner in which Stephano humors the delusion of the creature is laughably characteristic and ludicrous: —

"*Cal.* Hast thou not dropt from heaven?

Steph. Out of the moon I do assure thee. I was the man in the moon when time was.

Cal. I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee. My mistress showed me thee, and thy dog and bush."

Like all savages when first made acquainted with the bottle, he takes kindly to it, though the language used towards Stephano seems as much prompted by the humane treatment he has received at his hands as from the liberal potations which the butler has thrust down his throat. Whatever influence the drink may have had upon him, it is abundantly evident that, like every creature, however degraded, he is not unsusceptible to kind and con-

siderate treatment; and, not unlike many of the lower animals, when moved by kindness, he takes every means which his ingenuity can suggest, to show his gratitude. Mark how the exuberance of his gratitude is poured out in what follows. How characteristic is the thought and feeling, and the language used in giving utterance to it!

> "*Caliban.* I'll show thee every fertile inch of the island,
> And kiss thy foot: I pr'ythee be my god. . . .
> I'll show thee the best springs, I'll pluck thee berries,
> I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
> A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!
> I'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,
> Thou wondrous man.
> I pr'ythee let me bring thee where crabs grow;
> And I, with my long nails, will dig thee pig-nuts,
> Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
> To snare the nimble marmozet. I'll bring thee
> To clustering filberds, and sometimes I'll get thee
> Young sea-mells from the rock."

Caliban is by no means that monstrous offspring of the poet's imagination which he is sometimes supposed, — an evolution of the superfecundity of his genius. Those who, like the writer, have spent a portion of their lives in the former slave States of America, will remember to have met more than once with individuals quite similar to Caliban in many respects, if not identical with him, among the lower grades of plantation slaves. The personal appearance, conduct, mental and moral character of many of the "contrabands" of Fortress Monroe and Port Royal, as set forth by the corre-

spondents of the Northern press, show that Caliban has many representatives in real life, who were held in bondage by the "chivalry" of the South; the boasted affection for their masters of these modern Calibans of the actual and the present, and their readiness to fight for them, as has been abundantly shown, is about as great as that of the Caliban of the poet for his tormenting master Prospero. The parallel between the conduct of some of the "contrabands" at Beaufort, after their rebellious masters had fled and left them "a law unto themselves," and that of Caliban when he finds himself free from *his* master, and seeks to attach himself to Stephano as they sought to attach themselves to their liberators, is very marked, and must be apparent to every one. The savage and uncultivated nature of both, made desperate by years of degrading and abusive servitude, shows itself in the outrages they are ready to commit, when suffered to act unrestrained by the superior intelligences that have enslaved them and made them beasts of burden.

"*Cal.* I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer,
That by his cunning has cheated me of this island."

Like Caliban, the lower and more ignorant orders of the blacks of the South have proverbially a firm belief in magic, sorcery, and the machinations of a personal devil, who "goes about like a roaring lion" seeking to devour them, soul and body.

"*Caliban.* I say, by sorcery he got this isle;
From me he got it. If thy greatness will

Revenge it on him, thou shalt be lord of it, and I 'll serve thee. . . .

I'll yield him thee asleep, when thou mayest knock a nail into his head. . . .

'T is a custom with him i' the afternoon to sleep: then thou mayest brain him."

How *they* love their masters is quite apparent, we conceive, from the subjoined extracts respecting the conduct of the slaves after the desertion of Beaufort, which we are tempted to bring forward here to complete the parallel.

" We went through spacious houses," says the correspondent of the " New York Tribune," " where only a week ago families were living in luxury, and saw their costly furniture despoiled, books and papers thrown out upon the floor, mirrors broken, safes smashed, pianos on the sidewalks, feather-beds ripped open, and even the filth of the negroes left lying in parlors and bedchambers. The destruction had been wanton; in many instances no purposes of plunder could have been served, but simply a malicious love for mischief gratified. Entirely of their own accord the negroes perpetrated these enormities. We looked through the rooms so ruthlessly devasted and so sadly changed, out on the luxuriant gardens, blooming with tropical plants and redolent with unfamiliar fragrance, and saw the November sun shining on a landscape as warm and genial as our Northern fields in June. The slaves had in many instances been shot at by their masters for refusing to follow them." " There can hardly be a doubt," continues this correspond-

ent, "that the whole slave population, in this vicinity, is ready at least to desert its masters, — is not only ready and determined to do so, but has done so already by thousands. It is not yet a week since this battle, one of whose results is so tremendous."

