

AN advertisement appears in the papers which we ought not to look at without uneasiness, and even a touch of shame. It is issued in the name of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and it alleges that great exertion will be needed to keep from starvation the wives and families of the men of the reserves who have been recently sent home. The men are suddenly cast upon the world. Even the pittance they received while serving now ceases. Their work has been taken by others, and their places filled. They go back in thousands of instances to desolate homes, their furniture and their very clothes having been disposed of by their wives for the bare necessities of life. The Primate therefore appeals to "patriots" to aid him in relieving the destitution, and to make again the homes which have been so wretchedly demolished.

AMERICAN riflemen seem to be having it all their own way just at present—they are certainly all the rage. Two of them, both marvellously good shots, appear every evening at the Aquarium, Westminster, and their performance, although apparently dangerous, is really very wonderful. They fire at potatoes placed on each other's hands and heads, put out lighted cigars, and show in many different ways the extraordinary accuracy of their aim. It is scarcely a pleasing exhibition, because a bad shot would certainly cost one of them his life; but they seem to have perfect confidence in each other, and the coolness they exhibit tends to reassure the public that there is really no difficulty in accomplishing the feat. It is said, however, that they keep a pretty sharp look-out after each other during the day, as the slightest excess on the part of either—an unsteady hand or shaken nerves—might result in a fatal accident, if, indeed, an accident it could be called.

THE ADVANTAGES OF ILL-HEALTH.

We should imagine that one of the first generalisations attempted in the youth of the world by the growing mind of man was, that pain and disease were absolute and unmitigated misfortunes. We have no means of knowing who was the bold man who first burst away from this accepted truth and conceived the idea of seeking in suffering "a gain to match." The author of the Book of Job has perhaps as good a claim as anyone to this honour, but whoever it was, it may be assumed that the convenient idea was soon taken up by the parsons of the period in their character of general purveyors of consolation. In past times the clerical profession are said to have known more of physiology than they do now—a very obvious possibility—and thus in the first instance the specific influence of ill-health upon the mind may have been kept distinct from the influence of misfortune in general. It must, however, soon have lost this distinctive character; at any rate, at the present time we might safely challenge the two Houses of Convocation to foretell the specific mental effects likely to be produced in a given case respectively by a retroflected organ, a severe neuralgia, a disappointment in love, or a failure in the city. At the same time it must be confessed that the question has been equally neglected by the doctor, and except for Wendell Holmes' generalisation about disease above the diaphragm being associated with hopefulness, and disease below it with despair, we know of no attempts at either observation, experiment, or induction on the subject. Sudden conversations have, indeed, been jocularly attributed to the timely exhibition of a gentle purgative, and other ingenious speculations of a similar kind have been brought out from time to time from behind the screen of anonymity. Further, the subject has been more fully worked out in cases where the mental effect of bodily conditions passes the boundary line of sanity and conveys the patient into the hands of the alienists. But doctors know little better than the clergy what special tone of mind is apt to be associated, say, with scrofula or rickets, or to be produced by cancer or consumption. The effects may possibly be so slight that we may have to wait for a mental microscope before they can be sufficiently intensified to affect our sensoria, but the time will doubtless come when many mental eccentricities will lose half their objectionableness and some mental excellences half their charm because we can refer them, with only too great certainty, each to an uncontrollable bodily condition.

When we speak of the advantages of ill-health, we are thinking chiefly of those mental excellences which are often, as we hope to show, associated with deviations from ill-health. There may, of course, be fortuitous advantages. Some people, for instance, actually extract profit from their bodily infirmities; but none of these instances, whether it be Prince Bismarck with his shingles, or a street-beggar with his talipes, come within the scope of the present article. The advantages we speak of are unavoidable, not accidental. They admit, however, of division into two categories, according as they are the result of congenital or of acquired disease. The most generally recognised effect of congenital deficiency in natural vigour is a diminution in what the metaphysicians call objectivity. The cause of this is easily explained. A certain amount of locomotive vigour is necessary for any extended exercise of objective energy; the congenital invalid cannot supply this, and his attention becomes of necessity concentrated on the impressions nearest to his hand, those belonging to his own thoughts and feelings. Besides this, the congenital invalid often

