

our possession rather tends to support.* Then, again, what share does the cerebellum take as a perceptive centre for impressions of any kind, or are its functions of an entirely different nature? These are questions concerning which we are not, at present, in possession of sufficient data to enable us to decide.

On the Antiquity of General Paralysis. By T. CLAYE SHAW, M.D., Lond., Assistant Medical Officer, Middlesex Lunatic Asylum, Colney Hatch.

SHAKESPEARE has used the character of "Achilles" to portray in vivid language his own conception of a malady of the mind which modern pathologists choosing to consider

A new disease, unknown to men,

have made familiar to us under the term of "General Paralysis." Doubtless, the recognition of this as a distinct phase of insanity necessitating confinement in an asylum dates from comparatively recent times, but Shakespeare not only remarked and described the chief symptoms, but also noted them as constituting a disease of the mind, though probably he would not have classed those so afflicted with the rest of "Bedlam Beggars."

In the "Manual of Psychological Medicine," p. 17, is a passage from Trelut said to be quoted from Hippocrates, in which Dr. Hack Tuke hints "we might recognise the symptoms of incipient general paralysis," but the quotation referred to from Hippocrates is doubtful.

The passage now to be commented upon is found in "Troilus and Cressida," Act II. Sc. III., and it is Ulysses who speaks:—

" Things small as nothing, for requests' sake only,
He makes important: possess'd he is with greatness;
And speaks not to himself, but with a pride
That quarrels at self-breath: imagin'd worth
Holds in his blood such swoln and hot discourse,
That, twixt his mental and his active parts,
Kingdom'd Achilles in commotion rages,
And batters down himself: what should I say?
He is so plaguy proud, that the death-tokens of it
Cry—' No recovery.' "

* Macmillan's Magaz., Nov. 1864, "On the Human Brain."

If language was given to conceal thoughts, surely in this instance language fails, for here is a positive description of certain facts and consequences with which we are familiar. There can be but one mode of explanation of this remarkable passage. That it has been overlooked by authors who have had especially in hand the psychology of Shakespeare is surprising, and can be only accounted for by supposing that as Homer certainly did not present Achilles to us as insane, so neither should Shakespeare have any reason for doing so. They err who reason thus. Shakespeare did not intend to describe Achilles as "mad." What he meant to describe was a condition of intense *emotional perdition*, as destructive to its abstract mental state as was a certain disease which he had noticed to be fatal to corporeal existence, and which he had coupled with all these signs of exaltation. And into the mouth of Ulysses, who spoke such "music, wit and oracle," are put these words—Ulysses, to whom throughout the play is given the burden of description, and from whom emanates the truest record of observation.

The character of Achilles is represented by Shakespeare as that of a pride-eaten, vainglorious man, spending his time in laziness and buffoonery, forgetful of his ancient prestige and the great cause in hand; everywhere is this shewn :—

"The proud Lord that bastes his arrogance with his own seam, and never suffers matter of this world to enter his thoughts."

Again :—

"Over proud and under honest; in
Self assumption greater than in the note of judgment."

And so on on all occasions is this

"Seeded pride to rank maturity grown up,"

pushed forward. Not that the great son of Peleus and Thetis, the terrible Argicide, had any lack either of possessions or pretensions to greatness, for he it was whom

"Reputation crowned the sinew and the
Forehead of our host."

And even Ulysses, speaking of Ajax, proclaims him,

"As amply titled as Achilles is."

Thus the "degree of greatness" with which Achilles was credited was neither altogether supposititious nor impertinent. He was a landed lord. His territory extended from Trachis to the Peneus, and he ruled over at least four peoples. There was in him no actual delusion of the existence of a power altogether aerial, chimerical; but as there must be a *modus in rebus*, even in undisputed greatness, so when this *modus* is exceeded, the exuberant growth is disease, and produces deformity. What a character must a man have when, to best show off his points, he is clothed with the garb of a diseased mind, as the one serving not to conceal his defects but to proclaim his weakness!

For clearness, let us analyse this declaration of Ulysses, and see how, to the letter, the condition of a "general Paralytic" is described.

"Things *small as nothing* for request's sake,"

i.e. for the mere reason that he was asked about them—rank contrariety—"he makes important." "*Possessed* he is with greatness," &c. How accurately do these words that we have put into italics denote the immeasurably-magnified fictions, the entire absorption in his own aggrandisement, of a general paralytic.

Even the very act of "speaking to himself" wrangles with the breath by which it exists, quarrels with the bridge that carries it over. "Imagined worth" and "kingdom'd Achilles" are spoken half satirically. All conversant with the assertive and tempestuous gestures of asylum-aristocrats and timocrats, will understand the "commotion between his mental and his active parts that batters down himself."

Now comes the most singular and decisive phrase, the last one: "He is so plaguy proud that the death-tokens of it cry, 'No recovery.'" "No recovery." Note the connection between the diseased ideas and the bodily annihilation. If the former part of the passage admitted of doubt, this latter does of none. Can we refuse to acknowledge the direct reference when we think of the almost (if not quite) universal fatality of "general Paralysis?"

