

the Chambered Nautilus. "In writing the poem I was filled with a better feeling, the highest state of mental exaltation and the most crystalline clairvoyance that had ever been granted to me—I mean that lucid vision of one's thought and all forms of expression which will be at once precise and musical, which is the poet's special gift, however large or small in amount or value."* To the base mechanical of the working-day world, this lucid vision, this crystalline clairvoyance and mental exaltation is indeed a madness working in the brain, a state which he cannot understand, a Holy of Holies into which he cannot enter.

I.

When all the circumstances are taken into account, the English Parnassus affords no parallel to the career of Keats—Adonais, as we love to call him—whose birthday, one hundred years ago, we celebrate to-day.

Born at the sign of the "Swan and Hoop," Moorgate Pavement, the son of the head ostler, his parentage and the social atmosphere of his early years conspired to produce an ordinary beer-loving, pugnacious cockney; but instead there was fashioned one of the clearest, sweetest, and strongest singers of the century, whose advent sets at naught all laws of heredity, as his development transcends all laws of environment.

Keats' father succeeded to "Mine Host of the Swan and Hoop," but died when the poet was only eight years old. His grandmother was in comfortable circumstances, and Keats was sent to a school at Enfield, kept by the father of Charles Cowden Clarke. Here among other accomplishments he developed his knuckles, and received a second-hand introduction to the Greek Pantheon. He is described by one of his schoolfellows as "the pet prize-fighter with terrier courage," but in the last two years at school he studied hard and took

* In a private letter which is published in a notice of Dr. Holmes, J. H. H. BULLETIN, October, 1894.