has his attention forcibly drawn to the phenomena of his own body by pain and suffering. As long as the human machine works smoothly and without effort, it is all but unconscious of its own existence; but as soon as it begins to creak and groan under its task, it is apt to become over-conscious of its work, and to spend its energy in mental introspection. Hence follow two results. In the first place, the invalid becomes more versed in the mechanism of mental processes than in their external consequences. He differs from healthy men in paying regard rather to the state of feeling produced by a sensation, than to the outward expression of that state of feeling. In the second place, it follows from his enforced inactivity that the invalid's stock of inductions is chiefly founded on his subjective experiences, and not, as in the case with other men, on the observation of the acts of others. These two characteristics are almost essential factors in the growth of two excellent qualities in man—sympathy and humour, neither of which, it would seem, can exist in its most subtle form where the whole tone of mind is of an objective character. We are far from wishing to trace all sympathy and all humour to a pathological cause, but it appears to us that a condition of ill-health often gives to these qualities a character which they would not otherwise possess.

Instances in favour of, or in opposition to, this view will occur to everyone, but the lives of poets and humorists supply us perhaps with the best material for forming an opinion regarding it. What especially strikes us in connection with the poets is that those who have been of vigorous health have written for the most part objective poems, while the invalids amongst them have given us verses whose chief distinctive feature is sensibility. The one class deal more with the actual, the other with the ideal. Compare, for instance, the veterans Chaucer and Goethe with the consumptives Shelley, Keats, and Schiller. We are much inclined to regard the well-known "Resignation" of the last named poet, beautiful as it is, as a purely pathological production. Again in the case of the humorists, it is a somewhat suggestive fact that Sterne, Lamb, and Hood were all sufferers from congenital maladies. We confine ourselves to mentioning these few authors, because both their writings and the circumstances of their lives are familiar to us all, but numerous instances may be found amongst less known men all pointing to the same truth. It is, indeed, a popular generalisation that poetry goes hand-in-hand with a feeble organization, and we have no doubt that if they had dared people would have applied to the poets a definition very similar to that which they have given to the tailors. Further, it is not only amongst public men that a generalisation as to the effects of ill-health has been popularly, though unconsciously, made. Even in private we often hear it remarked how much illness has improved a certain person. No one can have failed to observe how in certain cases prolonged ill-health has changed a brusque and self-centered woman into a gentle and sympathising one, and grafted on a careless and overbearing man the virtues of kindness and consideration for others. If this be so, disease cannot be the unmitigated misfortune that the healthy are apt to imagine it. If we consider the whole case, it must be confessed that even ill-health has its advantages.

THE REFLEX EFFECT OF ACTING.

The death of Charles Mathews—a most regrettable event, for within a limited range he was an admirable artist—reminds us of a curious lacuna in the history of the Stage. There does not exist, so far as we know, certainly there does not exist in English, anything like a good autobiography by an actor, a life describing the intellectual and moral effect of the profession upon the actor's self. This effect should be great. The world believes much, and we think justly, in the effect of books, and swallow greedily stories of groups of boys made bandits by Schiller's "Robbers," and every now and then proposes to prohibit "penny dreadfuls;" and the effect of reading must be slight compared with that of acting. It is simply impossible that a man gifted with the sympathies essential to an actor should be able to realize many characters so completely to himself that he can represent them to others, and make them laugh or weep with his temporary self, without those characters exercising some effect upon his mind; and we want to know both its kind and its degree. Was Charles Mathews or was he not more of an agreeable rattle because he incessantly studied how agreeable rattles should be depicted? His biographers say that his cool, laughing insouciance lasted all his long life, and sustained him under all difficulties, and it is at least possible that it may have been deepened by his professional assumption of the quality. The effect must be increased by the process of natural selection, which induces an actor to choose those parts which he can represent best and with which, therefore, he must have a certain nearness of sympathy that one would think must greatly deepen the impact of their impression upon himself. One catches qualities from friends who are similar. Elliston, for instance, perhaps the best known of all actors of the second rank, had about him a certain liking at once for graciousness and pomp which made him inclined to represent kings; and he studied so many parts of that kind, and acted them so well, that his friends all believed in their influence on his