The following from the correspondence of the "New York Herald," renders the parallel between these Southern Calibans and the Caliban of our poet still more striking. Read the language of the latter after he attaches himself to Stephano, and witness his joy in the idea of being free from his tormenting master, and then the following from this correspondent: —

"Contraband slaves still flock into the camp, and find profitable employment and plenty to eat from the representatives of the United States. It is highly amusing to see these poor creatures, after their day's work, give expression to their exuberant spirits at the change in their condition from that of animals to that of human beings. At night, groups of them gather together; they sing and dance and otherwise enjoy themselves, and seem grateful to our troops for their unexpected delivery from the hands of their tyrant masters."

"*Caliban.* I'll fish for thee and get thee wood enough.
A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!
I'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,
Thou wondrous man."

The further consideration of this parallelism between the savage of the poet's imagination and

the real Calibans of the actual and the present, would open an interesting chapter in comparative psychology, a subject which is now beginning to attract the serious attention of the mental and moral philosopher, and from the further development of which we venture to predict the most interesting and important results. Here also the poet has pointed out the road and has himself led the way, leaving his footprints further in the direction yet to be trod than any other who has undertaken the journey. Our great bard has something applicable to all conceivable circumstances; he has written for all time, past, present and to come. His was not only "a mind reflecting ages past," but it was also one "to outrun hasty time," penetrate the mysteries of ages yet to come, and discover what lies hid in the "deep, dusky dungeons" of futurity; and we cannot conceive that the evolution of the great Platonic year would find him obsolete, but still unexhausted and inexhaustible.

PART III.

SHAKSPEARE'S DELINEATION OF SUICIDE.

OTHELLO.

THAT state of mind, whether healthy and normal, or unhealthy and abnormal, which leads an individual to the commission of self-murder, was one not likely to escape the careful observation and comment of the great psychologist of the sixteenth century; therefore, scattered throughout the whole extent of his works, we find allusions to this subject, characterized by that deep, philosophical, and comprehensive knowledge of the motives and mainsprings of human action, which, as we have taken occasion frequently to remark, places him preëminently above all others of ancient or modern times. Some of the greatest minds have contemplated this subject; many of them, alas! viewing it through the dark, dismal shadows of their own sad experience.

One of the greatest minds of modern times has been brought to bear upon it, and a volume of great power and all-absorbing interest has been the result. Yet the "Sorrows of Werther," with its

deep analysis of feeling and sentiment, is but an amplification of Hamlet's great soliloquy, "To be, or not to be." And aside from the light which modern science has shed upon suicide as a manifestation of nervous disease, this soliloquy, uttered near three hundred years since, is the "end of the law" upon the subject when viewed in the abstract.

Shakspeare evidently regarded suicide as resulting not so much from what might be termed a morbid mental process, in the strict scientific acceptation of the term, as from a false moral philosophy, acting upon minds which had been wrought to the point of desperation, though not of disease, and from false views of man in his relations to time, death, and eternity. Moreover, it was not his purpose either to furnish us a philosophy of suicide, or to regard the subject from a scientific point of view and as the result of a certain diseased mental process. He certainly was not the man to sit upon a coroner's inquest, and pronounce upon oath a verdict of "temporary insanity" upon every case of suicide that came up. This is a psychological refinement reserved for modern times, and one of the things "not dreamed of" in his psychology. Therefore, all his principal suicides, as it will be observed, perpetrate the crime in their natural, at least, if not in their sober senses.

Prominent among these stands Othello, a character which we think could not have been rendered insane by any combination of moral causes.

In all the characters that become insane, as we have already shown, the experienced psychologist detects at once the peculiar physical, mental, and moral organization which constitutes the inherent predisposition. He perceives that the germ of the disease has been implanted there originally, and only awaits the influence of adequate exciting causes, to bring about its complete development. In Othello this is not present, and though "perplexed in the extreme," and wrought up to the highest pitch of desperation, his mind, up to the moment he plunges the dagger into his heart, never loses its balance even temporarily. If in the mind of Othello there had existed the slighest inherent tendency to mental disease, the jealousy and extreme perplexity, which have so strong an influence in calling it forth, would most certainly have rendered him insane, and that they do not may, we think, naturally be attributed to the entire absence of any such natural tendency.

