

*Professor Sir William Osler, Bart., M.D., LL.D., Sc.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.;
&c., &c., &c. —*

*with cordial good wishes — from
his ardent admirer and
Sincere friend,*

The Author.

THE LAST ILLNESS of LORD BYRON

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A STUDY IN THE BORDERLAND OF GENIUS
AND MADNESS, OF COSMICAL INSPIRATION
AND PATHOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

JOHN KNOTT

A. M., M. D. Ch. B. and D. P. H., (Univ. Dub.)

M. R. C. P. I.; M. R. I. A.; Etc.

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Do—please—criticize,
Favourably, or otherwise!

— and with fullest longitude of Candour

Wm.

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THE LAST ILLNESS OF LORD BYRON: A STUDY IN
THE BORDERLAND OF GENIUS AND MADNESS,
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LOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY.

By JOHN KNOTT, A. M., M. D., CH. B., and D. P. H.,
(UNIV. DUB.); M. R. C. P. I.; M. R. I. A.; Etc.

DUBLIN, IRELAND.

In the, now unhappily remote, days of the adolescence of the present writer two startlingly vivid impressions were made on his mental (as well as physical) retina by the sudden apparitions of very realistic book illustrations of sadly interesting type. So deeply imbedded, and so clearly retained, did these prove to be, that they have, each, been often reproduced since in moments of retrospective seclusion or nocturnal restlessness; and always with a clearcut precision and definition of outline, and expressiveness of the physiognomic features of form, position, and implied movement, which have never failed in their sad suggestiveness of associated reminiscences—even down to the present date. One of the prints referred to represented the majestically graceful—sometime royal, and, I should fondly hope, ever saintly—form of Lady Jane Grey, as she knelt with blindfold eyes and prayerfully clasped hands, and neck exposed to the edge of the poised axe of the hideously ghoulish, masked headsman. (Frontispiece to Harrison Ainsworth's *Tower of London*.) The other (in Major Parry's narrative) depicted Lord Byron on his death-bed sitting up in the lonely invalid couch to which he had been consigned by the necessitous conditions of the environment of the malarial laager that he was obliged to utilize in that stage of his

Hellenic crusade when hereditary and acquired physical qualities had rendered him prematurely susceptible to the constitutional ravages of time, and to the mechanical strain of over-exertion; as well as the newly-presented infection in which a notoriously aguish district richly abounded. The fateful thread of each of those uniquely interesting personalities was shorn by the relentless hand and shears of *Atropos*, at a date and age at which, according to the average experience of fairly healthy human life, each should have been entering on the most vigorously fertile, and socially and intellectually important, stage of a brilliantly auspicious career. Looked at in the present light of biographic revelation, the life-history of the former may be said to present plausible *prima facie* evidence of having been very directly controlled, and very abruptly concluded, by the immediate influence of "Circumstance that unspiritual God and miscreator" of whom the pessimistic poet afterwards sang, with music of so thrilling, melancholy and fascinating influence; while his own life-history would, in its turn, appear to have been so far influenced by both the *inevitable* and the *avoidable* as to present a very typical result of the effects of the persistent blend, the continuous mingling and ever present opposition, of the causes and effects attributable to the divided sovereignty of *Schicksal und eigene Schuld*. To the curious in examples of peculiar parallelism, or of contrast, in biographic story, the period of that of Lady Jane Grey, also furnishes another specimen of suggestive (limited, fractional) similarity to the career of Lord Byron. I allude to that of Francis Bacon, whose rapid and phenomenal precipitation from the pyramidal apex of public dignity and popular appreciation is so suited to remind many readers of the fall of the more meteoric Byron. Both those men had attained positions in the eye of the literary and thinking world unparalleled in their respective generations. Each was, unquestionably, devoted to his work; to the delivery of the message which he, very evidently, believed that he had (somehow) been commissioned by some superior authority, or from an indefinitely-placed higher source, to deliver to his contemporary fellow men, and to bequeath to posterity. Both were destined to drink to the dregs the contents of the cup of bitterness which had been so assiduously filled and blended by the dragon-like fore-paw of the monster of jealousy, who has evermore been found to contribute with unsleeping industry to the fouling of the purest and sweetest sources of the Creator's noblest and most consoling gifts to fallen humanity.

Each was made the generalized subject of the vilest and vulgarest vituperation and detraction, the universal weapons which *moral* and (above all) *intellectual inferiority* have never been known to fail to employ against those specially gifted in that non-negotiable faculty of the combined creative and critical mental insight and perspective; and which are used secretly and darkly in the day of success, but openly and with vociferous jubilation when the reversal of the tidal current of undulating fortune furnishes the opportunity for dragging the objects of their atrabilious animosity down to the attainable range of their poisoned javelins. The rise of the elder of those phenomenal geniuses was incomparably more obstructed, and more gradual, than was the electric evolution of the fame of the junior. The fall of each was precipitous in its velocity and, in a restricted sense, its depth and immediate results. For the name of each was, with approximate completeness of deletion, removed from the roll of the successful claimants to (even) respectability of reputation. Yet each bore his fall without appreciable loss of his own sense of the divine value and dignity of the message which he believed himself commissioned to deliver to humanity; and each appealed with a pathetic, yet evidently well assured, confidence to the skilled judgment of his contemporaries among foreign nations, and to the unprejudiced verdict of the learned posterity of all civilization, for the final decision of the merits of his personal and intellectual record, and the value of the life-work which he had transmitted to their critical care. There is an undeniable cousin-germanship of basic feelings underlying the respective appeals of the philosophic Lord Chancellor and the aristocratic verse-maker. In the Last Will and Testament of the former we read: "For my name and memory, I leave them to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages." And the author of *Childe Harold*, after evident saturation with the sorrows which inspired his somewhat over-shrill lamentation for the "brain sear'd" and the "heart riven," is still able to console himself with a prophetic anticipation of the fulfilment of the ambitious hope of his highest ideal:

"* * * * * I twine
My hopes of being remembered in my line
With my land's language; * * *

The magnitude of the values, and the complexity of the problems, involved in each of the two cases, are perhaps most

convincingly demonstrated by the fact that in neither instance has the posterity in question laid its myriad heads so close together as to decide upon the formulation of a final verdict. Nor, I feel considerable confidence in thinking, is that multi-capitate entity at all likely to do so for many generations to come, if ever. Nor, I am impelled to add, is the name or memory of either personality at all likely to become forgotten in the course of this peculiarly prolonged process of philosophic and literary appeal; the only net result which can well be said to have hitherto been definitely secured in that direction, being a demonstration of the fact that the fame, at least, has, in each case, been fully and firmly secured. Thus has each provided the inquiring members of the specially curious section of inquisitive posterity with a fruitful subject for: philosophical reflection, psychological analysis, ethical evangelization and religious homilization. And, as we concentrate our attention on the subject of the present article, we find ourselves face to face with data and problems, and suggestive facts and perplexing theories, which invite special inquiry, and demand special skill, in every one of the domains referred to. Even in adhering (with the closest attainable range of approximation) to discussion of the physical aspects of the poet's personality, his intellectual powers, and his moral idiosyncracies, far more material is ready to the hand and eye of the skilled Byronic specialist than can be woven into the texture of a single article. Still, even in presence of such discouraging difficulty, the subject may be found sufficiently stimulating to suggest an effort in the direction of the partial success which alone is possible. It has proved so to the present writer—whose highest prospective reward must accordingly be the sympathetic appreciation of those who approach the perusal of the paragraphs now before them in a corresponding mental attitude; and, perhaps more gratifying still, the conversion of some who had previously entertained an estimate diametrically opposed.

All readers know that Byron entered the turbid and gusty atmosphere of his earthly pilgrimage as the only child of his mother, and that both his parents had been originally endowed with constitutions and dispositions of the most highly neurotic type; the family of each having notoriously scored an exceptionally high record in the department of mental aberration. They also know that he was spoiled and sulky, as such boys are more than likely to be; petted, and humored, and caressed, to excess, in the first few years of his precocious existence; and supervised and

lectured, and homilized, almost into a state of quotidian frenzy, as puberty approached and developed. He was celebrated at school and college for superior intelligence, extraordinary memory, passionate temperament, irritable disposition, wayward pursuits, eccentric habits, love of strange pets, unrivalled pistol dexterity, exquisitely beautiful voice, pallid complexion, light grey eyes, jet black hair, and weird personal fascination. His exquisitely shaped head and clubbed left foot formed one of the numerous binary sets of polar physical and moral contrasts and inconsistencies which characterized the person of the future poet.

The exquisite diction of Macaulay's antithetic allusion can hardly ever be surpassed, and the words need not be quoted; as every reader who has read anything, to any purpose, knows them by heart. Still they hardly represent so serious an incompatibility as that supplied by the startlingly ill-matched juxtaposition of eyes of the lightest and hair of the darkest color. The latter was strictly in keeping with his long, long French ancestral line; as this was with the dazzling vivacity of his meteoric imagination, and the crystalline lucidity of his thought and expression; as well as with the keenly logical precision, and critical perception, which so distinctly indicated the Gallic quality of his genius and intellect. So it was with the startling *pallor* of complexion, and the aspect which so often gave appreciative observers the impression that his head was at a *higher temperature* than that of other people. But the co-existence of *irides* of very scanty pigment represented a misarrangement of Nature's furniture which gave the observant physiognomist the prophetic impression of many impetuous onsets and disastrous collisions in the course of life's pilgrimage. There was an obstinate tendency to *stoutness*, even from boyhood, which proved one of the most worrying of the bugbears of Byron's existence; and which he used to stave off by prolonged periods of self-sacrificial starvation, the descriptions of which remind one of the practice of Oriental Anchorites, and of modern exhibitions of the DR. TANNER type. Then there were the exquisitely moulded and sensitive *hands*, and "thoroughbred fingers"; which suggested the highest artistic powers of execution as well as of conception, and the daintiest development of the "daintier sense" which is little likely to be found except in the individual whose "little employment" of that organ has inherited a tradition of many generations of antecedent restfulness. Even the *hysterical curvature* of the *upper eyelashes* is distinctly noticeable in engravings of the best portraits of By-

ron; as is the repose of ever *unstable equilibrium*, of which a feather-weight touch could produce an explosive disarrangement; so are the general contours of artistic outline and of (even *involuntary*) *pose*; the graceful *curling of the hair*; the *scornful mouth*, with the classic curvature of its exquisitely sensitive lips; the lightning flash which seems ready to emerge with blighting effect from the expressive *eye*; and the *nasolabial* curves of expression of intellectual and social *superiority*, and extreme, unaffected *disdain*. While over all is plainly depicted the *electric instability*, and corresponding velocity of inspiration from within, and of response to stimulation from without; the *physical and mental restlessness*; the *lucidity of perception* and of *expression*; the sensory and spiritual *hyperacsthesis*; the utter and hopeless *dissatisfaction* with environment and circumstance; the swiftness and indelibility of impressions of *sympathy* and *antipathy*; the "*scorn of man*," with aggressive expression of the same; the boundless *love of woman*, and the inevitable *disappointment* thereon supervening; the wilful, uncalculating *impetuosity*; the furious *impatience of contradiction*, and of opposition; the many, many features and *undeveloped possibilities of affection*; and power of *intellectual achievement* of quality which (not unjustly) may surely be rated as superhuman, when measured by the average standard scale of his own time; and, perhaps even more so, when compared with that of our own "enlightened" twentieth century.

