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## JOHN KEATS—THE APOTHECARY POET.

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We have the very highest authority for the statement that "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet, are of imagination all compact." In a more comprehensive division, with a keener discernment, Plato recognizes a madness which is not an evil, but a divine gift, and the source of the chiefest blessings granted to men. Of this divine madness poetry occupies one of the fourfold partitions. Here is his definition: "The third kind is the madness of those who are possessed by the Muses; which, taking hold of a delicate and virgin soul, and there inspiring frenzy, awakens lyrical and all other numbers; with these adorning the myriad actions of ancient heroes for the instruction of posterity. But he who, having no touch of the Muses' madness in his soul, comes to the door and thinks that he will get into the temple by the help of art—he, I say, and his poetry are not admitted; the sane man disappears and is nowhere when he enters into rivalry with the madman."

Here, in a few words, we have expressed the very pith and marrow of the nature of poetry, and a clearer distinction than is drawn by many modern writers of the relation of the art to the spirit, of the form to the thought. By the help of art, without the Muses' madness, no man enters the temple. The poet is a "light and winged and holy thing," whose inspiration, genius, faculty, whatever we may choose to call it, is allied to madness—he is possessed or inspired. Oliver Wendell Holmes has expressed this very charmingly in more modern terms, speaking of his own condition when composing