No one will pretend to affirm that Othello was naturally endowed with the highest order of intellect. He has great force of will, and all the qualities calculated to adorn the soldier, — open, generous, brave, faithful, confiding, and to the last degree "jealous of honor;" in short, possessed naturally of the exact qualities necessary to be acted upon by the deep cunning and base treachery of one endowed with a high order of intellect, one who knew exactly how and when and where to assail him. Othello has not naturally the keen

penetration and discernment of character necessary to shield him from the machinations of the intellectual villain and moral bankrupt who haunts and pursues him to desperation. His reason and judgment, though never diseased, he allows to become clouded by the deep passions stirred up within him by this evil genius. His mind sometimes appears to reel and stagger so strongly under the influence of the whirlwind of passion, that once, and only once, is it suggested that it is upset; and Lodovico asks, "Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?" Yet we have no apprehensions of such a result as is here hinted at, and to whatever extremities of desperation he is driven we feel certain that his wits are safe, and that, though he may seem for a moment light of brain, it is but temporary, for he soon recovers his balance, and in the desperation of his passion, with a clear head, sweeps on to the accomplishment of his dark purpose, —

> "Like to the Pontic sea,
> Whose icy current and compulsive course
> Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
> To the Propontic and the Hellespont."

Let us now attempt to trace out and observe the working of the fearful passions which ultimately culminate in homicide and self-murder. With Othello, everything relating to love and matrimonial felicity has gone on well up to act third, scene third, of the tragedy. At this point the measure of his happiness seems indeed full and running over. Care rests lightly upon him, though no duty is neg-

lected. When aroused, in a former scene, from his balmy slumbers by the drunken brawl into which poor Cassio has been drawn by the deep villain who lies in wait for Othello himself, he disposes of the matter with the energy and the cool commanding decision so characteristic of the true soldier, and says, playfully, to Desdemona,

> "'T is the soldiers' life
> To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife."

In scene third, where Othello and Iago come in upon Desdemona, Emilia, and Cassio, as the latter have been importuning her "in most honorable fashion" to interpose in restoring him to favor with his captain, the villain takes occasion to drop the first drop of poison into his cup of felicity.

"Ha! I like not that," he utters slyly in the ear of Othello, as something which had slipped unintentionally from his lips. He here intimates to Othello most adroitly his suspicion that all is not well. The time, the opportunity, and all circumstances are now most fitting, and the result is just what he intended it should be; a suspicion is aroused in the mind of his victim. The first coil of his fatal web is fastened upon him, to be cautiously woven and strengthened, as time and circumstances may admit.

> "But the Moor
> Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,"

and this suspicion seems to have been nearly dissipated by the mere presence and words of Desdemona, though the plot has been so cunningly

arranged that her discourse regarding Cassio was precisely what was required to confirm it, and on dismissing her kindly and affectionately from his presence, he says : —

> "I will deny thee nothing. . . .
> Farewell, my Desdemona, I will come to thee straight."

On her departure, he exclaims in words which indicate thoroughly the intensity of his affection :—

> "Excellent wretch ! Perdition catch my soul,
> But I do love thee ! and when I love thee not,
> Chaos is come again."

The arch intriguer then proceeds to cast another coil about his victim, and with a profound dissimulation which Othello has not the discernment to detect, asks shrewdly, and as though the answer would involve something of terrible importance touching the happiness of his victim, —

> "My noble lord,
> Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady,
> Know of your love ?"

When told that he did, and interrogated as to why he asked such a question, he replies with diabolical coolness, —

> "But for the satisfaction of my *thought ;*
> No further harm."

This *thought*, the import of which Iago conceals so adroitly, until it suits his purpose to reveal it, becomes at once another drop of bitterness in the cup of his noble victim, by stirring up still more

his suspicions that all is not well between Cassio and his heart's idol.

" *Oth.* Think, my lord!
By Heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something:
I heard thee say but now, — Thou lik'dst not that,
When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like?
And, when I told thee, he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou cry'dst, *Indeed?*
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit."

Throughout this entire scene we are made to feel the weakness of Othello, and his utter inability to discern and analyze the character and motives of Iago, and the lack of that shrewd penetration which would enable him to cope with the intellectual villain who besets him, and in whose hand he seems like a little child, to be led in whatever way may seem fit to the master mind. In this case it is painfully interesting to observe the subtle workings of the strong, acute intellect, and its influence for evil upon the weaker.