The major portion of the literary products of this unusually—even mysteriously, and almost monstrously—complex system of human mechanism cannot, of course, be criticized here; and, indeed, for the purposes of the present discussion, would require but a few cursory allusions, even were the disposal of time and space unlimited. But there is one feature to which I would like to give marked prominence in the mind of the interested and intelligent inquirer, inasmuch as it seems to me to have never been dwelt upon in the way to which it was surely entitled by its convincing significance. I allude to the *quantity* (as well as *quality*) of his writings, even as we now possess them; the actual products having been, of course, very appreciably discounted by the destruction of certain very important and, as was thought by his literary executors, far too candidly outspoken documents. Not only is that quantity phenomenal, having regard to the time-limit of the sixteen years, or so, of the very restless and disturbed existence, in the available intervals of which they were—spas-

modically—produced; but it is, for the most part, characterized by the qualitative features of a profundity, as well as lucidity and intensity, of thought and expression, which have rarely been paralleled in the extant products of poetic inspiration. And this fact cannot fail to impress the appreciative reader even more forcibly and deeply as the range of his own reading and inquiry expands. I have often heard persons of more than average intelligence and literary attainment express the opinion that Byron's words were "very well," eloquent, musical and sonorous; "but": the *sound*, not the *sense* had dictated their choice and arrangement. I venture to assert that a less accurate opinion has seldom been expressed; and the fact that this author is so highly appreciated by accomplished continental critics and translators, who hardly acknowledge any other English poet, except the Anglo-Saxon (or Anglo-German) Shakespeare, is surely the most convincing proof of the contrary. Comparatively small trouble has been taken with the foreign upholstering of the manufactures of the late Lord Tennyson; whom his English contemporaries had actually bellowed into the belief that he was not only a poet but "a big one, too!" Thus are reputations sometimes made; and, without unnecessary or unpatriotic irreverence be it stated, more especially by the English Press. And so of William Wordsworth of Byron's own day, with regard to whom the British literary and critical public has for the past decade or two been kneading and twisting itself, as well as its disciples and followers, into the opinion that he was not only a poet but a great philosopher; in fact, somewhat comparable in brilliancy and magnitude to the respective founders of the original *Academy* and *Lyceum*!! Thus are the national opinions formed, of a public which is too stolid, or too indifferent, or otherwise too busy and distracted, to form an opinion of its own. Nevertheless, people still persist in reading Byron; and, while the appreciative "man in the street" never fails to enjoy him, the best judges still confess (to themselves and their intimates) that his text presents, although tarnished with the "solar" spots of muddy murkiness, and leavened with all the ferments of human passion, a mine of inspired opinion and philosophic expression, and a mirror of human thought and action, which are, respectively, more richly comprehensive, and more faithfully reproductive, than in the case of any other writer of poetry or prose; with exceptions that can be reckoned on the digits, perhaps of even a single hand. To the superficial reader of *Don Juan*, the riotous recklessness of its thought and expression

usually appears the specially characteristic—and wholly dominating—feature; yet I would cheerfully undertake, against all comers, to illustrate from the stanzas of that production more sublime, and infinitely more true, philosophy than can be gleaned from the whole of the writings of William Wordsworth, even with those of all of the other “Lakers” thrown into the balance! The vividness of Byron’s word-painting, and impressiveness of description and of allusion, will, I think, hardly at the present date be denied even by his greatest detractors; it is the gift of his intellectual (and correlated physical) supersensitiveness, of one whose *vision* was too *receptive* as well as too *penetrating*. His magnificently musical eloquence, his exquisite choice of words, and his unrivalled—I use this adjective advisedly—purity of English, both in prose and poetry, are attributable to the same exquisite *thin-skinnedness*, of mind as well as of body; by means of the peculiar properties of which he saw and retained, and transmitted, so much; and suffered so keenly. But the extremely demonstrative feature of Byron’s record which seems to me to have been almost systematically ignored is the very evident *devotion to his work*, to his literary achievement; to its continuous culture; with an untiring outlook towards improvement of quality, as well as unflagging zeal in the production of quantity. The restless energy displayed in his aims at universal conquest in the department of literature was, most assuredly, paralleled in the political records, and results, of his generation only by that of Napoleon himself.

A few more passing glances at the activity of the individual, and at the more characteristic landmarks which he scattered along the zig-zag pathway of his life pilgrimage, will now suffice for the purpose of the present communication. His very ardent desire to excel in manly sports was cultivated with that intensity of enthusiasm, and irresistible perseverance of purpose, which distinguished the other pursuits of his life. In presence of the disabling and humiliating obstacle presented by the weakness and deformity of one of his limbs, this fact offers convincing evidence of the ardor with which he pursued an object of ambition, even in the teeth of specially depressing difficulties. The fact that he retained up to the onset of his last illness, even when in the latter months his hand had become very shaky, the reputation of being “about the best” *pistol shot* of his generation, is, I believe, less generally known to the average reader than is the fact of his being one of its best and most enthusiastic *swimmers*. His

exquisitely *musical vocalization* was a natural gift of which the existence (very appropriately, indeed) has been specially telegraphed to posterity by the testimony of the devoted la Guiccioli; and the fact that it always attracted the attention of strangers in the drawing-room gatherings of the noble and cultured in the musical land of Italy, is proof of the possession of a weapon of unique power, of which the effectiveness was recorded by the owner in the tone of suggested rakishness that one reader, at least has come to believe was chiefly inspired by the nervously "bluffing" perversion of the originally *morbid modesty* of which the shreds invested, and often incumbered, the writer, even to the very close of his life:

"The devil has not, in all his quiver's choice,
An arrow for the heart like a *sweet voice*."

It is interesting, too, to the philosophic medical scientist, to the inquiring psychologist, and to the clinical observer, to be reminded by the same faithful *amica* that the other distinctive feature of the daily life of her adored Byron—a habit, this time, not a gift—was also a *respiratory* one. "*THAT SIGH*"!—how it used to wring the heart of the devoted Teresa; that suffocated cry of agony called forth by the sudden recollection of wrecked hopes, and unattained and unattainable desires! ! ! How truly has its source been metrically voiced and painted by the most self-revealing of all poets:

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside forever; it may a sound—
A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring—
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound.

And how or why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
But feel the shock renew'd, nor can efface
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
Which out of things familiar, undesign'd,
When least we deem of such, calls up to view
The spectres whom no exorcism can bind,
The cold, the changed, perchance the dead, anew,
The mourn'd, the loved, the lost—too many!—yet how few!

And how strangely *prophetic* of the utter *loneliness* of the "last phase" of the "*Pilgrimage*" of the "self-exiled *Harold*" is the almost piteous wail of anticipatory agony which resounds from the Trophonian depths of the concluding stanza of the immortal cantos which served to elevate their author, in the course of a single night, to the acme of contemporary fame.

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?
 What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?
 To view each loved one blotted from life's page,
 And be alone on earth as I am now.
 Before the Chastener humbly let me bow,
 O'er hearts divided, and o'er hopes destroyed:
 Roll on vain days! full reckless may ye flow,
 Since Time hath reft whate'er my soul enjoy'd,
 And with the ills of Eld mine earlier years alloy'd.

To many readers of the present generation who can fairly estimate, uninfluenced by the agitation of personal prejudices or the misleading measurements of dazzling proximity of perspective, the environment of the poet who had then barely emerged upon the arena of the marathon race of manhood, the tone of the wail of this stanza seems at first positively *childish*, rather than inspired; *hysterical*, rather than prophetic. But when read in the light of the full record of the closing scenes of the pilgrimage of the real *Childe*, which I have quoted in the subsequent course of this communication, how *thrillingly prophetic* they are found to be! "Coming events" surely *did* "cast their shadows before" in Byron's thorny pathway of life. The only consolatory reflection is that they were necessary in the strange scheme of Providence to the fruition subsequently attained. For the penetrating observation of Goethe, that the *genius* of his gifted junior was *pain*, is far too thrillingly obvious to the real student of the "real Byron":

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
 And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a fire
 And motion of the soul which will not dwell
 In its own narrow being, but aspire
 Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
 And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
 Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
 Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
 Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

Was ever invisible, and undemonstrable, physical fact more truly (and prophetically) transcribed into the flashing revelations of the language of metaphor and simile than in the lines of this stanza? Good reason was there, as we now well know, by the aid of the gloomy enlightenment reflected from the post-mortem table, that the *Childe* was continuously and hopelessly conscious that he had donned the *Nessus shirt* with his original swaddling-clothes!

The second section of the present study of the peculiarly gifted (and peculiarly unhappy) poet, can, I believe, be most satisfactorily sketched and illuminated by beginning with the very last feature of "The last phase": the post-mortem examination of the earthly remains of one of the most vividly imaginative, and most intensely expressive of all the poets; those of every age and nation being included in the competitive exhibition. Of the results of this procedure, as well as of the clinical details of the preceding scenes of the tragedy, the accounts transmitted to us by Drs. BRUNO and MILLINGEN agree as to all the main physical facts; and are confirmed by those given by the nonmedical observers present: Count Pietro Gamba, the brother of la Guiccioli; and Major Parry, his groggy boon companion; whose imputed toadyism had very probably soothed, as his buffoonery unquestionably was made to amuse, the many hours of tediousness and irritation of Byron's final expedition. Millingen's account appears to me to be that of a close and appreciative observer; and is, I venture to hope, of interest and importance sufficient to arrest the attention of every medical and philosophical inquirer, during the time required for its perusal. It reads as follows:

"Before we proceeded to embalm the body, we could not refrain from pausing, in silent contemplation, of the lifeless clay of one, who, but a few days before, was the hope of a whole nation and the admiration of the civilized world. After consecrating a few moments to the feelings such a spectacle naturally inspired, we could not but admire the perfect symmetry of his body. Nothing could surpass the beauty of the forehead; its height was extraordinary, and the protuberances, under which the nobler intellectual faculties are supposed to reside, were slightly pronounced. His hair, which curled naturally, was quite grey; the mustachios light coloured. His physiognomy had suffered little alteration; and still preserved the sarcastic haughty expression, which habitually characterized it. The chest was broad, high

vaulted, the waist very small, the pelvis rather narrow; the muscular system well pronounced; especially that of the superior extremities; the skin delicate and white, and the habit of the body plump. The adipose tissue was everywhere predominant, a proof of his natural predisposition to embonpoint; which his severe abstemiousness could hardly counteract. The only blemish of his body, which might otherwise have vied with that of Apollo himself, was the congenital malformation of his left foot and leg. The foot was deformed and turned inwards; and the leg was smaller and shorter than the sound one. Although Byron preferred attributing his lameness to the unskillful treatment of a sprained ankle, there can be little or no doubt that he was born club-footed.

