

choly, and even to do and feel inclined to do an extravagant thing, so it is as common for him to get well and be quite cheerful again;

“And thus a-while the fit will work on him;
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,
His silence will sit drooping.”

Thus it is among witless people that the true insanity will be found. It is the more intelligent that are subject to the other disorders, and a proper use of their intelligence will show them what the disorders are.

But weak treatment may frighten the intelligent. A kind person, for instance, in a fit of melancholy, may confess that he feels an inclination to do some desperate or even cruel thing. This is often treated at once as insanity, instead of an excess of the kind just mentioned; and the person seeing he is thought mad, begins to think himself so, and at last acts as if he were. This is a lamentable evil; but it does not stop here. The children or other relatives of the person may become victims to the mistake. They think there is madness, as the phrase is, “in the family,” and so whenever they feel ill or meet with a misfortune, and get what is commonly called a “fit of the blues,” the thought will prey upon their minds; and this may lead to catastrophes with which they have really no more to do than any other sick or unfortunate people. How many persons have committed an extravagance, done some more than eccentric thing in a brain fever, or undergone hallucinations of mind in consequence of getting an ague, or taking opium or morphine, or fifty other causes; and yet the moment the least wandering of mind is observed in them, others become frightened; their fright is manifested beyond all necessity; and the patients and their family must suffer for it. They seem to think that no disorder can properly be held a true Christian sickness, and fit for charitable interpretation, but where the patient has gone regularly to bed, and had caudle-cups, and water-gruel, and nurses about him, like a well-behaved respectable sick gentleman, and has had a litany said for him in common with all others afflicted in mind, body, or estate. But this state of things implies muscular weakness, or weakness of that sort which renders the bodily action feeble. Now, in nervous disorders the muscular action may be as strong as ever; and people may reasonably be allowed a world of illness, sitting in their arm-chairs, or even walking or running.

These mistaken pronouncers upon disease ought to be told, that when they are thus unwarrantably frightened, they are partaking