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SELECTED ARTICLES.

THE EPILEPSY OF NAPOLEON.

(Concluded.)

Zola, in the "Roman Naturaliste," gives us this point on the inspiration of Balzac: "He worked under the operation of certain impulses which are a mystery to us; he was the victim of a capricious power. At times for all the gold in the world he could not have written a line, at other times, in the evening, in the middle of the street or in a morning orgie, a burning coal kindled his brain, his hands, his tongue; on a sudden a word awakens hidden ideas which lie fermenting. So is the artist an humble instrument of a despotic power.

"My passions," says Burns, "are wild as demons if they do not find a vent in verse." After writing he felt relieved and consoled. Such are the confessions of Mahomet, St. Paul and Dostoyewsky. In "Besi" he writes: "Suddenly something opened before him, an extraordinary internal light illumined his mind; there are moments which do not last more than five or six seconds, in which you suddenly feel the presence of eternal harmony. This phenomenon is not terrestrial, nor celestial, but something that man in his earthly development can scarcely endure; he would be obliged to transform himself physically or die. It is an ineffable feeling. Suddenly it seems as if you were

put in touch with all nature. There is neither tenderness nor joy; there is no forgiveness, because there is nothing to forgive; there is not even love! Oh! it is a feeling higher than love. The joy that fills one is terrible; if this state should last more than five seconds the spirit could not resist; it would have to vanish. During these five seconds I live an entire human existence, and for it I would give my whole life, and should not feel I were paying too dearly." "Are you not epileptic?" "No." You will become so. I have heard it said that one begins in just that way. A man subject to this disease (evidently it is Dostoyewsky himself) has described minutely the sensation which precedes the attack, and listening to your description it seemed as if he were speaking. He also said that it would be impossible to sustain this state more than five seconds. Do you remember the vase of Mahomet? While it was being filled the prophet flew to paradise. The vase is your five seconds, and paradise is your harmony: Mahomet was epileptic." ("Besi," Vol. i.) And in the "Idiot": "I remember, among other things, a phenomenon which preceded his attacks of epilepsy, the weakness, the mental marasmus, which proved the disease. There were moments in which his brain suddenly became inflamed, and his vital forces all at once rose to a prodigious degree of intensity. The sensation of life, of conscious existence was increased tenfold in