Iago proceeds so subtly, and leads on his victim so cautiously, step by step, that Othello seems quite incapable of discerning the contradictions in his conduct and conversation, though striving with all his force of penetration to determine which of the two, Iago or Desdemona, is false to him. When Iago tells him, —

" Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy;

> It is the green-eyed monster, which doth make
> The meat it feeds on,"

and at the same instant takes every means to add fuel to the passion, Othello is quite incapable of perceiving the contradiction. The dissimulation expressed in the panegyric on *good name*, is altogether too profound for Othello, and produces just such an impression as the villain intended it should.

In the profound duplicity of Iago, nothing is better or more successfully managed than this pretence to put Othello on his guard against the very jealousy he is seeking to bring about; and among the observations he drops so carelessly from his lips, in working out his evil purpose, we find some of deep psychological significance. With what force, for example, do the following lines fall upon the ears of those who have had repeated opportunities in the course of their professional experience to observe that unfortunate class of melancholics, who, while vastly rich, perhaps, in all that pertains to worldly goods, are, through fear of poverty, "all their life-time subject to bondage": —

> "*Iago.* Poor, and content, is rich, and rich enough;
> But riches fineless, is poor as winter,
> To him that ever fears he shall be poor." *

* Numbers of such unfortunates can be pointed out in Lunatic Asylums any day. "I have no home and no friends on earth," said one of these to the writer, not long since, with an expression of utter desolation, and the repeated assurance that she had everything that heart could wish, but mental health, was of no avail. She had not this inestimable blessing, and consequently, in the strictest acceptation of the term, was "poor indeed."

Towards the conclusion of scene third Iago has so far succeeded in worming himself into the confidence of Othello, that he waxes more bold. His victim, however, is not firmly within his grasp, and he is yet under the necessity of proceeding somewhat cautiously. When Iago suggests that, inasmuch as Desdemona had deceived her father in marrying him, it may be possible that another passion, hastily conceived, might lead her to deceive her husband, he seems, by his expression, to catch at this idea as something new and quite possible. "And so she did," he exclaims. And when Iago remarks,

"I see this hath a little dashed your spirits,"

the complete abstraction of his reply,

"Not a jot, not a jot,"

shows how fully the thought has taken possession of his mind. And again, when Iago remarks,

"My lord, I see you are moved,"

his reply shows how intensely his mind is fixed upon the thought which has been suggested: —

"No, not much moved; —
I do not think but Desdemona 's honest. . . .
And yet how Nature erring from itself" —

When Iago takes his leave, Othello asks with great earnestness,

"Why did I marry? This honest creature
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds."

Othello seems now to be fully persuaded of

the honesty of Iago, for a little further on he says: —

> "This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
> And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit
> Of human dealing."

And in the interview with Desdemona immediately following, we perceive painfully the influence wrought upon his mind by the first harshness manifested towards his wife. This, although not very marked, is sufficient for her to perceive that something is wrong.

The passion now deepens, and when Iago next meets Othello he seems to feel sure of his victim.

> "*Iago.* The Moor already changes with my poison.
> Dangerous conceits are, in their nature, poisons,
> Which, at the first, are scarce found to distaste;
> But, with a little act upon the blood,
> Burn like the mines of sulphur."

When the approach of Othello reveals to him the strong working of the poison he speaks of, he says to himself, with a grim, diabolical satisfaction, —

> "Not poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou ow'dst yesterday."

The following shows how firmly his suspicions have taken possession of his mind, even at this early period, and how thoroughly unhappy he has been made by them, even though they do not breathe forth that utter desperation which we shall perceive further on: —

"Oh, now, forever,
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! Oh, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner; and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation 's gone."

Although we are made to perceive from the beginning that the doom of Othello has been fixed, — that he is not and could not, from the character of his intellectual organization, be any match for the arch intriguer who besets him, — it is painful to witness the vain struggles of the noble victim. He strides backward and forward as though lashed by furies; and at every turn in his rugged pathway he is met by the incarnate devil who seeks only too successfully to destroy him, both soul and body. He struggles manfully with the monster, seizes him by the throat, in his desperate efforts to discover whether he is honest or treacherous, and says, —

"Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;
Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,
Than answer my waked wrath."

All this passion, however, is weak and worthless, and when weighed in the balance with the cool, calm intellectuality which opposes it, becomes really a "trifle light as air." A few soft words from

the destroyer, who never loses temper, turn away his wrath. And now, when the time is come, he is ready at the strenuous demand, with his "confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ."