character. He became, as life went on, more and more the kind of benignant but over-stately and ceremonious grandee that he loved to represent, regarded all about him from a certain height, as his subjects, and met the endless difficulties of his career with a feeling which always kept him cheerful, and which could not be distinguished from benign condescension towards the creditors, supers, patrons, and other stupid people with a right to exist who kept trying to ruffle his serenity. It has now and then happened to an actor to play a part so well that the public never ceases to demand it, and he himself has begun to confess to an influence arising from a repetition which perplexed and worried his mind. We do not know if the saying attributed Mrs. Dion Boucicault is true or not, but it exactly represents our point. Her representation of the dark "Colleen" in the *Colleen Bawn* so charmed all London that the piece, perhaps the best melodrama ever written to have no genius in it, went on for hundreds of nights, until at last the actress declared he must stop, that her brain was growing confused, and that "she began to be uncertain whether she was acting the Colleen Bawn, or the Colleen Bawn was acting Mrs. Boucicault." We have heard Americans say that they believed that most perfect of actors, Mr. Jefferson, was distinctly modified in character, and for the better, by his endless repetitions of Rip Van Winkle; and certainly it is difficult to conceive how a man could create that character, and then pass his life in representing it, without imbibing in some degree its essential qualities, the spirit of humorous tolerance and sense of the puzzle of daily life. But one wants direct evidence of that. Does Mr. Irving, for example, find that when he has been acting Hamlet for fifty nights the tone of his own inner mind has become more or less Hamletian? We say less because, of course, the chance of an influence of repulsion must always exist, and we can imagine an actor hating ambition more because he was every night a Richard III., or growing graver because for part of every day he was Mercutio. Liston's incessant playing of fools helped, in all human probability, to make of him the depressed Evangelical he was; and we could hardly imagine Mr. Irving less alive to the uselessness of religious formalism because he had played for seventy nights as Louis XI. Could a man act Prospero every day for a year and not acquire something, however little, of the dignified serenity of mind, of the sense of the power possessed by the immaterial to rule material circumstances? Or could he be Jaques for a year, and not tend to melancholy reflectiveness? It has often been remarked that men to whom life seems unreal, who have a sense of the histrionic element in it, are the least dependable of mankind; and of all foibles, absence of dependableness is the one most frequent with an actor. May not that be increased by his half-dubiousness whether he is himself or that other man whom every night he seems, to a watching audience, to be? Can Mr. Charles Mathews have separated himself entirely from the Sir Charles Coldstream, of whom the little girl said that she did not admire that Mr. Mathews, he was so lazy, and all through the play was only himself. Is Mr. Jefferson ever quite sure, as he walks about, that Schneider is not at his heels? That the long repetition of a dramatic character will make certain physical mannerisms cling to an actor for months, and even years after he has discontinued the performance, is quite certain—just watch Mr. Sothern as Garrick—and why not mental mannerisms too? Was there no trace of Lady Macbeth's nature, no iron of resolve in Mrs. Siddons, even though she had acted tragedy, and especially that tragedy, so long that she could not get rid of her grandeur in private life, and appalled an unhappy waiter with—

You've brought me water, boy! I asked for beer.

The speculation, though it may seem of little importance, is of rare interest to students of the human mind, and solid evidence about it might greatly affect education, more particularly by determining tutors as to the Jesuits' contention, the utility of an enforced attitude of mind in moulding the inner character; but solid evidence can only be obtained when some considerable actor, himself a man able enough and conscious enough to trace the workings of his own mind, shall delight the world and keep his memory fresh by giving us his autobiography.

THE BIRTH OF A GREAT JOURNAL.

