

imaginations are hard-mouthed and exceedingly disposed to run away with his reason, upon which account my friends will never trust me alone without a solemn promise to vent my speculations in this and the like manner for the benefit of mankind.

Letzman, who later threw himself from a window, wrote the celebrated "Journal of a Melancholiac."

Mailath, after having depicted his own depression in "Le Suicide," killed himself with his sister, to whom this romance was dedicated. Tasso has repeatedly detailed his insanity. Long before the periodical mania became demonstrable, he had written:

Although I cannot deny that I am not insane, I can hardly believe my insanity is caused by drink or lust, for I am better when I drink or indulge in coitus.

Dostoyewski introduces imbeciles, paranoiacs and epileptics in the "Idiot" and "Besi," and moral imbeciles in "Crime and Punishment."

Gerard de Nerval wrote "Aurelia," which has been called a canticle of febrile dreams, a mixture of poetry and delirium.

Barbora wrote "Les Detraqués." Burton¹ depicted his own delusions. Allix, although not a physician, wrote on insanity. Lenau, twelve years before succumbing to insanity, described its phenomena. All his poems depict with sadly vivid colors, tendencies to suicide and depression, as may be seen even from their titles, "Hypochondria," "Insanity," "Soul-Sick," "Violent Dreams," and "The Moon of a Melancholiac." Not even in the pages of Ortil can be found as vividly colored a passage descriptive of suicidal tendency as the following from "Soul-Sick."

My heart is a deep wound, and dumb to my grave I bear it. My life breaks hour by hour. One alone can console me, on whose bosom can I sob myself into calm; and this one lies in the depths of the grave. Oh, my mother, rouse at my prayers. If thy love live in death; if thou canst watch over thy son's future . . . Let me leave life quick. I desire the death-night. Aid thy weary son to despoil himself of sorrow.

His "Violent Dreams" is a terribly vivid picture of the hallucinations which preceded or accompanied his first maniacal attack, and a careful reader can detect the incoherence and fragmentation of ideas and phrases of maniacal exaltation. Nathanael Lee, popularly known as the "mad poet," minutely depicted insane geniuses, as in his "Cæsar Borgia."

The principal mental defect of great minds is discernible in the totality of their works, in illogical deductions, in absurd contradictions and bizarre, weird fantasies. Socrates was insane, when despite the fact that he had closely approximated Judaic monotheism and Christian ethics, etc., he drew omens from sneezing and from the voices and tokens of his protecting genius.² Car-

dan, who had anticipated Newton in the discovery of gravitation, was insane, despite the fact that in his work, "De Subtilitate," he explains as hallucinatory, the strange symptoms of the "possessed," and the ecstasies of hermits, since he attributes to a genius, not only his inspiration, but the creaking of a table or the trembling of a pen. He is insane, since he claims several times to have been bewitched. His work, "On Dreams," is as demonstrable of insanity to an alienist as a pseudo-membrane is of disease to a pathologist. At the outset of this work, his observations are interesting and logically analytical of dream phenomena. He points out that greater physical pain in dreams produces less proportionate results, while slight pain acts with greater force than in the waking state; that fools and the insane dream much; that in dream, as in a theatre, a long series of events occupies but a short space of time, and finally (an observation in which there is considerable truth), that men dream totally in conformity to, or totally in opposition to, their usual habits. Soon after such striking evidence of genius, appears most obsequious obedience to vulgar credulity, detailing according to what more or less insignificant incident of a dream could be determined a more or less distant future. He composed, with most sincere faith, a dictionary of fortune, identical in form with the cabalistic *brochures*. Each subject, each word is connected with a series of references so us to interpret each other; father signified author, husband, son, commander; foot meant house, foundation, arts and artisans.¹

Newton,² who weighed worlds in the balance of his calculus, was certainly insane when he attempted to interpret the "Apocalypse," or the horns of Daniel; and he was still more so when he wrote to Bentley:

By the law of attraction the elongated orbit of comets is explained, but God alone can explain the lateral difference of the almost circular planetary orbit.

A very singular argument, as has been said by Arago, which places God at the limits where science has not penetrated.³ This very Newton, in his "Optics," declaims against those who in the "Aristotelean" fashion put occult qualities in things, thus limiting the researches of science,⁴ and a century later, Laplace found the cause relegated by Newton to God, as undiscoverable by his calculus.

Ampère believed he had squared the circle.⁵

1. This was simply a "dream book" of our time, and Cardan had the dream-bias of the theology of his time.

2. Evidence of theological bias, perchance, and resultant limitation, but to one trained in the popular theology of the time, and even of our time, such limitations were inevitable. Newton was a querulous paranoiac, but this was no evidence of it.

3. Wherein does it differ from the placing of God in modern times at the limits of the knowable?

4. There was as wide a psychological difference between these "Aristotelean" views and Newton's, as between fetishism and monotheism.

5. An error or a delusion.

1. Not Buston, as Lombroso has it.

2. These notions are still held by sane Christians—the result of early training.