He first brings forward his own personal experience in confirmation of the suspicion he has aroused, by relating what occurred when he lay with Cassio, and was troubled with a raging tooth, that,

> "This may help to thicken other proofs,
> That do demonstrate thinly."

The plot is now arranged so consummately that the "other proof," the handkerchief, taken in connection with what precedes, appeals so strongly to Othello's personal experience, that in the state of mind in which it finds him, it is overpowering and quite convincing. When Iago tells him, —

> "Such a hankerchief
> Did I to-day
> See Cassio wipe his beard with,"

his flaming anger is aroused to a pitch which nothing but blood can quench.

> "Oh that the slave had forty thousand lives;
> One is too poor, too weak for my revenge!
> Now do I see 't is true. Look here, Iago;
> All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.
> 'T is gone! —
> Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
> Yield up, O love, thy crown, and hearted throne,
> To tyrannous hate! swell, bosom, with thy fraught;
> For 't is of aspic's tongues! —
> Oh blood, Iago, blood!"

When Iago promises to revenge him by taking the life of Cassio, and begs him deceitfully to spare the life of his wife, he replies: —

> "Damn her, lewd minx; . . .
> . . . I will withdraw
> To furnish me with some swift means of death
> For the fair devil."

Nothing is more apparent in the character of Othello, than the great disparity between the strength of his passions and affections, and the weakness of his perceptions, his incapability of discerning clearly the character and motives of others. When we next meet him, in scene fourth of the same act, it would seem as though the mere presence of Desdemona, and the simplicity and truthfulness of her language, should disarm him; and it does to a certain extent. But the plot has been so skilfully arranged that even this is made to work against her, in the plea which, conscious of her innocence, she makes with so much earnestness for the restoration of Cassio. Othello does not seem here to nurse his passion with a morbid satisfaction, as an insane man will cherish a delusion, but struggles manfully against it with such intellectual force as he has been naturally endowed with, and as though he would fain believe that his wife was innocent, and he himself deceived, in spite of all the evidence brought to bear against her by the demi-devil who plots her destruction. But these "proofs" are so cunningly devised that, to the "jealous mind," they are quite conclusive, —

"strong as proofs of holy writ," — and to every solicitation he reiterates "the handkerchief," "the handkerchief," and concludes by dismissing her abruptly and harshly from his presence.

In act fourth, scene first, the mind of Othello seems for the first time to stagger with the heavy burden of passion under which it travels. He here seems to make an effort to be rid of the convictions forced upon him, but is met at every turn by some tormenting suggestion of his cool, cautious, and cunning adversary, and when he reminds him of the handkerchief, he replies somewhat abstractedly, like one waking up from a reverie: —

> "By Heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it: —
> Thou said'st, O! it comes o'er my memory,
> As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
> Boding to all."

The terrible mental agony which he now suffers from the broad, pointed insinuations of Iago, is plainly indicated in the broken ejaculations that follow. These broken reflections and fearful starts, however, bear little resemblance to the incoherence of raving madness, and could not be mistaken for such by the most careless observer. This intense mental agony is not disease, though it overcomes completely, for a moment, his strong physical powers, and he

> "Falls in a trance."

"My medicines work!" says the villain, contemplating the fearful suffering of his prostrate victim, —

> "Thus credulous fools are caught."

When Cassio enters, Iago is not in the least disconcerted, but to his question, "What is the matter?" replies with diabolical coolness: —

> "My lord is fallen into an epilepsy;
> This is his second fit; he had one yesterday."

The intimate connection between epilepsy and the "savage madness" which follows the fit in many cases of this dreadful malady, Shakspeare seems to have understood thoroughly, for when Cassio proposes to "rub Othello about the temples," Iago replies: —

> "No, forbear.
> The lethargy must have its quiet course;
> If not, he foams at mouth; and, by and by,
> Breaks out to savage madness."

At the first glance it may seem to the psychologist that Iago manifested ignorance of the nature and course of the epileptic seizure, by intimating that rubbing the temples would have any influence whatever upon the fit, or what follows it. But it will be perceived, on looking closely, that he says this simply to prevent Cassio from interfering to arouse him, which, just at this moment, did not suit his purposes, and he therefore finds a pretext to dismiss him: —

> "*Iago.* Look, he stirs.
> Do you withdraw yourself a little while,
> He will recover straight; when he is gone,
> I would on great occasion speak with you."

