ELIZABETHAN DRAMA AND ITS MAD FOLK

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ELIZABETHAN DRAMA AND ITS MAD FOLK

The Harness Prize Essay for 1913

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CAMBRIDGE:
W. HEFFER AND SONS LTD.
1914

To

My Mother

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PREFACE.

The bulk of this essay is the result of research work along lines which, so far as the author knows, have not been previously traversed. The arrangement and the general treatment of the work are therefore original. Certain books, notably Tuke's "History of the Insane in the British Isles," Bucknill's "Mad Folk of Shakespeare," Bradley's "Shakespearean Tragedy," and Ward's "English Dramatic Literature," have been of special utility in places where reference is made to them. The critical judgments of these authors, however, have by no means always been followed.

The original title of the essay was "The Mad Folk of English Comedy and Tragedy down to 1642." It has been shortened for purposes of convenience, and the term Elizabethan extended in order to take in a few plays which belong to the next two reigns. The term is, however, generally recognised to be an elastic one, and most of the plays dealt with fall easily within it.

Much of the revision of this work has been carried out under pressure of other duties. I have been greatly helped in it by the criticisms and suggestions of Professor G. Moore Smith,

by the constant help of Mr. N. G. Brett James, by some useful information given me by Mr. C. Ll. Bullock, and especially by the kindness of my friend, Dr. J. Hamilton, who has read the essay through in manuscript from the point of view of the physician. Although I have not always taken up this standpoint in dealing with my subject, I have tried at all times to give it due consideration, for, as Ferdinand says in the "Duchess of Malfi," "Physicians are like kings: they brook no contradiction."

E. A. P.

Mill Hill,
March, 1914.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

"Shall I tell you why?
Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say every why hath a wherefore."
(Shakespeare: "Comedy of Errors.")

The jingling criticism of Dromio of Syracuse will ever recur to the essayist on an unconventional subject. Lest any therefore should claim of this essay that "in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme nor reason," excuse shall come prologue to the theme, and its "wherefore" shall receive a moment's merited attention. Of what utility, it may be asked, can the study of certain insane persons appearing in early modern drama be to the student of to-day? To this question let us give a double answer. The study has a distinct historical value, for from the mass of original documents which form the body of drama under consideration, we may gather much of the progress which has been made in the attitude of the country towards insanity, and hence the increasing tendency towards a humane and intelligent outlook upon disease in general. Our study is also of value from the point of view of literature—partly as shewing the varying accuracy of our

dramatists and the art with which they portrayed their mad folk and introduced them into their plays, partly by selecting and exposing the chief types of the mad folk themselves, considering them on their own merits, as pieces of art of intrinsic literary value. This last will be the chief business of the present essay.

We shall follow the order above indicated, regarding the presentation of madness successively from the standpoints of history and of literature. Under the latter head we shall consider several general questions before proceeding to isolate individual characters in turn. Lastly, we shall endeavour, from the matter furnished us by these plays, to extract some general conclusions.

One proviso must be made before we can embark upon our subject. What, for the purposes of this essay, is to be the criterion of madness? In ordinary life, as we know, the border-land of the rational and the irrational is but ill-defined. We cannot always tell whether mental disease is actually present in a person whom we have known all our lives, much less can we say when the pronounced eccentricity of a stranger has passed the bourn which divides it from insanity. The medical profession itself has not always been too wise where madness is concerned; and where the profession is at fault, with every detail of the case before it, how

can the layman aspire to success, with only a few pages of evidence before him of a "case" propounded by another layman of three centuries before? Were we to take the point of view of the physician we should be plunged into a medical dissertation for which we are both ill-equipped and ill-inclined.

But there is another, and a far more serious objection, already hinted at, to the adoption in this essay of the medical point of view. The authors themselves were not physicians; in many cases, as will be seen, they appear to have had but an imperfect technical knowledge of insanity and its treatment; their ideas were based largely on the loose and popular medical ideas of the Elizabethan age. If we are to consider this subject as a department of literature we must adopt the point of view of the dramatist, not of the practical physician. We must, for the time, definitely break with those who enquire deeply and seriously into the state of mind of every character in Shakespeare. In dealing with "King Lear," for example, we shall make no attempt to pry behind the curtain five minutes before the opening of the play for the purpose of detecting thus early some symptoms of approaching senile decay. Nor shall we follow those who endeavour to carry the history of Shylock beyond the limits of Shakespeare's knowledge of him, in the hope of

discovering whether he was true or false to the religion of his fathers. The critic who peeps behind the scenes at such times as these finds only the scene-shifters and the green room, where his nice offence will soon receive appropriate comments!

Our best plan, then, will be habitually to consider the plays from the point of view which we take to be that of the author himself. Prejudices will be put aside, and predispositions to premature diagnoses resisted. Constance and Timon of Athens, with several personages from Marlowe's dramas, will be regarded (with some effort) as sane, for the simple and quite adequate reason that they were so regarded by their authors. The question whether or no Hamlet was actually insane will, for the same reason, be dismissed in a few words; while the many witches who haunt Elizabethan drama, and whose prototypes afforded in nearly every case genuine examples of dementia, will be heroically disregarded, as falling without the bounds of our proposed theme.

From the number of occurrences in this body of drama of such words as "mad," "madness," "Bedlam," "frantic," and the like, it might be supposed that there are more genuine mad folk than actually appear. A few words will suffice to clear up this difficulty.

The term "madness" is often used in a loose,

unmeaning sense,—in phrases such as "Mad wench!", somewhat resembling the equally unmeaning slang of to-day. To insist on this point would probably provoke the charge of a lack of the sense of humour, and insistence is indeed unnecessary. Most readers of Shakespeare will recall Leontes' transport before the supposed statue of his wife, a transport which he characterises as "madness"; Portia's description of that "hare," "madness the youth"; Biron's apostrophe:

"Behaviour, what wert thou
Till this madman show'd thee?" [1]

and no less Shylock's famous description of men that

"are mad if they behold a cat." [2]

Those who are acquainted with "Philaster" may remember Megra's description of

"A woman's madness,
The glory of a fury," [3]

and everyone has at some time or other lighted upon that kind of "fine madness" which is the property of every true poet, and which Drayton, attributing it to Marlowe, declares

"rightly should possess a poet's brain." [4]

Nowhere in these passages are we expected to see insanity, though the last two are somewhat stronger than the others, and are typical of

[1] "Love's Labour's Lost," v., 2, 337.
[2] "Merchant of Venice," iv., 1, 48.
[3] "Philaster," ii., 4.
[4] Drayton, "The Battle of Agincourt."

many places where "madness" is used for simple passion and for inspiration respectively.

In a very special sense, however, madness is used for the passion of love, to such an extent that there is an actual gradation into madness itself. Loosely, and often humorously, the lover is said to be mad for the same reason as the lunatic. To quote Shakespeare once more—as he is more familiar than many of his contemporaries—

> "The lunatic, the lover and the poet,
> Are of imagination all compact."[1]

There is only a step between seeing "Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt,"[2] and seeing "more devils than vast hell can hold."[3] Once cool reason has given way to "frenzy," the Elizabethan is not always too subtle in his distinctions within that convenient term. So when Troilus informs us that he is "mad in Cressida's love,"[4] when Rosalind jestingly speaks of love as deserving "a dark house and a whip,"[5] and when Mercutio declares that his Rosaline-tormented Romeo will "sure run mad,"[6] we must not altogether discard such references as idle or even conventional. For while there is a great gulf fixed between such "frenzies" as these and the madness of the love-lorn Ophelia or

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1 "Midsummer Night's Dream," v., 1, 7. 2 1. 11. 3 1. 9.
4 "Troilus and Cressida," i., 1, 51.
5 "As You Like It," iii., 2, 420.
6 "Romeo and Juliet," ii., 4, 5.

even of the Gaoler's Daughter in the "Two Noble Kinsmen," we can only account for such a peculiar case as Memnon—in Fletcher's "Mad Lover"—by postulating a conscious development of the idea that "love is a kind of madness."

It is possible that the difficulty of keeping to the point of view we have chosen may lead to many mistakes being made in our treatment of individual characters. But it seems better to run the risk of this than to set about this work as though it were a medical treatise, or as though the plays to be considered had been produced by a kind of evolution, and not by very human, imperfect, work-a-day playwrights. That being said, Prologue has finished:

"Now, good or bad, 'tis but the chance of war."

CHAPTER II.

The Presentation of Madness—from the Standpoint of History.

"A mad world, my masters!"
(*Middleton.*)

The earliest view of madness which finds its way into this drama and persists throughout it, is based on the idea of possession by evil spirits. This conception came down from remote ages; it accounts, for example, for the madness of King Saul in the Old Testament, when "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit troubled him."[1] In the Elizabethan Age, demoniacal possession was still regarded as one of the most potent causes of insanity; it was made to account not only for mental disease but for all kinds of physical deformations and imperfections, whether occurring alone, or, as is often the case, accompanying idiocy. An offshoot, as it were, from this idea, is the ascription of mental disease to the influence of witches, who were often themselves (ironically enough), persons suffering from mental disorders. So enlightened a man as Sir Thomas Browne declares more than once his belief in witches and their influence; Burton's "Anatomy of

[1] I. Samuel, xvi., 14.

Melancholy" asserts that melancholy can be caused and cured by witches; the learned James, King of England, and Edward Coke, who lived at the same time, both take up the legal aspects, stating that the plea of insanity offered on behalf of witches should not be recognised at the legal tribunal. In Middleton's "Witch" (i., 2), there is a mention of "solanum somniferum" (otherwise known as Deadly Nightshade or Atropa Belladonna) which was the chief ingredient in many witches' recipes and produced hallucinations and other abnormal states of mind. Banquo, in Shakespeare's "Macbeth," probably refers to the witches' influence when he enquires, directly after the first meeting with them:

> "Have we eaten on the insane root
> That takes the reason prisoner?" [1]

A counterpart to the idea of possession by demons is found in a belief, common at this time and earlier, in the inspired utterances of the frenzied prophetess. Neither here nor with the witches was any curative treatment undertaken. For with the oracle no such treatment was thought to be necessary or even advisable, and with the witches none except death was supposed to avail. Occasionally a "witch" might be subjected, like other mad folk, to "chains" and "whips," but the road more often

[1] "Macbeth," i., 3, 84.

taken was the short one. In simple cases of demoniacal possession the means of cure was patent: the demon must be cast out and the patient will return to his right mind. The exorcisation of the "conjuror" was commonly accompanied by pseudo-medical treatment, the nature of which will presently appear.

Now the influence of the demonological conception of insanity is clearly seen in our dramas. Everyone is familiar, to go no farther than Shakespeare, with the famous exorcisation scene in "Twelfth Night,"[1] where the clown, disguised as "Sir Topas the curate," comes to visit "Malvolio the lunatic," and drives out the "hyperbolical fiend" which is supposed to vex him. Everything Malvolio does can be expressed in terms of Satan. When the wretched man speaks, it is the "fiend" speaking "hollow" within him. His disgusted exclamation when Maria urges him to "say his prayers" is construed into the fiend's repugnance to things sacred. Fabian advises "no way (of treatment) but gentleness . . . the fiend is rough and will not be roughly used." While Sir Toby protests that it is "not for gravity to play at cherry-pit with Satan; hang him, foul collier." A more complete and far more famous illustration may be found in "Lear,"[2] where Edgar attributes his assumed madness to possession by the

[1] "Twelfth Night," iv., 2. [2] "King Lear," iii., 4, etc.

various spirits which he names. Almost his first words in his disguise tell of the "foul fiend" leading him "through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire."[1] He names "the foul Flibbertigibbet," the fiend of "mopping and mowing,"[2] who "gives the web and the pin, squints the eye, and makes the harelip;"[3] of "the prince of darkness . . . a gentleman; Modo he's called and Mahu";[4] of "Hobbididence prince of dumbness;" of "Hoppedance" who "cries in Tom's belly for two white herring"[5] and many others—culled from the flowery page of Harsnet's "Popish Impostures."

A more modern idea of insanity is that which attributes it to natural physical causes, and this finds expression in our dramas—often in the same play—side by side with the conception just mentioned. The capriciousness of heredity, for instance, is recognised by the author of "A Fair Quarrel":

> "Wise men beget fools and fools are the fathers
> To many wise children . . .
> A great scholar may beget an idiot,
> And from the ploughtail may come a great scholar."[6]

The supposed justice of the same law is illustrated by a passage in Brome's "English Moor," where among punishments for sin is included:

> "That his base offspring proves a natural idiot."

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[1] "King Lear," iii., 4, 52, etc.
[2] Ibid., iv., 1, 64.
[3] Ibid., iii., 4, 122.
[4] Ibid., iii., 4, 148-9.
[5] Ibid,, iii., 5, 31.
[6] Middleton: "A Fair Quarrel," i., 1.

One of the most popular of the physical causes assigned by seventeenth century dramatists to madness is the worm in the brain. "Madam," says Arcadius in Shirley's "Coronation," "my uncle is something craz'd; there is a worm in's brain."[1] Shirley frequently refers to this particular "cause," and Winfield, one of the characters in "The Ball," adds to it another superstition when he says: "He has a worm in's brain, which some have suppos'd at some time o' the moon doth ravish him into perfect madness."[2]

Superstition is responsible for many of the "causes" of madness in our drama, and among these the most prominent is probably the superstition responsible for the English word "lunatic." The supposed influence of the moon on insanity and of its deviations on the recurrence of maniacal periods is clearly the source of those words which Shakespeare gives to Othello after the murder of Desdemona:

> "It is the very error of the moon;
> She comes more nearer earth than she was wont
> And makes men mad."[3]

So Lollio, in "The Changeling," tells Franciscus that "Luna" made him mad.[4] The "parson" who figures, too, among the mad folk in "The Pilgrim," has to be "tied short" since "the moon's i' th' full."[5]

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[1] iii., 2. [2] i., 1. [3] "Othello," v., 2, 109.
[4] iii., 3. [5] iii., 6. Cf. with these the phrases: "planet-struck," "planet-stricken," etc.; *e.g.* Brome's "City Wit," v., 1—Crazy: "Sure I was planet-struck."

That the superstition connected with the moon, however, was under high medical patronage is shewn by a reference to the "Anatomie of the Bodie of Man" by one Vicary, chief surgeon at St. Bartholomew's Hospital (1548-1562). "Also the Brayne" (he writes) "hath this propertie that it moveth and followeth the moving of the moone; for in the waxing of the moone the brayne discendeth downwarde and vanisheth in substance of vertue; for then the Brayne shrinketh together in itselfe and is not so fully obedient to the spirit of feeling, and this is proved in men that be lunaticke or madde . . . that be moste greeved in the beginning of the newe moone and in the latter quarter of the moone. Wherefore when it happeneth that the Brayne is either too drye or too moyst, then can it not werke his kinde; then are the spirits of life melted and resolved away, and then foloweth feebleness of the wittes and of al other members of the bodie, and at the laste death."

The word "lunatic" itself, it may be noted, quickly passed into common speech, and was used without reference to its original significance. We shall find it constantly recurring throughout this study, but as there is little variety in its use, no further examples need be quoted.

An interesting superstition is connected with

the mandrake plant, round which, from the supposed resemblance of its strangely cleft root to the human figure, many weird notions have gathered. One of these was that when torn from the ground, the plant would utter groans of "sad horror," which, if heard, caused instant madness, or even death.[1] From the numerous references to this superstition in Elizabethan drama may be extracted two,—the first from "Romeo and Juliet" (iv., 3. 47-8), where Juliet speaks of

> "shrieks of mandrakes, torn out of the earth
> That living mortals, hearing them, run mad";

the second from a speech of Suffolk's in "2 Henry VI." (iii., 2, 310), where the Duke reminds the Queen that curses will not kill

> "as doth the mandrake's groan."

Other causes to which, rightly or wrongly, insanity is attributed may be grouped together for convenience. In the "Emperor of the East" is an obvious reminiscence of Holy Writ where Flaccilla says of Pulcheria:

> "Grant heaven, your too much learning
> Does not conclude in madness."[2]

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[1] For further information on this subject Bulleine's "Bulwark of Defence" and Sir Thomas Browne's "Vulgar Errors" may be consulted.

[2] Act. iii. Sc. iv., cf. Jonson: "The Alchemist," ii., 1. Face of Dol:

> "She is a most rare scholar,
> And is gone mad with studying Broughton's works.
> If you but name a word touching the Hebrew
> She falls into her fit and will discourse
> So learnedly of genealogies,
> As you would run mad, too, to hear her, sir."

This devout wish, however, has only about as much claim to be taken seriously as Leonato's fear that Benedick and Beatrice, married a week, would "talk themselves mad."[1]

Such causes as irritation, worry, jealousy and persecution are frequently mentioned as conducing to frenzy, if not actually causing it. The Abbess of the "Comedy of Errors," reproaching Adriana for her treatment of Antipholus, sums the matter up thus:

"The venom clamours of a jealous woman
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
It seems his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing,
And thereof comes it that his head is light.
Thou say'st his meat was sauced with thy upbraidings:
Unquiet meals make ill digestions;
Thereof the raging fire of fever bred;
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?
Thou say'st his sports were hinder'd by thy brawls:
Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy . . .
The consequence is then thy jealous fits
Have scared thy husband from the use of wits."[2]

We need not stay long over the numerous characters who speak of anger as leading to madness. The term "horn-mad," however, is sufficiently interesting to be cleared up here.[3]

It is used in two senses. Often it is no more than an emphatic way of expressing the simple adjective. In this sense it may be connected

[1] "Much Ado About Nothing," ii., 1, 868.

[2] "Comedy of Errors," v., 1, 68.

[3] For further information on this interesting word see the New English Dictionary. *s.v.* "horn-mad."

with the Scottish word "harns," meaning "brains," an alternative form being "horn-wood." When Joculo, in Day's "Law Tricks," suggests that "the better half of the townsmen will run horn-mad,"[1] this is clearly the sense in which the words are to be taken. But in another sense, the source of which is evident, "horn-mad" is the word used to denote a kind of madness unknown as a technical term to the medical profession, but very common in the less elevated portions of our drama. This madness is a thing

> "Created
> Of woman's making and her faithless vows";

the madness, in a word, of the cuckold. Falstaff seems to be punning on the two senses of the term when he says: "If I have horns to make me mad, let the proverb go with me: I'll be horn mad."[2] Dekker exhibits an especial fondness for this particular pun. Cordolente, the shopkeeper of "Match Me in London," whose wife the King has seduced, says on being informed by that monarch that he is mad: "I am indeed horn-mad. O me! In the holiest place of the Kingdom have I caught my undoing."[3] Similar passages can be found in nearly all Dekker's plays, whether true madness is actually in question or not.

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1 "Law Tricks," iv., 2.
2 "Merry Wives of Windsor," iii., 5, 153.
3 "Match Me in London," iv., 1.

A world of meaning lies beneath such phrases as "dog-madness," "midsummer madness," "March mad," "as mad as May butter."[1] The first refers primarily to hydrophobia, though it is not always used in that sense; the second is accounted for by the old belief that insanity was fiercest and most prevalent in midsummer. The phrase "March mad" is connected with the saying "As mad as a March hare." Its explanation is that during the month of March, their breeding season, hares are wilder than usual. An example of the use of the phrase might be quoted from Drayton's (non-dramatic) work, "Nymphidia":

> "Oberon . . . Grew mad as any hare
> When he had sought each place with care
> And found his queen was missing."

"May butter" is unsalted butter, preserved during May for medicinal use in healing wounds. The connexion of the phrase with madness, however, is so deep as to be no longer understood!

Finally, among the causes of madness recognised in the seventeenth century must be mentioned melancholy, though we shall have to return to this on another page. The common belief appears to have been, in the words of the Doctors of the Induction to the "Taming of the Shrew," that "Melancholy is the nurse of frenzy,"[2] and incipient melancholiacs are con-

[1] All taken from plays of the period under consideration.
[2] "Taming of the Shrew," Ind. ii., 135.

stantly adjured by their nearest and dearest to remember this fact—though their adjurations seldom have any effect. The Duchess of Malfi, indeed, hearing in her captivity a "hideous noise," and being told:

> "'Tis the wild consort
> Of madmen, lady, whom your tyrant brother
> Hath placed about your lodging,"

replies:

> "Indeed, I thank him; nothing but noise and folly
> Can keep me in my right wits; whereas reason
> And silence make me mad."[1]

In the "Lover's Melancholy," Prince Palador is presented with a "Masque of Melancholy" (for which the author was largely indebted to Burton) in order that his diseased mind may be relieved. These two cases certainly shew a divergence from the more general opinion. The first may perhaps be attributed to the Duchess' desire: "to make a virtue of necessity," the second to the fact that Palador's disease is not true melancholia, but a state of mind bordering on affectation—that melancholy affected by more than one of Shakespeare's "humorous" characters, of whom it can be said "You may call it melancholy if you will favour the man, but by my head 'tis pride."[2]

We may gather next, from our plays, some of the recognised symptoms of insanity in these

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[1] "Duchess of Malfi," iv., 2.

[2] "Troilus and Cressida," ii., 3, 92.

early times. Epicene, pretending to recognise the madness of Morose, says: "Lord, how idly he talks, and how his eyes sparkle! he looks green about the temples! do you see what blue spots he has?" Clerimont has his answer ready: "Ay, 'tis melancholy."[1] But these two are over-frivolous; their diagnosis is untrustworthy; we must turn to surer ground. One supposed sign of madness was evidently the quickening of the heart and the pulse. Hamlet, in a well-known passage, ridicules his mother's idea that the ghost which he sees is due to "ecstasy":

> "Ecstasy!
> My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
> And makes as healthful music." [2]

Philaster, declaring his sanity to Arethusa, says:

> "Take this sword
> And search how temperate a heart I have . . ."

and again:

> ". . . Am I raging now?
> If I were mad, I should desire to live.
> Sir, feel my pulse, whether have you known
> A man in a more equal tune to die."

Bellario replies:

> "Alas, my lord, your pulse keeps madman's time!
> So does your tongue."

That these tests were inadequate is proved by a simple illustration—in the "Comedy of Errors,"

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[1] "Epicene," iv., 2.
[2] "Hamlet," iii., 4, 139, etc.
[3] "Philaster," iv., 3, 45, etc.

Pinch the exorcist, mistakes Antipholus' anger for madness. Luciana cries:

"Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks!"

And a courtezan,

"Mark, how he trembles in his ecstasy!"[1]

Pinch attempts to feel the "madman's" pulse, but in any case he knows that both man and master are possessed:

"I know it by their pale and deadly looks."[2]

The madman was supposed not to be aware of the nature of his disease. "That proves you mad," says the Officer in Dekker's "Honest Whore," by a strange piece of reasoning, "because you know it not."[3] Throughout the plays occurs the same phenomenon. Even when certain of the mad folk recognise that they are afflicted with some sort of disease, they resent questioning on it. Guildernstern's account of Hamlet is significant of a large number of cases:

"Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But with a crafty madness, keeps aloof
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state."[4]

The resentment is no doubt due to a subconscious wish of the madman to hide his loss of that sense of personal identity which is used by Shakespeare as one of the criteria of madness. Constance' proof to Pandulph of her entire sanity will be remembered:

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[1] "Comedy of Errors," iv., 4, 52-3. [2] Ibid., l. 96.
[3] "Honest Whore," iv., 3. [4] "Hamlet," iii., 1, 7.

"I am not mad; this hair I tear is mine.
My name is Constance; I was Geffrey's wife;
Young Arthur is my son and he is lost:
I am not mad[1] . . ."

Sebastian, in "Twelfth Night," gives similar evidence:

"This is the air; that is the glorious sun;
This pearl she gave me. I do feel't and see't;
And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,
Yet 'tis not madness."[2]

Another symptom of insanity was sleeping with open eyes. Meleander, in the "Lover's Melancholy," "sleeps . . . with eyes open, and that's no good sign"[3] and the Duchess of Malfi is said to sleep "like a madman, with (her) eyes open."[4]

A general wildness of demeanour was thought to be characteristic of both the earlier and the later stages of madness. Songs and dances are often associated with it; wild laughter, "the usher to a violent extremity," accompanied by fulminations against the world in general; bitter sarcasm, sudden touches of pathos and consequent outbursts of anger; "thundering" and "roaring," which can only be checked by like excesses on the part of others—these are all common symptoms, together with "raving" on all kinds of subjects. This wildness, however,

1 "King John," iii., 4, 48, etc.
2 "Twelfth Night," iv., 3, 1, etc.
3 "Lover's Melancholy," ii., 2.
4 "Duchess of Malfi," iv., 2.

is not inconsistent with considerable force and pregnancy of speech, which might lead some to doubt the actual presence of insanity; and which is "a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of."[1] A sense of physical pain, of being "cut to the brains," might also afflict the patient; and the disease frequently causes such suffering that

> "Nor the exterior nor the inward man
> Resembles that it was."[2]

An excellent objective description of a single case is furnished by the "Gentleman" in "Hamlet" who announces the frenzy of Ophelia:

"She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world, and hems and beats her heart;
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense; her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
Which as her winks and nods and gestures yield them
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily."[3]

As to the nature of the madman's talk, we find it impossible to generalise, and the ideas of different authors on what it should be have not much agreement, beyond the one condition that there should be wanting what Shakespeare aptly calls "a dependency of thing on thing." This

[1] "Hamlet," ii., 2, 212.
[2] Ibid., ii., 2, 6-7.
[3] Ibid., iv., 5, 4, etc.

will be noted more particularly when we come to the study of individual characters.