"The following are the principal phenomena which the autopsy presented: the cranium resembled completely that of a man much advanced in age; its sutures were obliterated; its two tables were united into one; no traces of the diploe remained, and the texture of it was as hard as ivory. The adhesion of the dura mater to the interior of the skull-cap was extraordinarily strong. Its vessels were large, highly injected, and it had acquired at least twice its usual thickness. Each of its surfaces was covered with strong organized bands uniting them powerfully to the adjacent parts. Its prolongation, the falciform process, was perhaps even more inflamed and adhered firmly to the hemispheres; and the tentorium cerebelli, though in a less degree, was also strongly injected. The pia mater presented the appearance of the conjunctiva on an inflamed eye. The whole system of sanguiferous vessels, of the cerebrum and cerebellum, was gorged with blood, and their substance was surprisingly hard. The ventricles contained several ounces of serous fluid.

"The lungs were perfectly healthy and crepitant, and what is seldom observed in natives of cold climates, had not contracted the slightest adhesion to the pleura. The appearance, presented by the heart, was singular. Its parietes were as collapsed, and of a consistence as flabby as those of persons who have died of old age. Its muscular fibres were pale and hardly pronounced, and the ventricles had no thickness whatever.

"The liver was beginning to undergo the alterations observed in persons who have indulged in the abuse of alcoholic liquors. Its bulk was smaller, its texture harder, its colour much lighter than in its healthy condition. The stomach and intestines presented no remarkable phenomena."

"Poor Byron"—such was the final summary of the critical observation, and moral dissection (of a philosophic and *experienced* word-painter of men and things) to which Lady Blessington was led by her brief, but closely scrutinizing, acquaintance with her gifted and unhappy poetical contemporary. And that all too expressive exclamation may well be adopted as representative of the view of the skilled pathologist and psychological philosopher who has perused the above account of the post-mortem examination of the mortal coil of the most brilliant master of the English language in his day. How dearly did Byron pay for his heritage in the world's metrical fame! How heavily was every one of his unrivalled gifts taxed by the inflexible canon of unsympathetic fate! And how ruthlessly was every individual item of the contribution levied, from the earliest onset to the close of the last lap of his marathon race of life! The *pachymeningitis* which the rigid adhesions, solidified diploe, and ankylosed cranial sutures, prove to have been of very chronic standing, indeed, explains, all too clearly, the ungovernable *irritability*, the volcanic *headaches*, and the explosive *restlessness*; as well as the facial suggestion of an internal *temperature higher than that of other heads*; the ever-recurring and never-relieving *sigh*; the *epileptic* seizures towards the termination of the final phase; and the development of the *coma* which crowned the closing scene. (I sometimes wonder whether Carlyle had not Byron prominently in his mind's eye when he penned his famous simile—which likened the typical *genius* to a ship on fire near shore, the conflagration of which had been unsympathetically provided by fate for the entertainment of the gaping crowd on land. Of course, the unrefined Caledonian, who professed to look upon the haughty aristocratic poet as "a sulky dandy," would not confess to his readers—or, without throes of mental colic, even to himself—that he rated the titled ultra-Celtic versifier as an ideal "genius.") Then the same osteomeningeal conditions inevitably connoted the continuous presence of abnormally rapid circulation in the vessels of the subjacent cerebral convolutions—with electromagnetic velocity of metabolism in the molecular constituents of their cells and fibers.

And how well did the prematurely aged, and (evidently) mechanically exhausted, *cardiac* tissues display their quota of the reflected luminosity of that revelation of Byron's experience of the dearly-bought pleasures of Bacchus and Venus:

"I have tried both, and he who would a part take
May choose between the headache and the heartache."

With regard to the condition of the *liver*, I very much incline to think that, as the teaching of the great French physician who "invented" the term *cirrhosis* was then very much in vogue, it may have tinted the pathological vision of the anatomist of the occasion. And I will just take the opportunity of indicating, parenthetically, that the causal connection of *alcohol* and *cirrhosis* is not so clearly established as the majority seem to think. The so-called "*cabby's*" *liver* has been met with in persons of decidedly temperate habits, even *ladies*, as is pointed out in WATSON's classic *Lectures*, and, *mirabilis dictu*, even in cows! On the other hand, Byron *never was* a confirmed "soaker," as has been so often implied. His excitability of temperament made the effects of small quantities of stimulants unusually obvious; and the explanation is made far too sadly apparent by bearing in mind the intracranial conditions revealed by the autopsy. And another eye-witness, less charitable than the over-accommodating Parry, could not allow himself to miss the opportunity of stigmatizing the latter. (Oh, the rancorous scrutinies of the parasites of power and genius, and of fame!!!):

"It was soon perceived, that the brandy bottle was Parry's Castalian spring, and that, unless he drank deep, his stories became dull. Lord Byron, in consequence took constant care to keep him in good spirits; but unfortunately, partly from inclination, and partly to keep him company, he drank himself to the same excess. One evening, by way of driving away the vexation he had experienced during the day, from an altercation with some one, whose name I do not now remember, Parry prescribed some punch of his own composition, so agreeable to Lord Byron's palate, that he drank immoderate quantities of it. To remove the burning sensation, his Lordship, soon after began to experience, he ordered a bottle of cider and having drank a glass of it, he said it was 'excessively cold and pleasant.' Scarcely had he said these words when he fell upon the floor, agitated by violent spasmodic movements of all his limbs. He foamed at the mouth, gnashed his teeth, and rolled his eyes like one in an epilepsy. After remaining about two minutes in this state his senses returned, and the first words he uttered were: 'Is not this Sunday?' On being answered in the affirmative, he said: 'I should have thought it most strange if it were not.'

"DOCTOR BRUNO, his private physician, proposed opening a vein, but finding it impossible to obtain his consent, he applied leeches to the temples, which bled so copiously as almost to bring on syncope. Alarmed to see the difficulty DOCTOR BRUNO experienced in endeavoring to stop the hemorrhage, Lord Byron sent for me, and I succeeded in stopping the bleeding by the application of lunar caustic. The acute pain, produced by this slight operation, rendered him more than ever impatient, and made him say, 'In this world there is nothing but pain.'

"The nervous system of Lord Byron, which by nature was highly irritable, and which had become more so by the immoderate use of green tea, the abuse of medicines, and habitual intemperance, could not sustain so violent a shock without some serious attendant consequences. Like a cord at its full stretch, it required but the slightest force to break it. From this moment a change took place in his mental and bodily functions. That wonderful elasticity of disposition, that continued flow of wit, and that facility of jest, by which his conversation had been so highly distinguished, returned only at distant intervals; for he fell into a state of melancholy, from which none of our reasonings could relieve him. He felt assured that his constitution had been irretrievably ruined by intemperance; that he was a worn out man; and that his muscular power was gone. Flashes before the eyes, palpitations and anxieties, hourly afflicted him; and at times such a sense of faintness would overpower him, that, fearing to be attacked by similar convulsions, he would send in great haste for medical assistance. His nervous system was in fact in a continued state of erethism, which could only be augmented by the low debilitating diet, enjoined him by his physician. One day while I sat rather longer than usual, endeavoring to prove that by a total reform in his mode of living, and by following a tonic plan, he might recover his former vigour, I quoted in support of my argument, the celebrated example of Cornaro the Venetian, who at a more advanced age, and with a constitution still more broken, not only recovered his strength by adopting a proper regimen, but continued beyond the hundredth year in the full possession of all his mental and bodily faculties. 'Do you suppose,' inquired his lordship with impatience, 'that I wish for life? I have grown heartily sick of it, and shall welcome the hour I depart from it. Why should I regret it, have I not enjoyed it to a surfeit? Few men can live faster than I did. I am, literally speaking, a young old man. Hardly arrived at manhood, I had

attained the zenith of fame. Pleasure I have known under every form it can present itself to mortals. I have traveled, satisfied my curiosity, lost every illusion; I have exhausted all the nectar contained in the cup of life; it is time to throw the dregs away. But the apprehension of two things haunt my mind. I picture myself slowly expiring on a bed of torture, or terminating my days like Swift—a grinning idiot! Would to Heaven the day were arrived in which, rushing, sword in hand, on a body of Turks, and fighting like one weary of existence, I shall meet immediate painless death—the object of my wishes!”

Like the inspired and unhappy author of *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Tale of a Tub*, Byron had all too realistic conceptions of the intracranial conditions in process; and too vivid forebodings of the consequences which the inevitable failure of the functions of the organ of mind must carry in its train. And was not the firmness of the basis of the fabric of his vision corroborated, and all too substantially, by the revelations displayed by the scalpel after his sadly premature decease? The chronic pachymeningitis and chronic cerebral congestion too well accounted for the iron-bound tension of the bursting brain; while the continuous hyperaemia of the *noeud vitale* explains but too clearly the peculiarities of “the young heart, hot and restless” (and its inseparable train of facts and consequences) that characterized the meteoric conduct of its over-driven owner during the most active part of his career; and the fact that the latter organ almost literally consumed itself to ashes towards the close of its sadly curtailed cycle—which ended in conditions so lonely in their depressing influences, and so inspiring in the sacredness of their associations and motives. The *self-revealing* powers of the morbidly penetrating *introspection* of the author of *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan* were never more lucidly displayed than in connection with his prospective diagnosis of his own pathological progress—as “a young old man.” And, while the processes of *synostosis* of the cranial sutures and *eburnation* of the cranial diploe were in progress, as they surely had been in very early manhood (and, more than probably, even at the date of his earliest metrical productions), were not his *heart* and *brain*, and *mind*, “on fire,” and their tortured owner ever on the rack—was he not, necessarily, one of those who could never help feeling the permanently watchful presence of:

* * * * * demons who impair
 The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
 In melancholy bosoms, such as were
 Of moody texture from their earliest day,
 And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
 Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
 Which is not of the pangs that pass away;
 Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
 The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

Genius is, and, so far as biographical record enlightens us on the subject, evermore has been, one of the most dearly bought possessions; one of the most heavily taxed of the mysterious gifts of an inscrutable Providence, as some may feel disposed to regard it. That Byron's life pilgrimage was one of the most unhappy known to our collective annals is a fact which has usually been admitted, and frequently commented on; often, too, without Christian charity, or even philanthropic sympathy; and nearly always without philosophic penetration, or discriminating intelligence. But too clearly can the physiological pathologist now trace the physical inspiration of *Harold's* introspective address:

Yet must I think less wildly:—I *have* thought,
 Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
 In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
 A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
 And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
 My springs of life were poison'd.