It was in a dark and dingy room in a pot house on Thames street, New York, some forty-four years ago, that the *New York Herald* was brought into existence. The house was kept by an old Englishman, named Tom Reynolds, and was noted for superior ale and the style in which Welch rarebit was served. It was a miscellaneous company that assembled one evening—composed of Americans, English and Scotchmen—and probably the most impecunious in the crowd was James Gordon Bennett. He had formerly been employed on the *Courier and Enquirer* as a Washington correspondent; but the managing editor and himself had a difficulty and he had been for some time out of a situation, and was, to all intents and purposes, in a hard-up condition.

Mr. Nunn, the then celebrated pianoforte manufacturer, was a constant visitor to the house, and, moreover, he was a friend to Bennett, who, upon the night in question, appeared to be more than usually depressed in spirits. "Take another toby of ale, old fellow, and

cheer up," said Nunn, "it's a long lane that has no turning, and who knows but you may be at the turning point of your luck?"

"I don't see any show for better times, so far as I am concerned," replied Bennett gloomily.

It was then the era for penny papers, two of which, the *Sun* and *Transcript*, had been started in New York, and were getting along swimmingly.

"How much money will it take to start a paper the size of the *Sun*?" inquired Nunn.

"If I had \$500 in cash, I could do it," replied Bennett.

"Gentlemen," said Nunn, addressing the assembled company, "let us Bennett up. I'll head the subscription with a hundred dollars."

There was a cheerful response. Old Tom Reynolds subscribed fifty, and then and there the money was made up and an article drawn, wherein Bennett pledged himself to conduct the *New York Herald*, the name settled upon for the paper, as a purely independent sheet; and this was the origin of one of the most lucrative newspaper establishments in the world.

MILITARY PROTECTION.

To the Editor of the ILLUSTRATED NEWS:—

SIR,—I read with pleasure your article in the *News* of 17th inst., on the subject of "Our Military System," and I agree with you that it is a very hard matter to suppress disturbances in any locality with the aid of the volunteer force. A more loyal set of men do not exist under any Government in the world than our noble volunteers, and I trust they will not be called out again to shoot down their fellow-townsmen.

I would go beyond you in suggesting that a memorial be at once got up and sent home to the British Premier who is quite alive to aiding the colonies and cementing the bond his predecessors were anxious to sever, asking for five or six regiments of regular troops, one to be quartered at Halifax, one in Quebec, one in Montreal, one in Ottawa, and another in Toronto, and one divided between Kingston and London. What use would two companies be to suppress a riot? and before the regiment could be got together, a town might be destroyed and sacked.

We live in momentous times when Communism appears to be extending itself through the world, and it behoves the friends of law and order to be prepared for any and every emergency.

Trusting that these few suggestions will not be taken amiss, and will find a place in the columns of your excellent paper,

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,

J. G. D.

Ottawa, August 19th, 1878.

HOW TO SING A SONG.

"Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing." These doggerel lines, affixed by William Byrde to some songs published 300 years ago, are true and applicable to our times. The author gives the following brief reasons for persuading every one to learn to sing:

"1. It is a knowledge easily taught and quickly learned, where there is a good master and an apt scholar.

"2. The exercise of singing is delightful to nature, and good to preserve the health of man.

"3. It doth strengthen all parts of the breast, and doth open the pipes.

"4. It is a singular good remedy for a stuttering and stammering in the speech.

"5. It is the best means to procure a perfect pronunciation, and to make a good orator.

"6. It is the only way to know where nature hath bestowed the benefit of a good voice; which gift is so rare, as there is not one among a thousand that hath it; and in many that excellent gift is lost, because they want art to express nature.

"7. There is not any music of instruments whatsoever comparable to that which is made of the voices of men, where the voices are good and the same well sorted and ordered.

"8. The better the voice is the meeter it is to honour and serve God therewith; and the voice of man is chiefly to be employed to that end."

Quaintly as this is put by Master Byrde, one cannot help thinking of Shakespeare's dictum, "Much virtue in 'if.'" Of course, if an apt scholar with the rare voice of one in a thousand study with diligence under a good master, the result is a *regone* conclusion; but, believing as I do, that 999 out of 1,000 people may have passably fair voices and sufficient natural musical capacity to be able to experience a never-failing delight and solace in the exercise of singing, if properly directed, I propose to say a few words on the subject of "How to sing a song."

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