From these symptoms and others which might be cited it will be evident that the madness of our dramas is far from being confined to one type. We know that various kinds of insanity were recognised in the seventeenth century. Corax, the physician of the "Lover's Melancholy," makes it clear that

> "Ecstasy
> Fantastic Dotage, Madness, Frenzy, Rapture
> Of mere imagination differ partly
> From Melancholy."[1]

Our learned informant, Ben Jonson, diagnoses another case of insanity as "the disease in Greek . . . called *μα νια*, in Latin, insania, furor, vel ecstasis melancholica, that is egressio, when a man ex melancholico evadit fanaticus, ... But he may be but 'phreneticus,' yet, mistress, and 'phrenesis' is only 'delirium' or so."[2] And indeed there are all varieties of insanity in the plays before us. There is the young person who merely talks "fantastically," "like a justice of peace," "of a thousand matters and all to no purpose,"[3] and whose words "though they (lack) form a little," are "not like madness."[4] There is the person dominated by the "idée fixe"—examples differing widely occur in "King Lear" and in "Bartholomew Fair."

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1 "Lover's Melancholy," iii., 1. 2 "Epicene," iv., 2.
3 "Honest Whore," v., 1. 4 "Hamlet," iii., 1, 171.

There is the "idiot" and there is the "imbecile" —two types between which it would be affectation here to attempt a discrimination. The melancholiac, one of "sundry kinds," affected by a "mere commotion of the mind, o'ercharged with fear and sorrow,"[1] is one of the commonest types. Mania and delusional insanity are also frequent and account for a large proportion of our characters. Yet, since this is not a medical treatise, how can we distinguish any more finely? We shall do better not to attempt a more detailed classification of our mad folk than this, which will be utilised later in the consideration of individual characters. "It is not as deep as a well, nor as wide as a church-door, but 'twill serve." Like more than one of those Elizabethan playwrights we may feel that:

> "To define true madness
> What is't but to be nothing else but mad?"[2]

On this let us act and employ a literary rather than a medical criticism.

Our dramas are not silent as to the way in which lunatics were regarded by the world at large. Few people at that time had the sympathy of Langland for those whom, three hundred years before, he beautifully called "God's minstrels"—a title explained by the preceding exhortation to his readers to bestow their gifts on the wandering insane as bountifully as though

[1] "Lover's Melancholy," iii., 1. [2] "Hamlet," ii., 2, 93.

they were wandering minstrels. For the most part the lunatic seems to have been regarded, when confined, as a negligible factor in every-day life,[1] and when at large as a harmless and a gratuitous amusement. So, as has just been noted, the Duchess of Malfi is regaled before her death with "some sport" in the shape of several madmen who sing and dance before her. Here, of course, the intention is a sinister one, but there is no sinister meaning in a casual remark let fall by Truewit in the "Silent Woman"—"Mad folks and other strange sights to be seen daily, private, and public"![2] Nor is there any idea but one of legitimate amusement in the entertainment organised by the master of a private asylum, Alibius by name, for the marriage of Beatrice-Joanna (in "The Changeling") and given, as he says, by:

> "A mixture of our madmen and our fools,
> To finish, as it were, and make the fag
> Of all the revels, the third night from the first."[3]

Isabella caustically remarks "Madmen and fools are a staple commodity."

In this connexion, a particular class of lunatic deserves notice. The Bedlam beggar, variously known as "bedlamer," "bedlamite," and "Abraham's man," was originally an inmate of Bedlam, but, coming to be regarded as convalescent, had

[1] *e.g.* A lunatic's legal acts were annulled and his property was placed under control. (See further, Encyl. Brit., *s.v.* Insanity.)

[2] "Epicene," ii., 1. [3] "The Changeling," iii., 3.

been set free and would roam about the country, half-crazed, living for the most part on the charity of such as would befriend him. In Dekker's "Belman of London," a non-dramatic work professing to expose "The most notorious Villanies that are now Practised in the Kingdome," is a long description, in the manner of a seventeenth century "character," of one of "those Wild-geese or Hayre-braynes . . . called Abraham's men." Dekker at least has little good to say of them. "The fellow . . . sweares he hath bin in bedlam and will talke frantickly of purpose: you see pinnes stuck in sundry places of his naked flesh, especially in his armes, which paine he gladly puts himselfe to (beeing indeede no torment at all, his skin is either so dead, with some fowle disease, or so hardned with weather), onely to make you believe he is out of his wits: he calls himself by the name of Poore Tom, and comming neere anybody, cryes out Poore Tom is a-cold . . . ." The mind at once turns to Edgar and the celebrated lines where he poses as one of those very "Abraham-men":

> "This country gives me proof and precedent
> Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
> Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
> Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
> And with this horrible object, from low farms,
> Poor pelting villages, sheep cotes, and mills,
> Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers
> Enforce their charity."[1]

[1] "King Lear," ii., 3, 13, etc.

From all that we can gather, however, of the treatment of the insane in madhouses of the time, it would seem probable that, among those released or escaping from them, many would still be genuine lunatics. At the same time, it was no doubt fairly easy to make a living in the way Dekker describes, and numbers of beggars must have emulated Edgar's behaviour from far less worthy motives.

Such a lack of popular sympathy could hardly go hand-in-hand with a peculiarly humanitarian treatment of the insane. The Saxon treatment of lunatics has been described as "a curious compound of pharmacy, superstition, and castigation." In the seventeenth century it had been but little improved upon. Its most characteristic feature was confinement in a dark room, with additional treatment, varying according to circumstances. A book, of date 1542, called "A Compendious Pygment or a Dyetry of Helth" by one Dr. Borde, advises the keeping of lunatics in a dark room, provided with no knives, girdles, nor pictures of man or woman on the wall. Few words are to be used except in gentle reproofs and the dietary is to be careful and ample. Dr. Borde's treatment was enlarged upon in later days; chains were used to prevent escape; castigation was employed freely and often attended with great cruelty. A quatrain in Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" (1621),

confirms this statement, presenting what is indeed a ghastly picture. It is all borne out by the dramatic references, which are extremely numerous. The lunatic *chez lui* is evidently a subject which appeals to the dramatist: madness and its cure become topics of ordinary conversation. Rosalind, in playful banter with Orlando, compares love to "a madness," which "deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too."[1] Leonato, in "Much Ado" talks (from our point of view ominously) of those who would

> "Give preceptial medicine to rage,
> Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
> Charm ache with air and agony with words."[2]

Shakespeare is not predicting here, as has been suggested, the application of gentle methods to insanity, but ridiculing those who were so foolish as to apply "a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief." Even as he wrote lightly of the silken thread, he would have heard in imagination the clank of the lunatic's chains.

Another addition to the attractions of the asylum was the course of slow starvation, and this is hinted at in a casual allusion by Romeo in "Romeo and Juliet":

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1 "As You Like It," iii., 2, 420, etc.

2 "Much Ado About Nothing," v., 1, 24, etc.

"Why Romeo, art thou mad?" asks Benvolio.

"Not mad," answers Romeo, "but bound more than a madman is,
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,
Whipped and tormented."[1]

Pinch the conjuror knows what to do in cases of madness:

"Mistress, both man and master is possess'd . . .
They must be bound and laid in some dark room."

George, in "The Honest Whore," has heard of domestic cures: "'Sfoot! I have known many women that have had mad rascals to their husbands, whom they would belabour by all means possible to keep 'em in their right wits." And a character in Marston's "What You Will" speaks in a delightfully brisk and business-like manner: "Shut the windows, darken the room, fetch whips; the fellow is mad, he raves, he raves—talks idly—lunatic."

Few tests were needed to convince the keepers of an asylum that their patient was mad, and if it could be made a matter of pecuniary advantage to them to incarcerate any person, they would often take him and clothe him in the "fool's coat" or clap him into the "madman's cage" without making too many inquiries. Thus the madhouse became, in many a sinister sense, "a house of correction to whip us into our senses."[2]

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1 "Romeo and Juliet," i., 2, 54, etc.
2 Shirley: "Bird in a Cage," ii., 1.

Before we leave the historical side of our subject, some mention must be made of the famous Bedlam, so often mentioned in connexion with the mad folk of our plays. The real and original Bedlam, "Bethlem monastery," as it is called, "the madman's pound," which is actually introduced into one or more of the plays under consideration,[1] was formerly the Hospital of St. Mary Bethlehem in Bishopsgate Street. The Priory was founded for this Order in 1247 by an ex-sheriff named Simon Fitz-Mary. It passed through many vicissitudes, chief among which were a seizure by the Crown in 1375 and the dissolution by Henry VIII. in 1547. After this latter date the revenues were held by the Mayor, the commonalty and the citizens of London. For some hundred and fifty years the Hospital had been used for lunatics, and the only difference in this use caused by its dissolution as a religious house seems to have been that it became incorporated as a Royal Foundation. For a considerable time it suffered through poverty, being largely dependent on legacies, such as Sir Thomas Gresham's in 1575, and on general alms. Mistress Trainewell, in Brome's "Northern Lass" (1632), mentions Bedlam among other objects of charity, and suggests to Squelch an excellent

[1] Notably into "Northward Ho." The madhouses of "The Pilgrim," "The Honest Whore," and "The Changeling" are private asylums.

reason for patronising it. The passage may be quoted in full:

> *Squelch*: "I will now bestow my wealth in monumental good deeds, and charitable uses in my life-time, to be talked well on when I am dead."
>
> *Trainewell*: "Yes, build almshouses and hospitals for beggars, and provide in Bridewell houses of correction for your friends and kindred. Pray give enough to Bedlam, you may feel some part of that benefit yourself before you die, if these fits hold you."

The later history of Bedlam is uneventful, and, to us, unimportant. In 1676 it was transferred to London Wall, the new buildings being known as the "New Hospital of Bethlehem," and in 1815 to Lambeth. Bethlem Hospital was by far the best known of London mad-houses in the Seventeeth Century; two more are mentioned by Stow in his "Survey of London," and may be noted here. The first was "an Hospitall in the Parish of Barking Church," founded "by Robert Denton Chaplen, for the sustentation of poore Priests, and other both men and women, that were sicke of the Phrenzie, there to remaine till they were perfectly whole, and restored to good memorie."[1] In another place, under the title of "An house belonging to Bethlem," we read: "Then had ye an house wherein sometime were distraught and lunatike people, of what antiquity founded, or by whom I have not read, neither of the suppression, but it was said that sometime a King of England,

[1] Stow: "Survey of London" (Clarendon Press), i., 137.

not liking such a kind of people to remaine so neare his pallace, caused them to be remoued farther of, to Bethlem without Bishops gate of London, and to that Hospitall the said house by Charing crosse doth yet remaine."[1]

No doubt there were also private asylums in existence, where the treatment of the patients was harsh, and their comforts were few. The conditions, indeed, seem to have been very similar to those of Bedlam. These and other details may be gathered chiefly from four plays, in each of which there are "madhouse scenes"—they are "The Pilgrim" by John Fletcher, "The Honest Whore" by Thomas Dekker, "Northward Ho," the joint work of Dekker and Webster, and "The Changeling," ascribed to Middleton, who was probably aided in it by Rowley. A comparison of these plays should give a very fair account of a seventeenth century lunatic asylum.[2]

It is not difficult to obtain admission to this asylum, for the charge is only a penny or twopence, and Bellamont and his friends in "Northward Ho" look at the "mad Greeks" for a short time before calling for their horses, which are stabled at "the Dolphin without

[1] Ibid., ii., 98.

[2] The chief sources from which this description is compiled are:—"The Pilgrim," iii. 6, iv. 3, v. 5; "The Honest Whore," v. 12, 13; "The Changeling," i. 2, iii. 3, iv. 3, v. 3; "Northward Ho," iv. 1. For obvious reasons the specific references to every quotation are not given.

Bishopsgate" near by. The hospital consists of "a parlour, kitchen, and larder below stairs, and twenty-one rooms where the poor distracted people lie, and above stairs eight rooms more for servants"; the madmen may either be visited in their cells, or brought in for inspection by the visitors. Preferring the former alternative we approach the cells, and hear a confused roaring—"the Chimes of Bedlam." It is "Mad Bess roaring for meat or the Englishman for drink"; like "bells rung backward" they are nothing but "confusion and mere noises." The "shaking of irons" adds to the din, which is increased by the snatches of coarse song which are continually assailing our ears, the playing of rough games such as "barley-break," the running and jumping of the more violent of the patients, and the cries of those who are undergoing a treatment of the whip:

> "If sad, they cry,
> If mirth be their conceit, they laugh again;
> Sometimes they imitate the beasts and birds,
> Singing or howling, braying, barking, all
> As their wild fancies prompt 'em."

When the lunatics are brought in, or (as was more usual in real life though unsuited for dramatic representation), we visit them in their "cages" or cells, we are confronted with a strange sight. A "pretty poet" who "ran mad for a chambermaid" invokes Titania and Oberon,

and speaks in the sanest of tones of "daisies, primrose, violets"; his madness, though at the time we do not know it, is feigned. The Englishman is still crying for drink. Everyone must go down on his knees and pledge him: "A thousand pots, and froth 'em, froth 'em!" The parson, "that run mad for tithe goslings," threatens to excommunicate and curse the whole company. A musician walks slowly and deliberately apart; he fell mad "for love of an Italian dwarf." Many a lunatic resembles Candido, "much gone indeed," who believes himself to be a prentice, "talks to himself," selling "pure calicos, fine hollands, choice cambrics, neat lawns," and resenting interference in a way which is positively dangerous. Near him is a lad brought in (like Alinda) "a little craz'd, distracted" and not suffering acutely; he is allowed comparative freedom and accorded light treatment till more dangerous symptoms shew themselves. He

> "talks little idly
> And therefore has the freedom of the house."

We speak to the keepers about their charges, and they seem mildly interested. The most entertaining characters we may discuss at length with them; and, if we will brave their foul talk, we may even converse with the patients as freely as they are permitted to converse with each other. We must be prepared, in this case,

to hear frank comments on our personal appearance and the wildest of guesses, often mere expressions of an *idèe fixe* on our profession or our business. The lunatics will not, of course, allow that they are mad, though they may recognise that they are ill and under a doctor's care. This, however, is less common with our asylum patients than with those undergoing private treatment, such as Ford's Meleander. The mere suggestion that they may be of unsound mind usually amuses them, or makes them indignant. It is only when the keeper ceases to reproach them with madness and turns the conversation to "Whips!" that they become serious again. Perhaps, after all, a talk with the keeper will best serve our purpose.

Friar Anselmo is at hand and will describe to us with more sympathy than many of his kind the condition of the inmates:

"There are of madmen, as there are of tame,
All humoured not alike. We have here some
So apish and fantastic, play with a feather;
And, though 'twould grieve a soul to see God's image
So blemished and defaced, yet they do act
Such antic and such pretty lunacies,
That, spite of sorrow, they will make you smile.
Others, again, we have, like hungry lions,
Fierce as wild bulls, untameable as flies;
And these have oftentimes from strangers' sides
Snatch'd rapiers suddenly and done much harm;
Whom if you'll see, you must be weaponless."

We may ask him about his treatment of these poor creatures, who are ever in fear of the lash.

It will be easily justified:

> "They must be used like children; pleased with toys,
> And anon whipt for their unruliness."

Alternate cajolings and threats are the mildest form of treatment that we can hope to see in these places. The Elizabethan asylum keeper holds with Shakespeare that

> "Diseases desperate grown
> By desperate appliance are relieved
> Or not at all."

In the middle of this entertaining discussion we are interrupted. A prospective patient, it seems, is being announced, but the first words of the Master, who enters with him, suggest that we have been fortunate enough to meet with a case of false incarceration. A scholarly young man has been confined without cause and his friends in high quarters have come, armed with a "discharge from my lord cardinal," to demand his release. "I am heartily sorry," says the Master, "If ye allow him sound, pray take him with ye." A gentleman protests that there is nothing in the Scholar

> "light nor tainted,
> No startings nor no rubs in all his answers;
> In all his letters nothing but discretion,
> Learning and handsome style."

He is quite "perfect"; "a civiler discourser I ne'er talked with." Then, before the Master, the Scholar is catechised:

"You find no sickness?" "Do ye sleep o' nights?" "Have you no fearful dreams?" The

answers, to the Master's disgust, are satisfactory. "I think," exclaims the friend, "You keep him here to teach him madness. But, just then, his "eyes alter," and

> "On a sudden, from some word or other.
> When no man could expect a fit, he has flown out."

The mention of "stubborn weather" and "strange work at sea," starts in him a new delusion or revives an old one. He rants and raves: "I am Neptune." Now it is the Master's turn to jeer, and the visitors retire, discomfited.

It may be noticed, in passing, that the questions addressed by the keepers of madhouses to prospective patients in order to ascertain whether or no they are indeed mad are hardly less irrelevant and absurd than those of "Sir Topas" in "Twelfth Night." Antonio, in the "Changeling," is asked as "easy questions": "How many true (*i.e.* honest) fingers has a tailor on his right hand?" . . . "and how many on both?"—"How many fools goes to a wise man?" These remind us of the questions put by the Fool to King Lear.

Our madhouse does not contain only those lunatics who are termed "madmen"; there is another variety, known most commonly as the "fool." Now the word "fool," in Elizabethan literature, has a number of connotations. It may be used, as in Shakespeare, for the professional jester of the court, who was, indeed,

often a little wanting in ordinary intelligence, though this was amply atoned for by his witty and pregnant remarks. It is also used in a general sense, as to-day, of a person who has acted, or who habitually acts, in an unwise way. With reference, however, to our plays, it has more often approximately the technical meaning of "imbecile"—a term used of those whose brains are constitutionally affected and whose insanity is therefore rather a quantitative rather than a qualitative defect. Taken in this sense, the word "fool" may be applied to some of the asylum's inmates, the word "madman" to others. The two classes are not always well distinguished in these plays, but the fools can generally be detected by the inanity, rather than the violence, of their words and actions. They tend to reply in the style of Antonio, the feigning fool of "The Changeling"—

"He, he, he! well, I thank you, cousin, he, he, he!"

To which Lollio, the attendant, replies: "He can laugh; I perceive by that he is no beast."

The two classes of patients are apparently allowed to mix in each others' company. "We have," says Lollio, "two sorts of people in the house, and both under the whip, that's fools and madmen; the one has not wit enough to be knaves, and the other not knavery enough to be fools." They are kept under very much the same discipline, though the fools are sent to the "Fools'

College"—which is an institution of the madhouse itself—and are put to school in various classes in the hope of improving their wit.

The seventeenth-century asylum, it must be remembered, claims to have worked cures, though at first it seems hard to believe that its designation as "the school where those that lose their wits Practise again to get them" is anything more than a phrase. As we enter the domain of Anselmo we are met by a "sweeper," who describes himself as one of the "implements" of the house—"a mad wag myself here once; but I thank father Anselmo, he lashed me into my right mind again."

We are struck at once, as we read these accounts of Bedlam, by the inconsequence, verging at times on brutal heartlessness, with which those responsible for the lunatics' welfare refer to them. It is the expression of that spirit upon which we have remarked continually throughout this historical survey. In concluding it we can hardly illustrate this last point better than by considering a few of the occasions on which the mad folk are held up to ridicule or satire. It is, of course, the dramatist with whom we have properly to reckon for this, yet he was clearly influenced by the attitude of the time, and contemporary prose-references endorse the spirit of the plays.

Satire abounds on the coarsest of subjects—

that of the "horn-mad" patient—and further examples need hardly be given. More interesting is the comment of the keeper in the "Pilgrim" when a patient enters crying "Give me some drink."

"Oh, there's the Englishman! . . .
These English are so malt-mad there's no meddling with 'em;
When they have a fruitful year of barley there,
All the whole island's thus."

A similar skit follows on the parson above-mentioned "that run mad for tithe goslings." But Fletcher's best effort in this direction is the introduction of the Welshman, who, but for his premature exit might have served as quite a reasonable understudy for Fluellen. "Whaw, Master Keeper," is his first remark, "Give me some ceeze and onions, give me some wash brew . . . Pendragon was a shentleman, marg you, sir. And the organs at Rixum were made by revelations: There is a spirit blows the bellows, and then they sing." He will "sing, dance and do anything," and when the Englishman and the Scholar challenge him, he threatens to "get upon a mountain and call my countrymen." Dekker, in the "Honest Whore," is able to hit the lawyers. There are none of that company, he says, among Anselmo's madmen. "We dare not let a lawyer come in, for he'll make 'em mad faster than we can recover 'em." Questioned as to how long it takes to "recover" any of the patients, our informant replies that

"An alderman's son will be mad a great while. . . . A whore will hardly come to her wits again. A Puritan, there's no hope of him, unless he may pull down the steeple and hang himself i' the bell-ropes."[1]

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[1] Another interesting passage, no doubt satirical, but too long for quotation at length, occurs in "The Duchess of Malfi," Act iv., Sc. 2: It begins:

"A mad lawyer and a secular priest
A doctor that hath forfeited his wits
By jealousy," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

The Presentation of Madness—from the Standpoint of Literature.

"This mirthful comic style
Makes us at once both serious, and smile."
(Alex. Brome.)

The questions which we have now to answer, before passing to our main study and considering the mad folk as individuals, are two in number. The first is a general one: What is the place of such a feature as madness in drama? The second is more particular: What place does madness assume in the body of drama under consideration? Let us take them in this order.

1. Clearly there is a great difference between madness in tragedy and madness in comedy. Many of us would hold to the one and emphatically despise the other. At all events, risking confusion through an over-complicated scheme of sub-division, we shall deal with each separately.

The representation of madness in tragedy might be objected to upon the following grounds: If carried out well, it becomes too terrible for the stage; if badly, it is nothing but a ludicrous caricature of greatness. This is at least plausible, and the last proposition is evidently true. But what of the first? Is madness really too terrible

for dramatic presentation, or is it not eminently suited to the stage by virtue of its peculiar qualities?

The critic replies that madness is sheer suffering of the most painful sort, that the ravings of a noble mind o'erthrown have passed the *ne plus ultra* of the tragic, while the babblings of mere imbecility have not reached the level of tragedy at all. "Such suffering" (he will say), "as is the lot of Lear, should never be dwelt upon, much less paraded before crowds, and decked out with the tinsel of the stage. Think of physical suffering comparable with it, if that be possible—for is not mental suffering far more terrible and heart-rending than physical?—and you would never talk of putting the maniac on the stage. Think of the repulsion caused by the blinding of Gloster and the murder of Lady Macduff's infant son,—and is not the madness of Lear more terrible? 'King Lear' is, of course, a brilliant exception, but the exception proves the rule."

With this last provoking platitude we need not quarrel, but the main assertion must be challenged nevertheless. In the first place it is a fact that we do not feel the same repulsion at the representation of madness on the stage as we do at a similar case in real life, whereas with physical brutality the effect seems in drama to be almost magnified. Could we possibly feel

more keenly the blow which Othello gives to Desdemona if the scene took place in our own family? It is at least doubtful. But if we think of the suffering of Lear, or of Ophelia, and suppose one-tenth of it inflicted on our dearest friend, the thought becomes perfectly unbearable. It is not that we do not enter into the spirit of "King Lear," but rather that the sufferings of the aged King, by reason of their very remoteness from human life, give us the actual "tragic feeling" which Shakespearean tragedy inevitably produces.

Not only so, but the state of the madman, provided that apart from him the play contains the requisite tragic hero, is admirably calculated to contribute, through the emotions of pity and fear, to that *καθάρσις* which Aristotle considers to be the essence of tragedy. Tragic pity will most surely be excited at the misfortunes of "one who is undeserving," that is of

> "a man
> More sinn'd against than sinning."

Hardly any disaster which may befall a human being can excite such tragic pity as the crowning disaster of insanity. Whatever a man's sins, we feel that the loss of reason more than atones for them all. If the greatest villain in drama should lose his reason, we should feel this; when Lear, the rash, impetuous King of Britain, becomes insane, we cry out, forgetting for the time his

tragic error, that his punishment is too great for him. When the brief scene is ended we consign him to the Great Silence, not with feelings of rebellion but with a sense of supreme calm :

> "He hates him
> That would upon the rack of this tough world
> Stretch him out longer."[1]

So equally with tragic fear. This emotion, which is no vulgar sense of possible or impending misfortune to ourselves, but an awed and sympathetic feeling for a character essentially of the nature of our own, is brought out to the full by means of the portrayal of madness. For what reduces men so quickly to the same level as the loss of reason by a fellow-man? In real life our hearts are stirred by compassion, yet moved by inexpressible awe, as we see or hear of one whom we have known and whose senses have deserted him. Be he of high or low station, it matters nothing. Differences of rank are forgotten—and this is less often so with physical calamity. Loss of reason has effected the belated recognition of our common humanity. Carry this into the imaginative world of drama, and you have the emotion of tragic fear.