"No recovery!" His pride presaged that he must perish. How and when Achilles died is uncertain. Homer says nothing about it, and all is conjecture. That Achilles betrayed no bodily weakness, his fight with Hector shows; and here let us notice an apparent anomaly in Shakespeare's

version of this fight, for, contrary to the express statement of the Iliad that Achilles, "plunging in that part his spear, impelled it through the yielding flesh beyond," and that when Hector was struck "The ashen beam his power of utterance left still unimpaired, but in the dust he fell and the exulting conqueror exclaimed," &c., &c. Shakespeare's account is, that Achilles surprised Hector when unprepared, and set on his Myrmidons to slaughter him. In the Homeric account the Myrmidons do indeed stab Hector, but not till he has been first killed by Achilles, and we are told "How far more patient of the touch is Hector now than when he lived." This instance of variation from the direct Homeric account is a good specimen of the whole tenor of the play, which, as Knight says, was meant to be "A deeply significant satire upon the Homeric herodom. He had no desire to debase the elevated, to deteriorate or make little the great, and still less to attack the poetical worth of Homer, or of heroic poetry in general, but he wished to warn against the over-valuation of them to which man abandons himself."

Ulrici took the same view and says that "Shakespeare saw the danger of the indiscriminate admiration of classical antiquity, for he who accepted it must fall to the very lowest station in religion and morality." And so a deep lesson is read to human vanity by showing that when the pride which should ennoble becomes debasing, an emotional deterioration indicating death to all high sentiment and sense of honour follows. Such over-strained pride is as much a death-token of moral recovery in a Grecian hero, as of bodily recovery in a mortal man.

That Shakespeare did not mean to palm upon Achilles the very material disease, the proclamation of which is put into the rôle of Ulysses, but spoke merely as in a figure, intending but to typify a state of mind which he wished to present, is shown by referring a few pages farther on, where Ulysses, in that passage which ought to be at the finger ends of every student, beginning "Time hath, my Lord, a wallet at his back," &c., goes on to tell Achilles that the cry was once on him, and still might be again, urging him not to "entomb himself alive, and ease his reputation in his tent."

Can Ulysses' statement be understood of any other disease than the one we have assigned to it?

In his "Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare," Art. "Troilus and Cressida," Dr. Bucknill gives in full the quotation we are

commenting upon, but having apparently a special object in view, that, namely, of collating Shakespeare's references to "The Plague," the learned psychologist seems to have neglected the first clauses and to have appropriated the word "plaguy," connecting it with "death-tokens" so as to make the reading parallel with some passages in "Love's Labour Lost," and "Antony and Cleopatra," in the former, where Biron says:—

"They are infected, in their hearts it lies;
They have the plague, and caught it of your eyes.
These lords are visited; you are not free,
For the *Lord's tokens* on you I do see."

And in the latter, where Scarns says,

"On our side like the token'd pestilence
Where death is sure, yon ribald-rid hag of Egypt,
Whom leprosy o'ertake," &c.

Dr. Bucknill then quotes Woodall's account of a cutaneous disease where "these marks which are held to be of such fearful import are called 'the Lord's tokens.'"

If the whole passage be read in its entirety it must, we think, appear that the word "plaguy" is merely expletive, asseverative, and refers no more to "Lord's tokens" than Jack Falstaff did when he sneered out—

"A plague of all cowards, say I."

The word is used qualitatively in the sense of "very," "annoyingly," "wearisome," &c., its particular connotative meaning having disappeared,

"Plaguy" was never a second time used by Shakespeare in writing, but instances are numerous of the expletive use of the word "plague:" *e.g.*, once in connexion with madness—

"O plague and madness! you are moved."
TRO. AND CRESS., Act. v. 2.

And again,

"What a plague mean ye to colt me thus."
I HENRY IV., Act IV. 2.

And,

"'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind."
LEAR, Act IV., 1.

There are multitudes of references to show that "token" is used as a sign, and thus that "death-tokens" mean but "signs of death," e.g.

"With signs and tokens she can scowl."

TITUS ANDRON., Act II., 5.

"A token from Troilus"

TROIL. AND CRESS., Act I., 2.

"What in time proceeds,
May token to the future our deeds past."

ALL'S WELL, Act IV., 2.

Subordinating then "plaguy" to its expletive sense (in which Manner Steevens in his commentary takes it) and understanding by "death-tokens" the signs of a deadly disease, we have the full force of the meaning evident.

Be it remembered, too, that Shakespeare lived in a time when society and intellectualism had made great and sudden progress. The Elizabethan age was peculiarly fertile in all the causes that untune the concords of the mind—religious feud, international warfare, civil strife, development of trade; all these crowding simultaneously, fell with terrible momentum upon men's minds, and those sources to which we in our times attribute the apparently exotic growth of "general paralysis" were really existing, and in a most potent form, but the relationship was not recognised.

Seeing the feeble development in Shakespeare's time of a scientific classification of mental diseases, can we wonder that he tacked on this description to no "mad" character? It was not a form penned up in mad-houses, manacled and caged; but it did exist, was fatal then as now, and coming under the eye of our great cartographer of the mind, was marked by him as a formidable entity.

If Shakespeare was anything he was a mental philosopher, whose accurate objective sensations rose rapidly into intense perception, and developed downwards in the motion of language, and around in the fertile territory of his stored-up imagery.

Shakespeare typed the debased herodism of Achilles by declaring that his extravagant bombast proclaimed him under the ban of the sure destruction awaiting those whose phantom pride heralds their doom.