Among the innumerable germs of inspiration of the critical and biographic Vandalism which flourished so freely after Byron's untimely death, was his favoring familiarity with a person so crudely dowered with manners and morals as Major Parry—with whom (we are informed) that, as toadying buffoon, he conversed too intimately; and, on some occasions, drank somewhat too freely. Yet I think Parry's own record proves that, with the material then within his reach, Byron could not have done better. Does not the following quotation present convincing evidence of watchful care and *intelligent* anxiety? The language is that of the much-abused Parry, and I think that most readers will admit that it is neither that of a knave or a fool: "DR. BRUNO, I believe to be a very good young man, but he was certainly inadequate to his situation. I do not mean as to his scientific acquirements, for of them I pretend not to judge, but he wanted firmness and was

so much agitated, that he was incapable of bringing whatever knowledge he might possess into use. He was kind and attentive, and by far the most teachable and useful of all the persons about Lord Byron. As there was nobody invested with any authority over his household, after he fell sick, there was neither method, order, nor quiet, in his apartments. A clever, skillful English surgeon, possessing the confidence of his employer, would have put all this in train; but DR. BRUNO had no idea of doing any such thing. There was also a want of many comforts which, to the sick, may indeed be called necessities, and there was a dreadful confusion of tongues. In his agitation DR. BRUNO's English, and he spoke but imperfectly, was unintelligible; Fletcher's Italian was equally bad. I speak nothing but English; Tita then spoke nothing but Italian; and the ordinary Greek domestics were incomprehensible to us all. In all the attendants there was the officiousness of zeal; but owing to their ignorance of each others' language, their zeal only added to the confusion. This circumstance, and the want of common necessities, made Lord Byron's apartment such a picture of distress and even anguish during the two or three last days of his life, as I never before beheld, and wish never again to witness."

Surely the discrimination displayed in these remarks, and the heartfelt sympathy which they so unmistakably indicate, convey absolute proof of the instinctive wisdom displayed in the choice of the lonely poet, whose perceptions were probably at least as penetrating as those of any other of the votaries of the Muse of whom we possess any reliable record; and who had unquestionably had a more varied experience of "the world" (social and geographical) than any of his brethren. "From Count Gamba's statement, which I have transferred to the title page of this work, the reader may be satisfied that I was present with Lord Byron a short time before he became insensible forever, and that Count Gamba himself was not present, for he says, 'I had not the heart to go.' It was to Parry, Count Gamba says, 'to whom Lord Byron tried to express his last wishes.' He says, 'I was sent for to persuade him (Lord Byron) to allow of blisters being put on, and returned in all haste with Mr. Parry.' Why did Count Gamba return *with me* when he was sent for! Because in fact it was I who was summoned to persuade his Lordship and who always was summoned, and these were the only times that the doctors liked my presence, whenever Lord Byron

was to be convinced or persuaded that the remedies proposed were likely to be beneficial.

"Whenever Lord Byron objected or refused to follow their prescription, then I was sent for to exert my influence over him; at other times, as I have stated, all sorts of excuses were invented to exclude me from his room. Whenever I saw him, also, and this is well worthy of attention, he never omitted to complain of the altercations he had with his doctors, of whose treatment of him he said many harsh things."

These statements, of course, display the mental attitude of one who felt that he had been made the object of depreciation and detraction by his rivals in the candidature for Byron's esteem; and was, accordingly, as was very human, energetically anxious to place himself in the most favorable light with his surviving contemporaries. And I must add that his description of symptoms is always so clear and consistent as to give me confidence in his judgment, as well as powers of observation and of graphic description. He then proceeds with his narrative and comment: "From the beginning of April, he had frequently complained to me of violent headaches, and of great debility. Both these had remained from the time of the first attack; but he had felt them particularly, from the time of the bleeding. When these headaches left him, his hopes returned that his health would be restored in the summer."

The struggle between the activity of a naturally restless *spirit*, goaded (rather than stimulated) into over-activity by the *physiological* torrent of metabolism of the tissues of the organ of thought (and the consequently muddied state of its hæmic and lymphatic currents), and the sagging failure of a *body* of which the organ of greatest mechanical importance had hopelessly passed into the stage of, *serè* and yellow, could hardly have been more lucidly illustrated than by the symptomatic features presented by Parry's dying patron in that process of Nature's ruthless experiment in graduated vivisection. The spring of vital elasticity, which had been so frequently and violently overstrained, had irrecoverably lost its power of spontaneous recoil. But the affected individual would be one of the least perspicuous of all intelligent observers of the drifting position—one of the merciful provisions of the Omniscient Omnipotence being that of jealously screening off the fateful decisions of the events of the future from the inquiring vision of the parties chiefly concerned. But, fitful flashes of illumination *do*, sometimes, *appear* through mys-

terious *mental chinks* under those circumstances; as I feel sure every experienced reader has had an opportunity of observing. And the light that was thus let into the psychological *camera obscura* of the real Lord Byron, where the mind's eye of the owner, so often and so vividly, "beheld what never was to be," has rarely been rendered so illuminating to the reader as in the following paragraph: "When the news arrived from England on April the 9th, of the loan for the Greeks having been negotiated in London, Lord Byron also received several private letters which brought him favorable accounts of his daughter. Whenever he spoke of her, it was with delight to think he was a father, or with a strong feeling of melancholy, at recollecting that her infantine and most endearing embraces were denied to his love. The pleasant intelligence which he had received concerning her, gave a fresh stimulus to his mind, I may almost say revived for a moment a spirit that was already faint and weary, and slumbering in the arms of death. He rode out after hearing this news twice; and once was caught in the rain. Those who wish to attribute his death to any other cause rather than to general debility occasioned by a long system of exhaustion, both of body and mind, have eagerly seized hold of this trifling circumstance, to make the world believe, that he who had swam the Hellespont, who had been accustomed to brave every climate, and every season, fell a victim to a shower of rain and a wet saddle. When a man is borne down, almost to death, by continued vexation, and a want of sufficient nourishment, such trifles may complete his dissolution. In this case they were only the last grains of the ponderous load of calamities which weighed this noble-minded man to the earth; and it is my honest conviction, that he might have been saved, had he had with him one sensible and influential friend, partly to shield him from himself, partly to shield him from others, and zealous to preserve both his fame and his life." As the ruling passion rules with proverbial rigidity at the period of approaching dissolution, the "faint and weary" spirit, which Parry has thus so vividly depicted, then flashed forth with a degree of revealing illumination that had seldom been paralleled throughout the course of the Byronic record. The love of home and of offspring (and the *ideal*—unhappily, *not* the *actual*—woman) was surely innate with the author of the autobiographic *Dream*. And the summarizing conclusions of Parry contained in the above paragraph will bear the strictest medical scrutiny. We learn from his clinical sketch that: "A short time after he returned from the

ride on April 9th, when he had got wet, he complained of considerable pain and fever, and his physician, evidently from some Sangrado theory, immediately proposed that he should be again bled. To this he objected, and against this, when I heard of it, I remonstrated. I was confident from the mode in which he had lately lived, and been lately tormented, that to bleed him would be to kill him. He was worn out, not fairly but unfairly, and the momentary heat and symptoms of fever were little more, I believe, than the expiring struggle or the last flashes of an ardent spirit.

"On April 11th, he was very unwell, had shivering fits continually, and pains over every part of his body, particularly in his bones and head. He talked a great deal, and I thought in rather a wandering manner, and I became alarmed for his safety. To me there appeared to be no time to be lost, and I earnestly supplicated him to go immediately to Zante, and try change of air and scene. After some time he gave me an unwilling consent, and I received his orders to prepare vessels for his conveyance. Count Gamba, Lieut. Hesketh, his aid-de-camp, M. BRUNO, his physician, and his servants Fletcher and Tita were to accompany him. . . . Lord Byron kept his bed all day on the 12th of April, and complained that he could not sleep, that his bones were very sore, and that the pain in his head increased. He could not eat anything, and in fact took no nourishment whatever.

"On the following day all the preparations for his departure were completed, but a hurricane ensued, and it was impossible for the vessel to leave the port; torrents of rain also came down, the country around was flooded and Missolonghi for the time became a complete prison. The hurricane was no other than the pestilent Sirocco wind; and thus it seems as if the elements had combined with man to ensure Lord Byron's death."

And has it not always been so "from the beginning, as now" (we diffidently refrain from suggesting the "evermore shall be"), in the experience of each and all of us? The atmospheric *elements* above combine their destructive efforts with those of the grossly unspiritual Deity of *Circumstance* around, and of the (much-libeled) *microbes* within, to disintegrate the constituent items of the unstable fabric of the human MICROCOSM, whenever and wherever an opportunity presents itself. The respective powers and functions of prevention and cure cannot be duly estimated, or effectively applied, without fully realizing the *perpetual warfare* (or should we utilize the much milder connotation of

antagonistic *motion?*) which pervades the constituents of the *Cosmos*, so far as human knowledge has become cognizant of its mysteries.

The assiduous Parry then proceeds with his narrative of—very clearly impressive—facts, and decorates them with opinions which sometimes become too emphatically demonstrative in their assumption of *expert* validity. Some of the medico-physical and medico-psychological opinions are indeed expressed with an expansive confidence which might generate a plausible suggestion of having been dictated when the author was inspired by his own favorite *toddy* so far as to “let himself go” without any considerations of squamish misgiving. The foot-note was perhaps suggested and constructed by, or under the guiding influence of, some medical friend or friends unknown. The reader may well be allowed to form his own opinion:

“Hitherto he had risen during the day, and for a short time had left his bedroom; but after retiring on April the 11th, he came out no more. From that time he was confined to his bed, and nobody was allowed to see him or permitted to enter his bedroom but Count Gamba, the physician, the two servants Tita and Fletcher, and myself. The confidence with which he had ever honored me since my arrival, was shown even in his last moments; and, still keeping in view why he and I were both in Greece, he told me to be with him as much as I possibly could, without thereby retarding the service.