The representation, then, of madness in tragedy would seem to be not only permissible, but of the greatest value to the drama when this madness is worked into the plot and becomes an

[1] "King Lear," v., 3, 313.

essential part of it. Often, however, and especially with the lesser lights of the Elizabethan stage, it held a place wholly subsidiary to the main theme of the tragedy. If tragic fear and tragic pity were to be evoked it would be by other means; madness was required for colouring effects, and to lend a peculiar atmosphere to the tragedy. It was sketched but lightly, frequently with little attempt at reality; whether this arose from the dramatists' lack of ability, or from a desire to lessen the supposed pain, can only be a matter of conjecture. The introduction of madness, as a subsidiary element, into tragedy, appears to be justifiable only when it is regarded objectively with no relation to the pain caused to the sufferer. Let us illustrate. The Duchess of Malfi, previously to her death, is made to listen to the cries and to watch the antics of madmen. The intention of the author is evident. Whether we consider him to have been successful or not, we can hardly cavil at his device when we bear in mind the nature of the tragedy. But had a madman been introduced and presented as a new character with a definite interest of his own, either at this or at an earlier stage of the play, we should have rightly condemned the new feature as inartistic and revolting, for our centre of gravity, so to say, would at once have been shifted from the unfortunate lady to the unfortunate madman.

The conception of madness in tragedy is a powerful one and cannot be trifled with.

There is another point of view from which the question must be considered before we pass from tragedy to comedy,—namely, that of the action. It is recognised that in tragedy properly so called the conflict must spring from the actions of the hero, and that the calamity which marks the tragedy must be unmistakeably dependent upon this generating action. Now the hero, to commit a tragic error, must obviously be responsible for his actions,—otherwise the tragedy will rest upon an irrational basis, which would be absurd. No abnormal mental state, then, such as would arise from drunkenness, hallucination, or insanity, can serve to generate the conflict. The most usual and natural position for the introduction of insanity will be either during a considerable part of the decline of the action from the crisis (as with Ophelia's madness in "Hamlet")[1] or immediately preceding the catastrophe (cf. the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth), when it adds greatly to the force of the tragedy. The construction of "King Lear" is in this respect peculiar. Lear's madness, to the ordinary spectator, is first noticeable in the third act;[2]

[1] Taking the Play Scene (iii., 2.) as the crisis.

[2] Indeed many critics find incipient madness in Lear's conduct even earlier, *i.e.* from the very beginning of the play. This view I cannot hold; Lear's actions in the early

but, as Dr. Bradley points out, it is more satisfactory from the point of view of the construction to consider, not Lear, but Goneril, Edmund and Regan, as the leading characters in the play.[3]

What of madness in comedy? This, we confess, it is difficult, if not impossible, to justify. Feigned madness may, no doubt, have some place in a comedy, and such tricks as occur in "Northward Ho!" where the poet Bellamont narrowly escapes being immured in a madhouse, may, and certainly did appeal to a certain kind of audience. But the introduction of Bedlam into a romance such as "The Pilgrim," or a comedy of low life such as "The Changeling," merely for the sake of giving some cheap amusement to the groundlings, reveals a mind which one would suppose to be untouched by the elements of human pity. It can only be understood in the light of the treatment accorded to the lunatic in real life. And our authors' sins do not end here. In more than one comedy in which the madman appears, little or no attempt is made to give even an approximate idea of what he might be expected to say or do. His presence is merely an excuse

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part of the play do not seem to me to be the result of anything but the childishness of old age. The King is quite responsible for his actions. If he were not, he would be the one exception to Shakespeare's practice in his tragedies.

[3] Sh. Trag., p. 53.

for the coarsest of jokes and the vilest of songs, which, no doubt, lost nothing in the acting. The degradation of a theme which is properly tragic is unhappily only what may be expected from playwrights whose work graced the Post-Restoration stage.

In tragi-comedy, it may be said, madness has a legitimate place, and we find the authors of "The Two Noble Kinsmen," among others, making full use of it. We shall best see, when we consider this play separately, how impossible it is to reconcile madness with the dénouement of comedy. We may be able to put a hook into the nose of leviathan, but we can no more use the sufferings of mad folk and then bring them to a dénouement, in a tragi-comedy worthy of the name, than we can supply a "happy ending" to "Hamlet" or "Lear." The heights of mania are very high, as the depths of idiocy are very low. The maniac, though cured of his disease, does not fit into comedy, any more than the imbecile, however well-born, can harmonise with tragedy. From one point of view at least, a great man is at his greatest when he is possessed by an uncontrollable passion. If the madman of a tragi-comedy is sufficiently great for tragedy, the play cannot be resolved into a comedy; if he is not a possible tragic hero, his madness is not sufficiently imposing to raise the conflict to a crisis. We are on the horns of

a dilemma which may be avoided in practice by some dramatic genius, but which were certainly not avoided in Elizabethan drama by those authors who rushed in where others might fear to tread.

2. We have now to enquire into the actual presentation of madness in our tragedy and comedy, and it must be confessed at once that the results will be somewhat disappointing. We have between twenty and thirty plays of which it may fairly be said that the conception of madness enters definitely into the plot, and of this number all, save four or five, are comedies. The tragedies may briefly be considered first.

In "King Lear," mad folk are given an exalted place. On the madness of the old King depends the whole play; the scenes which are naturally the most striking become more terrible because of his ravings; their effect is further enhanced by the feigned madness of Edgar and by the curious half-imbecility of the Fool. In "Hamlet" the hero's assumption of an "antic disposition" is inextricably interwoven with the main plot, while Ophelia's loss of reason is largely responsible for the catastrophe. Nowhere else in Elizabethan Tragedy do we find so bold a use of the madman as here. Turn to "The Changeling" and Middleton's ideas of what can be done with

him take shape. There is a comic underplot, alternating during the greater part of the play with a fine tragic theme, and only becoming connected with it towards the end—this underplot embodies the grossest of all possible conceptions of madness. From a sublime passion, it becomes material for vulgar intrigue. Even where mad folk are seriously treated in these tragedies, they are not portrayed with the power of which the author is capable. Penthea, for example, in Ford's "Broken Heart," though not, as has been suggested, a mere reminiscence of Ophelia, is somewhat slightly and inadequately drawn. And one would at least have expected Webster, with his penchant towards the carnival of horrors, to have produced something better than the inane songs and dances which, with hardly the saving grace of being grotesque, disfigure the fourth act of the "Duchess of Malfi." The fact is that the common Elizabethan treatment of insanity was so far removed from the humane that the subject was regarded rather as one for mirth than for solemnity—for comedy and not for tragedy.

Reconciling ourselves as best we can to this state of things, let us examine some representative comedies. There are, in the first place, those in which insanity plays quite a subsidiary part and is not in the least essential

to the main plot. In "The Silent Woman," for example, the pretended madness of Morose is an occasion for much merriment, but it lasts only for part of a scene. In "Northward Ho!", Maybery, Greenshield and their friends lay a merry plot against Bellamont and contrive to secure his arrest as a madman, though here again, the jest is but a short one. Similarly, in "Twelfth Night," Malvolio is treated as if he were insane, much to the delight of Maria, Sir Toby, and the lesser folk; while in the "Comedy of Errors" many accusations of madness are bandied to and fro, which more than once lead to violence. Sometimes the madness is only reported. In "Cymbeline," the Queen is said in the fourth act to be afflicted by

> "A fever with the absence of her son,
> A madness of which her life's in danger,"

and there is little doubt that her violent death, "most shameless-desperate," was due to some derangement of the reason. So, too, the Lady Constance dies "in a frenzy," and Brutus' Portia, it is reported,

> "fell distract
> And, her attendants absent, swallow'd fire."

Such scenes as these last three, however, Shakespeare has, with his usual tact, kept off the stage, knowing that in the case of "Cymbeline" he would otherwise introduce too violent a nemesis into what was rapidly becoming the dénouement of a romantic comedy.

Massinger, on the contrary, in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," seems rather to welcome this nemesis, allowing his extortioner, Sir Giles Overreach, when outwitted in the fifth act, to go mad and to be taken off to Bedlam. It will be noticed that most of the examples just given (excluding those of "reported" insanity) have been mainly of pretended madness; where bona-fide mad folk are introduced into comedy without affecting the construction of the play, this is usually for the sake of a vulgar realism or of comic effect falsely so-called. We have already seen enough of this and may pass on.

In "Bartholomew Fair" we have a madman delineated with some care. Trouble-all, the lunatic in question, only makes his appearance in the fourth act, but from his entry to the close of the play he evokes, together with Quarlous, who masquerades in his clothes, a considerable share of attention. His place in the plot is an important one. Dame Purecraft, who is being wooed by that notorious Puritan, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, and by a gentleman named Winwife, has had it foretold that she must marry a madman within seven days. She has been daily to Bedlam to enquire if any insane gentlemen are available, but it is only when she meets Trouble-all that she feels any inclination towards one. By a trick, however, Quarlous, a "gamester" and a friend of

Winwife's, succeeds in duping and eventually marrying the Dame, and although Trouble-all discovers the ruse, all ends happily. It will be seen, when a sketch of the madman is attempted on another page, how carefully the lunatic is portrayed.

It is needless to examine all the comedies in which the madman is more intricately interwoven with the plot than in "Bartholomew Fair," for the work is seldom done with any appreciable dramatic skill, or with the least vestige of sympathy. The plot of "The Mad Lover," a play in Fletcher's worst style, will serve as a typical example. Madness here forms the basis and theme of the plot. Memnon, a valiant general somewhat advanced in years, albeit a blunt, uncourtly fellow, has returned from his victories to the Court of Paphos. He falls in love with Calis, the King's sister, who is herself in love with Memnon's brother, Polydore. The General proposes in truly singular fashion; his courtship begins and ends with three remarks: "I love thee, lady," "With all my heart I love thee," and finally, "Good lady, kiss me!" Calis, supposing not unnaturally that he is mad, ignores him; when she has left the room, the Mad Lover suddenly grows quarrelsome, talks wildly, and declares that his suit shall succeed. Calis, re-entering, is held up, and, growing fearful, tries to humour him, but

he rushes from her presence with wild threats. In the next act, we find him contemplating death for the purpose of presenting his lady with his heart. This announcement of his project sends more than one of his friends to plead for him with the Princess. Meanwhile, Polydore, who has overheard his brother entreating the surgeon to cut out his heart and seen the surgeon beat a hasty retreat, concludes that the "cause is merely heat" and contrives a double expedient. For Memnon he dresses up another woman as the Princess, in the hope that he may be satisfied with her; at the same time, he reports to Calis that Memnon has carried out his threat and makes believe to present the General's heart in a cup together with some verses from her "dead" lover. This makes her a little remorseful. But Memnon refuses to be deceived, and it is only when Polydore himself pretends to be dead that the Princess is induced to change her mind and marry Memnon. Instantly the Mad Lover becomes sane, and all is well.

Of the tragi-comedies into which this theme is introduced we may take two—"The Lover's Melancholy" and "Match Me in London"—as being representative. Each shows some improvement on the "Mad Lover." The "Lover's Melancholy" is based, as the name partly implies, on the melancholy of Palador, Prince of Cyprus.

whose love Eroclea has "disappeared," though in reality she is present in disguise during the whole play. The plot turns on the situation caused by the heroine's secret presence. Among the disasters occasioned by her "loss" is the madness of her father, Meleander; his recovery, in the fifth act, is the best part of that act, the Prince having rediscovered his love long before (iv., 3.). Dr. Ward considers that the melancholy of Palador "recalls Hamlet."[1] The young Prince is certainly an interesting character, and the curtness of his exclamations and replies, together with the natural grace of his disposition, afford quite a noticeable contrast with the now coherent, now raving old father. Both characters are intimately connected with the plot; and both present traits, as will be seen, which are fully in harmony with their conditions. It only remains to wish that Ford had not been inspired by Burton, and that the zealous physician Corax had refrained from presenting the Prince with that "trifle" of his "own brain," to wit, the tedious and unnecessary "Masque of Melancholy."

It may at first appear a violent anti-climax to come to Dekker's "Match Me in London." Nevertheless the working into the plot of Tormiella's feigned madness is quite in the true dramatic spirit, and one scene leaves us a little

[1] Eng. Dram. Lit.: Vol. ii., p. 297.

suspicious, as is so often the case with the plays of Shakespeare's contemporaries, of the influence of Ophelia. Tormiella is a young shopkeeper's wife whom the King tries to seduce; he visits her in disguise and she is beguiled away, with the compliance of her father. The situation develops thus: Malevento, Tormiella's father, rushes on the stage, crying out that his daughter has lost her reason:[1]

Mal. O royal Sir, my daughter Tormiella
Has lost her use of reason and gone mad.
King. When!
Mal. Not half an hour since.
King. Mad now! now frantic!
When all my hopes are at the highest pitch
To enjoy her beauties! talk no more; thou liest.
[*Enter Gazetto.*
Gaz. May it please your Majesty—
King. Curses consume thee—oh— [*Strikes him.*
Gaz. It is dispatch'd, the Queen is lost, never to be found.
King. Wave upon wave,
Hard-hearted Furies, when will you dig my grave?
You do not hear him, thunder shakes Heaven first.
Before dull earth can feel it:—
My dear, dear'st Queen is dead.

The King is distracted. "Without a woman," he says, he will himself "run mad at midnight." The physician is to use his "skill," but if that prove unavailing the King's resolve is taken nevertheless.

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[1] "Match Me in London," Act v., Sc. 1.

> "I will marry
> The lunatic lady, she shall be my Queen,
> Proclaim her so."[1]

So saying, he leaves the room, and almost simultaneously Tormiella enters. She plays the madwoman for some time before the physician; but, discovering at length that he is in reality an agent for her husband, she reveals her sanity to him, together with the reasons for her assumption of madness. The action hurries on from this point with increasing rapidity; and, after several plots have been thwarted, the dead come to life and sinners are converted, after the approved manner of romantic comedy. But enough has been said to shew how the somewhat vulgar plot is given a startling and unexpected turn, at a point where, to tell the truth, it is badly needed. The actual "mad scene" is extremely short, but it serves a true dramatic purpose and is far from being the worst thing in the play. We are a long way from the comic scenes of the "Changeling" and the "Honest Whore" of Dekker himself.

In these few pages we have briefly considered the places occupied by mad folk in some of the most representative of our tragedies and comedies. In many of them sublime passion is degraded for the most vulgar of purposes; in many more there is little attempt to realise the

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[1] Ibid., v., 1.

nature of insanity—mere surface work, a "writing down" to the lowest type of contemporary playgoer. Such prostitution of art appears to us, in the light of Shakespeare's plays and of our own opinions, unworthy and base. Yet it must not be forgotten that many of the "madhouse scenes" of our plays contain much genuine humour which from the point of view of the day was harmless and legitimate. And as we have already agreed to take up, as far as possible, the position of the author himself, we shall restrain our Puritanical or artistic indignation, and pass on to consider our mad folk themselves, as men and women rather than as puppets of a playwright, from the point of view not of construction but of character.

CHAPTER IV.

Mad Folk in Comedy and Tragedy—
(i.) The Maniacs.

"Whom if you'll see, you must be weaponless."
(The Honest Whore.)

In the division of our study upon which we have now entered, the various figures of madmen will be considered under some five or six headings. We shall naturally exclude the mere crowds of madmen who enter the plays as lay figures rather than as personalities of the drama. The largest of the remaining classes will be dealt with first, namely, that which includes "maniacs," or "madmen" in the proper acceptation of the term. Next come the half-witted, who will not detain us long; then the melancholiacs, who appear so frequently that they demand a section to themselves; next those suffering from hallucinations and delusions, who have not perhaps crossed the border-line, or who exhibit abnormal symptoms which can hardly be included in the term insanity, though they are very near it. Lastly, there is a group of pretenders,—of whom Hamlet and Edgar are the chief,—members of which attract our attention in several other plays.

Greene's Orlando, a rude and undeveloped character, whose frenzy is quite conventional, may be briefly mentioned by way of prelude. His ravings are composed mainly of scraps of classical lore: "Woods, trees, leaves; leaves, trees, woods, tria sequuntur tria; ergo optimus vir non est optimus magistratus, a peny for a pote of beer and sixe pence for a peec of beife? wounds! what am I the worse? O Minerva! salve; good morrow; how do you to-day? Sweet goddesse, now I see thou lovest thy ulisses, lovely Minerva, tell thy ulisses, will Jove send Mercury to Calipso to lett me goe?"[1] It will be seen that Greene has no idea of making his madman anything more than a source of amusement. His violence is noteworthy: more than once he "beats" those who listen to his ravings. Scraps of incident like the fight with Brandimant, King of the Isles, are highly significant:

Brandimant. "Frantic companion, lunatic and wood,
Get thee hence, or else I vow by heaven,
Thy madness shall not privilege thy life."

[*Alarum. They fight. Orlando kills Brandimant.*

The following dialogue, too, is delightfully naïve:

Enter Tom and Ralph.

Ralph. O Tom, look where he is! Call him madman.
Tom. Madman, Madman.
Ralph. Madman, Madman.
Orlando. What say'st thou, villain? [*Beats him.*

[1] From the Alleyn MS.

It only remains to add that after being treated for his disease by Melissa, a witch—she sprinkles, among other things, many Latin verses over him—Orlando recovers his sanity, and cries:

> "Sirrah, how came I thus disguis'd,
> Like mad Orestes, quaintly thus attir'd?"

A more serious study of insanity, in a work of that unbridled force which characterised the University Wits, is Kyd's portrayal of Hieronimo and Isabella.[1]

Hieronimo, Marshal of Spain, whose son Horatio has been murdered by the King's nephew, Lorenzo, is stricken with insanity as a result of the shock; his lunacy is intermittent (closely akin to the disease known as manic depressive insanity), but it is only right to add that this result is largely due to the addition of certain scenes to the play by another hand. Kyd represents Hieronimo as afflicted by a deep melancholy which is only a later phase of his grief and in no way prevents him from doing his ordinary duties; the scenes in which his ravings are at their wildest are commonly attributed to Ben Jonson. It is therefore of little use attempting to trace any regular development of Hieronimo's madness; a short account of it will suffice.

It breaks out, not when entering the arbour "in his shirt, etc.," he first discovers his murdered

[1] "Spanish Tragedy."

son, but after he has cut him down from the tree on which he has been hanged, and has lamented the murder with his wife. All his ravings, as we are told later in the play, are of Horatio.

> "His heart is quiet—like a desp'rate man,
> Grows lunatic and childish for his son.
> Sometimes, as he doth at his table sit,
> He speaks as if Horatio stood by him;
> Then, starting in a rage, falls on the earth,
> Cries out 'Horatio, where is my Horatio?'
> So that with extreme grief and cutting sorrow
> There is not left in him one inch of man."[1]

At the conclusion of the scene the distracted father is made to recite some Latin verses, usually attributed to Kyd himself. Hieronimo's "tragical speeches" do not again reveal a mind unhinged, until the eleventh scene of the third act, where the interpolator is once more busy. This, however, occurring as it does in Kyd's part of the play, where the Marshal is still sane, must not be mistaken for a sign of madness. He utters the word "son." In his disordered brain this starts a train of bewildered reasoning. "My son, and what's a son?"—he debates the question dispassionately until he once more remembers his loss. Then his grief breaks forth: he rants of Nemesis and Furies, murder and confusion, and even in Kyd's work we now see that "this man is passing lunatic." From this point onwards Hieronimo pursues his course of revenge with all the dogged

[1] "Spanish Tragedy," iii., 12a.

cunning of real madness. His violence surprises the King, who is ignorant of its cause. He digs with his dagger; he would "rip the bowels of the earth." "Stand from about me," he cries to the courtiers,

> "I'll make a pickaxe of my poniard
> And here surrender up my marshalship;
> For I'll go marshal up the fiends in hell,
> To be avenged on you all for this."[1]

The next scene — an interpolation — is the weirdest and perhaps the most effective in the play. Tormented by delusions of spirits, yet hotly denying his madness even while raving on all kinds of topics, Hieronimo is confronted with a painter, Bazardo. Ever mindful of his cruel bereavement, he entreats Bazardo to paint a picture of him with his wife and son, to paint a murderer, "a youth run through and through," and—if he only could—"to paint a doleful cry." At the end of this scene Hieronimo is at his greatest, and, although in a more detailed study of the play the manner of his revenge and his death would find due place, we will be content to leave him here:

> "Make me curse," he cries, "make me rave, make me cry, make me mad, make me well again, make me curse hell, invocate heaven, and in the end leave me in a trance—and so forth.
>
> *Painter.* And is this the end?
>
> *Hieronimo.* O no, there is no end: the end is death and madness! As I am never better than when I am

[1] "Spanish Tragedy," iii., 12.

mad; then, methinks, I am a brave fellow; then I do wonders; but reason abuseth me, and there's the torment, there's the hell. At the last, sir, bring me to one of the murderers; were he as strong as Hector, thus would I tear and drag him up and down."[1]

Hieronimo's wife, Isabella, who is similarly afflicted by Horatio's murder, though she plays a much smaller part in the play, first "runs lunatic" in a short scene with her maid. Here her talk is mere nonsense:

"Why did I not give you gowns and goodly things,
Bought you a whistle and a whipstalk too,
To be revenged on their villanies?"[2]

She seems sane enough, however, in the "Painte Scene," and only appears once again,[3] when she cuts down the accursèd arbour and, after a long soliloquy, stabs herself.

The comparatively rough sketches of Greene and Kyd—the first, in order of time, of those under consideration—have been introduced thus early into this chapter for the sake of contrast with the figures that follow.[4] Kyd, in "The Spanish Tragedy," almost certainly inspired "Titus Andronicus," and we may be fairly sure of his influence on "Hamlet." Now that we have

[1] Ibid., iii., 12a. [2] Ibid., iii., 8. [3] Ibid., iv., 2.

[4] Other examples of conventional madness abound. See page 151, Note 1. (Ann Ratcliff, in "The Witch of Edmonton.") Peele, in the "Old Wives' Tale," presents us with a character, Venelia, sent mad by a sorcerer, Sacrapant:

She "runs madding, all enraged, about the woods
All by his cursèd and enchanting spells."

But, apart from this, she does nothing!

examined the work of the instructor, let us turn to Shakespeare's maniacs and see how the pupil has bettered the instruction.

The most powerful character among the maniacs, by far the grandest figure in our drama of insanity, if not indeed in the whole of English drama, is King Lear. "Grandly passive"—the description is Professor Dowden's—"played upon by all the manifold forces of nature and society," he "passes away from our sight, not in any mood of resignation or faith or illuminated peace, but in a piteous agony of yearning for that love which he had found only to lose for ever."[1] This alone would make him a noteworthy figure, but he has far greater claims on our admiration and wonder. He is as lovable, even in his greatest weakness, as the most affectionate of all Shakespeare's characters, yet more terrible than his darkest villains. He takes hold at once of our sympathy, our pity and our imagination, and the tragic feelings evoked by the drama conflict in us with the more human emotions roused by his own essential humanity.

At the beginning of the play he is often said to be already insane, especially by those medical writers who are somewhat inclined to pervert Shakespeare in order to read in him their own opinions. "The general belief is that the

[1] "Shakespeare, His Mind and Art," p. 272.

insanity of Lear originated solely from the ill-treatment of his daughters, while in truth he was insane before that, from the beginning of the play, when he gave his kingdom away." Thus Dr. Brigham, in the "American Journal of Insanity," and thus more than one of his kind. But if what they assert be true, and Lear is really mad in the first scene of the play, then "King Lear" is not, in the Shakespearean sense, a tragedy at all. Lear is not mad, however, at this point, as an examination of the scene will shew. His apparently arbitrary division of the kingdom has really been planned before the opening of the play; the protestations of love on the part of his daughters are only planned as an impressive setting for the bestowal of the richest portion upon his best-loved child. Nor was it the King's original intention to live with each of his daughters in turn: "I loved her most," he says of Cordelia, "and thought to set my rest on her kind nursery."[1] His powers are indeed failing; his childishness, his vanity, his wayward temper have more sway over him than of old; but at the very worst his state is but one of incipient senile decay. His daughters themselves recognise this. "'Tis the infirmity of his age," says Regan to Goneril, "such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's

1 "King Lear," i., 1, 125-6.

banishment," and Goneril adds that they must "look . . . to receive, not alone the imperfections of long-ingraffed condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them."[1] Here, then, he stands, impatient and passionate, "a very foolish, fond old man," but sane in every sense of the word. Only a physician could detect in his "unconstant starts" a predisposition to insanity, with which, since it is not part of the play, we need not concern ourselves.

When the King next appears, his passion is for a time calmed, and his state, apart from the short scene with Oswald (i., 4, 84, etc.), one of tolerant indulgence. The caustic comments of the fool he listens to and encourages; it is only when Goneril appears that his tone changes to one of ill-concealed irritation. "How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown."[2] He pierces the thin disguise of urbanity which cloaks her speeches, and attacks with all the fierceness he can summon the ingratitude which it conceals. It is by no chance that he strikes his head as he exclaims:

> "O Lear, Lear, Lear.
> Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in,
> And thy dear judgment out."[3]

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[1] "King Lear," i., 1, 296, etc. [2] Ibid., i., 4, 207-8.
[3] Ibid., i., 4, 292-4.