From the terrible struggle through which he has just passed, he emerges with a clear head, and

nothing now, we are convinced, will be sufficient to upset his mind, whatsoever range he may suffer his passions to take. In the scene between Cassio and Iago which follows, and which he witnesses unperceived, he becomes more and more wrought up, but manages, though apparently with great difficulty, to control himself. At times he seems ready to spring forth upon Cassio with the fierceness of the tiger, more especially when he thinks that he perceives the fatal handkerchief in his hands.

When Cassio has taken his leave, he gives vent to his feelings and passions to Iago, who, as usual, takes occasion to inflame him more and more against his officer and his wife: —

> "I would have him nine years a-killing:
> A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned to-night; for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand."

Yet, hard as he declares his heart to be, her image is there firmly enthroned, and there it will remain, in spite of all his efforts to cast it down to destruction, and in the very next breath he says :—

> "Oh, the world hath not a sweeter creature; . . . So delicate with her needle! An admirable musician! Oh, she will sing the savageness out of a bear! Of so high and plenteous wit and invention! . . . And then of so gentle a condition! . . . . O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!"

When Iago suggests, with diabolical irony, that

"If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend; for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody, —"

his mind returns to the consciousness of his injuries, and he exclaims: —

"I will chop her into messes!"

The fearful working of contending passions here is sufficient, it would seem, to derange any mental organization not cast in the strongest mould. This organization, however, maintains strictly its integrity, though, in the scene between Othello, Desdemona, and Lodovico, which follows, he has become so much changed by what he has passed through, that the latter seems to tremble for the safety of his wits, and asks seriously if he is not "light of brain." But Lodovico, without being fully aware of what has preceded, has just witnessed the blow which, during the first temporary loss of self-control, he has inflicted upon his wife, accompanied by the epithet "devil," and the harsh command to be out of his sight. All this conduct follows very naturally from what has taken place, though unperceived, in the immediate presence of Lodovico at the time.

Lodovico naturally supposes that his mind was occupied by the packet recalling him from Cyprus; but the all-absorbing thought, the inconstancy of his wife, casts the contents of this entirely into the background, as is evident from his replies to the innocent remark of Desdemona respecting the "unkind breach," which she says she "would do much to

atone for the love I bear to Cassio." In the mental obtuseness which results from his fierce passion, he construes this into a direct acknowledgment of her love for Cassio, and the tormenting thought doubtless suggests the exclamation, "fire and brimstone," in which he gives vent to his anger.

And when he follows this by striking her in Lodovico's presence, and calling her "devil," Lodovico is so much surprised by the change that has come over him, that he declares, —

> "This would not be believed in Venice,
> Though I should swear I saw it."

And further on he asks: —

> "Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
> Call all-in-all sufficient? — this the noble nature
> Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
> The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
> Could neither graze, nor pierce?"

In the painful scene which follows, between Othello and his wife, (scene second, act fourth,) we hardly know which victim excites the more pity, though it must be confessed our sympathy for either is not the most profound, particularly as the simplicity and obtuseness of blind passion has had much to do in bringing about their calamities.

It is impossible for us to feel towards Othello as we have been made to feel towards Lear or Hamlet. The latter struggle in the grasp of a fearful and inexorable disease, which they cannot in the nature of things cast off; but the former is led captive by a blind passion, and the influence brought

to bear upon him by an intellect superior to his own. Yet we cannot listen to the eloquent and gushing sorrow expressed in the lines which follow, without pitying the noble victim of such profound treachery and dissimulation: —

"Had it pleased Heaven
To try me with affliction; had he rained
All kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head;
Steeped me in poverty to the very lips;
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes;
I should have found in some part of my soul
A drop of patience; but (alas!) to make me
A fixed figure, for the time of Scorn
To point his slow, unmoving finger at, —
O! O!
Yet could I bear that too: well, very well:
But there, where I have garnered up my heart;
Where either I must live, or bear no life;
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads
To knot and gender in! — turn thy complexion there!
Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubim;
Ay, there look grim as hell! . . .
O thou weed
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
That the sense aches at thee. Would thou hadst ne'er been born!"

In the whole course of the play we find no more delicate touch of nature than the utter confusion of mind which comes over Desdemona, from the effect of the shock imparted by the conduct and language of Othello in the scene just quoted: —

"*Emil.* How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady?