“My other occupations unfortunately did not allow me to be always about him; but whenever they did I paid him all the attention in my power. To me he seemed even from April 14th to be occasionally delirious, and frequently expressed a desire and intention to go* on horseback, or to take an excursion in his boat. I observed also that he sometimes slipped in an Italian sentence or phrase or two in his conversations with me, as if he were address-

*“In the account given in the Westminster Review of Lord Byron’s death, at page 255, Vol. II, there is a note recording some conversation between Lord Byron and his physician, from which the reviewer infers that Byron was delirious in an early stage of the disease. This strengthens what I have said in the text, I shall only deny that the delirium arose from inflammation. It was that alienation of the mind, which is so frequently the consequence of excessive debility. There was no symptom of violence in the early period of the disease, such as I have frequently seen in other young men attacked with fever, and such as I believe would in Lord Byron’s case, had the disorder been inflammatory, have been most severe. The delirium at every stage arose from extreme debility.”

ing Tita or Count Gamba. From fulfilling his intention of riding he was dissuaded, partly by his attendants, but chiefly by his weakness, which prevented him even from supporting himself without assistance.

"On the 15th of April Lord Byron was seriously and alarmingly ill, and I am now persuaded, from the manner of his conversation with me, more than from what he said, that he was then apprehensive his disease was dangerous. The doctors indeed thought there was no danger, and so they assured me and everybody else about Lord Byron. The Sirocco wind continued to blow very strong; and it was quite impossible to remove him, unless it had abated or changed. The same circumstance would have prevented us sending for Dr. THOMAS, or sending to Zante for anybody or anything, had such a measure been resolved on.

"It was seven o'clock in the evening when I saw him, and then I took a chair at his request, and sat down by his bed-side and remained till ten o'clock. He sat up in his bed, and was then calm and collected. He talked with me on a variety of subjects connected with himself and his family; he spoke of his intentions as to Greece, his plans for the campaign, and what he should ultimately do for that country. He spoke to me about my own adventures. He spoke of death also with great composure, and though he did not believe his end was so very near, there was something about him so serious and firm, so resigned and composed, so different from anything I had ever before seen in him, that my mind misgave me and at times foreboded his speedy dissolution.

"'Parry,' he said, when I first went to him, 'I have much wished to see you today. I have had most strange feelings, but my head is now better; I have no gloomy thoughts, and no idea but that I shall recover. I am perfectly collected, I am sure I am in my senses, but a melancholy will creep over me at times.'"

The stage of final flickering had been surely reached; but the faithful Parry does not seem, on his own showing, to have quite realized the gloomy fact. And the evidences of the ever-hankering hope for realization of the *ideal life*, surrounded by the hallowing coronae of *love and home*, break through the rift in the mental clouds, with all the pathetic brilliancy of the rapidly approaching sunset. Thus did the recorded monologue proceed:

"When I left Italy I had time on board the brig to give full scope to memory and reflection. It was then that I came to that resolution I have already informed you of. I am convinced of the happiness of domestic life. No man on earth respects a virtuous

woman more than I do, and the prospect of retirement in England, with my wife and Ada, give me an idea of happiness I have never experienced before. Retirement will be everything to me, for heretofore my life has been like the ocean in a storm." The longing for the rest and quiet which he had never attained in the active course of his meteoric existence! And the concomitant flickering hope that his fondest ideal would at least receive some temporary realization in the final stage of his sublunar pilgrimage! The dying poet, we are told, then proceeded, in words and tone which still display the keenness of his powers of observation of his fellows, and his exquisite (and inexhaustible) human sympathy: "I have closely observed to-day the conduct of all around me. TITA is an admirable fellow; he has not been out of the house for several days. BRUNO is an excellent young man and very skillful, but I am afraid he is too much agitated. I wish you to be as much about me as possible, you may prevent me from being jaded to death, and when I recover I assure you I shall adopt a different mode of living. They have misinformed you when they told you I was asleep. I have not slept and I can't imagine why they should tell you I was asleep."

The transition to the questions of *religion* and *immortality* was but a step—an easy as well as inevitable one. And without presuming to adopt the pose of an expert, far less of a doctrinaire, in opinions regarding matters so surpassingly serious, I cannot refrain from formulating, in necessarily tentative terms, a personal expression of the view that the notions of the *eternal* and *ineffable* here attributed to Byron are worthily in keeping with the highest precepts of the founder of Christianity.

"You have no conception of the unaccountable thoughts which come into my mind when the fever attacks me. I fancy myself a Jew, a Mahomedan, and a Christian of every profession of faith. Eternity and space are before me, but on this subject, thank God, I am happy and at ease. The thought of living eternally, of again reviving, is a great pleasure. Christianity is the purest and most liberal religion in the world, but the numerous teachers who are continually worrying mankind with their denunciations and their doctrines, are the greatest enemies of religion. I have read with more attention than half of them the book of Christianity, and I admire the liberal and truly charitable principles which Christ has laid down. There are questions connected with this subject which none but Almighty God can solve. Time and space who can conceive—none but God, on Him I rely."

That the above report of the dying poet's words is a faithfully accurate one, I absolutely believe. The tone and diction ring true, throughout every syllable. Accordingly, we are forcibly reminded, and with painful impressiveness, of the injustice of the furious attacks which were made by the "self-elected" on the religious status and teaching of the most famous English writer of his generation. One cannot help wondering what the many-headed host of orthodox detractors of Byron would have said (and done, and thought, and looked, and felt) if they had been permitted to live into the period of the ripening harvest of the "higher Criticism"! The reflection leads to the fairly consolatory conclusion that we live in an age of incomparably greater *mental freedom*; the loftiest, and noblest gift of the Divinity to man, as it was regarded by the late Mr. Gladstone. And just think of the lasting injustice of it!—a great part of the filth which was then so liberally aimed at the inspired author of the *Giaour* and the *Don Juan* still clings to his memory in the field of mental vision of the average man; who inevitably has no time for special investigation, and who characteristically adopts the terms of the first report presented to the blank sheet of his imagination, and retains it all the more tenaciously in a space of which the tenancy is hardly ever vigorously or seriously disputed. Surely in no man of his generation was the religious element more distinctly developed than in Byron, a Celt of the Celts, the emotional side of whose nature dominated, even to a destructively over-balancing degree, throughout the whole course of his impulsive existence. The mysterious power of fascination has never been denied to Byron, even by the most glaucopic of his industrious rivals and innumerable detractors. And the record of the bibulous Parry, of his own feelings on that occasion, constitutes convincing testimony to the weird influence of his patron.

"I had never before felt as I felt that evening. There was the gifted Lord Byron, who had been the object of universal attention, who had, even as a youth, been intoxicated with the idolatry of men, and the more flattering love of women, gradually expiring almost forsaken, and certainly without the consolation which generally awaits the meanest of mankind, of breathing out his last sigh in the arms of some dear friends. His habitation was weather-tight, but that was nearly all the comfort his deplorable room afforded him. He was my protector and benefactor, and I could not see him, whom I knew to have been so differently brought up, thus perishing, far from his home, far from

all the comforts due to his rank and situation, far too from every fond and affectionate heart, without a feeling of deep sorrow, such as I should not have had at the loss of my own dearest relation. The pestilent Sirocco was blowing a hurricane, and the rain was falling with almost tropical violence. In our apartment was the calm of coming death, and outside was the storm desolating the spot around us, but carrying I would fain hope, new life and vigour to some stagnant part of nature."

Reflections such as these have often been associated with death-bed scenes, and the damp-blanket explanation of the unemotional materialist is thrust forward: the meteoric happenings would never have been recognized or recorded, and accordingly, would not have been remembered beyond the limits of the narrow zone of personal experience, if the occasion had not been linked up with the suggestions which are inevitably called forth by the departure of a towering spirit: the extinction of one of the leading lights of the firmament of power, or of knowledge; the sudden creation of a blank in the foremost line of politics, of art, or of literature. But whether the explanation be a fully satisfactory one, which it by no means is to the present writer, the fact is uncontradictable that the abrupt close of each of many of the world's most gifted and most conspicuously-placed men has been accompanied by very impressive, sometimes highly startling, atmospheric or cosmic phenomena. This truth has attracted the attention of every one of the successive centuries of human experience of which the history (or folk-lore) has been preserved; so that the collective testimony firmly supports the facts, even while utterly incompetent to furnish a *reason why*. The poetical genius of Shakespeare utilized some of the most conspicuous specimens of such record; and, in so doing, treated the popular item of faith, or fact, with the same uncritical acceptance which the elder Pliny himself so notably displayed. And the respective death scenes and surroundings of the two most celebrated men of the first quarter of the nineteenth century did not fail to furnish, each, an item illustrative of the weirdly thrilling coincidence of uncanny meteoric phenomena with the passing of some of the world's most illuminating, or domineering, human spirits. The lonely island rock of the further Atlantic, and the malarial swamp of the Hellenic sea-board, contributed, each respectively, its item of testimony to the apparent sympathy of the "Powers of the Air" with the final agonizing scene of the life pilgrimage of the greatest war-

rior and most inspired poet of that generation of white hot, if not always beneficially productive or progressive, human activity.

And the association forcibly recalls the fact that in each case the conditions of depressing isolation, in which the formerly all-conquering Napoleon and the all-inspiring Byron were so sadly immersed in the final scene of the vital tragedy, did not for a moment deprive either of the unwavering respect and unsleeping devotion of his attendants and disciples. Let us again proceed with the steps of Parry's graphic narrative:

"The evening was, I believe, the last time Lord Byron was calm and collected for any considerable period. On the 16th, he was alarmingly ill, and almost constantly delirious. He spoke alternately in English and Italian, and spoke very wildly. I earnestly implored the doctors not to physic and bleed him, and to keep his extremities warm, for in them there was already the coolness of coming death. I was told, there was no doubt of Lord Byron's recovery, and that I might attend to my business without apprehension. Half assured by these positive assertions, I did leave his Lordship, to attend to my duties in the arsenal."