He invokes the most terrible of curses on his ungrateful daughter. His words are here and there broken, but their sense is only too clear. Hot tears escape him in spite of himself; his manhood he feels to be shaken, and when alone with his Fool and the faithful Kent (now disguised as "Caius" the servant), he feels that passion and shock have done their worst. Even as he listens to the jests of the Fool, he knows that the curse is coming upon him. The "self-consciousness of gathering madness" breaks through all restraint:

> "O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
> Keep me in temper, I would not be mad"[1]

From this time onward his self-control grows less and less; try as he will, he is unable to restrain his passion:

> "O how this mother swells up toward my heart!
> Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow,
> Thy element's below!"[2]

But the passionate nature is reasserting itself and will not be kept down. Sarcasm, tenderness, and anger alternate in his speeches; he responds to the least sign of love, but anything less draws from him the bitterest reproaches. He prays for patience and for the judgment of Heaven to be manifested in his favour. Now he begins to approach incoherence, and the abruptness which marks the matter as

1 "King Lear," i., 5, 50-1. 2 Ibid., ii., 4, 56-8.

well as the manner of his speech shews only too plainly the affection of his mind. His state of mind is truly described as one of "high rage."

> "No, I'll not weep;
> I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
> Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
> Or e'er I'll weep.—O fool, I shall go mad."[1]

It is from this point, though the physicians, with Dr Bucknill at their head, deny it, that we can actually assert that Lear is insane. Hitherto there have been signs that his madness was imminent, but it is the scene on the Heath which is "par excellence," the scene of Lear's madness. It is true that, as Dr. Bucknill says, he has "threatened, cursed, wept, knelt, beaten others, beaten his own head."[2] But "the addition of a physical cause" marks the crisis of what Shakespeare certainly means to be understood as insanity in the sense which that term commonly bears. From this time predominates that symptom which is so widespread in cases of insanity—the domination of an *idée fixe*. After Lear has announced "My wits begin to turn"[3] (a statement of itself not without significance), Edgar enters, disguised as Tom o' Bedlam. Lear mistakes him; the idea dominant in his mind comes to the surface: "Didst

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[1] "King Lear," iii., 4, 285-9.
[2] "The Mad Folk of Shakespeare," p. 194.
[3] "King Lear," iii., 2, 67.

thou give all to thy daughters? And art thou come to this?"[1]

However, the ravings of the King by no means continue incessantly from this point. Indeed, in the presence of Edgar he becomes comparatively tranquil, and henceforward periods of storm and calm follow in quick succession. His speeches still contain much reason, and they have lost little of their wonderful force. Edgar, appearing unclothed, is to Lear an enviable object—"the thing itself." Hence, through another semi-delusion, he becomes a "learned Theban," a "philosopher."[2] This delusion continually recurs, and is developed with much force and even eloquence, but with less poetry.

In the scene where Lear arraigns a pair of joint-stools as his supposed daughters,[3] we can trace all the wanderings of the deluded mind. In their "warp'd looks," the King can read "what store (their) heart is made on." He resolves to have them tried for their cruelty. Some people are standing about him. One (Edgar) is taken for a "robèd man of justice." Another (the Fool) is "his yokefellow of equity." Kent is "o' the commission," and must take his place beside them. Goneril is arraigned first, and Lear takes his oath that "she kicked the poor King, her father." The joint-stool naturally

1 "King Lear," iii., 4, 49-50. 2 Ibid., iii., 4 passim.
3 Ibid., iii., 6.

makes no reply; her guilt is thereby confirmed. "She cannot deny it." The other sister is then brought forward. But even as the self-constituted witness is about to give evidence, the image vanishes from his mind; the delusion changes; the criminal has escaped:

> "Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!
> False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?"

Now Edgar is again the object of a delusion; he is one of those scanty hundred followers: "You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred; only I do not like the fashion of your garments." It is all so true, and at the same time so pathetic! Edgar feels that he can hardly sustain his disguise.

> "My tears," he says, "begin to take his part so much,
> They mar my counterfeiting."

A long interval (according to Daniel, four dramatic days) has passed before Lear again appears.[1] He is "fantastically dressed with wild flowers" and is at first ignorant of Edgar's presence. Now he is wild, full of delusions, and certain of nothing. His mind first runs upon soldiers and war: "There's your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper."[2] Now he recalls a scene with Goneril, now the terrors of the storm on the heath, now some memory of his former greatness. "Is't not

[1] "King Lear," iv., 6, 81, etc. [2] l. 85.

the King?" asks Gloster, and the reply of Lear rings true:

"Ay, every inch a king.
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes."[1]

"Matter and impertinency," to quote the words of Edgar, mingle in his speech. He seems no longer to suspect the nature of his disease. He only knows that he needs surgeons: "I am cut to the brains!" Mr. Cowden Clarke aptly draws the reader's attention to this phrase,—expressive of what acute physical and mental suffering!—together with such phrases as "I am not ague-proof" and "Pull off my boots, harder, harder." It is in this scene, perhaps, more even than in the Storm Scene of the third act, that we feel the acutest distress at the King's sad condition.

We are relieved at length. When next we meet King Lear,[2] it is at Cordelia's tent in the camp. Gentle hands are ministering to him; loving faces are near to welcome him, when he shall awaken from the sleep which it is hoped will be his cure. He awakens to the sound of "soft music," growing gradually louder—how different from the "chimes of Bedlam"!—and when Cordelia speaks to him, he believes her to be a spirit from Heaven. Then at last he wakes —still infirm of mind, but faintly conscious of infirmity, not frantic with physical and mental

[1] ll. 109-10. [2] "King Lear," iv., 7.

pain. Everything in this scene is touched with the most delicate pathos; Lear's wistful plea:

> "Do not laugh at me,
> For, as I am a man, I think this lady,
> To be my child Cordelia." [1]

Cordelia's heart-felt reply:

> "And so I am, I am." [2]

Kent's loyal assertion that his master is in his "own kingdom," and the old father's final

> "Pray you now, forget and forgive," [3]

as if he were hardly convinced even yet that Cordelia's end was not revenge.

With such tender care as might now have been his lot, the old King would surely have recovered something like his former state of mind. But this is not to be, and our dramatic selves at least will not wish that it should be so. When Lear enters, with Cordelia dead in his arms and the rest following behind, we feel perhaps as nowhere else his tragic greatness. One wrathful speech, one tender reminiscence, and another of the fiercest:

> "Her voice was ever soft,
> Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman,
> I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee." [4]

A few questions and replies, and the catastrophe is upon us. Exquisite sympathy creates exquisite pathos:

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[1] "King Lear," iv., 7, 68-9. [2] l. 70. [3] l. 84. [4] Ibid., v., 3., 272-4.

"And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!—
Pray you, undo this button; thank you, sir,—
Do you see this? Look on her—look—her lips—
Look there, look there!"[1]

Lear is dead; he has rejoined his belovèd daughter; he has been "dismissed with calm of mind, all passion spent." What greater consummation could we desire?

There is little need to insist upon the grandeur and pathos of Lear, and, happily, with our next subject of study, the need is equally small. Yet Shakespeare's presentation of Ophelia is utterly different from his presentation of Lear. The madness of Lear we are able to trace from its first symptoms; we follow it through all its involutions and are present at its partial cure. Ophelia we see but once after she "becomes distract." A brief word of introduction, and she appears; a few broken words and snatches of song and she has left us. A brief re-entry and she has passed us again, and all is over—all save the report of her death. Lear is an old man, predisposed to insanity by a passionate temper and a mind weakened by old age. Ophelia is a young girl, a "Rose of May," whose loss of reason excites in us not so much terror as sheer pity. With Lear the crisis is brought on by thwartings of the will, followed by the severest

[1] "King Lear," v., 3, 305, etc.

physical exposure and shock. With Ophelia the cause is mental shock following the deepest of sorrows. Lear dies half-sane; Ophelia is never restored to her right mind,—her death is not shewn to us like that of Lear. There is a reason for these differences. Ophelia is no tragic personage and our sympathies are not to remain for long with her misery. She must disappear, lest she should destroy all our interest in the main plot. And thus we must not expect to find the depth in her character which we find in the character of Lear.

Before her affliction wins for her our sympathy, Ophelia stands in our estimation far below Shakespeare's other heroines. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that at times, like Isabella in "Measure for Measure," she is actually repellent, and for exactly the opposite reason. She is passive and reserved, gentle to the point of weakness, a tool in the hand of any man who could gain her confidence. This is the reason for her mind giving way. Throughout her life, she has leaned for support, not on her own strength, but upon the strength of her father and her brother. Her father is murdered, her lover distracted, her brother far away—and Ophelia herself is unable to stand alone.

We may have blamed her for a too ready acquiescence in her father's prying schemes and despised her for throwing over her lover, but

whatever her sins, they are more than atoned for by the treatment to which she has to submit at the hands of Hamlet himself; and when, in addition to this, her father is killed and she loses her reason, we feel that these calamities have been wholly undeserved. Thus, when a Gentleman of the Court prepares the Queen for her sad entry, our sympathy is entirely won:

"She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world, and hems and beats her heart;
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense." [1]

She is led in, crooning to herself, chattering incoherently of her sorrows, confusing them in her mind and mingling them together in her speech. Her songs have been censured for their alleged grossness. Small wonder if they should contain reminiscences of her lover's foul talk, yet for the most part these ditties are mere expressions of piercing sorrow at his supposed untimely madness. First she is clearly recalling the scenes where he has disdained her.

"How should I your true love know
From another one?" [2]

But as the Queen demands the meaning of the song, its theme changes:

"He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone." [3]

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[1] "Hamlet," iv., 5, 4, etc. [2] Ibid., iv. 5, 23, etc. [3] ll. 29-32.

And then, as the King comes in, she confuses the two calamities, and sings, as though her lover and not her father were dead:

"White his shroud as the mountain-snow . .
Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go,
With true-love showers."[1]

The King's voice seems here to divert the broken current of her thoughts and she wanders again. Then, returning to the tragic theme with the most piteous of cries: "We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground,"[2] she goes out.

Before long Lærtes returns, furious with rage at his father's violent end and eager to be revenged "most throughly" on his enemies. He has not heard of his sister's affliction and is dumbfounded, as at this moment she returns. Then he realises what has taken place and all his anger melts into a terrible grief:

"O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye . . .
O heavens! is't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?"[3]

Her pitiful condition soon reinforces his determination to be revenged: "This nothing's more than matter,"[4] he exclaims, and the spectator re-echoes the cry as he gazes on the enraged brother and the afflicted girl whose

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[1] "Hamlet," iv., 5, 35, etc.
[2] ll. 68-70.
[3] Ibid., iv., 5, 155, etc.
[4] l. 173.

sorrows have been more than she can bear. In her madness there is not a jot of the maniacal frenzy which is the great characteristic of Lear. Her nature was ever too gentle:

> "Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
> She turns to favour and to prettiness." [1]

Though of a wholly different nature from the insanity of Lear, Shakespeare's delineation of Ophelia's madness is in its way quite as masterly. We see nothing of it in its earlier stages—indeed it would seem to have been of sudden birth and to have developed quickly. In her ravings there is none of that force and pregnancy which marks the invective of Lear; two fixed ideas dominate her mind and constantly recur to it; apart from these she is totally incoherent. We are told, by those who know, that her insanity takes the form of erotomania, "the fine name for that form of insanity in which the sentiment of love is prominent;" [2] we should suppose, indeed, from what she says, that her father's death is its chief cause, as the King and Queen naturally think also; but this can hardly be assumed, for we cannot say how far she confuses the two causes of her affliction.

The Queen's account of the death of Ophelia is in keeping both with the tone of the "mad scene" and with the nature of Ophelia's malady.

[1] ll. 188-9.
[2] Ferriar, quoted by Dr. Bucknill, p. 155 (op. cit.)

Exquisitely pathetic, it tells how the distraught girl, obeying a common instinct of the insane for floral decoration (an instinct which we also find in "King Lear") clambered with "fantastic garlands," on to a willow which overhung a stream. Mad folk are notoriously regardless of danger, and Ophelia's rashness led to a premature grave:

"An envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death." [1]

It will be seen that Shakespeare's Ophelia, though not in the technical sense a tragic character, is essentially a character of tragedy, for it would be only in the gravest and most pathetic of tragi-comedies that scenes so magnificently portrayed as those of Ophelia's madness and the report of her death could be allowed to appear. And in no case could we witness with equanimity her restoration to complete sanity. The character was apparently a popular one on the Elizabethan stage and in more than one contemporary play there are resemblances to it which are so marked as to

[1] "Hamlet," iv., 7, 167, etc.

make a conjecture of mere coincidence impossible. We are now to consider a personage similarly conceived, but treated with none of the "high seriousness" of Ophelia and in altogether a lighter vein—and introduced into a comedy. This character (that of the 'Gaoler's Daughter' in 'The Two Noble Kinsmen,' probably the work of Shakespeare and Fletcher) is certainly one of the imitations of Ophelia. It is with equal certainty the work of Fletcher—indeed, the present writer is only prepared to admit Shakespeare's hand at all in two or three scenes, and these are entirely concerned with the main plot, whereas the story of the Gaoler's Daughter is a side issue, and she never appears on the stage at the same time as the Two Noble Kinsmen themselves. The nature of Fletcher's imitation—we might almost say his caricature—of Ophelia will best be seen from a brief account of the various scenes in which the Gaoler's Daughter appears.

The main plot embodies the well-known story of Palamon and Arcite and their love for the fair Emilia. It will be remembered that in Chaucer's version of the story it was "by helping of a freend" that Palamon escaped from prison; in our play the friend is none other than the daughter of the gaoler. She is prompted to do this service by a hopeless and entirely unrequited love for the unfortunate

prisoner, which helps to drive her to distraction. The exact nature of her malady is somewhat doubtful, and the author is not concerned to make it clear. One suspects that he was none too clear on the subject himself. The Doctor, who, unlike Shakespeare's physicians, is a rather incompetent fellow with a very competent tongue, says that her disease is "not an engraffed madness, but a most thick and profound melancholy."[1] Various other references, however, suggest mania rather than melancholy, and as the girl is an obvious imitation of Ophelia, she may best be considered here.

The whole story of the development of her madness is told in those portions of the play which form the underplot, and, in its first stages, it is told with considerable skill. A "Wooer" is asking the Gaoler for his daughter's hand, and during the conversation the daughter herself comes in and the talk runs on the noble prisoners.[2] The daughter is full of their praises. "By my troth, I think fame but stammers 'em; they stand a grise above the reach of report." "The prison itself is proud of 'em; and they have all the world in their chamber." Then the two prisoners appear "above" and the girl at once shews the nature of her interest—much as Portia, in "The Merchant of Venice" is made to display her preference for Bassanio:

[1] "Two Noble Kinsmen," iv., 3. [2] Ibid., ii., 1.

Gaoler: "Look yonder they are! that's Arcite looks out."
Daughter: "No, sir, no; that's Palamon; Arcite is the lower of the twain; you may perceive a part of him."

The love which one has probably suspected here is openly revealed in the fourth scene of the second act, which consists solely of a soliloquy by the Gaoler's Daughter. The course of her love is made plain to us: first she admired him; finally, pity having sprung from admiration and helpless love from pity, she

"Extremely lov'd him, infinitely lov'd him."

Her love has been fed by the plaintive songs he sings and impassioned by his kindness, his courtesy and a chance caress. On the next occasion[1] we see her more sympathetically yet —her love has achieved something, Palamon is free, and before long his deliverer is to meet him with food. But though she wanders by night through the forest, she is unable to find him. For two days nothing has passed her lips save a little water, she has not slept, and her whole being is alive with terror at the "strange howls" which seem to tell of her hero's untimely fate. "Dissolve my life!" she cries, with the dire foreboding of the incipient lunatic,

"Let not my sense unsettle,
Lest I should drown, or stab, or hang myself . . .
So, which way now?
The best way is the next way to a grave:
Each errant step beside is torment."

[1] Ibid., iii., 2.

For a moment she disappears, only to re-enter[1] in a state bordering on frenzy. Dawn has broken, and her search has been unsuccessful:

"Palamon!
Alas no! he's in heaven—where am I now?
Yonder's the sea, and there's a ship; how't tumbles!
And there's a rock lies watching under water;
Now, now, it beats upon it; now, now, now,
There's a leak sprung, a sound one; how they cry!
Spoom her before the wind, you'll lose all else;
Up with a course or two, and back about, boys;
Good night, good night; ye're gone. I'm very hungry:
Would I could find a fine frog! he would tell me
News from all parts o' the world; then would I make
A careck of a cockle-shell, and sail
By east and north-east to the King of Pygmies,
For he tells fortunes rarely."

She leaves us again, breaking into the first of her mad songs:

"For I'll cut my green coat a foot above my knee;
Hey nonny, nonny, nonny."

Up to this point the character of the Gaoler's Daughter is not unworthy of Shakespeare, but Fletcher could not keep at so high a level for long. More than any of his contemporaries he creates mad folk for the purpose of embellishing his comedies; in this play, having developed a situation with many fine capabilities, he proceeds to rush in and spoil his own work in the worst possible way. The luckless girl is introduced into a rustic scene[2] and made to sing for the delectation of some peasants, to exchange coarse banter with them, and

[1] Ibid., iii., 4. [2] Ibid., iii., 5.

even to join in their morris. From this time forward the underplot is hopelessly degraded, both by its being drawn out to an absurd length and by its ending in the coarsest of scenes which leads to what we are asked to believe is the girl's complete restoration to sanity.

The Wooer first acquaints the Gaoler with his sweetheart's complaint.[1] We learn that it has been preceded by the natural irritation which is common in such cases, and that she has answered her father's questions:

> "So childishly,
> So sillily, as if she were a fool,
> An innocent."

Since we have last seen her, her senses have quite gone. She constantly repeats phrases which tell of her trouble—"Palamon is gone," "Palamon, fair Palamon," and the like. She even plagiarises Desdemona, and sings nothing but "Willow, willow, willow." She has been playing and garlanding herself with flowers; now she weeps, now smiles, now sings; reckless of danger, she sits by a lake, and attempts to drown herself at the Wooer's approach. She appears at length[2] and carries on the same kind of conversation, fancifully constructing long trains of imagination from the smallest incidents. While ever and anon the theme of

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[1] Ibid., iv., 1. [2] Ibid., iv., 1, 104, etc.

Palamon recurs: he is still in love with her—"a fine young gentleman," and he "lies longing" for her in the wood.

This her father reports to the Doctor: "She is continually in a harmless distemper, sleeps little; altogether without appetite, save often drinking; dreaming of another world and a better; and what broken piece of matter so e'er she's about the name Palamon lards it."[1] The Doctor is out of his depth. He understands little of the mind diseased, holding the popular notion that it is "more at some time of the moon than at other some," and confessing that he "cannot minister" to her "perturbed mind." The remedy which he proposes is of the crudest. The Wooer is to dress as if he were Palamon, satisfy all the girl's desires, and wait for her to return to her right mind. Both Wooer and Gaoler protest against the extreme application of this "cure," but the Doctor is so insistent that they give in, and when in the last scene Palamon enquires after the girl who procured his escape and who, he has heard, has been ill, he is told that she is

> "well restor'd
> And to be married shortly."[2]

It is unnecessary to dwell on the cure, for long before this stage the story has lost all semblance of probability.

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[1] Ibid., iv., 3. [2] Ibid., v., 2.

The inferiority of the Gaoler's Daughter to Ophelia is as patent as that of the false to the true Florimel of Spenser's "Færie Queene." A little more skill on the part of the author and a great deal more restraint would, no doubt, have effected an enormous improvement, but it is unlikely that Fletcher could ever have made us take the same interest in the Gaoler's Daughter as we take in Ophelia. She is quite unnecessary to the plot, and would require far greater depth of characterisation before she could appeal with any force to our sympathies. Had this been done, the taint of the comic and the coarseness removed, the ravings lessened and the execrable character of the Doctor changed, we might have had another Ophelia and not an exaggerated and debased imitation.

Whatever the nature of the madness of our last subject, the affliction of Penthea, in Ford's "Broken Heart" is certainly acute melancholia. She is dealt with here for the sake of contrast with the two preceding characters. "The Broken Heart," as far as its "mad-scenes" are concerned, has certainly more in common with "Hamlet" than with "The Two Noble Kinsmen." It is a tragedy of more than usual gloom, and the scenes in question are marked by a subdued restraint quite absent from the "Two Noble Kinsmen." Penthea talks much more coherently than either Ophelia or her ape; and though there

is a distinct want in her speeches of that colour which so marks the other two plays, she is much nearer Ophelia in spirit and essentials than the girl for whom Ophelia actually stood as a model.

The story, so far as it concerns Penthea, is this: She is in love with Orgilus, son of a counsellor to the King of Laconia, but has been compelled to marry Bassanes, a jealous nobleman whom she detests. Her brother Ithocles' love for the King's daughter, Calantha, becomes known to Penthea, who, in spite of her brother's cruelty to her, tries to bring about their union; when she is dead, however, her lover stabs Ithocles and the Princess dies of a broken heart. Penthea's situation, when in the second act she has an interview with Orgilus, is this: she is contracted to Bassanes, and though she loathes him and will have no more to do with him than she can help she will not consent to break the bond of marriage. Her loss of reason, which terminates in her death in the fourth act, is one of the main factors of the series of events which leads up to the impressive final situation.

The scenes which portray the melancholy and distraction of Penthea are much superior to the others in which she appears, by reason of the irresistible sympathy which they inspire. We are not greatly enamoured of the unhappy girl in the first scenes; her character is somewhat slightly drawn, and, as one commentator

puts it, there is "a trace of selfishness in her sorrow, which operates against the sympathy excited by her sufferings."[1] This is dispelled in that touching scene (iii., 5), where Penthea pleads with Calantha on behalf of her brother. Her plaintive farewell to life, in the same scene, is not less touching:

> "Glories
> Of human greatness are but pleasing dreams
> And shadows soon decaying; on the stage
> Of my mortality my youth hath acted
> Some scenes of vanity, drawn out at length
> By varied pleasures sweetened in the mixture,
> But tragical in issue . . .
> . . . You may see
> How weary I am of a lingering life,
> Who count the best a misery."

When she next enters "with her hair loose" (iv., 2), Bassanes and Orgilus are engaged in a violent quarrel. She is followed by Ithocles heart-broken like Shakespeare's Lærtes, begging her to look up and speak to him:

> "Your Ithocles, your brother,
> Speaks t' ye; why do you weep? Dear, turn not from me."

The sight moves all to pity or remorse, save only Orgilus, whose bitter sarcasm, when rebuked by Ithocles, turns to a dreadful thirst for revenge. But the afflicted girl recks nothing of this. Loss of sleep and a voluntary fast have combined with her heavy sorrows to produce the inevitable

[1] Ward, Eng. Dram. Lit., ii., 300. The original criticism, as Dr. Ward points out, is Gifford's. Cf. the latter's edition of Ford, vol. i., p. 337.

result; her depression has deprived her of her reason and she is sinking into her grave:

> "There's not a hair
> Sticks on my head, but, like a leaden plummet,
> It sinks me to my grave: I must creep thither;
> The journey is not long."

"Her fancies guide her tongue," but the burden of her talk is the subject of marriage, child bearing, infidelity, and true love. Her resolve to die by starvation is certainly the project of a disordered brain, though Mr. Saintsbury treats it as if it were not, and censures the character as unnatural![1] Assuming that

> "There is no peace left for a ravished wife
> Widowed by lawful marriage,"

she declares that her blood shall

> "be henceforth never heightened
> With taste of sustenance,"

and falls fainting into her attendant's arms. The subsequent account of her death[2] is the more pathetic by reason of its brevity:

> *Philema.* "She called for music,
> And begged some gentle voice to tune a farewell
> To life and griefs; Christalla touched the lute;
> I wept the funeral song.
> *Christalla.* Which scarce was ended
> But her last breath sealed up these hollow sounds,
> 'O cruel Ithocles and injured Orgilus'
> So down she drew her veil, so died."

The presentation of Penthea's madness is one of the few examples of a truly artistic

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1 "Elizabethan Literature," p. 408.

2 "The Broken Heart," iv., 4.

treatment of the subject, and "The Broken Heart" is one of the few post-Shakespearean plays which with some touches by the Master-hand might have become a really great romantic tragedy. Penthea is, to tell the truth, about as far inferior to Ophelia as she is superior to the Gaoler's Daughter. The partly unsympathetic presentation of her character in the first part of the play, the lack of picturesqueness and relief from the gloom of the tragedy, the suspicion of melodrama in the surrounding scenes and the involved nature of the plot—all these combine to place Penthea on a lower level than Ophelia. And, in addition, she is less important and hence less striking from a purely dramatic point of view.

Something has already been said of the plot and the personages of "The Lover's Melancholy," but the melancholy of Palador and the madness of Meleander may be briefly considered here as furnishing additional examples of Ford's treatment of the subject. Palador's melancholy, which gives the title to the piece, seems to be largely temperamental and scarcely a case for the physician, though Corax, his medical adviser, goes to some pains to "cure" it, and is in consequence, hailed as a "perfect arts-man."[1] The Prince's melancholy is thus described:

[1] "The Lover's Melancholy," iii., 3.