Des. 'Faith, half asleep.
Emil. Good madam, what 's the matter with my lord?
Des. With who?
Emil. Why, with my lord, madam?
Des. Who is thy lord?
Emil. He that is yours, sweet lady.
Des. I have none. Do not talk to me, Emilia;
I cannot weep; nor answer have I none,
But what should go by water. Pr'ythee, to-night
Lay on my bed my wedding-sheets, — remember; —
And call thy husband hither."

Let us now pass on to consider briefly the tragic occurrences of the fearful night above referred to, in which the wedding-sheets become the winding-sheets of Desdemona, the innocent and unfortunate victim of the base treachery and blind passion we have attempted to trace.

What first strikes us here is the complete self-control of Othello. The fierce passions manifested upon former occasions are not now apparent, and in their place we find the cool, calm determination of one whose mind is fixed firmly upon the accomplishment of his purposes. We perceive no wavering, as upon former occasions; no halting between two opinions. His mind was never more firm than in this hour of utter desperation, and he reasons calmly upon what he is about to undertake, upon the cause and consequences: —

"It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul:
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
It is the cause. . . . . .
Put out the light, and then put out the light!
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,

I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me ; — but once put out thine,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have plucked thy rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again ;
It needs must wither."

After the accomplishment of the bloody deed, the full consciousness of his great and irreparable bereavement comes over him with fearful force, and the feeling of utter desolation finds expression in the words which follow : —

" My wife ! my wife ! What wife ? I have no wife.
Oh, insupportable ! Oh, heavy hour !
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon ; and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration."

But the most severe trial for the mind and feelings of Othello is yet to come ; it is the remorse which results from the discovery that he has been so grossly deceived and led to kill " the sweetest innocent that e'er did lift up eye."

But even this remorse, it will be observed, is not sufficient to destroy his mental integrity ; his mind, even in his utter desperation, is composed, and there is a degree of sublimity in the stolid calmness with which he takes a survey of his condition, and its utter hopelessness either in this world or that into which he is about to plunge unbidden. He flies to suicide, not from any hope of relief from the awful burden of remorse and sorrow under which he travels, for this burden he expects to bear

even in that "undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns." And, moreover, he seems to regard this, and whatever may be laid upon him in addition when he arrives there, as the just punishment of his weakness, his folly, and his crime.

Even the look of his innocent victim in eternity is to be his sufficient condemnation.

> "When we shall meet at Compt
> That look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
> And fiends will snatch at it."

But notwithstanding, he is ready for anything that can, even for a moment, distract his mind from the sorrow and remorse which springs from the sight of Desdemona, "whose breath these hands have newly stopped;" and before rushing into her presence and that of his Judge, he invokes upon himself the most awful physical torments the imagination is capable of conceiving for the lost.

> "Whip me, ye devils,
> From the possession of this heavenly sight!
> Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
> Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
> O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead?
> Dead? Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Immediately after, when the whole mystery of his deception is unravelled before him, and in the presence of Iago, he is quite calm, and in view of his folly and weakness he exclaims, —

> "O fool! fool! fool!"

After passing through all the mental suffering he

has been called upon to endure, the complete integrity of his mind is nowhere more clearly shown than in his last words:

"Soft you; a word or two, before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know it;
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
Of one, that loved not wisely, but too well;
Of one, not easily jealous, but being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme; of one, whose hand,
Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe; of one, whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
And say, besides, — that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian, and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him — thus." [*Stabs himself.*

The important psychological lesson inculcated by the poet in the delineation of the character of Othello, namely, that there are certain mental constitutions which no combination of moral causes can overthrow, is nowhere more clearly taught than here. The mind of Othello, as we took occasion to remark before, belonged strictly to this class; the inherent germ was not present, and consequently the disease could not be developed.

As we pen these concluding lines, we are re-

minded that upon this very day (April 23d, 1864,) the whole civilized world is commemorating the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, and not only the great, the noble, and the good of the isle which gave him birth are gathered reverently around the hallowed earth in which rests all that was mortal of the greatest among the sons of song, but the "isles of the sea" and the "uttermost parts of the earth" are striving together to do homage to his memory. Eloquent and loving words are everywhere being uttered in the noble tongue which, infinitely above all others, he has done so much to adorn. This is as it should be, and however humble the offering, if it be brought reverently and in love, let it not be utterly despised.

THE END.