

young officer so calmly claimed with an air of proprietorship as paid for, was able to reckon the value of his uniform, accoutrements, and horse, when he attended a full-dress parade, as worth more than two years' pay; he knew he could by no means escape debt unless he had a private income considerably exceeding the amount paid him out of taxes to which he himself contributed more than many such items of the Demos as then addressed him. It is hardly known to the public that officers pay exactly the same taxes as the rest of the community, or that their pay is absolutely insufficient to keep them in the army; what is more, that campaigning itself is costly and adds to the usual money out of pocket. So far as officers serve for any bribe except that of the military life itself, that bribe comes not from the people but from the Crown, in the shape of decorations and titles, remnants of barbarism which continue to touch the barbaric side of man's complex nature.—*Fortnightly Review* for March.

THE PROMISE OF SPRING.

HAVE patience! still
Spring yet shall all her joyful tasks fulfil.
She tarries long,
But all is ready: each bird knows his song,
Each flower has got by heart
Its fair or fragrant part;
And given the word,
Each bud and bird
Will proudly bring the lovely pageant on.
Have patience! Sweeter, sweeter far
Long-hoped-for treasures are
Than any we may have, without such waiting, won.

Almonds will crown
With tender pale-pink blossoms branches brown;
White-thorns will prove
How sweetly silver may with green be wove.
Orchards their snow will throw
On daisied lawns below;
Spires of soft bloom—
Plumes of perfume—
Lilacs will lift through Spring's translucid air.
Jove will descend to earth again
In showers of golden rain,
Whilst Danaë's heart is won by flowers laburnums bear.

The throats will
From scented choirs such glorious notes distil
As if before
No lavish birds had scattered Nature's store;
The larks her praise will sing
As if no other Spring,
Till this one, had
Made small birds glad.
The cuckoos will with such fresh wonder call
As though the sands had just begun
Through Time's hour-glass to run,
And Earth was holding there the opening carnival.

Nor there alone
Her gentle presence to us is made known.
Spring comes also
To precincts where no birds or blossoms show.
Softly she enters in
Amid the roar and din
Of the great town
That cannot drown
The subtle message of her whispering winds.
Then young and old, then each and all,
'Neath her enchantment fall,
And in a thousand hearts an answering thrill she finds.

—*St. James's Gazette.*

E. F. M.

IS GENIUS MORBID?

THE greatest poets always possess their imagination; are never possessed by it. They wing their highest flights serenely and majestically, never letting go the reins of reason. Nowhere are they more firmly held than in the loftiest and most rapturous of Dante's flights—probably the loftiest and most rapturous of all poetic flights—the *Paradiso*; the pure intellect and the pure imagination here go hand in hand, and while the poet is soaring in the empyrean, his brain never reels, nor does he once lose sight of the solid ground, though, at times, he may appear to do so; but, like Wordsworth's skylark, though in a deeper sense, he is ever "true to the kindred points of heaven and home." And it is the same with Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, Chaucer, Spenser, and Wordsworth as with Dante; the equilibrium of their faculties is never disturbed by the most concentrated efforts of their imagination. Most of them, too, were as practical in their dealings with men as they were sane and healthy in their writings. Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare, in particular, were all shrewd men of the world; and the same remark holds good of Scott.

Still, it is true that some great poets, only less than those we have named, have become insane, or betrayed symptoms of incipient insanity. The cause of this is not far to seek. Poets have, in all ages, been more sorely tried than most other men. It is surely neither strange nor surprising that the intellects of some of these should finally have given way under the pressure of accumulated misfortune. Most ordinary men, in like circumstances, would probably have succumbed much sooner. And when one considers the extreme susceptibility of the poetic temperament, one may well wonder that comparatively so few poets have become absolutely insane. It is a proof, we think, of their exceptional mental strength. The brains of poets are, necessarily, tasked much more severely than the brains of ordinary students who have no pretensions to genius; yet brain disease is as rare among the former class as it is frequent among the latter. It is not, however, to be denied that there is a morbid element in many of the finer poetic temperaments, especially those of more modern times. For this morbidity the feeble bodily organizations of the poets appear to us to have been, in most cases, largely, if not solely, responsible; it certainly constituted no essential part of their genius, as such. In the case of Collins, cited by Miss Sanborn, we have the testimony of Dr. Johnson, who knew him personally, that "his disease was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleness, a deficiency rather of his vital than his intellectual powers. What he spoke wanted neither judgment nor spirit." And, writing of Shelley, Byron, Poe, and others, M. Taine has observed:—"We are no longer poets without suffering for it. The passion of the brain gnaws our vitals, dries up the blood, eats into the marrow, shakes us like a tempest, and the human frame, such as civilization has made it, is not substantial enough long to resist it."