"He's the same melancholy man
He was at's father's death; sometimes speaks sense,
But seldom mirth; will smile, but seldom laugh;
Will lead an ear to business, deal in none;
Gaze upon revels, antic fopperies,
But is not moved; will sparingly discourse,
Hear music; but what most he takes delight in
Are handsome pictures." [1]

His melancholy apparently began at his father's death and was increased by the disappearance of Eroclea. We need not stay long over him. Corax, who is apparently a man of many theories and much resource, presents the Prince with a Masque,[2]—already mentioned—in which madmen of various sorts pass over the stage and make speeches. The last of these persons is Palador's lost love in disguise who appears as "Love-Melancholy." How far the Prince's malady is relieved by this is uncertain; but the form of "Parthenophil" arouses memories and the re-appearance of Eroclea in the next act is the real "potent" which restores the melancholy lover.

The madness of Meleander, Eroclea's father, is more interesting. He has, so far as we know, no sort of predisposition to insanity, which comes upon him following a cloud of troubles—he has been accused of treason, his lands have

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1 Ibid., i., 1.

2 A similar device is found in Brome's play, "The Antipodes," where, however, the physician uses the fantastic but less morbid device of a "play within a play." See page 136.

been seized and his daughter has disappeared. We are informed by our physician that his affliction is not madness; it is

> "His sorrows—
> Close-griping grief and anguish of the soul—
> That torture him."[1]

Yet we can find in Meleander all those "signs" which by now we are beginning to associate with insanity. The unfortunate man "sleeps like a hare, with his eyes open," he groans, "thunders" and "roars," and his "eyes roll." He talks wildly, yet at times coherently, knows his daughter Cleophila, enquires "Am I stark mad?" His maniacal excitability displays itself in his laughter, "the usher to a violent extremity."[2] The reaction soon follows; he faces those about him and remarks:

> "I am a weak old man; all these are come
> To jeer my ripe calamities."[2]

At times—and this is surely the greatest praise we can give him—his ravings remind us of Lear's, with their mingled sarcasm, pathos and unconcealed rage. His brother's son Menaphon approaches him with a "Good uncle!" What, outside Shakespeare, can be more like Lear before his eloquence goes and leaves his rage supreme, than Meleander's furious reply:[3]

> "Fools, desperate fools!
> You're cheated, grossly cheated; range, range on,
> And roll about the world to gather moss,
> The moss of honour, gay reports, gay clothes,

[1] Ibid., iv., 2. [2] Ibid., ii., 2. [3] Ibid., ii., 2.

> Gay wives, huge empty buildings, whose proud roofs
> Shall with their pinnacles even reach the stars,
> Ye work and work like moles, blind in the paths
> That are bored through the crannies of the earth,
> To charge your hungry souls with such full surfeits
> As being gorged once, make ye lean with plenty;
> And when ye've skimmed the vomit of your riots,
> Ye're fat in no felicity but folly;
> Then your last sleeps seize on ye; then the troops
> Of worms crawl round and feast; good cheer, rich fare,
> Dainty, delicious!"

How does Corax propose to cure such a patient as this? Spurred on by the flatteries of Rhetias—"a reduced Courtier"—nothing daunted by the picturesque report that Meleander "chafes hugely, fumes like a stew-pot,"[1] he coolly explains his intention of out-Heroding Herod—"We will roar with him, if he roar,"[1]—and suiting the action to the word he "produces a frightful mask and headpiece."[1] Meleander enters, armed with a poleaxe and raving in a vein which must have delighted the greediest of the groundlings. A battle of words and mock actions ensues, and the madman is soon reduced to a state of comparative calm. He lays down the poleaxe, and Corax removes the mask. The physician then proceeds to minister to the mind diseased with tales of his own supposed mental sufferings, assuming apparently that like counteracts like in madness as in melancholy. This is to some

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[1] Ibid., iv., 2.

extent true, and Shakespeare rightly represents Lear as in a state of comparative tranquillity when in the presence of Edgar. But Ford's play would seem to be inspired rather by a desire to please than by a fidelity to real life. The concluding scene,[1] however, so far as it concerns Meleander, is sufficient compensation, for again it recalls "King Lear" in its general nature if not in matters of detail. The madman has been put to sleep, his hair and beard have been trimmed and his gown is changed. Music, as in "King Lear," is playing, and a song, full of delicate charm, is being sung by a Boy outside. At its close Meleander awakens, confused and half-dreaming. He is inclined to sleep again, but the physician hails him—somewhat boisterously, one would think—and in spite of his patient's brusque "Away, beast! let me alone," he succeeds in rousing him. The madness certainly appears to have left him; he is now quite calm, though the burden of his troubles still oppresses him.

> "The weight of my disease," he says,
> Sits on my heart so heavy,
> That all the hands of art cannot remove
> One grain, to ease my grief."

Corax has, indeed, in preparation, a cordial which is to effect this, but it is reserved—not wholly for dramatic reasons,—to a fitting climax. Successive messengers first bring the

[1] Ibid., v., 1.

news that the Prince, now happy (though the father knows it not) in the possession of his love, has restored to Meleander all the honours he formerly enjoyed, together with new honours and marks of favour undreamed of. Then at last Eroclea is presented to him and his restored reason stands the test of happiness. Explanations ensue; all part friends; and "sorrows are changed to bride-songs."

It will be seen that Ford's conception of madness is by no means a low one; he has not debased it by making it a sport for those to whom it is a thing to fleer and jest at; he has introduced it into comedy indeed, but it must be remembered that Ford's tragi-comedy is a wholly different thing from the gross buffooneries of Fletcher, Dekker and Middleton, and that the madness of Meleander, though resembling that of Lear, is on a far lower scale. It rises now and then to unusual heights, but remains at their exalted level for so short a time that we never look at it seriously for long. The gloom is also lightened by the antics of the whimsical Corax, whose triumphs of psycho-medical skill would, no doubt, in happier times, have induced him to set up a private Bedlam of his own!

In considering Chettles' "Tragedy of Hoffman"[1] we are met by an initial difficulty of

[1] Acted in 1602; first printed in 1631.

authorship, for the resemblance between this play and "Hamlet," as well as between Lucibella and Ophelia, would suggest plagiarism. The question, however, is difficult to decide, and can hardly be discussed here. Whatever be the solution, Lucibella is a most effective character. To a certain degree her madness is merely conventional. But there are numerous touches of real art in her portrayal, and she is not degraded like the Gaoler's Daughter in "The Two Noble Kinsmen" by being made "a motley to the view." On the contrary, as one editor points out, Chettle surpasses Shakespeare by making her, unlike Ophelia, directly instrumental in bringing about the dénouement of the play.

The madness of Lucibella is brought about by the murder of her lover, Lodowick, through the agency of Hoffman. In her mad wanderings she discovers the skeletons of Hoffman's father, and of Prince Otho, for whose death her lover's murderer is also responsible. Eventually the mischief caused by the first shock is undone by a second; Lucibella recovers her reason. Hear her in her first ravings:

"Oh [Oh] a sword, I pray you, kill me not,
For I am going to the river's side,
To fetch white lilies and blue daffodils,
To stick in Lod'wick's bosom, where it bled,
And in mine own . . . .
'We must run all away, yet all must die'

'Tis so;—I wrought it in a sampler.
'Twas heart in hand, and true love's knots and words,
All true stitch, by my troth, the posy thus—
'*No flight, dear love, but death shall sever us.*'
Neither did that! He lies here, does he not?"

She cannot make up her mind whether her lover is really dead or not. Only conscious of a vague calamity, she cries:

"Tell Lod'wick, Lucibell would speak with him!
I've news from heav'n for him, he must not die;
I've robb'd Prometheus of his moving fire:—
Open the door!—I must come in, and will;
I'll beat myself to air, but I'll come in!"

So saying, she knocks violently at the door of the vault; those who surround her fear that she will "do violence upon herself." She understands:

"Oh, never fear me! there is somewhat cries
Within me, 'No!' tells me there're knaves abroad;
Bids me be quiet, lay me down, and sleep."[1]

Her violence is noteworthy; three or four men attempt to hold her; but she succeeds in freeing herself from them, and wanders abroad.

When we next see her the second shock is at work and Lucibella is returning to sanity. Mathias, Lodowick's brother, still fears for her life, having seen her "clamb'ring upon the steepness of the rock," but what she has seen in Hoffman's cave has saved her mental life. She talks still with the fierce sarcasm of mania.

Shewing the skeletons, she cries:

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[1] "Hoffman," iv., 1.

"Is it not like
I keep a princely house, when I have such
Fat porters at my gate."

Still, as before, she lards her speech with scraps of song:

"Here, look here!
Here is a way goes down!
Down, down, down,
Hey down, down!"

This ditty is reminiscent of the descent to the cave, but the next moment the memory of that is gone and only the consciousness of her loss remains:

"I sang that song while Lod'wick slept with me:"

But at length, gradually and before our eyes, she recovers her lost reason. Her speech to the Duchess of Luneberg shews what seems to be the wandering of her still distraught mind. She displays the rich clothes of Otho:

"A poor maiden, mistress, has a suit to you,
And 'tis a good suit, very good apparel."

And she breaks into song again. But shortly afterwards she recognises the two corpses, and as Lorick unfolds the ghastly story of Hoffman's crime the princess comes to her right mind again. At the end of the scene she declares her complete sanity:

"Nay I will come; my wits are mine agen,
Now faith grows firm to punish faithless men."[1]

For a moment now we may look at the madness of Cardenes, which enters into the plot

[1] Ibid., v., 2.

of Massinger's "A Very Woman." He is son to the Duke of Messina and a rival of Don John Antonio, the Prince of Tarent, for the hand of Almira, daughter of the Viceroy of Sicily. In a violent quarrel with Antonio, who is enraged at not being the favoured suitor, Cardenes is wounded—it is at first thought mortally, but he recovers, though for a time he loses his senses. Eventually he is restored by a physician named Paulo. We see very little of him in his mad condition. First we learn that his disease is

> "Melancholy
> And at the height, too, near akin to madness . . .
> . . . His senses are distracted," says Paulo,
> "Not one, but all; and if I can collect them
> With all the various ways invention
> Or industry e'er practised, I shall write it
> My masterpiece." [1]

When Cardenes actually appears,[2] any maniacal excitement which may have disturbed him has disappeared, and he appears to be in a state of simple melancholia:

> "Farewell, farewell, for ever, name of mistress!
> Out of my heart I cross thee; love and women
> Out of my thoughts."

This is the burden of his discourse. Paulo encourages him by mild half-contradictions:

> "And yet I've heard of many virtuous women."

But Cardenes' new-learned philosophy remains unchanged:

> "Not many, doctor; there your reading fails you:
> Would there were more, and in their loves less dangers."

[1] "A Very Woman," ii., 2. [2] Ibid., iii., 3.

The treatment recommended for this "strange melancholy" by the physician, who is of good reputation and has received many gifts from the Duke of Messina and others, is most noteworthy. He is no friend of prevailing customs: The patient "must take air." Though, as the surgeons protest, "he hath lost already . . . much blood,"

> "To choke up his spirits in a dark room,
> Is far more dangerous."

The remainder of the cure is not unlike the prescription of Corax. The physician applies himself to all the patient's "humours," "checking the bad and cherishing the good."

> "For these I have
> Prepared my instruments, fitting his chamber
> With trapdoors, and descents; sometimes presenting
> Good spirits of the air, bad of the earth,
> To pull down or advance his fair intentions.
> He's of a noble nature, yet sometimes
> Thinks that which, by confederacy, I do,
> Is by some skill in magic."[1]

Who can wonder, for "Protean Paulo" with his quaint devices shews a truly super-human versatility. At all events, he succeeds in gathering the "scatter'd sense" of Cardenes, who thanks him profusely for having been

> "My friar, soldier (and) philosopher,
> My poet, architect, physician."

Paulo is indeed a disinterested and enthusiastic doctor, and is really more interesting than Cardenes himself.

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[1] Ibid., iv., 2.

The madness of Sir Giles Overreach is worth our notice, as being introduced merely as a stage device, to emphasise the defeat of the cruel extortioner and to serve as a climax to the comedy. The last act of the play, into which he is introduced, shows every sign at the outset of being the usual type of "last act" of a tragi-comedy. Overreach, with "distracted looks," has learned how he has been tricked both by his creature, Marall, and by his daughter Margaret, who, against his will, has married her lover, and now appears with him, as his wife. The usurer is overcome by the double shock. "My brain turns," he cries. His rage passes all bounds. He attempts to kill his daughter and threatens to make the house "a heap of ashes." Flourishing his sword, he raves of his courage; those standing around are, to his disordered mind,

> "hangmen,
> That come to bind my hands, and then to drag me
> Before the judgment seat: now they are new shapes,
> And do appear like Furies, with steel whips
> To scourge my ulcerous soul. Shall I then fall
> Ingloriously and yield? No! spite of Fate,
> I will be forced to hell like to myself.
> Though you were legions of accursed spirits,
> Thus would I fly among you."[1]

He flings himself on the ground, foaming and biting the earth, only to be disarmed, bound and carried "to some dark room." He will be

[1] "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," v., 1.

tended by physicians from Bedlam, who will try

"What art can do for his recovery."[1]

The climax could hardly be more effective, were it not for Lord Lovell, who, before winding up the business of the play, thinks it necessary to point the moral in the most objectionable manner, only surpassed by Massinger himself elsewhere:

"Here is a precedent to teach wicked men,
That when they leave religion, and turn atheists,
Their own abilities leave them."[2]

With Overreach may be compared Webster's Ferdinand, who, after causing his sister, the Duchess of Malfi, with her little children, to be murdered, is driven by remorse to self-questionings and fears, and thence to raving madness. Webster's presentation of insanity is far superior, in these scenes, to that by Massinger just cited. For the ravings of Ferdinand come upon us with the greatest force after the awful tragedy for which he has been responsible—we are spared the comments of Justice Greedy on the situation. Further, the madness of Ferdinand is what we should expect from one of so passionate a nature, and its course, as will now be seen, is depicted with realistic force to its terrible end.

His insanity takes the form, so we are told, of lycanthropia,[3] victims of which, we learn

[1] Ibid., v., 1. [2] Ibid., v., 1.
[3] "The Duchess of Malfi," v., 2.

imagine themselves transformed into wolves and do deeds of violence to dead bodies; the Duke has already been found at night, has "howled fearfully" and seems in danger of his life. When he enters, he is persecuted by a fear of his shadow, which he tries unreasoningly to kill. The Doctor approaches him, but can do nothing with his patient beyond extracting one expression of fear: "Hide me from him; physicians are like kings, they brook no contradiction." But the timidity lasts but a moment, and Ferdinand leaves the stage in a fit of insane passion.

When he reappears, it is but for a moment; his words are few but tense, and recall the terrible crime he has committed. "Strangling is a very quiet death . . . So, it must be done in the dark: the Cardinal would not for a thousand pounds the doctor should see it." In the next scene, he is more violent. Interrupting a struggle between Bosola, his bloody instrument, and his brother the crafty Cardinal, he wounds them both, in spite of the latter's cry for assistance, and is himself stabbed by Bosola, who stigmatises him as "thou main cause of my undoing." In his last moments he recovers something of his reason.

> "He seems to come to himself," says Bosola,
> "Now he's so near the bottom."

And in truth the last words which fall from

the Duke's lips reiterate the remorse which he feels for his crime.

As concluding examples of the presentation of the madman, in the most usual sense of the word, may be taken two of Fletcher's characters and one of Jonson's. Fletcher's productions shall be considered briefly in succession: they are "The Passionate Madman," in the play, with that sub-title, usually known as "The Nice Valour,"[1] and Shattillion in "The Noble Gentleman."

"The Passionate Madman," who has no name besides, is inspired, like many of his fellows, rather by a desire to please the public than by a passion for probability. His peculiar mania takes the form of a succession of "fits," characterised as the "love fit," the "merry fit," the "angry fit" and so on. There is seldom any reason adduced for the change from one state to another, which is probably governed by the dramatic situation. There seems to be no authority for the classification of insanity in so many compartments in this manner; if the author ever thought about this at all, he probably arrived at a generalisation of the most common attribute of mania—the violent and rapid succession of emotions—in much the same way as Jonson generalised traits of character into "humours."

[1] It is referred to, however, in the following pages as "The Passionate Madman."

The madman of this play is a kinsman to the Duke of Genoa. He makes his appearance at the end of the first act,[1] coming on with a wooden smile and making "a congee or two to nothing." He selects a courtier for the object of his affections, makes love to him as if to a lady, and as the object of his choice is quite willing to sustain the delusion, he works himself up to a great state of excitement. In the next scene[2] it appears "by his flattering and his fineness" that "he is still in his love-fit," and his mistress, thinking it well to humour him, disguises herself as Cupid and persuades him that if he comes away she will make all ladies follow him. She really hopes to cure him:

> "She keeps this shape. . . .
> To see if she can draw all his wild passions
> To one point only, and that's love, the main point." [3]

She has every opportunity of trying, for at this moment the "love fit" obligingly gives way to the "angry fit." Galoshio, the clown, has been "almost beaten blind" by the Passionate Madman, "twice thrown down stairs, just before supper," and "pluck'd and tugg'd by th' hair o' th' head about a gallery half an acre long."[4] The Passionate Lord, after giving this foretaste of his achievements, is not long in appearing, "rudely and care-

[1] "The Passionate Madman," i., 1. [2] Ibid., ii., 1.
[3] Ibid., iii., 1. [4] Ibid., iii., 2.

lessly apparelled, unbraced and untrussed,"[1] and followed by the Lady, still in disguise. The fit would seem at first to be one of melancholy, which rejects all the Lady's blandishments and stigmatises those of her sex as "fair mischiefs." As Lapet, Galoshio's master, approaches, the "furious fit" succeeds. Lapet is struck down and discreetly shams death, while the madman accompanies his truncheon-blows with wild snatches of song. We see no more of our madman after this until the fifth act when the "merry fit" has sway. The burden of his speech is "Ha! ha! ha!" and his songs are wildly merry: he begins to be "song-ripe."[2] The Lady once more appears, followed by several others dressed as fools. But a cure is unexpectedly wrought more quickly than she could accomplish it. "The Soldier" (brother to Chamont, the chief character of the play) has been insulted by the madman at an earlier stage in it, and, much to the dismay of the Lady and her attendants, he now stabs the Passionate Lord, and makes his escape. He only re-appears at the end of the play, cured of his wound and at the same time of his madness. La Nove explains this to the Duke:

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[1] Compare "Hamlet," ii., 1, 77, etc.

Ophelia: "My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd,
No hat upon his head . . he comes before me."

[2] "The Passionate Madman," v., 1.

"Death cannot be more free from passions, sir,
Than he is at this instant; he's so meek now,
He makes those seem passionate were never thought of;
And, for he fears his moods have oft disturbed you, sir,
He's only hasty now for his forgiveness." [1]

There is little to add to this sketch, which is sufficiently expressive. The Lord is not interesting, still less striking, as a character; no attempt is made to introduce a vestige of reality into the madness, and thus the comedy leaves us unmoved. We cannot even be indignant at it—it is so feeble.

Is it necessary to complete the story by adding that the Passionate Lord marries the Lady?

As a slightly different example of Fletcher's work, we may consider his "Noble Gentleman" and the madman Shattillion. We can diagnose his case more readily than that of the Passionate Lord. He suffers from a kind of persecutory delusion, being

"strong opinion'd that the wench he lov'd
Remains close prisoner by the King's command,
Fearing her title." [2]

At the same time, he believes that certain enemies have designs on his life. Meeting his cousin Cleremont, he enquires of him his "faction," and being told:

"I know no parties nor no factions, sir,"

he commands him:

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[1] Ibid., v., 3. [2] "The Noble Gentleman," i., 2.

"Then wear this cross of white,
And where you see the like, they are my friends;
Observe them well, the type is dangerous." [1]

A touch of the pathetic (often mingled with the comic), accompanies the "poor, grieved gentlewoman" who once refused his suit and for love of whom Shattillion's mind became unhinged, who:

"Follows him much lamenting, and much loving,
In hope to make him well." [2]

But, says Longueville, a courtier,

"he knows her not,
Nor any else that comes to visit him." [2]

Shattillion is plainly created for a dramatic purpose. The main story concerns the gulling of a gentleman named Mount-Marine by his wife, who persuades him that the King has granted him many high honours, and that he is Duke of Burgundy. Shattillion, whose delusions persuade him that he has himself a claim to the crown, is worked into the plot with considerable skill, and his quarrel in the fifth act with the "Duke" and his servant unites the two plots with great effect.

A short study of the "mad scenes" will shew the strength and the weakness of this character. The particular form of his mania is brought out very clearly. The madman is perfectly sure about the plots laid for him; his friends are really enemies disguised to "sift into" his words;

[1] Ibid., i., 3. [2] Ibid., i., 2.

he "can see and can beware"; *he* has his wits about him and thanks Heaven for it! The burst of laughter with which the audience would greet this assertion is at once hushed as the Lady laments the o'erthrow of her lover's noble mind;

> "That was the fairest hope the French court bred,
> The worthiest and the sweetest-temper'd spirit,
> The truest, and the valiantest, the best of judgment."[1]

She is remorse-stricken at being the cause of it all, and prays Heaven to be merciful; she will do all she can to restore her lover to his senses.

A long interval elapses before Shattillion is again introduced.[2] Now he has heard of the "new duke" and he is suspicious and curious, so much so that he is gesticulating and enquiring about it in the open street. The Lady appears and begs Madam Marine to take him into her house "from the broad eyes of people." She does so. Shattillion, now believing that he is "betray'd" and about to be beheaded, is led away giving his last instructions. Before long, we see him once more, this time in Marine's house, proving to Marine that he (Shattillion) is of the blood royal, and but for the interference of his friends he would seize Marine as a traitor. In the next act he persuades Jacques, Marine's old servant, that he too is in danger of his life, and drags him into his house for shelter. As they

[1] Ibid., i., 3. [2] Act iii., Sc. 2.

go in, the Lady appears, and, knocking at Shattillion's door, is repulsed as another enemy. The madman's imagination goes so far as to see "some twenty musketeers in ambush," and he suspects his love of being their captain. Meanwhile Jacques, disguised as a woman, is leaving the house, when his preserver stops him, accuses him of being

> "A yeoman of the guard,
> Disguised in woman's clothes, to work on me,
> To make love to me and to trap my words
> And so ensnare my life."[1]

Jacques at length escapes, and after another adventure returns as servant to the "Duke." In this capacity he is forced into a fierce quarrel with Shattillion, who, in his furious loyalty, seizes Marine and throws him to the ground. Hereupon the Lady has a remedy to propose:

> "A strange conceit hath wrought this malady;
> Conceits again must bring him to himself;
> My strict denial to his will wrought this,
> And if you could but draw his wilder thoughts
> To know me, he would, sure, recover sense."

Longueville undertakes the charge. Assuring Shattillion that the King has rewarded his loyalty, he presents to him the Lady, who, he says, has been released from prison for his sake. Shattillion is overcome, and after a few minutes falls asleep. Longueville knows that this is a good sign:

> "His eyes grow very heavy. Not a word,
> That his weak senses may come sweetly home."[2]

[1] Ibid., iv. 3. [2] Ibid., v., 1.

He wakes, indeed, still "weak and sickly," but himself again.

The general impression left by this comedy is, on the whole, pleasant, that part of it concerned with Shattillion included. The antics of the madman himself are certainly comic, especially on the stage, and the lighter side of his mania is persistently put forward. The only pathetic touch is, in fact, the genuine sorrow of his Lady. This predominance of the comic may be regretted, though in a play of the farcical nature of "The Noble Gentleman" little else could be expected. However, the sound, realistic basis of the disease, together with the simple and unassuming cure—which, nevertheless, would hardly be successful in real life,—makes the treatment of Shattillion as far superior to the treatment of the Passionate Lord as the one play is to the other. Considered absolutely, the representation of Shattillion is chiefly remarkable for its reality, its skilful weaving into the plot, and its mingling of pathos with broad humour. On the other hand the pathos would not be so artificial if the entrance of the lady were somewhat less mechanical—we could almost certainly predict when she will enter in the last two acts. Fletcher's almost total blindness to everything but the comic and its possibilities also detracts from the effect of Shattillion, and the very obvious dramatic

motive for his introduction does not, on reflection, improve matters.

We have now passed from the heights of tragedy, through its pathos, and the ill-blended pathos and broad humour of inferior tragi-comedy to the pure and simple inanity of "The Nice Valour"—a work which certainly appears to be unfinished. In considering Shattillion, we have risen as high as we can hope to do within the limits of comedy, and before leaving the raving lunatic for another class of madman we must descend slightly as we consider Ben Jonson's comedy of "Bartholomew Fair," and his madman, Trouble-all.