Every true member of our noble profession must find his very keenest human sympathy, as well as professional interest, focussed at the contemplation of this moment: the turning point of the fatal illness. The journalistic record then continues:

"On the 17th, when I saw him in the morning, he was labouring at times under delirium. He appeared much worse than the day before, notwithstanding this, he was again bled twice, and both times fainted. His debility was excessive. He complained bitterly of his want of sleep, as delirious patients do complain, in a wild rambling manner. He said he had not slept for more than a week, when in fact, he had repeatedly slept at short intervals, disturbedly indeed, but still it was sleep. He had now ceased to think, or talk of death; he had probably, as Count Gamba has said, no idea that his life was so soon to terminate, for his senses were in such a state, that they rarely allowed him to form a correct idea of anything. Yet opinions, uttered under such circumstances, have been given to the world, by his friends, as Lord Byron's settled opinions. 'If,' he is made to say, 'my hour is come, I shall die whether I lose my blood or keep it.'

"Count Gamba indeed, says he transacted with him a considerable quantity of business on the 16th, when Lord Byron was almost insensible, as Mr. Fletcher has already testified, and as I now testify. Those conversations which Count Gamba reports,

as heard by himself and others are all of that rambling character which distinguish delirium. It is particularly necessary to make this observation because a great degree of importance is sometimes attributed to death-bed speeches. In Lord Byron's case, whatever may be reported as said, by him, must be taken with the consideration, that he was frequently delirious, for the last five days of his existence."

The feeling of horror with which I first perused the above-quoted description of the medical treatment of the dying poet has never faded from my memory. (I will just mention, parenthetically, that I first had an opportunity of reading it after having had some years experience of medical practice, and a larger number of earnest professional study.) After the author of *Childe Harold* had passed into a syndrome stage of which the significance would have been instantly recognized by the observant eye of such an attendant as Mrs. Quickly, he was deliberately bled and bled again, each time to *fainting!* Well may every reader here echo, and in tones more truly sympathetic than those intended by Lady Blessington, her parting (and all too prophetic) reflection: "*Poor Byron!*" If ever a patient was "bled to death"—but 'tis vain to reflect. Byron's constitution had been already broken; the main-spring of his vitality has lost its property of elastic recoil, and it could never be made to beat duly measured time again. So perhaps it was as well;—such is our only consolatory reflection. The 18th of April happened to be Easter Sunday, and it was arranged by Prince Mavrocordato that Parry should take the artillery brigade and Suliotes to some distance from the town, and exercise them so as to carry the inhabitants to enjoy the spectacle. This was done with the object of preventing the Greeks from disturbing Lord Byron by the firing of muskets with which they were accustomed to celebrate Easter. On this account, Parry says, "I did not see much of Lord Byron till towards the middle of the day. I saw him a short time indeed, in the morning and then he was very delirious, and alarmingly ill. I could learn little or nothing of what had passed," he says, in proceeding to narrate his observations after returning from active duty, "except that a consultation had taken place, two other medical men having been called in, also that one of them, DR. TREITIER, a German, had warmly condemned the mode in which Lord Byron had been treated. It was by his recommendation and advice, I believe, that it was now

resolved to administer bark, and I was sent for to persuade Lord Byron to take it. I do not know that it is possible to give a stronger proof of Lord Byron's complete want of confidence in his medical men, and of their conviction that he had no confidence in them. Whether he was to be bled or blistered, or receive stimulant medicines, they felt that he would not listen to them, and I, who was comparatively a stranger to Lord Byron, or some one of his household was obliged to enforce the physicians' recommendation. At the moment of administering the bark, he seemed sensible; I spoke to him, and said, 'My Lord take the bark, it will do you good, it will recover your Lordship.' He took my hand, and said, 'Give it to me.' He was able to swallow only a small quantity, about four mouthfuls I think. DR. BRUNO seemed satisfied however, and said, 'That will do.' When he took my hand, I found his hands were deadly cold. With the assistance of Tita, I endeavoured to create gently a little warmth in them; and I also loosened the bandage which was tied around his head. Till this was done he seemed in great pain, clenched his hands at times, grated his teeth, and uttered the Italian exclamation of *Ah Christi*. He bore the loosening of the band passively, and after it was loosened, he shed tears. I encouraged him to weep and said, 'My Lord, I thank God I hope you will now be better; shed as many tears as you can, you will sleep and find ease.' He replied faintly, 'Yes, the pain is gone, I shall sleep now,' and he again took my hand, uttered a faint good night and sank into a slumber; my heart ached, but I thought then that his sufferings were over, and that he would wake no more.

"He did wake again, however, and I went to him; Byron knew me, though scarcely. He had then less of alienation about him than I had seen for some time before, there was the calmness of resignation, but there was also the stupor of death. He tried to utter his wishes, but he was incapable, he said something about summoning his Italian servant, and uttered several incoherent words. There was either no meaning in what he said, or it was such a meaning, as one should not expect at that moment. His eyes continued open only a short time, and then, about six o'clock in the evening of the 18th he sank into a slumber, or rather I should say a stupor, and woke and knew no more.

"He continued in a state of complete insensibility for twenty-four hours, giving no other signs of life, but that rattling in his throat which indicated the approach of death. On Monday,

April 19th, at six o'clock in the evening, even this faint indication of existence had ceased,—Lord Byron was dead.”*

Caesar, Cromwell, and Napoleon, the trio of heroic conquerors, of sanguinary world-enslavers, whose memorable achievements would seem to have most deeply and permanently impressed the receptive tablet of Byron's emotional mentality—how largely did they loom over the poet's mental horizon in his most sensitively inspired moments!—and how closely were the achievements and ultimate destiny, of each and all three, interwoven in the blended, and necessarily bewildering and awe-inspiring, picture which both intellectual bias and material experience had led him to form of the omnipotent and unrelenting Divinity of Fate. And—as ever—how weirdly prophetic did the associational magnetism prove to be: in the brilliancy of power and achievement; the tornado-like velocity (and destructiveness) of progress; and desolating stormy sadness of the final fulgurating scenes of the thrillingly dramatic career:

“As soon as it was known, that Lord Byron was dead, sorrow and grief were generally felt in Greece. They spread from his own apartments, and from amongst his domestics and friends, over the town of Missolonghi, through the whole of Greece, and over every part of civilized Europe. Wherever the English language is known, there the works and the genius of Byron are admired; and wherever our language is known, his death was lamented. I need not tell the people of England how profound a sensation that news caused among them. Every little anecdote, every little incident concerning him, was eagerly narrated and not one public writer of any eminence—for even those who were his enemies, bore testimony to his unrivalled powers by their attacks—not one journal but spoke of the death of Lord Byron, as they would of an earthquake, of a victory that had saved the nation, or of any other remarkable event, as the single all-engrossing topic of the day. The chord of affliction, which was struck at Missolonghi vibrated its painful and melancholy notes through the whole of Europe.

“But although the death of Lord Byron was everywhere felt

*“At the very time Lord Byron died, there was one of the most awful thunder storms, I ever witnessed. The lightning was terrific. The Greeks, who are very superstitious, and generally believe that such an event occurs whenever a much superior, or as they say, a supreme man dies, immediately exclaimed, ‘The great man is gone.’ On the present occasion it was too true; and the storm was so violent, as to strengthen their superstitious belief. Their friend and benefactor was indeed dead.”

as a severe loss, although the friends of true liberty mourned him, as one of the bravest and purest of their champions, and the lovers of heart-stirring poetry regretted him as the first of writers; yet nowhere was he more deeply lamented than in Greece. He was both the poet and the defender of that once brilliant but now humbled country. No persons, perhaps, after his domestic and personal friends, felt his loss more acutely than the poor citizens of Missolonghi. His residence among them gave them food, and ensured their protection. But for him they would have been first plundered by the unpaid Suliotes, and then left a prey to the Turks. Not only were the Primates, and Prince Mavrocordato affected on the occasion, but the poorest citizen felt that he had lost a friend. The prince wept bitterly, and deplored his own situation as made most unfortunate by the death of Lord Byron. He spoke of him as the great friend of Greece, and of his conduct as widely different from that of other foreigners. 'Nobody knows,' he said, 'except perhaps myself, the loss Greece has suffered. Her safety even depended on his continuing in existence. His presence here has checked intrigues which will now have uncontrolled sway. By his aid, alone, have I been able to preserve Missolonghi; and now I know, that every assistance I derived from him will be taken away. Already a conspiracy has been formed to break up the establishment here, and now there is every probability it will be successful. The foreigners here will support the enemies of the government, and Missolonghi will be made bare, to aggrandize some of the Captains.'"

This affecting testimony to the estimation in which Lord Byron was universally held by those around him, and the fascination which his presence exerted on every one with whom he had come in contact, even in the final hours of absolute physical prostration and mental incapacity, has been amply corroborated by every other reliable witness; even by the least sympathetic or admiring. And do we not again detect the luminous forebodings of the prophetic soul of the truly inspired *Childe*, in his philosophic summation of the career of the world's leaders:

 Their breath is agitation, and their life
 A storm whereon they ride to sink at last,
 And get so nursed and bigoted to strife,
 That should their days, surviving perils past,
 Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast,
 With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
 Even as a flame unfed, which runs to waste
 With its own flickering, or a sword laid by
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

"Poor Byron!" The author of the *Giaour* was never meant by fate to bear the bending burden of a lingering old age! But whether this opinion was or was not that of the sympathetic Parry, his righteous indignation does not fail to boil over, again and again, in his references to, and his estimates of, the incompetence and density (and possible untruthfulness) of Byron's medical attendants. Indeed, the vigorous emphasis with which he gives his own (necessarily inexpert) views would be amusing if the inspiration had been less serious:

"But though, in my opinion, the primary cause of Lord Byron's death was the serious disappointment he suffered, I must not therefore be understood to say, that no art could have saved him. From the symptoms of his disease, as recorded by his medical attendant, and from the state of his body on dissection, physicians may probably form a different opinion of the immediate causes of his death, from the one I entertain. They may say, as a writer in the 'Westminster Review' has said, 'that he died in consequence of an inflammation of the brain; at least, if the appearances really *were as described*. The cause of the attack, was the exposure to wet and cold, on the 9th of April. By this exposure fever was excited. That he might have been saved by early and copious bleeding, is certain. That his *medical attendants had not, until it was too late to do anything, any suspicion of the true nature of his disease, we are fully satisfied.*'"

To the skilled clinical observer who has just scrutinized the graphic mental picture of the symptoms and treatment of Byron's case which Parry sketched for his readers with so vivid—and *convincingly* truthful—earnestness and precision, there is something painfully startling in the confidence of tone in which is expressed the (*destructively amateurish*) journalistic opinion of the *certainty* that the patient *might have been saved by early and copious bleeding*. And the unsurpassable climax of the opposite view of the other "outsider," is surely reached after the following expression of "my opinion"! (The lover of the poet must here give a sigh to his poetic idol, and a smile to the devoted Parry):

"The latter part of this quotation, expresses my opinion. The physicians knew nothing whatever of the nature of his disease. But I shall further say, not only on account of DR. BRUNO being an interested person, but also on account of the great agitation he suffered, so as to bewilder him, for the last ten days of Lord Byron's life, that he is an incompetent witness as to the

state of the body after death. But this statement is the only ground for the reviewer's opinion, that early and copious bleeding would have saved Lord Byron's life. In this statement, be it also remarked, he does not place implicit confidence. Let any man, therefore, take into account the mode in which Lord Byron lived in Greece, together with his former habits, and the severe exercise he then took, and I think a conviction will immediately arise in his mind, as in mine, that Lord Byron's disease needed not the remedy of bleeding."