That madness is rather an accident than the "shadow" of genius, as it has been sometimes called, the very different lives of Calderon and Tasso afford, we think, a striking proof. No one who reads the dramas of the great Spanish poet will doubt that his was a keenly sensitive nature, as susceptible at least of all impressions as that of Tasso. And if ever there was a poet in whom the imagination was stronger than the judgment, it was Calderon; his fancies throng thicker and faster even than those of Shelley, and the sober reader is almost as bewildered among them as he would be by the vagaries of a madman; yet, so far as we know, Calderon was never subject to such hallucinations as those of Tasso or Shelley, nor has any suspicion of insanity ever been imputed to him. He was perfectly sane to the last, though he attained a ripe old age; and this we are inclined solely to attribute to the exceptionally happy circumstances of his life. In Tasso's cell he would, with his temperament, have shared Tasso's madness.—*The Spectator.*

MODERN DRESS.

UNDER the auspices of the National Health Society, a successful lecture was given on Friday, the 12th ult., under the above title, by Dr. A. T. Schofield, at the Public Baths, Queen's Road, Bayswater, before a large audience of ladies and gentlemen. After describing the bony framework of the body, the lecturer proceeded to explain the functions of clothes which, he said, were threefold: (1) To cover the body; (2) for warmth; (3) for purposes of social distinction. Men's clothes, he observed, fulfil all these conditions very well, except the last, in the case of identity of evening dress with a waiter's ordinary garb, which causes sometimes a disagreeable confusion. He, however, strongly condemned the chimney-pot hat as being without a single virtue. Clothes, in reality, neither warm the body nor keep it cool, but serve as an isolating medium to protect it from the surrounding atmosphere, and prevent the body being too rapidly cooled or overheated by the air in which it is placed. The only perfect isolating medium is wool, which is twice as good as cotton or linen, and, moreover, allows the evaporation of perspiration from the body and permits air to reach the skin. No other substance should ever be next the skin, and if possible all the clothes should be made of wool. The lecturer then passed on to consider the dress of ladies, which, he says, is fairly satisfactory as long as it is not fashionable. Why, he asks, cannot the leaders of fashion be imbued with rational ideas on the subject? If they would dress in a healthy manner all those who follow them like sheep or geese would be benefited. Is the human form so hideous that art must be called into change it? He saw no essential reason why fashion and reason should not agree. Taking, for example, a lady's evening dress and comparing it with the standard of what dress should be, we find that it does not cover the body, and, moreover, leaves exposed the upper lobes of the lungs, the seat of that terrible disease—consumption. The upper parts of the lungs are thus endangered by cold, and the lower are injured by the compression of corsets. No ladies will confess to lacing tightly. A lady, in whom he found two ribs had been dislocated by the compression of stays, maintained that she did not lace tightly; but any woman who measures more round the waist without her stays than with them was guilty of tight lacing, and he implored his audience to apply this test and act upon the result. If stays compress, skirts depress the vital organs, and he urged the adoption of union garments. Healthy dress need consist of no more than combinations and stockings of wool, a woollen union garment with divided skirt, and a free play to every organ; (2) not to weigh on the hips; (3) to be light; and (4) to cover every part of the body equally. Boots should be made to the natural shape of the foot, with broad soles and low heels. Ladies, if they wanted to wear French boots, should have the second toe amputated before doing so; he was convinced of this by the numbers of toes he had seen amputated afterwards. The lecture was illustrated by many diagrams,