The plot has already been outlined, and it will be seen that the place of the madman is an important one. Theoretically, he is of prime importance to the play, since it is foretold that Dame Purecraft, who has already had two suitors, shall "never have happy hour unless she marry within this sen'night; and when it is it must be a madman," and it is Quarlous, dressed in Trouble-all's clothes and affecting his malady, who eventually marries her. As a matter of fact, the main portion of the play is concerned with other things, and we only meet our madman in the fourth act. From this point onward, the author shews great ingenuity in his handling of him; the burden of his remarks alone serves as a *point d'appui*

for the spectator (who by this time is probably getting wearied), while the humorous situations which he provokes, culminating in the acuteness of Quarlous and its success, are largely responsible for the undoubted popularity of the comedy with both reader and spectator.

This is, of course, very much to the credit of a comedy which professedly deals with low life; it is more to our purpose to remark that as a picture of madness the character of Trouble-all is exceptionally correct. Gifford's note to Cunningham's edition of Ben Jonson remarks that "Even the trifling part of Trouble-all, in any other writer than Jonson, would be thought deserving of praise for its correct delineation of a particular species of insanity, too inoffensive for fear and too slight for commiseration."[1] Gifford is right, both in what he states and in what he implies. We expect correctness from Jonson and we are not disappointed.

A sketch of the madman should make this clear. He was "an officer in the court of pie-poudres last year and put out of his place by Justice Overdo."[2] His affliction is marked by the *idée fixe*; he raves continually about the Justice, and will do nothing—not even the simplest actions of daily life—without satisfying himself that he has Overdo's warrant for it. How true to life this feature is may be read in

[1] p. 210. [2] "Bartholomew Fair," iv., 1.

any modern book on insanity. He appears first of all in the fair, where Overdo is being put into the stocks: "If you have Justice Overdo's warrant," he says, "'tis well; you are safe: that is the warrant of warrants."[1] He is walking to and fro, with all the restless impatience of mania, demanding to be shewn Adam Overdo. In his frantic wanderings he comes upon Dame Purecraft, who apparently thinks him more suitable for her than any madman she has yet seen and cries: "Now heaven increase his madness and bless and thank it." Trouble-all's reply does not vary: "Have you a warrant? an you have a warrant, shew it."[1] Person after person presents himself but the madman's reply is always the same. Every conversation he interrupts with his query, and, when he is ignored, he turns away in disgust. Once he exasperates a watchman, who strikes him. The latent rage of the lunatic shews itself, but the madman's rationalisation first provides it with an excuse: "Strikest thou without a warrant? take thou that." When Quarlous personates the lunatic[2] our author rightly depicts him as only partially successful, though his end is nevertheless as well reached as if he had been wholly so. He raves occasionally about a warrant, but it is not hard to see his sanity peeping through the veil of assumed madness. Much of his talk

[1] Ibid., iv., 1. [2] Ibid., v., 2.

is comparatively coherent, and beyond his occasional references to the warrant he makes no attempt to play the madman. To turn his literal phrase into metaphor, he is "mad but from the gown outward."[1] Trouble-all himself, when Quarlous' purpose is accomplished, makes one furious entry, armed "with a dripping pan,"[1] but he does no mischief, and soon disappears.

Trouble-all is a noteworthy character, though a small one; yet, for more than one reason, the character is less praiseworthy than Fletcher's Shattillion. Considerable care is shewn in the sketch, but little or no sympathy; and, if madness is to be utilised in comedy, the comic element should at least, as has been seen, be mingled with some touches of pathos. As it is, any other character than the madman would have served Jonson equally well, provided that it had supplied him with the same dramatic advantages. When Overdo says: "Alas, poor wretch! how it yearns my heart for him!" we believe him about as readily as if Jonson had made the same remark in an "author's footnote."

In one respect, and in one respect only, can any claim be made on behalf of Jonson's character to rank above Fletcher's "Noble Gentleman." Fletcher makes us look at madness from the point of view of the madman,

[1] Ibid., v., 3.

and tries to put us in sympathy with him. We have seen that he is only partially successful. Jonson, on the other hand, treats madness in quite an objective way, uses it frankly for a subsidiary dramatic purpose, and portrays his madman with the utmost conscientiousness and care. It may be just a question—though the writer himself does not think so—whether from the point of view of art Jonson's production is not the more praiseworthy.

Be that, however, as it may, it is nevertheless absolute Ben Jonson!

CHAPTER V.

Mad Folk in Comedy and Tragedy.

(ii.) Imbecility.

> "I ask'd her questions and she answered me
> So far from what she was, so childishly,
> So sillily, as if she were a fool,
> An innocent."
>
> ("*Two Noble Kinsmen.*")

Of the few sketches of imbeciles which we find in the drama under consideration there is hardly one which can properly be called a full-length portrait. As a class, the idiots come in for a fair share of attention; the "fool" as well as the "madman" is shewn us in the asylums of Fletcher and Middleton, but no dramatist seems to have thought the tragic or the comic possibilities of the "lunatic lean-witted fool" sufficiently promising to justify the inclusion of him as a prominent character of a play. This is not altogether surprising; the imbecile—we shall take the term as nearly as possible in its precise signification[1]—was not considered as an ordinary madman; he was treated like the half-developed creature he really was, looked

[1] Strictly speaking, the insanity of the imbecile is congenital; the general conformation of his brain is faulty, and the mental phenomena of his condition are for the most part "dissociated from active bodily disease." (See Encyl. Brit., s.v. Insanity.)

after more carefully than the madman, and trained in simple things just like a child. So the fool occupied a subordinate place, in drama as well as in life.

The word "fool" as has been explained,[1] is used in our plays in more senses than one, and a few characters who answer to the description "simple," "idiot" or "imbecile" may now be mentioned. They demand little space, for, though serving a dramatic purpose, they have little interest or importance in themselves. Nearest sanity is Pogio of Chapman's "Gentleman Usher," whose half-witted condition seems to be largely pose; it is a strange way of carrying out his own dictum that "gentility must be fantastical." Bergetto, too, in Ford's play, "'Tis pity she's a Whore," though consistently spoken of as "fool's head," "dunce" and the like, could hardly be called anything more serious than a foolish fellow. Jerome, in Chettle's "Tragedy of Hoffman," and Cloten, the "empty purse" of Cymbeline, have both something of the true congenital idiot about them. With Jerome, however, our judgment is influenced more by impression than by anything he says or does in the play. Hoffman and others call him an "idiot," and he himself owns "They say I am a fool," after which he speaks of seeking out "my notes of Machiavell." But this is mere

1 Above, p. 37 ff.

foolish talk, as, indeed, are most of his speeches. In a quaint scene he addresses the people as their King, but is outdone by a later speech of Hoffman's, which he himself solicits saying, "I charge you all, upon pain of death, that you hear my cousin." The action of a fool, indeed, but was it not also the action of honest Brutus? Therefore we must cling to our estimate of Jerome, framed from his own speeches, as justification for including him in this category. Both the actions and the words of Shakespeare's Cloten are those of a man mentally deficient; Guiderius was not far from the truth when he said:

> "not Hercules
> Could have knock'd out his brains, for he had none";[1]

and everyone who knows him wonders

> "That such a crafty devil as is his mother
> Should yield the world this ass."[2]

A quaint pair of simples may be seen in Lyly's "Mother Bombie." Memphio, an avaricious old man, has a supposed son, Accius by name, whom he wishes to marry to Silena; both parties being mentally defective, the old man takes it for granted that their offspring will be sane. Silena is described as "no natural fool"; and though this would at first seem to be untrue, it becomes doubtful later if the author had any very clear idea of the nature of her malady. She begins by being "passing amiable, but very simple," but

[1] "Cymbeline," iv., 2, 114. [2] Ibid., iv., 1, 57.

before long her condition approaches mania. Her first speech is typical: "My name is Silena. I care not who know it, so I do not; my father keeps me close, so he does; and now I have stolen out, so I have; to go to old Bombie to know my fortune, so I will." Candius, who listens to her, thinks her at first a "fool," but decides that as "so fair a face cannot be the scabbard of a foolish mind," she must be mad. In her meeting with Accius, in the fourth act of the farce, she justifies this conclusion by mistaking him for a "joint-stool."[1]

Before leaving the imbeciles, we must make a bare mention of Shakespeare's Caliban—bare, because we are hardly justified in calling him a human being at all. The son of a witch,

> "A freckled whelp hag-born—not honour'd with
> A human shape,"[2]

he is only distinguished, as Coleridge says, from the brutes by his dim understanding (bereft, however, of moral reason) and the absence in him of all the instincts of absolute animals. Schlegel gives perhaps the best account of Shakespeare's creation when he says: "It is as though the use of reason and human speech should be communicated to a stupid ape."[3] Such

[1] Cf. "Lear," iii., 6, 54. The expression was proverbial, it is true.

[2] "Tempest," i., 2.

[3] It is interesting to compare the higher conception of Caliban seen in Browning's "Caliban upon Setebos," where, though the brute sprawls "with elbows wide, fists clenched

a being as this can certainly not be classed with such "simples" and "fools" as have just been mentioned.

To the ordinary reader of drama the word "fool" describes, not a natural imbecile, but a peculiar type of character in the tragedy and comedy of Shakespeare. The Shakespearean fool has a significance which it would be out of place to dwell upon here; he is, however, speaking generally, perfectly sane, and rather rich than defective in intellect. Thus he has nothing in common with the "naturall fooles . . . suted in long coats" mentioned by Nash,[1] and but little with the "fool" of many a country village. For this strange character is most often a half-demented fellow with a gift for making curt, cutting remarks, and a tongue which, since its owner fears nobody, invariably vents whatever his breast may forge. There would seem to be only one of Shakespeare's fools who is really half-witted, and that one is, of course, the fool in "King Lear."

This point is well made by Dr. Bradley: "To suppose that the Fool is, like many a domestic fool at that time, a perfectly sane man pretending to be half-witted, is surely a most

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to prop his chin," in the "cool slush," he nevertheless reasons vaguely upon such problems as the existence of evil, of pain, and of a law governing the universe.

[1] In "Have with you to Saffron Walden." The "fool's coat" is often mentioned in our plays.

prosaic blunder. There is no difficulty in imagining that, being slightly touched in the brain, and holding the office of fool, he performs the duties of his office intentionally as well as involuntarily—it is evident that he does so. But unless we suppose that he *is* touched in the brain, we lose half the effect of his appearance in the Storm-scenes. The effect of those scenes (to state the matter as plainly as possible) depends largely on the presence of three characters and on the affinities and contrasts between them; on our perception that the differences of station in King, Fool, and beggar-noble, are levelled by one blast of calamity; but also on our perception of the differences between these three in one respect,—viz., in regard to the peculiar affliction of insanity. . . . The insanity of the King differs from that of the beggar, not only in its nature, but also in the fact that one is real and the other simply a pretence. Are we to suppose then that the insanity of the third character, the Fool, is in this respect a mere repetition of the second, the beggar,—that it is *mere* pretence? To suppose this is not only to impoverish miserably the impression made by the trio as a whole, it is also to diminish the heroic and pathetic effect of the character of the Fool."[1] If further proof were needed it could be found

[1] "Shakespearean Tragedy," pp. 311-12.

in the expressions and the turns of thought which characterise him throughout the play,—they are not the expressions of mania, nor yet of perfect self-possession; they are often, indeed, the expressions which one would expect of a feeble mind. Can one suppose,—to take only one example—that any sane man, even in the position of a Court fool, would insist, as mercilessly as the Fool does in the first scenes, upon the ingratitude of Lear's daughters? None of Shakespeare's other fools will be found to probe a wound so deep, but it is exactly what one would expect from a Fool whose brain is really slightly touched. It is true that he also diverts the King's attention from his troubles in the same scenes, but it is only to return to them again with an even more piercing sting.

Still further, if we assume the actual imbecility of the Fool, a flood of light is at once thrown upon the question of his age—not that it matters in the least what his age is, but some critics have found a difficulty in reconciling the references which seem to make him now a boy, now a man. He is, in fact, a man, but his feeble intellect, together perhaps with a certain physical frailty, causes him to be treated occasionally as a boy, much in the same way that Antonio is treated by Lollio in the "Changeling." We need not stay longer, however, to defend this view, for, as Dr. Bradley

says: "Arguments against the idea that the Fool is wholly sane are either needless or futile; for in the end they are appeals to the perception that this idea almost destroys the poetry of the character."[1]

Alone, then, in this division of our subject, we place the Fool of "King Lear." Demented persons may occur here and there in our plays (such is Cassandra in "Troilus and Cressida") and there may even be some congenital imbeciles (as Cloten in "Cymbeline"). But such cases of dementia are hard to distinguish from those of mania. In both cases—especially in the second—it is often hard to say whether or no the author intended the idea of idiocy to be conveyed. So Lear's Fool remains unrivalled and we are glad of it. For nowhere in drama is there a more delicate intermingling of laughter and tears, of terror and pathos, than in this play of "King Lear." The Fool needs no more lengthy description. To see him (whether as we watch or as we read) alone suffices, and nothing else will do so. When we have looked on him, we have seen "sunshine and rain at once"; there is no "better way."

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[1] "Shakespearean Tragedy," p. 312.

CHAPTER VI.

Mad Folk in Comedy and Tragedy.

(iii.) Melancholy.

"Many new and old writers have spoken confusedly of it, confounding melancholy and madness."

(*Burton*: "*Anatomy of Melancholy*.")

The representation of "melancholy" and of the disease which we know as "melancholia" was extremely common in seventeenth century drama. Its popularity with playwrights of all kinds can be traced to several causes. In the first place it gave ample opportunity for introducing poetry of no mean order, which seems to have been more popular on the stage a few centuries ago than it is to-day. Then "melancholy" was commonly associated with unrequited love, and the sad lover has always been a favourite character both in comedy and in tragedy. Again, a hero or heroine afflicted with "melancholy" was, after all, in the seventeenth-century acceptation of the term, quite sane. "Melancholy," then, became a kind of "humour"—as in the eyes of the mediæval physician it literally had been—and it was not regarded in at all the same way as other species of mental disorder.

We must distinguish, however, between the

variety of ways in which the word "melancholy" is used in these dramas, where there are "large volumes of it in print to very slender purpose."[1] When Shakespeare says in "Cymbeline"

> "O melancholy!
> Who ever yet could find thy bottom? find
> The ooze, to show what coast thy sluggish crare
> Might easiliest harbour in,"[2]

he is expressing feelings shared by anyone who tries to fathom the treatment of melancholy by Shakespeare's own contemporaries. There was no common and generally recognised conception of melancholy as of the more obvious forms of insanity. Hence it becomes impossible to consider the question of melancholy from the standpoint of medicine, still less to make any division such as the threefold medical division of to-day, into acute melancholia, excited melancholia, and that alternation of depression and excitement known as "folie circulaire." We shall instead divide our subject more broadly and simply into Melancholy True and Melancholy False, taking but a few typical cases to illustrate each of these divisions in turn.

By Melancholy True is meant what we call nowadays "melancholia,"—that is, a mental disease in which the prevailing symptom is depression,—a mental disease from the author's

[1] As Pate says in Brome's "Northern Lass" (v., 1).
[2] "Cymbeline," iv., 2, 203.

point of view and not merely from ours. Some cases which would come under this heading have already, for convenience' sake, been treated above. There is the melancholia of Penthea, hardly distinguishable from madness, and utilised dramatically in a similar way. There is also the melancholy of Palador, which seems to us less a case for the physician than it did to the author. Ford's conception of melancholy as a disease is clearly influenced by Burton, and he would no doubt have agreed with the doctors of Christopher Sly that "Melancholy is the Nurse of frenzy,"[1] if, indeed, he would not have gone farther and declined to distinguish between them. Other cases of melancholia are merely described, and will hardly repay study. Such is Viola's well-known description of one (imaginary) girl who

> "Never told her love,
> But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud
> Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought
> And with a green and yellow melancholy
> She sat like Patience on a monument,
> Smiling at grief."[2]

Shakespeare's King John is thinking of another kind of melancholy when he says to Hubert:

> " . . . that surly spirit, melancholy,
> Had baked thy blood and made it heavy-thick."[3]

In the two characters which we shall now study,—Aspatia of the "Maid's Tragedy" and

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1 Induction, ii., 135. 2 "Twelfth Night," ii., 4, 113, etc.
3 "King John," iii., 3, 42.

Euphrasia in "Philaster"—we shall see that there is with Beaumont and Fletcher a considerable lightening of the subject, with a consequent artistic gain, but possibly a loss in force and impressiveness.

Aspatia is, of course, throughout the play, subordinated to Evadne, and she appears only in the first two acts and the last, her death occurring in the last scene. From her first appearance, after her betrothed husband has taken Evadne to wife at the King's command, the pitiableness of her situation and the nobility and the purity of her character endear her to us unchangeably. None of the indecency which mars the play clings to the wronged Aspatia; many would go so far as to consider her laments more effective, because less revolting, than those of Ophelia. Wherever we see her

"Nothing but sad thoughts in her breast do dwell."[1]

When Melantius offers her his ill-timed congratulations on the marriage which he supposes to have been hers, her reply is short:

"My hard fortunes
Deserve not scorn; for I was never proud
When they were good."[2]

In the next scene, however, when the presence of the bride makes the hurt keener, her tongue is loosened. No sweeter song, in spite of the rather vulgar criticism of Evadne, can be found

[1] "The Maid's Tragedy," ii., 1. [2] Ibid., i., 1.

outside Shakespeare than the only one Aspatia gives us:

> "Lay a garland on my hearse,
> Of the dismal yew,
> Maidens, willow trenches bear;
> Say I died true;
> My love was false, but I was firm
> From my hour of birth.
> Upon my buried body lie
> Lightly, gentle earth."[1]

"Fie on't madam!" says Evadne, "The words are so strange, they are able to make one dream of hobgoblins."

The effect of Aspatia's appearances enhances enormously the effect of the play as a whole.

> "She carries with her an infectious grief,
> That strikes all her beholders."[2]

Her father is distressed beyond measure; her betrothed, "servile 'iure divino' royalist" as he is, is stricken with the keenest remorse. Even the apparently buoyant Evadne is moved to pity.

Perhaps, in the scene between Aspatia and her waiting women, the wronged woman loses a little of our sympathy. The dramatists have evidently succumbed to the Muse of Poetry and Aspatia's laments become drawn-out and a little monotonous. Yet the poetry is at times almost perfect; it is only her continual harping on the subject of "Man, Oh that beast man!"[3] which makes us fear lest melancholy become

[1] Ibid., ii., 1. [2] Ibid., i., 1. [3] Ibid., ii., 2.

raving madness. When she subsides at last into "dull silence," our love for her is at its height: she is indeed "like Sorrow's monument."

In the last act she appears once more,[1] in the disguise of a supposed brother, with the seeming intention of killing her faithless lord. A tragic Viola indeed, she succeeds in getting wounded, and eventually dies, not without witnessing the death of Evadne and holding Amintor's hand in token of reconciliation.

The girl Euphrasia, in "Philaster," has less of tragedy and more of romance, more even of Shakespeare's own poetry. In her disguise as Bellario, Philaster's page, she appears as a "pretty, sad-talking boy,"[2] and it would seem to be rather the prince, who sits "cross-armed," "sighs away the day" for love of Arethusa, and talks furthermore in several places of going mad,[3] who should come under this category of melancholiacs. But he himself proves to his own satisfaction that he is sane enough; and though such a statement is not always to be believed, it seems for once to correspond with the point of view of the author. But Euphrasia herself is continually reminding us of her melancholy, which has all the appearance of being conceived as similar to that of Aspatia, although it is less pronounced. It springs

[1] Ibid., v., 4. [2] "Philaster," ii., 3.
[3] *e.g.* iii., 1, 277; iii., 2, 83, etc.

from love, it is nowhere put down to a mere caprice, and although in neither of these two plays is any cure attempted, this is because the characters are subordinated to others and for the sake of a unified plot.

The melancholy of Mistress Constance, in Brome's "Northern Lass," was probably meant by the author to be taken more seriously than most people would find possible to-day. In conception it resembles the melancholy-madness of Fletcher's "Passionate Madman." Its cause, to go no further, is the same. Love has "overwhelmed her spirits, and turned the faculties of all her senses into a rude confusion, sending forth the uses of them extravagantly." The method of her cure, according to Pate (disguised as a Doctor) is as simple as are the lightning cures of Fletcher: "The party that she loves must be the doctor, the medicine and the cure." This *médecin malgré lui*, however, finds his patient too much for him. "I fear she is wiser than all of us, that have to do with her. She knows my gown better than I do; for I have had but two hours' acquaintance with it." Constance, though at times she sings snatches of song, does not rave like Shattillion or the Gaoler's Daughter; the prevailing symptom of her melancholy is depression. As a character she is peculiarly lacking in charm, though the title-page of the play, which declares it to

be "a comedy often acted with good applause," in high places, would suggest that the heroine was popular enough at the time.

Almira, the daughter of the Viceroy of Sicily, in Massinger's "A Very Woman," might profitably be considered in a later section dealing with unclassified abnormal states of mind. However, the malady produced in her by the supposed loss of her lover was apparently conceived by the dramatist as "melancholy-madness," and therefore it finds a place here. Gifford, in a note in his edition of Massinger, describes Almira's complaint as "not madness, but light-headedness." She is firmly convinced that Cardenes, who has been wounded in a scuffle with his rival, is dead, and all her friends' attempts to convince her to the contrary merely strengthen her belief.

> "I know you,
> And that in this you flatter me; he's dead,
> As much as could die of him: but look yonder!
> Amongst a million of glorious lights
> That deck the heavenly canopy, I have
> Discern'd his soul, transform'd into a star.
> Do you not see it?"[1]

The belief induces semi-hallucinations. She hears "a dismal sound"—it is Antonio in hell, "on the infernal rack where murderers are tormented."[1] This sets a train of delusive ideas in motion; her cousin fears "she'll grow into a

1 "A Very Woman," ii., 3.

frenzy," when one of her women exclaims "Her fit begins to leave her," and she is once more herself, relating her "strangest waking dream of hell and heaven."[1] Notwithstanding these temperate intervals her father is alarmed, and fears, not without reason, that

"She'll do some violent act upon herself."[2]

Her hands are therefore to be bound and a physician sent for. We hear a good deal more of her melancholy during the play, but it becomes conventional, and after the second act we think of her as quite a rational human being—as a "Very Woman." It is the strange change in her affections which gives the great interest to her character which it certainly possesses; for that reason it would hardly be fair to attempt to compare her either with Aspatia or with Euphrasia, interest in whom is dependent on other considerations.

A case of melancholy, both interesting and amusing, similar in conception and treatment to the mania of Shattillion and of the Passionate Lover mentioned above,[3] is furnished by Brome's "Antipodes." As we should expect in an "approved Comedy" acted in the year 1638, the subject is approached only from its lighter side; within the limits which such a treatment necessarily imposes the play is pleasant enough, and the principal characters are very laughable.

[1] Ibid., ii., 3. [2] Ibid., ii., 3. [3] pp. 105 ff.

Joyless and Diana, it appears, have a son Peregrine, a lad of twenty-five, who has been married for some years to a girl named Martha. But Peregrine, whose inclination has always been for a roving life, has developed a melancholy in consequence of his parents' opposition to his desire for travel. The disease, when the play opens, is "inclining still to worse, As he grows more in days," and the father's anxiety is aggravated by the fact that Martha is also afflicted with a similar trouble, caused by her husband's neglect. Her symptoms are somewhat different:

> "Indeed she's full of passion, which she utters
> By the effects, as diversely, as several
> Objects reflect upon her wand'ring fancy,
> Sometimes in extreme weepings, and anon
> In vehement laughter; now in sullen silence,
> And presently in loudest exclamations."[1]

Doctor Hughball, a physician of renown, undertakes both cases, and in addition that of Joyless, whom "some few yellow spots" about the temples proclaim to be "jealous-mad." This doctor, like others of the "cure-all" tribe whom we have recently encountered, has had great experience of mental disease. He has cured

> "A country gentleman, that fell mad
> For spending of his land before he sold it."[2]

A lady who fell mad with "tedious and painful study" to find "a way to love her husband," and "horn-mad citizens, he cures them by the

[1] "The Antipodes," i., 2. [2] Ibid., i., 1.

dozens"![1] Brought face to face with the melancholiac in one of his "fits," Hughball sets about humouring him, "applauding" his "noble disposition," and "adoring" his "spirit of travel." He tells his patient that he has been all over the world, even in the Antipodes, meeting his praise of Mandeville, Drake, and other worthies with vivid and imaginative descriptions of the unknown lands on the other side of the world. Everything, it appears, goes by contraries:

> "There the deer
> Pursue the hounds, and (which you may think strange),
> I ha' seen one sheep worry a dozen foxes,
> By moonshine, in a morning before day,
> They hunt, trail scents with oxen and plough with dogs."[2]

Peregrine is subdued; he could listen to the Doctor "a whole fortnight," and gladly accepts his offer to travel with him to this wonderful land. Hence, in the next scene, by the device of a play within a play,[3] the Doctor is able to effect a threefold cure. Joyless' jealousy is overcome; Martha (after being disguised as a Queen and formally presented to her husband), wins back the love of the melancholy Peregrine; and Peregrine himself, though falling back more than once during the play-scenes to "Mandeville-madness," is eventually cured. In the concluding

[1] Ibid., i., 1. [2] Ibid., i., 6.