I think the majority of expert readers will in this instance range themselves on the side of the uninitiated (but closely observant) Parry; whose general knowledge of the world and its (human) ways was joined, very evidently (whatever his enemies said or thought on the subject), to a good deal of Anglo-Saxon common sense, as well as unmistakable devotion to his fated patron. The further perusal of his remarks will, I feel confident, confirm his view:

"He was before the fever attacked him, reduced to a mere shadow; and the *slow fever* as it is called by Mr. Fletcher, which terminated his existence, was only the symptom of that general disease, which from the time of my arrival in Greece, had been gradually wasting his frame. However learnedly the doctors may talk and write on the matter, it is plain and palpable to common observation, that Lord Byron was worried, and starved to death. A part of his irritation arose from the structure of his own mind; but much of it was caused by those with whom he was connected, in, and about the affairs of Greece. His diet was dictated by his own will, and for that he is responsible, but for the medical treatment his physicians must answer.

"To pacify the people of this empire, for the loss of one of the greatest, if not the greatest of their poets, and one of the most ardent champions of national freedom, they have been told, that the structure of his frame did not promise a long life. The eagerness with which this circumstance was put forward, indicates a conviction in other bosoms than mine, that a different treatment would have saved Lord Byron's valuable life. He cannot now be recalled; anger would only disturb his ashes, but in proportion as we loved and valued him, we must be displeased at those whose conduct hastened his dissolution."

Thus, above all the reverberations of the chaotic reports of conflicting opinion, we here recognize the heart-rending wail of desolating bereavement! Was ever man more sincerely, *intensely*,

loved by his immediate attendants? And let us ask ourselves the old, old question once more: Could the man who had the undeniable power of exciting so much love, and securing so great and lasting devotion, be the wavering, or unreliable, or otherwise objectionable, personality by which Byron has so often been represented by his enemies and detractors, and reproduced, with the *malignant industry of conscious inferiority*, by their subsequent copyists?

Parry gives two extracts from letters written from Missolonghi to Lord Byron, the concentrated value of the testimony of which must surely outweigh in every unprejudiced mind that of the integrated evidence furnished on the other side by the multitudinous volumes, and essays, and "lives" and magazine articles; and prefaces to collected editions of, and to selections from, the poetry and prose of his idolized patron. One of them was written by a patriotic and princely Greek, the other by a (presumably) philanthropic and "liberal"-minded English officer. Prince Mavrocordato wrote to Lord Byron on December 29th, 1823, from the fatal station at Missolonghi:

"Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire, mi Lord, combien il me tard de vous voir arriver; à quel point votre présence est désirée de tout le monde, et quelle direction avantageuse, elle donnera à toutes les affaires; vos *conseils seront écoutés comme des oracles* et nous ne perdrons pas le temps le plus précieux de nos opérations contre l'ennemi."

And Colonel Stanhope wrote, on the same and preceding day, and from the same station, letters to Lord Byron which contained the following: (1) "It is right and necessary to tell you, that a great deal is expected of you, both in the way of counsel and money." "All are eager to see you." (2) "I walked along the street this evening, and the people asked me after Lord Byron" "I hope your Lordship will proceed hither, you are expected with feverish anxiety. Your further delay in coming will be attended with serious consequences."

Then the ethico-clinical comment of the *fidus Achates* proceeds:

"At this moment then, that is at the commencement of April, there was a combination of circumstances, all tending to irritate the naturally sensitive disposition of Lord Byron, and to weaken his hopes of a great and glorious result. He was more a mental being, if I may use this phrase, than any man I ever saw. He lived on thought more than on food. As his hopes of the cause

of Greece failed, and they seem to have been the last, and perhaps the greatest his mind was capable of forming, he became peevish; and if I may so speak, little-minded. Losing hope, he lost enthusiasm, and became gloomily sensible to his situation. There was no mental stimulus left to make him bear up against his increasing perplexities, and nerve his body to resist the noxious effects of a bad climate.

"The difficulties of his own situation, and the coming dangers, had the effect on the obstinate mind of Lord Byron, of compelling him to remain at Missolonghi. But for these circumstances he would have left it for a time, and have found repose and health.

"He who has been thought by many to have contemptuously braved the opinion of the world, was, when it was in harmony with his own convictions, completely and sensitively under its control. He felt that the Greeks were more than ever in danger, and his high and proud mind obstinately refused to leave Missolonghi, for a more quiet scene, and a more healthy abode. He dreaded what the world might say of his desertion; his spirit was more powerful than his frame, and this fell into dissolution before that changed its determination. Had it not been for the state of Greece, I believe he would, at the commencement of his disorder, have gone to Zante, but he could not brook the idea of flinching from danger, even to save his life."

Of course he could not!—anyone who has studied Byron's record, in his own script, and through the more or less translucent media of the various items of contemporary testimony, could have felt assured of the fact. The author of the "Isles of Greece" was the votary and slave of his ideals throughout the whole course of his painful pilgrimage of life; they kept his "brain and heart on fire"; they actually constituted the motive force which was accountable for his best ordered thoughts and actions; as well as for the painful and blighting collisions which punctuated the zigzag stages of his fulgurating progress on the surface of the planet on which he had been flung by the centrifugal force of fate, as an exiled human meteor. How lofty those ideals were, how unerringly true to the highest ethical conceptions of *right* and *justice* was the moral standard measure which was treasured in the strong-room of Byron's mental sanctuary, must be surely brought home with convincing vividness to the mind of the patriotic citizen of the great American Republic who gives but, a

moment's serious thought to the political reflection of *Childe Harold*:

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child,
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprang forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourish'd in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

But the reflecting reader who has given some time and thought to the currents of Anglo-Saxon politics and literature of the past century will hardly require to be told that the outspoken, even dazzling, candor of Byron's word-paintings of thought and fact and opinion was one of the features most definitely responsible for the genesis of the explosive antagonism of contemporary scribblers, and of self-elected guardians of national taste and public morality. And was it not well that it should be so? Western nakedness was made to be ashamed in the exacting inhospitality of our extra-tropical zones. It is only beneath the mysterious lights of the illuminating Orient that the shedding of the assumed protective scales of the textile products of animal and vegetable fiber confers the privilege of veneration on the self-emancipated seer. (Yet we must not, or should not, forget—*ex Oriente lux*—that all our light, internal as well as external, intellectual as well as physical, is traceable to Eastern sources!) But whether Western, transplanted, genius is, or is not, lawfully entitled to special licence in the promulgation of its decrees and doctrines, the fact is undeniable that it has evermore tended to assume and wield it.

But the *gold* and the *clay* are ever and anon found to be far too conspicuously placed in *incompatible proximity* in even the best constructed model of the "human form divine" that we can hope to have an opportunity of critically and dispassionately examining at close quarters. The proverbial veracity of the aphoristic observation that "no man is a hero to his valet" has seldom, I believe, been seriously or successfully disputed. And if the severity of the test be accepted as indisputable proof of the value of the withstanding medium, there are few instances known to biographical record in which the subject will be found to emerge so successfully as in the case of Byron himself. The devotion of

his servants, on whom he was always so ready to demonstrate by *physical* proof the standard elevation of his temper, accompanied him from his boyhood to his grave—and beyond. The attachment of the somewhat unsophisticated Fletcher rang out as true when tested by application of the most rigidly applied physical (“percussion”), as well as emotional, tests as did that of the devoted la Guiccioli herself! And will any critically scientific detractor of Byron’s memory in the present day, when his name and fame are once more a good deal in the air—and, indeed, in all the literatures and localities of twentieth-century civilization—dare to assert that it was by virtue of the demoniacal qualities which hypocritical enemies did not fail to attribute to him, that he was able, even without effort or object, or actual consciousness, to exercise a degree of personal fascination possessed by no other individual in his day, with the possible exception of Napoleon himself? But, as I am concerned with the *moral* as well as physical *pathology* of the highly-gifted and acutely-inflicted author of *Cain*, I must not refrain from placing before the inquiring reader, the evidence, absolutely (as well as painfully) convincing to me, regarding the question which has provided so much copy for book-manufacturers and journalists during the past few years. The discussion must not be shirked, in the cause and in the presence of scientific truth; and it possesses a particularly painful interest for the fellow-citizens of the gifted author of the epoch-making story of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

Adah. But all we know of it has gather’d
Evil on ill: expulsion from our home,
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness;
Remorse of that which was—and hope of that
Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with this spirit.
Bear with what we have borne, and love me—I
Love Thee.

Lucifer. More than thy mother, and thy sire?

Adah. I do. Is that a sin, too?

Lucifer. No, not yet;

It will one day be in your children.

Adah. What!

Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch?

Lucifer. Not as thou lovest Cain.

Adah. Oh, my God?

Shall they not live, and bring forth things that love
Out of their love? have they not drawn their milk
Out of this bosom? was not he, their father,
Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour

With me? Did not we, love each other? and
In multiplying our being, multiply
Things which will love each other as we love
Them?—And as I love thee, my Cain! go not
Forth with this spirit, he is not of ours.

Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of my making,
And cannot be a sin in you, whate'er
It seem to those who will replace ye in
Mortality.

Adah. What is the sin which is not
Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
Or virtue?—If it doth, we are the slaves
Of—

Lucifer. Higher things than ye are slaves; and higher
Than them or ye would be so, did they not
Prefer an independency of torture
To the smooth agonies of adulation,
In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers,
To that which is omnipotent, because
It is omnipotent, and not from love,
But terror and self-hope.

Adah. Omnipotence
Must be all goodness.