[3] The scenes in which Joyless, Diana, Peregrine and the rest listen to this play and pass comments on it often bear a striking resemblance to the better known "Knight of the Burning Pestle."

scenes, where music "upon the Recorders" is being played, we are shewn the melancholiac's return to complete sanity.

> "I am what you are pleased to make me; but withal . . . ignorant of my own condition, whether I sleep or wake, or talk, or dream; whether *I* be, or be not; or if I am, whether I do, or do not anything." [1]

Revelations and recognitions follow, in spite of the Doctor's warning against "troubling his brain with new discoveries." Peregrine is then made to "recover roundly" by means of a short masque (preceded by "a most untunable flourish"!) introducing "Discord, Folly, Jealousy, Melancholy, and Madness." When these characters have been routed by Harmony and her train, Peregrine declares "Indeed, I find me well."

The treatment of melancholy in this play is in no way serious, and shews us little of real value.

"Melancholy False" [2] is hard to define; the

[1] "The Antipodes," v., 9.

[2] A medical friend reminds me that there is, properly speaking, no such thing as "melancholy false," and that the characters mentioned under this head are not suffering, in his opinion, from any form of mental disease. I will therefore repeat here that the classification of "melancholy" adopted in this chapter is *not* a scientific one, that it is made on a seventeenth century, rather than on a twentieth century basis—we are trying, that is, to take up the positions of the several dramatists. Few specialists of to-day would consider Jacques, Achilles or Antonio to be in a state of disease, but that the Elizabethan doctor would have diagnosed their malady as "melancholy" I have little doubt. The ordinary spectator would probably not consider the question in any detail.

criterion must ultimately be a subjective one. It is depicted as a state of the mind in which the person concerned has full control of himself, —as a cloak which he assumes for his own purposes, and which he is able to throw off should necessity arise. At its very worst, it would only be spoken of to-day as "depression." Sometimes, it is true, this melancholy seems to give a definite colour to the person whom it characterises — to be, in fact, part of his temperament; but in these cases no mention is made of any possible cure of the trouble—sometimes not even of the cause—so that the suggestion of disease does not arise in the spectator's mind. No doubt such a condition, if persisted in, would often have disastrous results. Such a "humour" was dangerous, but it was nevertheless a "humour."

It may be objected that many persons, using these tests, might well put Euphrasia and Aspatia in the present category. It is true. But if we made no distinctions and adopted no classifications but those which were indisputable and self-evident, we should make very few, and those would be of little value. We have it on excellent authority that the only way to "part sadness and melancholy" is "by a familiar demonstration of the working."[1] To a layman it would probably be clear that the melancholy

[1] "Love's Labour's Lost," Moth: i., 2, 9-10.

of Aspatia and Euphrasia, of Mistress Constance and Almira, is meant to be of a different kind from that of several characters with whom we shall now have to deal.

The largest variety of "cases" is furnished by Shakespeare, and for this reason our study of this type may be confined to his works. Some of the "cases" are described by Dr. Bucknill:[1] "the melancholy of pride in Achilles, of prosperity in Antonio, of constitution and timidity in the Queen of 'Richard II,' of contemplation in Jacques." We might possibly add more, but here are instances enough (if they are really instances) to shew the nature of this melancholy.

Surprise might perhaps be expressed that Shakespeare should make such large use of this "humour"; it would be expected that he, whom we have shewn to be familiar with all kinds of insanity, would conceive of melancholia more nearly after the fashion of the present-day physician. The explanation is simple. Shakespeare knew perfectly well that melancholy could be a disease, and has described it as such. Let us remember the quotations, given above,[2] from "Twelfth Night" and "King John." And who was it that "besieged with sable-coloured melancholy . . . did commend the black-oppressing humour to the most

[1] "Mad Folk," etc., p. 310. [2] p. 128.

wholesome physic of thy health-giving air?"[1] Yet Shakespeare was equally well acquainted with that hypochondriacal melancholia and that temperamental depression which play a large part in modern life, and both of these, to say nothing of the love-melancholy which varies from slight depression to acute mania, he found it convenient to use. The contemporary dramatists, however great or small their knowledge, usually preferred the "love melancholy" and used it almost exclusively.

The melancholy of Achilles is quite superficial. He is "lion sick of a proud heart"[2] just as Ajax is "melancholy without cause," and nobody in the play interprets his behaviour otherwise. The estimate just quoted of him is one of the least violent of the opinions of Ajax; Agamemnon calls him "over-proud and under-honest";[3] Ulysses says that he is

> "possess'd . . . with greatness
> And speaks not to himself but with a pride
> That quarrels at self-breath."[4]

Ulysses' descriptions of the general's occupations, of his jests at Agamemnon and the Greeks, of his delight in Patroclus' imitations, and the "loud applause" which comes from his "deep chest"[5] are sufficient proof that his malady is not very serious. Certainly, judging from the

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[1] "Love's Labour's Lost," i., 1, 233, etc.
[2] "Troilus and Cressida," ii., 3, 92, etc.
[3] Ibid., ii., 3, 132. [4] Ibid., ii., 3, 180. [5] Ibid., i., 3, 161, etc.

care with which Shakespeare demonstrates the nature of its source, we shall conclude that this melancholy is presented to us as a "humour."

The "Merchant of Venice" is coloured by the sadness of its hero, even at the height of his prosperity. At the outset of the play he declares to his friends:

> "In sooth, I know not why I am so sad;
> It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
> But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
> What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
> I am to learn.
> And such a want-wit sadness makes of me
> That I have much ado to know myself."[1]

We at least are not at a loss to explain Antonio's depression. It is not alone the boredom of "unruffled prosperity"[2]—this sorts ill with the character of the noble merchant: it is rather a peculiarity of temperament which colours both adversity and prosperity. For such melancholy as marks Antonio's farewell to Bassanio:

> "I am a tainted wether of the flock,
> Meetest for death,"[3]

is not the necessary concomitant either of prosperity or of adversity. The two speeches quoted are examples of the same condition of mind; the melancholy which they exhibit has the double dramatic purpose of beautifying the character of Antonio and of giving the spectator

[1] "Merchant of Venice," i., 1, 1, etc.
[2] Bucknill, "Mad Folk," etc., p. 307.
[3] "Merchant of Venice," iv., 1-114, etc.

that "preadjustment" which is so valuable an aid to the plot.

Similarly we have in "Richard II" the melancholy of the Queen, which prepares us for the troubles about to befall her. This melancholy may best be attributed, not necessarily, as Dr. Bucknill suggests, to her temperament, certainly not to any prosperity she may have enjoyed, but rather to a vague fear as to the results of her husband's perilous journey, coupled possibly with her experience of the King's rashness and a recognition of his recent weakness in dealing with Mowbray and Bolingbroke. It is, at all events, merely a passing sadness of the "inward soul" and her "heavy sad"-ness is soon dispersed, changing first to real grief, which gives place before her weaker husband—true woman that she is!—to a resolution concealing for a time her sorrow.

In Jacques we have a character of more complexity. His humour he describes as "a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness."[1] He wishes, in his own words, to

> "Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
> If they will patiently receive my medicine."[2]

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[1] "As You Like It," iv., 1, 15, etc. [2] Ibid., ii., 7, 60.

But the Duke, usually so gentle, is quite out of sympathy with the pseudo-reformer. Jacques, he says, has been a libertine, and like many a reformed sinner, the ex-voluptuary would merely "disgorge into the general world," "all the embossèd sores and headed evils" of his unregenerate days.[2]

So much discussion has been lavished on the "case" of Jacques that we shall not attempt to do more than shew what we believe to be its perfectly superficial nature. Judging from the play as a whole, and more especially from the Duke's contempt and Rosalind's banter, we should suppose this to be Shakespeare's view. As Dr. Moulton very justly remarks, egotism is plainly shewn to be at the root of his disposition. He has lived out his life in a short time; now he turns everything, for sheer self-love, into matter not for jests but for scurrilous abuse, or at best for a malevolent, sarcastic humour.

Yet the morbidity of Jacques' melancholy suggests that, more than any other of Shakespeare's similarly conceived characters, he carries about with him a secret malady when he persists in his attitude towards the world. One day the secret wound will fester; his "weeping" and his "sullen fits" will become uncontrollable; his frantic abuse will turn to frenzy; his ironic, half-humorous sallies will change to the

[1] Ibid., ii., 7, 67-9.

disconnected utterances of a maniac; or his surly humour will sink lower and lower until it reaches the dead level of melancholic depression.

Here, then, we have, in briefest outline, some of the types of melancholy—true and false—presented by Shakespeare and certain of his contemporaries. Numerous examples from other authors of the time might be added, but we have seen enough to be clear on two points. These are, the essential difference between the true and the false melancholy, and the use of each to the dramatist in his work, both for its own sake and because of the opportunities which it gives for the introduction of poetical passages. From the character who entertains a "wilful stillness"

> "With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
> Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,"[1]

to the true victim of his sorrow, holding, against his will (like Constance in "King John")

> "The eternal spirit . . .
> In the vile prison of afflicted breath,"[2]

the melancholiac has great dramatic possibilities, of which, for the most part, the fullest advantage is taken.

This seems to be the most convenient place to discuss the question of the real (as distinguished from the assumed) mental condition

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1 "Merchant of Venice," i., 1-91, 2.

2 "King John," iii., 4, 18.

of Hamlet. That it is an abnormal condition most careful readers of the play will not question. How otherwise can we explain his habitual inaction, his sudden fits of energy, his violence to those whom he loves, his strange self-questionings, and his even stranger apathy to those things which should most move him? The whole question of the cause of Hamlet's procrastination depends on our estimate of his mental state. Goethe's description of Hamlet as "a beautiful, pure, noble, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which makes the hero," is clearly at variance with facts, and the estimates of both Coleridge and Dowden largely ignore the practical side of the character of Hamlet. Only by recognising what the play certainly tells us, that the melancholy of Hamlet is really a disease, can we obtain anything like a reasonable explanation of his strange movements. After all, he is not the one-sided, unequally-developed weakling that certain school editions of Shakespeare would have us suppose. He is, without any doubt, a man of practical ability, capable of prompt, energetic action, skilled in all manly exercises. Intellectually, his "noble mind" compels the greatest regard, he has studied long at the University and possesses besides such qualities as would serve him admirably as ruler of Denmark. Fortinbras says of him that

"He was likely
Had he been put on, to have proved most royally."[1]

His moral nature is equally praiseworthy. Ordinarily strong of will, "most generous and free from all contriving,"[2] though probably at times inclined to be passionate and on occasions headstrong to excess, he was certainly not the man to procrastinate through "losing himself in labyrinths of thought" as Schlegel asserts him to have done.

If we would find the key to this mystery, Hamlet himself will give it us in his first soliloquy. He meditates suicide, from which he is only kept by the fact that "the Everlasting" has "fix'd His canon 'gainst self-slaughter."[3] Then he explains why everything to him is "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable"—it is the terrible shock of his mother's incestuous marriage following that of the death of his father, and the suspicious circumstances which attended it, that has given rise to this abnormal state of mind. His melancholy is augmented by the nature of the command laid on him by the Ghost and the consequent secrecy which he must put upon himself:

"But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue."[4]

This is Melancholy True—a state of mind which

1 "Hamlet," v., 2, 408.
2 Ibid., iv., 7, 136—the King's testimony.
3 Ibid., i., 2, 131-2.
4 Ibid., i., 2, 159.

cannot be thrown off like a cloak, yet which is abnormal. It is an excellent case for the pathologist. Truly conceived, it furnishes the only satisfying explanation of the strange phases of Hamlet's so-called "character"—the depression, the self-weariness, the irritability, the violence, the satisfaction at the smallest thing achieved, the impossibility of carrying out the original purpose—all these things are the natural outcome of melancholia.

A two-fold objection to this view has to be met. It will be said that such a conception of Hamlet destroys the moral lesson of the play. And would that it did! It is unfortunate that certain critics are unable to pick up a play without looking at once for the moral. Those who have done this with "Hamlet" have succeeded in shifting the centre of gravity from the author to themselves. They say that the play shews how wrong it is to procrastinate, and how by procrastination we lose far more than we gain. It is, according to these critics, a mere sermon preached on the text

> "That we would do
> We should do when we would."[1]

How, they say, can this sermon be preached if the chief illustration—the man by whom we are all to be warned—is exculpated from blame by illness?

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[1] "Hamlet," iv., 7, 119-20.

They know little of tragedy—or at least of Shakespeare's tragedy—who hold a view like this. What Shakespeare habitually does is to shew us a man, by nature fitted to be a hero of tragedy, with a fatal defect, the consequences of which are worked out in the play. Looked at from this point of view, the sentimental objection at once vanishes, and the second objection arises. It is a more serious one: Can a man suffering from melancholia—to put the thing in its most prosaic form—any more than a man suffering from any other form of insanity, be admitted as a tragic hero? The answer is that he can. And this partly because his exact state of mind is not determined, partly because it is a condition not generally recognised as one of disease, and tragedy has always to be considered from the point of view, not of the doctor, but of the author and the audience. As Dr. Bradley, who very ably sums up the question, says in his Lectures on Shakespearean Tragedy: "The man who suffers as Hamlet suffers—and thousands go about their business suffering thus in greater or less degree—is considered irresponsible neither by other people nor by himself: he is only too keenly conscious of his responsibility. . . . . Hamlet's state is not one which a healthy mind is unable sufficiently to imagine. It is probably not further from average experience, nor more difficult to realise, than the

great tragic passions of Othello, Antony or Macbeth."[1]

Before we leave Hamlet, it should be emphasised that the state of mind of the hero is quite a subordinate question in the play itself. "It would be absurdly unjust to call 'Hamlet' a study of melancholy, but it contains such a study," is Dr. Bradley's way of putting it.[2] The significance of this is that we must not expect the indications of Hamlet's disease to be developed to any degree, nor refuse to claim for it a place among our examples of "Melancholy True," just because the author fails to introduce the hero to a physician![3]

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1 "Shakespearean Tragedy," p. 121. 2 Ibid., p. 121.

3 Beside the melancholy of Hamlet we might place that of Haraldus, the young Prince of Shirley's play, "*The Politician*," were it not that the part played by his melancholy is purely nominal. His father—the Politician—sends two courtiers to cure him, and they make him drunk. His excesses bring on a fever which causes his death. His likeness to Hamlet only strikes us here and there, and the melancholy, such as it is, is caused chiefly by the discovery that he is a bastard.

CHAPTER VII.

Mad Folk in Comedy and Tragedy—(iv.) Delusions, Hallucinations and other Abnormal States.

"How now; who's there? spirits, spirits?"
("*Spanish Tragedy.*")

Delusions and hallucinations occurring in cases of real madness we have already encountered, but since these phenomena are themselves symptoms of a disordered state of mind we must not neglect instances in which they occur with persons otherwise sane. These spring to the memory; who, for example, can ever forget the sights which Faustus sees in his last hour on earth?

"O, I'll leap up to my God; who pulls me down?
See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament.
One drop would save my soul, half a drop—Ah, my Christ!
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on Him: Oh, spare me, Lucifer!
Where is it now? 'tis gone: And see where God
Stretcheth out His arm, and bends His ireful brows;
Mountains and hills, come, come and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God."[1]

More examples of such hallucinations in moments of great stress might be quoted. It will best serve our purpose if we consider

[1] Dr. Faustus, l. 1419, etc. (Oxford text.)

one typical case (Frank, in "The Witch of Edmonton,") and afterwards discuss a case of special interest—that of Shakespeare's Macbeth.

Frank Thorney, in "The Witch of Edmonton," has married one Winifred, but is forced into a bigamous marriage with Susan, whom he afterwards murders, without letting any suspicion fall on himself. He is tormented on his sick-bed by phantoms indistinguishable from realities, more particularly by the ghost of Susan, and at last reveals to Winifred the awful truth.

"I am not idle," he says, and he is right. But thick-coming fancies disturb him. The ghost of Susan appears. He stares at it fixedly, then turns to the other side, only to be confronted again by the apparition. When it vanishes he is raving of "a force in which were drawn a thousand ghosts, leap'd newly from their graves, to pluck me into a winding-sheet." He has, so he says, "Some windmill in my brains for want of sleep," but sleep only comes with the unburdening of the guilty conscience.[1]

Macbeth (like Frank Thorney) is at no time

[1] The insanity of Ann Ratcliff, in this play, may also be noticed, thought it is of the same rude type as that of Greene's Orlando. "See, see, see," she cries, "the Man in the Moon has built a new windmill, and what running there's from all quarters of the city, to learn the art of grinding." The only feature of interest in her frenzy is the expression of physical pain which we noticed in "King Lear." Her ribs are like to break, and "there's a Lancashire horn-pipe in my throat. Hark how it tickles it, with Doodle, doodle, doodle, doodle," etc.

in the play insane, but he becomes the victim of "horrible imaginings" which beyond a certain point seem to him to be real.[1] Macbeth is predisposed to hallucinations by a remarkably vivid power of imagination, which finds expression from the very outset of the play. The mere suggestion of the murder of Duncan he describes as a "horrid image" which unfixes his hair and makes his seated heart knock at his ribs, against the use of nature. Thus we have a character whose imagination torments him throughout his career of crime till he has "supped full of horrors" and the "taste of fears" has almost lost all significance.[2]

In the well-known "Dagger Scene"[3] we are confronted with the first of Macbeth's hallucinations. It is before the murder of Duncan, and the spectral dagger only deceives him for a moment. Making an unsuccessful attempt

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[1] With Macbeth might be compared two other remorse-stricken murderers in little known plays. Glapthorne's "Albertus Wallenstein" is the story of a man who causes his son and his son's betrothed to be killed and is then haunted by his crimes. His soul "is shaken with a nipping frost"; he mistakes his son's page for a ghost and murders him; after this false visions of spirits are ever before him. Only when mortally wounded by conspirators is his mind at rest. In Denham's "Sophy" (which is in spirit outside our period, though it was acted in 1641), Abbas, King of Persia, is likewise tormented by the ghosts of those whom he has murdered. Abbas, unlike Macbeth and Wallenstein, is quite a maniac, and does not recover his senses before his death.

[2] cf. "Macbeth," v., 5, 9, etc. "I have almost forgot the taste of fears . . ."

[3] Act ii., Scene 1.

to clutch it, he is for a short moment at a loss to explain a weapon which he can see but cannot handle. Then he rightly concludes that it is but a "dagger of the mind, a false creation"; his eyes "are made the fools o' the other senses," yet the image does not disappear till courage comes again and with it "the heat of deeds."

Duncan is murdered; "after life's fitful fever he sleeps well," but the regicide's better self torments him more and more, and the Lady fears for his sanity:

> "These deeds must not be thought
> After these ways; so, it will make us mad."[1]

Macbeth, however, is losing his self-control. At the moment of the murder a fresh hallucination troubled him, and though its true nature is now recognised, and he can "moralise" upon it, its very mention fills the Lady with fears.

> "Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!
> Macbeth doth murder sleep'. . . .
> Still it cried, 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:
> 'Glamis hath murther'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
> Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more.'"[2]

Dr. Bucknill, it is true, considers that this is not an hallucination, on account of the word "methought."[3] But the same word would have been used of the dagger, which the critic himself admits to have been an hallucination. Nor is the length of the fancied speeches any

[1] "Macbeth," ii., 3, 32-3. [2] Ibid., ii., 2, 35, etc.
[3] "Mad Folk," etc., p. 20.

obstacle, the greater part of the speech in which they occur being Macbeth's own embellishment of the event.

The hallucination at the banquet is more formidable. Macbeth, having caused Banquo to be murdered—the murder being unknown to his guests—is regretting his absence, "thus by a voluntary mental act calling before his mind's eye the image of the murdered man."[1] At the mention of him, an image rises in the place reserved for Macbeth himself. It shakes its "gory locks" at the murderer, it nods but will not speak, and only vanishes like the "air-drawn dagger," when Macbeth begins to overcome his fear and brave it. When he pledges Banquo it appears again; once more he declaims violently against it and it vanishes, but not before he has

> . . "displac'd the mirth, broke the good meeting
> With most admir'd disorder."[2]

to say nothing of a certain amount of suspicion attached to it.

The remainder of the story, from the psychological point of view, can best be told in Dr. Bucknill's words.[3] "Macbeth," he says, "saved himself from actual insanity by rushing from the maddening horrors of meditation into a course of decisive resolute action. From hence-

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[1] Ibid., p. 24. [2] "Macbeth," iii., 4, 109.
[3] "Mad Folk," etc., p. 29.

forth he gave himself no time to reflect; he made the firstlings of his heart the firstlings of his hand; he became a fearful tyrant to his country; but he escaped madness. This change in him, however, effected a change in his relation to his wife, which in her had the opposite result. . . . Her attention, heretofore directed to her husband and to outward occurrences, was forced inwards upon that wreck of all-content which her meditation supplied." She becomes mad; no medicine can minister to her mind, diseased by crime and remorse, and her madness is fatal. But Macbeth never becomes insane. "Some say he's mad," it is true, yet

> "Others, that lesser hate him,
> Do call it valiant fury."[1]

He has saved his own mental life, but he has flung away the "eternal jewel" of his soul.

Lady Macbeth, at every point in the play, is strongly contrasted with her husband. She is frankly distressed at the developments of Macbeth's criminal career. He bids her be "innocent of the knowledge" till she applaud his deeds. She thus drifts farther away from him and leaves him to pursue his bloody course alone. Her meditation breeds madness. She lacks, even as her husband had done,

being

> "the season of all natures, sleep,"
> "Troubled with thick-coming fancies
> That keep her from her rest."[2]

[1] "Macbeth," v., 2, 13. [2] Ibid., v., 2, 37-8.

The scene in which she betrays her secret in her sleep is full of significance, shewing the terrible impression made on her by the murder of Duncan, and no less by the slaughter of Lady Macduff. After her fainting fit, which follows the discovery of Duncan's murder, she ceases to occupy a prominent place in the tragedy. Her death is almost unnoticed. Whether she died naturally or whether her attendants were unable to keep from her the "means of all annoyance," it is hard to say. But once again Shakespeare shews his dramatic skill in relating rather than portraying the scene of her death.

Returning to Macbeth, one must remark in conclusion that it is only when Shakespeare's art in delineating the various types of insanity is studied as a whole that this character can be fully appreciated. Yet even from a superficial examination of the play the value to the dramatist of Macbeth's hallucinations must be clear. For they not only add to the scenic effect of the play, but they constitute a striking contrast between the murderer and his wife, besides clarifying the already powerful idea of his accusing imagination.

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We must now briefly consider another kind of abnormality which has not yet been mentioned. Occasionally, in reading the dramatists of the period, we meet with persons whom at first we suppose to be insane, but who are, in reality, not so. Yet their states of mind are far from normal. Occasionally they seem to be possessed by insane desires and ambitions; sometimes lust has taken complete possession of them; sometimes remorse, vengeance or similar passion dominates all their actions. It is hard to point to any of their actions and to say: "That is the act of a madman." To-day, no doubt, did they exist in the flesh, they would be removed to a Mental Hospital and treated for disease of the mind. But looked at by their author and by his audience and in an Elizabethan environment, they were not, in all probability, and in the ordinary sense of the word, madmen. And for that reason we can only allow them a passing consideration here, though every one of them would repay detailed study.

One or two examples may be cited from Shakespeare—the first being Constance, in "King John." Dr. Bucknill, without the least hesitation, styles her mad,—but he is a physician. Shakespeare, who may be supposed to have known better, represents her as passionate by nature, and half-demented with grief. But she

is never more than half-crazy, always retaining sufficient of her native strength of will to control her wonderful imagination. Her own explanation of her conduct:

"Grief fills the room up of my absent child,"[1]

is quite sufficient. Her reply to Pandulph's accusation,

"Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow,"[2]

is conclusive proof that she is to be regarded as sane. She does not, like many a lunatic, merely protest that she is not mad; she gives what, according to the standard of the day, would pass as clear evidence of her sanity:

"I am not mad: this hair I tear is mine;
My name is Constance; I was Geffrey's wife;
Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost!
I am not mad; I would to heaven I were!
For then, 'tis like I should forget myself . . .
If I were mad, I should forget my son,
Or madly think a babe of clouts were he.
I am not mad; too well, too well I feel
The different plague of each calamity."[3]

Constance, even when her blemishes are taken into account, is a sublime figure. At times the poet's instinct seems for a moment to fail him; his touch is less sure and his Fury becomes dangerously like a common scold. But at her best she is unsurpassed, and if we wonder at the skill with which Shakespeare portrays and utilises true madness on the stage, we must not forget to withhold a portion of our

[1] "King John," iii., 4, 93. [2] l. 43. [3] ll. 45, etc.

admiration for his sure-footed walk on the border line.

Timon of Athens, too, is a wonderful character—the wonder of the play. A good-natured, generous and wealthy noble, he has attracted to him crowds of parasites whom he calls friends, but who in reality do nothing but receive his favours. At length he discovers their essential baseness, and becoming, in his own words, "misanthropos" who "hates mankind,"[1] leaves Athens, with oaths and curses, for a cave near the sea-shore. There he ends his days—the manner of his death is uncertain. His friends consider him beyond all doubt insane. A creditor says that his debts "may well be called desperate ones, for a madman owes 'em";[2] others sum the matter up tersely by saying "Lord Timon's mad."[3] Alcibiades excuses Timon's behaviour on the ground that

> "his wits
> Are drown'd and lost in his calamities."[4]

Only Flavius, his faithful steward, gives no hint that he considers his lord insane, though even he is struck with Timon's unhappy condition, so "full of decay and failing."[5] Flavius, in this as in other particulars, seems, like Ulysses, in "Troilus and Cressida" and other characters in different plays, to be Shakespeare's mouthpiece.

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1 "Timon of Athens," iv., 3, 53.
2 Ibid., iii., 4, 101-2
3 Ibid., iii., 6, 129.
4 Ibid., iv., 3, 88.
5 Ibid., iv., 3, 465.

There is nothing in his representation of Timon which gives us cause to impute madness to the protagonist. His state of mind is one of acute depression, which we should call melancholia, were there any hint that such a conception entered into the mind of the author. The condition of Timon is not unlike that of Hamlet, and we could easily understand his feigning madness to avoid the real evil coming upon him.

If any further proof were needed that Timon is not a maniac his speeches would suffice. The objection that "all satire upon the hollowness of the world would lose much of its point if it came from the lips of an undoubted lunatic,"[1] is perfectly valid. In "King Lear" the speeches which contain the most sarcasm, as well as the most poetry, are those of the earlier scenes, in which Lear has not yet become entirely a maniac. This kind of speech is characteristic of Timon to the end. His very last words, though lacking the force of the first outburst, are equally coherent and contain far more poetry:

"Come not to me again: but say to Athens,
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood;
Who once a day with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover; thither come
And let my gravestone be your oracle.

1 Raised and disputed by Bucknill, "Mad Folk," etc., p. 259.

Lips, let sour words go by and language end:
What is amiss plague and infection mend!
Graves only be men's works and death their gain!
Sun, hide thy beams! Timon hath done his reign."[1]

A character far more repulsive, but depicted with the greatest force, is Malefort Senior, of Massinger's "Unnatural Combat." Malefort is an Admiral of Marseilles who is challenged by his apostate son to a duel and comes off victorious, the son being slain. Shortly afterwards, Theocrine, Malefort's daughter, is sought in marriage by the son of the Governor; the father consents, but his strange extravagances towards her, as he loads her with jewels, riches and a superfluity of caresses, is generally commented upon, and before long it appears that he has fallen in love with her. The remainder of the plot hastens to the catastrophe, Theocrine being dishonoured and virtually murdered by a false friend of her father's. Malefort himself is persecuted by ghosts, and is finally killed by a flash of lightning.

A modern author would no doubt represent such a character as Malefort as suffering from some mental disease, but Massinger appears to have considered the unnatural passion of the father for his daughter as the fruit of the unnatural combat in which he kills his son. He cares more for the development of this idea than for the mental condition of Malefort, who

[1] "Timon of Athens," v., 1, 217, etc.

speaks, in one place, of his son's blood as growing upon him like Hercules' poisoned shirt, though he seems also to feel an inward cause of his passion which he cannot explain. Montreville, the false friend, supposes that he may be mad, and recommends:

> "A deep-read man, that can with charms and herbs
> Restore you to your reason."[1]

But from the general character of the play it is easy to see that he is not considered insane.

Here, then, we have an attempt made to subject an outrageous and unnatural passion, the manifestations of which bear at times the closest resemblance to mania, to the dramatic treatment of tragedy. That Massinger has wholly succeeded, few would be rash enough to assert. He has given us a grim and ghastly picture, full of brute strength but wanting in that higher power which restrains and subdues. He has created a character at times human, always terrible, but only partially effective in the highest sense of the word.

It is probable that if Constance and Malefort had been portrayed as mad and not merely as possessed by an overpowering passion, the result in each case would have been a considerable dramatic gain. The death of the Lady Constance "in a frenzy"—like the deaths of Lady Macbeth and the Queen in "Cymbeline"—is only reported

[1] "The Unnatural Combat," iv., 1.

by a messenger. Had that frenzy actually been depicted, the result would have been a weakening of the whole plot, but a decided increase in the effectiveness of Constance. In the two plays which we shall now consider, a comparatively poor theme is treated in such a way that the passion portrayed is heightened,—without being raised, however, to the level of madness. It is interesting to speculate on the result had this been done—whether the madness would have elevated the drama or whether the paucity or the inconsequence of the theme would have debased the presentation of insanity.

Grimaldi, the remorse-stricken renegade of Massinger's play "The Renegado," who first immures a young girl, and afterwards repents, is reduced in the fourth act to a state approaching insanity. He is a poor sort of creature, at any rate until the concluding portion of the play, where he contrives a remarkable stratagem which brings about the dénouement. His remorse bears many of the signs of madness, and indeed may have been intended for such by the author. For days he has taken no food; the mention of the words "church" and "high altar" increases his melancholy; his speech ends ever with "those dreadful words damnation and despair."[1] His "ravings" lead him to contemplate all kinds of extravagances; he would do a

[1] "The Renegado," iv., 1.

"bloody justice" on himself, pull out his eyes, lop off his legs, and give his body to those whom he has injured. He does none of these things, however,—a Jesuit priest, habited like a Bishop, curing him by the very simple means of granting him absolution. The wild ravings give place to calmer expressions of contrition and he goes off with a riming couplet! It is unnecessary to follow him; one only wishes that the extreme nature of his remorse had not made it advisable for us to include such a creature, for whom little can be felt but contempt.

Our last example is Memnon, in Fletcher's play, "The Mad Lover." Here is a character for whom we cannot help entertaining some regard, but we are at a loss to know what exactly to make of him. If he is really mad, as seems at first sight unlikely, it is a very unreal kind of madness, with more dramatic purpose than realism. One of the characters, indeed, calls him "stupid mad," and the term is not an inapt one. We should be inclined to group him with the pretenders, but for three considerations. Firstly, he never declares nor even hints to anyone that he is not what he seems, as Hamlet does to Horatio and as Memnon himself might with perfect ease have done—for example, to Siphax. Then his recovery, however sudden, complete and unreal, is only the sort of thing one would expect from Fletcher, and may be

left out of the question. Lastly, in the scene where he refuses the whore, it is true that he shews considerable sagacity and discrimination. Nevertheless it is no more than has actually been found in "cases" arising from the same cause as Memnon's. Yet obviously, as we shall see, the mad lover is not mad in the acceptation of the word then common, and the hypothesis of an abnormal passion will meet the case, better perhaps than if we consider our hero either mad or sane.

The plot has already been sketched, and a few references should make this statement clear. The lover's rude courtship is the fruit of long campaignings and absence from court; when he is told by his friend of the strange impression he has made he speaks perfectly rationally and merely becomes confirmed in his purpose. The extravagant idea of cutting out his heart is the first sign of the strength of his passion. Yet his soliloquy:

> "'Tis but to die. Dogs do it, ducks with dabbling,
> Birds sing away their souls, and babies sleep 'em . . ."[1]

is spoken in a temper quite unlike the madman's. His argument might even by some be considered valid: "For in the other world she is bound to have me," he says, "Her princely word is past." When others enter, he grows wilder, and throughout the play talks in the

[1] "The Mad Lover," ii., 1.

most extravagant vein, more particularly to the surgeon whom he tries to persuade to cut out his heart. "Here I am, sir," says Memnon,

"Come, look upon me, view the best way boldly;
Fear nothing, but cut home. If your hand shake, sirrah,
Or any way deface my heart i' the cutting,
Make the least scratch upon it . . . .
. . . I'll slice thee to the soul. . . .
I will not have you smile, sirrah, when you do it,
As though you cut a lady's corn; 'tis scurvy.
Do me it, as thou dost thy prayers, seriously."[1]

Here is a man whose mind is certainly in an abnormal condition, and, whatever the precise nature of that condition may be, it alone gives to the play the least vestige of probability. If Memnon were sane, the play would be absurd; if he were mad, then madness would once more be degraded. As it is, he is not an unpleasing fellow; at times he is even touched with pathos: any verdict on him would assuredly be more favourable than a just verdict on the play as a whole.

[1] Ibid., iii., 2.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mad Folk in Comedy and Tragedy.

(vi.) The Pretenders.

"I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw."

("*Hamlet.*")

Last of all in the long train of madmen which has now almost passed us come the Pretenders—characters who have feigned insanity for some purpose. We need not, of course, devote much space here to pseudo-lunatics like Morose in "The Silent Woman," Bellamont in "Northward Ho," Malvolio and Christopher Sly. These are all sane enough and have no wish to be thought otherwise. They are victimised by the pretences of others, and shew none of the signs which were supposed to characterise insanity. Thus they have small interest for us and no place in the present section.

A somewhat different example may be taken from Day's "Law Tricks,"[1] where Polymetes, son of the reigning Duke, pretends, on his father's sudden return from a long journey, to be deeply immersed in his studies, in order to avert the Duke's reproaches for his neglect and loose living. His page, a boy "worth his weight

[1] Act iv., scene 2.

in pearl," comes to the Duke with a cock-and-bull story about an "English poet" who is with the Prince. This is presently supplemented by Julio, who explains that "the boy is lunatic." His description of the supposed origin of the lunacy is most interesting. "Coming abruptly to the Prince's chamber about some ordinary service, I found him in his study and a company of bottle-nosed devils dancing the Irish hay about him, which on the sudden so started the poor boy as he clean lost his wits, and ever since talks thus idle as your Excellence hath heard him." The "studies" of Polymetes, it later appears, are in astrology!

The "true Pretenders"—if the term may be allowed—have on the other hand considerable interest, and are well worthy of attention. Among other things we may take into consideration the intention with which they are portrayed, how far they fulfil that intention, how closely they counterfeit insanity—if any such attempt is really made,—and what worth they have as characters—how nearly, in other words, they resemble men and women.

Beginning at the bottom of the scale, let us take Middleton's "Changeling," a play already studied, in which Antonio, the "Changeling" of the piece, counterfeits idiocy, and Franciscus his companion, pretends to be a madman. Their devices, which form the substance of a

somewhat coarse underplot, are not successful. This would surprise nobody; the intention of the author (or authors) being mainly comic relief, little care is shewn and the characters are almost worthless. Franciscus says in the last scene, "I was changed from a little wit to be stark mad"; and Antonio, "I was changed too from a little ass as I was to a great fool as I am!"[1] The last statement we can take literally. For, after all, idiocy is fairly easy to counterfeit, and he would be a fool indeed who could not do at least equally well. Franciscus is rather better, and might really be very effective on the stage. He is supposed to have "run mad for love," and was a "pretty poet" till the muses forsook him. He discourses most appropriately of "Titania" and "flowery banks," invokes his imaginary mistress, and pledges her in imaginary wine.[2] He succeeds in extorting the pity of Isabella with his ravings. The least spark sets him alight; the mere mention of "Luna" is sufficient for him to rhapsodise upon, and he works himself up to a state of violence which has to be calmed by the whip. His snatches of song are equally true to life. But he does not re-appear for any length of time after this scene, and he never again reaches the same level of excellence. Apart from this skill in counterfeit Franciscus appears to have no character worthy

[1] "The Changeling," v., 3. [2] Ibid., iii., 3.

of the name, and is therefore of small importance.

Something has already been said of the shopkeeper's wife, Tormiella, of Dekker's tragi-comedy "Match me in London"; here, as in "The Changeling," and as in many another minor play, the feigned madness is utilised for the plot and makes little difference to the character. We have seen that Dekker has shewn considerable skill in weaving this pretended madness into the plot as well as in introducing it at a favourable place. But the scene is so short, and its place in the play of such relatively small importance, that we need do no more here than repeat that the "feigning" is well done and serves its purpose.

Space may also be found for Dol in Jonson's "Alchemist." She goes mad for the benefit of Sir Epicure Mammon in the fourth act of the play, but unfortunately the learned dramatist infuses little probability into her feigning. She is not so successful a lunatic as Quarlous, though her task is certainly less simple. She appears before Mammon "in her fit of raving" to discourse of "Alexander's death," the "communion of vowels and consonants," "Pythagoras," "the tongue of Eber and Javan" and so forth. The alleged reason for this is given us earlier in the play in a speech by Face already quoted.[1]

[1] Page 14, note 2.

In the "Honest Whore,"[1] Bellafront, for her own purposes, feigns madness. Her pretence is skilful, though Friar Anselmo does not consider her dangerous. "How now, huswife," he says good-humouredly, "whether gad you?" "A-nutting forsooth," answers Bellafront, "How do you, gaffer? How do you, gaffer? there's a French curt'sy for you too." "Do you not know me?" she enquires. "No," reply all. "What are they?" asks Anselmo, "come tell me, what are they?" Her answer reminds us of "Hamlet." "They're fish-wives," she says, "will you buy any gudgeons?" At a later stage in the proceedings, she is anxious to tell everyone's fortunes and demands sugar-plums as a reward. This madness, however, is not without method, for the fortune-telling leads to discoveries and explanations. When at last Matheo, whom Bellafront wishes to marry, declares that if her wits are restored he will consent, she at once reveals her sanity:

> "Matheo, thou art mine.
> I am not mad; but put on this disguise
> Only for you."

We now come without any further slips of prolixity to the only two pretenders for whom we can entertain the least enthusiasm—to the classical examples of feigned madness in English Drama, Edgar and Hamlet.

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[1] "Honest Whore," v., 13.

Edgar is represented as simulating "Poor Tom" of Bedlam, one of the lunatics who roamed about the countryside, possessed by the "foul fiend," and dependent upon such charity as kindly hearts might prompt. How well he counterfeits need only be suggested. It is, after all, an easy matter for an author to portray feigned madness for a scene or two with something like accuracy. But what a genius is required to lead his pretender, so to say, "through fire and through flame," place him in all kinds of situations, cause him to change his disguise from lunatic to peasant, then back to lunatic again, marking all the time by subtle touches the most delicate shades of expression. The burthen of his cry, as one would expect, is "Poor Tom's a-cold. . . . The foul fiend follows me." Persistently he raves and consistently, but at times "the natural touch" overcomes him,

> "My tears begin to take his part so much
> They mar my counterfeiting."[1]

An even more wonderful effect of art is pointed out by Mr. Cowden Clarke. Gloster, now blind, would seem to recognise amidst the wild ravings of his son "some tone or inflection in Edgar's voice . . . and he links (his son's conduct) with that of Lear's daughters. Edgar, instinctively feeling this, perseveres with his Bedlam

[1] "King Lear," iii., 6, 63-4.

cry, to drown the betrayed sound of his own voice and maintain the impression of his assumed character." If this is really Shakespeare's art and not the imagination of the critic —as some might think it to be—it is but one more illustration of his dramatic genius.

Apart from such details as these, the character of Edgar, especially during his feigned madness, is a genuine masterpiece. At times during the play he has certainly some of the frigidity—closely allied to a quality which is dangerously like self-righteousness—which marks Shakespeare's own Isabella. But in these scenes of madness he is all tenderness and forgiveness. His compassion on his blinded father we feel the more keenly in contrast with Gloster's own conduct and the ingratitude of Lear's children. Edgar is Shakespeare at his best and truest—he rings true—we may even say that he stands for Truth itself. And thus his feigned madness is no ordinary stage-device requisitioned by an unmanageable plot. It has uses connected with the plot, indeed, but beyond these it brings out characteristics of the man which endear him to the most hostile spectator.

Lastly we come to Hamlet and his feigned madness. Like most of the Pretenders he is introduced into a play where real madness also plays a part, but unlike any of them he is actually in a condition verging on madness.

Possibly it is by a kind of self-preservative instinct that he chooses that disguise for his purpose of deceiving the King. Fortunately he is able to prevent his mind actually giving way, and so he defeats the King's designs, seeing "a cherub that sees them." He shrinks from nothing; his demeanour towards those whom he loves, and especially towards Ophelia, fully bears out his supposed affliction. He appears with doublet all unbraced,

> "No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,
> Ungarter'd and down-gyved to his ancle;
> Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
> And with a look so piteous in purport
> As if he had been loosed out of hell
> To speak of horrors." [1]

His attitude and his words seem to confirm the judgment of Polonius: "This is the very ecstasy of love." [2] He is caught in no trap. The presence of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern does not suffice to

> "Get from him why he puts on this confusion
> Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
> With turbulent and dangerous lunacy." [3]

Only the faithful Horatio knows that; elsewhere Hamlet "keeps aloof" from the topic with true madman's instinct, whenever his state is mentioned. The King pretends to Polonius that while the disease is not so serious as it seems, only Hamlet's absence from Denmark can prevent it from becoming so. In this way he

[1] "Hamlet" ii., 1, 78, etc. [2] Ibid., l. 102. [3] Ibid., iii., 1, 2-4.

gets him removed. But throughout the play, whether in his attempts to deceive the Court or in his foiling of the King's design, Hamlet acts with what might be called the craft of true madness.

It is unnecessary to insist on the complexity and the lifelike truth of Hamlet's character. No personage in the world's drama has excited more criticism. The Prince of Denmark is on all sides acknowledged to be supreme. And for that reason it is needless to attempt to prove what otherwise would be the main contention of this chapter—that Hamlet is in every way the greatest of the Pretenders whom we have studied, and, indeed, of the madmen, true and false, who form the subject of this essay.

CHAPTER IX.

Conclusion.—Shakespeare and his Contemporaries.

"All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow."
(*Matthew Arnold*: "*Shakespeare.*")

In such a study as this, dealing largely with the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries, it is to be hoped that it will not be out of place to centre the concluding portion around Shakespeare himself. It is but one aspect of our study to compare our greatest dramatist and his fellows with respect to their presentation of madness, and it is throwing a dim light on Shakespeare's greatness to make the comparison in such a trivial sphere. Our conclusion is thus doubly insignificant, yet we enter upon it nevertheless. For if it tells us nothing that is new, it serves at least to strengthen our present convictions, and this from an entirely new standpoint. We shall, then, compare Shakespeare and his contemporaries from three points of view: in their general ideas and sentiments concerning madness, in their dramatic use of madness, and in their representation of mad folk as complete figures, the Elizabethan dramatists bow one and all before their master.

General Ideas and Sentiments.

1. To a certain extent, in madness as in other departments of life, Shakespeare took over the general notions of his day and introduced them fairly liberally into his work. He could hardly do otherwise, for the subject of lunacy was so commonplace and found so ready a way into ordinary conversation that the dramatist who, like Shakespeare, mirrored the life and speech of every day, would find himself, even against his will, borrowing figures from Bedlam. Many of these we have already noticed; a very few more will show the diversity of the references. The shipwrecked mariners in "The Tempest," "felt a fever of the mad and play'd Some tricks of desparation." Theseus speaks of "The lunatic, the lover and the poet" as being "of imagination all compact." Rosalind mentions "the dark house and the whip," Romeo the prison, the bonds and the torments, Othello the popular view of the influence of the moon. This breadth of treatment in casual allusions alone might be contrasted with the meagre work of his contemporaries. But we must pass on to notice that Shakespeare himself was far in advance of his time, seeing in some way features of insanity which were commonly overlooked, and using remedies which we consider quite "modern," even to-day. His tests

for insanity are certainly somewhat crude, but they occur rather as allusions, where, as we have seen, he adopted the ideas of his day, than in full-length portraits, in which he is remarkably exact. A physician of the last century[1] remarks on Lear: "Lear's is a genuine case of insanity from the beginning to the end, such as we often see in aged persons. On reading it we cannot divest ourselves of the idea that it is a real case correctly reported." This is high praise; and although Shakespeare hardly requires such commendation, it is interesting to notice the small details which are true to life. We have such phrases in "King Lear" as

> "O Lear, Lear, Lear!
> Beat at this gate that let thy folly in,
> And thy dear judgment out,"[2]

where the old king beats his head, as

> "O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
> Keep me in temper; I would not be mad,"[3]

as:

> "O how this mother swells up towards my heart!"[4]

"My wits begin to turn," "I am cut to the brains," and the like. These are touches which can be paralleled by none other of the authors who have been dealt with in this study. They are the result of a shrewd, penetrating observation applied to those mental phenomena which

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[1] Dr. Brigham.
[2] "King Lear," i., 4, 292.
[3] Ibid., i., 5, 50.
[4] Ibid., ii., 4, 53, and passim.

were displayed before the gaze of any who cared to notice them. If we would contrast genius with mediocrity, we have only to look at the general attitude of Shakespeare's contemporaries towards madness and their representation of it. Take the scene of Lear's partial restoration to reason. With its soft, sweet music, with the loving faces surrounding the sleeping sufferer, with the gradual re-awakening of sanity—what a contrast there is between this and the metamorphosis of Memnon, the mad lover, or even the rude art of Ford when he pictures the restoration of Meleander.

Dramatic use of Madness.

2. The superiority of Shakespeare, again, in his dramatic use of madness! If there is one thing more than another which arrests a student of this subject it is Shakespeare's refusal to sacrifice so grand a passion to the interests of comedy, to expose it as a butt for the jests of the groundlings and a subject for idle conversation. His madmen are among his sublimest figures; he introduces them, not after the manner of Dekker and Middleton, as characters of light comedy, but as the agents or the victims of tragedy, "more sinned against than sinning." They contribute to no coarse underplot, they are not introduced to enhance the supposed terrors of melodrama—they form part of the

plot itself, are inextricably interwoven with it, colour its very texture, determine its whole character. This is no imagination, but sheer fact. "Lear" *is* the mad king. The word "Hamlet" calls up an image, either of the hero's "antic disposition" or (which is still more likely) of the lonely pathos of Ophelia in her last passion. Think, on the contrary, of Shakespeare's contemporaries. There is Fletcher, whose Mad Lover certainly colours the play, but what a play of farce and absurdity! There is Webster, whose sole use of the madman is for the pageantry, and for the intensification by means of it of the effect of his catastrophe. Or there is Dekker, who paints the interior of a Bedlam, for the same reason as elsewhere he leads us into a brothel-house—for the sake of a so-called realism. Or, if you prefer it, there is Middleton, whose madmen supply material for the introduction of a trivial underplot and a few coarse jests and songs. Nowhere, except perhaps in Ford, who appears to have been attracted by insanity, to have studied it and to have painted it with some insight and sympathy, is there any approach in this body of drama to the sustained excellence of Shakespeare.

Mad Folk.

3. The same fact emerges when we take the complete figures and consider them, as has been

done, from a purely literary standpoint. We need not go over the whole story again; it will be sufficient if we cast our eye back over each group and seize upon the most prominent figures in it. Take Trouble-all, Meleander, Shattillion, and the Passionate Madman, and, following the prescription which Paulina gives to Leontes in the "Winter's Tale," choose the best traits from each, concentrate, add, improve—and you are still far from the august figure of Lear. Surround Ophelia with the heroines of Beaumont, Fletcher, and Ford. Will anyone assert that either Aspatia, or the Gaoler's Daughter, or Penthea approaches the fair Ophelia? Take the Pretenders: where have you so admirable a pretence as that of Hamlet, a pretence so realistic that many critics of to-day maintain that it is reality, and most allow that, if not actually mad, the Prince of Denmark was perilously near a state of insanity? It is certainly not in the antics of the boy of Polymetes, or of the fool "Tony" represented in "The Changeling." Considered from this point of view alone, there is no pretender who does the thing so well as Hamlet,—as a masterpiece of literary art no character can touch him. If anyone could be said to have the slightest claim to do so it would be Shakespeare's own Edgar, less important in relation to the plot, far less universal in his appeal to mankind as a representative of humanity, yet perhaps

more wonderfully impressive in the place he occupies than any other personage could possibly be.

Or let us look at that unimportant yet not wholly negligible group of persons who have been made the victims of others, written down as asses by the world at large, and are cowering over there in a corner. Even here we see that Shakespeare's figures are by far the most noteworthy. Morose is not uninteresting, and the dismay of Bellamont, the "reverent" poet, as he is apprehended for a madman and seems to be in danger of confinement in Bedlam, is quite a diverting incident in the plot. But compare them with Shakespeare's figures. Here is Christopher Sly, "old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker." There is individuality here, conveyed in a few lines,—which are quite sufficient, notwithstanding, to stamp the character with the impress of Shakespeare's seal. Better still, take Malvolio, who is accused of madness for a jest, but whose character as previously drawn would make an admirable reason for the jest being taken seriously. So much does he take things to heart that Sir Toby thinks he may actually go mad through disappointment. "Why, thou hast put him in such a dream that when the image of it leaves him

he must run mad."[1] Thorough as always, true to life, this is very Shakespeare: none other can approach him in his own arena of the stage.

* * * * * *

The last figure seems to have disappeared from the stage, the unmeaning groups of madmen have dispersed, and with them the crowd. We turn to go. Yet, as for a moment we look back on the scene we have just left, a solitary figure meets our eye. It is no madman, no pretender, and no dupe. It is just the Fool, the Fool unparalleled, the Fool of Lear. Ere his master's afflictions could drive him mad like that master, he went "to bed at noon." Now he returns to remind us of his other master,—of his creator,—who painted him on the same canvas which holds Edgar and Lear, a figure

"sublime
With tears and laughter for all time."

With no more fitting words, inasmuch as they describe not alone the Fool but all Shakespeare's mad folk, could we close our study.

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1 "Twelfth Night," ii., 5, 211.

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