The above lines are quoted from the first scene of *Cain; A Mystery*—and furnish for the satisfaction, although not for the pleasure, of the reader who has saturated himself with the spirit of Byron's genius, and thereby learned to decipher the text of his every "mystery" (every one of which stands recorded and revealed in his poetry), the key that unlocks the casket of which the contents were rather unnecessarily displayed to the mischievously curious reading public by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. Arguments regarding the final decision of the question, thus raised with ruthless indiscretion, would be useless for those who can read between, as well as through, the lines of the above dialogue; and would have a surely mischievous effect on those who cannot. The subject as it has been presented by recent writers is, necessarily, an acutely painful one to the philanthropist and the true physician; to the votary of genius; to the lover of literature; and—to the patriotic Englishman. Then let us recognize the fact that it presents a golden opportunity for the exercise of the most noble and dignified *Christian Charity*, as well as for the most profound philosophic investigation of the sources of human thought; of the mainsprings of human action; and of the construction and codification of ethical systems. Without daring to put forward any pretence to qualification for the presenting of

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moral rules, or the defence of theological theses, I will take the liberty on the present occasion of interjecting the confident opinion that the man whose death-bed experiences and expressions I have just been discussing with my overtaxed reader had no need to fear being suddenly presented before the tribunal of the self-sacrificing Savior, the "Incarnate" *Charity* who laid down his life for the benefit of his enemies as well as of his friends. But he might well shudder at a thought of the possibility of being brought up for final judgment at the bar of a house whose members consisted of contemporary clerics and puritans, and brother artists in literature! Then the experienced historian and ethnologist well knows how endlessly varied have been the moral codes of the various sections of the human race, in geographical space and in cosmical time. The irreconcilable wars of the Oriental hosts who respectively defended the supreme claims of *Yoni*-worship and *Lingam*-worship inevitably recur to the memory of the competent critic of opinions which would regulate sexual life and practice by Procrustean rules. And, in the most celebrated of all centres of ancient civilization, we find the purity of the pedigree of the Egyptian *Pharaohs* maintained in the royal line by exclusive marriage of brother and sister. (Then in those Levantine regions, whence issued the original twilight rays of our Western civilization, the orthodox sacramental process of preparation of the aristocratic bride for the embraces of the bridegroom was in the crepuscular epochs of morality carried out by the *priest*, as his *perquisite* and her *privilege*; a practice of which the more materialistic secular form was conveyed, along the lines of Mediterranean commerce and Roman conquest—to take root on the banks of the Tiber, as the sacred rite of *Priapean initiation*; and to be finally deposited on the borders of Western Europe, as the revolting "*Droit du Seigneur*.") While, on the opposite side of the globe, we ascertain that the special dignity of descent of the high-placed and responsible bearers of the combined functions of "prophet, priest, and king" was maintained by the same privileged and jealously-guarded practice in the court of the *Incas* of Peru! The relationship, in each instance, was obviously looked upon, by the parties directly interested, with the unblinking optics of *unsullied innocence*; through the medium of which it had been presented to the daughter of Eve, the *sister-wife* of the first manslayer. And yet all our light has come from the East! We can surely afford to be charitable, if only our hypocrisy would allow us!! And even the barkings of that un-

speaking *Cerberus* will be found to become inaudible, if consenting silence be found, or believed, "*worth while*." The Shah of Persia, accompanied by his "favorite boy," was received and entertained at the most moral Court of Western Europe, within living memory. Wisely and well was the Prince of Denmark made to formulate, in a moment of gloomy cynicism, the oft-quoted aphorism: "There is nothing either good nor bad, but thinking makes it so." But my final appeal to the charitable consideration of the reader in the case of Byron is one which I base (with confidence) on those physical (pathological) data which cannot fail to enlist the sympathetic consideration of all high-minded medical readers; philosophers and philanthropists, as all such invariably are, and can never fail to be. The expert in physiology, and pathological psychology, who has examined with me the *osteosclerotic eburnation* of the tables of the unhappy poet's cranium, and duly estimated the significance of the *disappearance* of the intervening *diploe* and the bordering *sutures*, has not only ceased to wonder at the eccentricities of conduct and ebullitions of violent temper which Byron often so conspicuously displayed, but will incline to wonder, after giving due consideration to the *chronic thickening and adhesions of the dura mater*, that he had not, many years before, either become a raving *lunatic* or a drivelling *imbecile*; or ended his life-long torture by an act of *self-destruction*. Under the influence of special forms of excitement, an individual whose cerebro-meningeal, and subjacent cerebro-cortical, blood-vessels had undergone changes so radical was surely not a representative of the type of *homo sapiens* for whom the skilled casuist could, justly or reasonably, claim the moral responsibility (as well as dignity), of complete *Freedom of the Will*. It is, of course, to the *expert* member of the healing art that I can (*only*, I fear) appeal with full confidence in advocating this view of the question. But, I sincerely hope that with the rapid diffusion of knowledge, and obliteration of prejudice, the members of the intelligent public will continue to grow in charitable stature and wisdom, in that special domain of knowledge which involves the relationship and mutual influence of *mind* and *matter*. Among the many fruitful suggestions which were made to the scientific public by the late Professor Cesare Lombroso, one of the most valuable, I am disposed to think, is that of the strangely narrow bordering belt which separates (and unites) *genius* and *madness*. And we have before us the too significant item of corroborative evidence, that Lady Byron's suspicion of the stability of her husband's mental

equilibrium was aroused after a brief experience of married life. The suspicion was, necessarily, a torturing one for her. "What they inflict they feel" was the summary of the author of *Don Juan* of the "kind of wild justice" which woman provides for herself under the special circumstances. The result is usually as chaotic, and as *blindly unjust*, as was that of Samson's final act of destructive revenge upon the persecuting Philistines. But it is the ever-recurring record of human experience: Some of us cannot help sometimes wondering whether the horrible system of progressive reduplication of injustice in gynandrian relationships, which so usually tend, in individual instances, to advance with geometrical ratio of increase, will become beneficially revolutionized on the establishment of the coming *millenium* of the *SUFFRAGETTE!* The final verdict of intelligent and unprejudiced humanity on the subject of Byron's personality and productions has surely a long period of growth to come before arrival at the acme of its ultimate development and universal adoption. But the long-deferred decision will, as surely, too, be very much influenced by the results due to the methods of inquiry initiated by the enthusiastic researches and teaching of the "founder of *modern criminology*." Hardly has any other scientist known to fame done so much to awake the sympathetic intelligence of humanity to the fact that we are all the creatures of circumstance in this world of exile, with all its bitter trials and bewildering problems. That Byron was as hopelessly handicapped in some directions of self-guidance (as the inevitable result of the cruelly combined effects of *hereditary moral weakness* and *physical malformation*, with those of *acquired disease*, of *imperfect nutrition* and *undue exertion*) as he was almost superhumanly gifted in many of his intellectual and artistic capabilities and well-won attainments—*cannot*, and, I venture to express the hope, *will not*, henceforth be questioned by any conscientious inquirer, or objector, who has had an opportunity of examining the data which I have placed before the reader in the present communication. The giddiness imposed upon him by the excessive neural tension of his whole economy gave him "the awful wish to leap within it," whenever he found himself on the edge of an abyss. We, of less noble clay, prefer to avail ourselves of the protection of a parapet, or the support of a hand-rail.

"And just as lamely can ye guess
How much perchance they rue it."

Such was the auto-analytical, as well as auto-biographical, reflection of the *one* great metrical exponent of nature and passion which the unsympathetic clime and genius of Caledonia has hitherto presented to the world. And, without wishing in any way to detract from the high estimation in which the memory of Robert Burns is so deservedly held by admiring posterity throughout the civilized world, I must point out to the reader, as we pass together along this pathway of inquiry and contemplation, the horrified disgust which the perusal of some of the autograph epistles of the northern bard produced in Byron on the occasion of first perusal, by the unscreened coarseness and unfamiliar naturalism which those documents then presented—to an equally impulsive and passionate, but immeasurably more sensitive and refined, psychological medium of reflection and transmission. The close relationship of *wit* and *genius* and *madness* is an enigmatical fact of which the existence has been noticed by the wise observers of every generation and epoch of the world's history; although some may here interject the statement that its *Oedipus* can hardly be said to have hitherto been found to present himself, at least recognizably, to a degree of general satisfaction. Still I venture to express the hope that the skilled expert in my own profession will agree that the genuine explanation of the truth of the rather depressing truism is to be found in the directions indicated in the facts and reasonings of the preceding paragraphs.

I must now bring to a close this, very long-drawn, presentation of what I believe to be an approximately original view of the tortuous and tangled linkage of mind and matter in the personal unit of the greatest master of the English language, as I believe, that the world has yet seen. And, in doing so, I would earnestly appeal to the Supreme tribunal of *fair play* and the *rights of man* (still unhappily, as well as universally, unregenerate and imperfect, as our mis-named *homo sapiens* continues to be), remembering that it was for those ideals that the original founders of the GREAT WESTERN REPUBLIC fought *so wisely*; and that their successors have collectively defended the same *so well*; ever since having acquired *so nobly* the guardianship of the prizes. And I will here boldly claim the recognition of a debt which is due, in chivalrous honor if not in material law, to the memory of probably the most brilliant, and assuredly the *most sincere*, of the original leaders of the *modern* movement towards the final goal of *human liberty*. Byron's appreciation of the sacredness of the sanctuary of human rights and natural privileges, which

had just expanded its early spring blossoms on the opposite coast of the Atlantic, was clearly shown by the fact that he at one time seriously thought of making it *his own city of refuge*. The same view is lucidly voiced, in ringing music of the most inspiring quality, in the stanza of *Childe Harold* (above quoted) wherein is embedded the immortal name of the founder, and first President, of the United States. And the fact that the skilled but worn and wearied swimmer sank in the storm-beaten surf of the rock-bound and unharbored coast of Grecian liberty, dragged down as he was by recent *disease*, weighted with the heavy impediments furnished by the effects of *starvation*, *exposure*, *malaria*, *venesection*, and *worry*, gives him surely the most eloquent claim on the sympathetic judgment of the American citizen of the twentieth century! Let us all remember how well and truly did the Prince of Denmark point out to his audience that, for even the best of us, *desert* invariably spells *whipping*, at least! And the present writer has far too high an opinion of his American brethren to conceive that even the least tolerant of the readers whose patience he has on this occasion so sorely tried, will, either now or hereafter, display his highly justifiable irritation by casting the first stone at the "name and memory" of the subject of this communication.

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