

perpetuity, to the five hundred perpetuity persons who otherwise will occupy that hospital, and then pay to each of those five hundred persons three dollars and fifty cents. weekly for his support, would not the proceeding be considered a most glaring instance of extravagance? Yet this, substantially, is precisely what the Commonwealth is doing, and will do, at Danvers.

The Unconsciousness of Genius.

Sir James Paget's neat and graceful, but not very deeply thought out, Hunterian Oration at the College of Surgeons has excited in the bosom of the "British Medical Journal" a gushing enthusiasm which it apparently finds a difficulty to express adequately. It is described as "a masterpiece of modern oratory," "a gem of critical literature," as "resplendent with purple patches" (whatever they may be), and "starred with gems of thought," as presenting "a picture which will live in literature and which shines with all the beauty of truth;" and so on in similar outbursts. Probably Sir James Paget will be more surprised than any one else to find that he has produced such a gigantic work of genius, and, if he accepts this almost feminine effusiveness seriously, may consider himself as an instance aptly proving the truth of an opinion which he expressed in his oration, that true greatness is ever unconscious of its powers. Of one character of Hunter's mind he spoke thus:—

I mean the unconsciousness of its own mental power. He could be provoked, in his later life, into saying that he knew better than some of those that spoke ill of him; but he said he felt a mere pigmy in the presence of the work he had to do; and even the sensitiveness and vexation with which he sometimes speaks of rivals is enough to prove that he doubted whether he did work good and great enough for permanent renown. He stands as he stands all other tests, so this of mental greatness, well—the test of self-unconsciousness; and it is happy for science he did so.

Is it then so certain that the test of mental greatness is unconsciousness of its power? We know that an opinion of this kind is sometimes confidently enunciated, and used as a sort of rod to correct the presumption of young ambition, and that Shakespeare is quoted as an example and a proof. On the face of it, however, it seems rather strange that the person who of all men is supposed to have the greatest power of insight among his cotemporaries should have the

least insight into his own powers. A man may feel himself a pigmy in the presence of the exhaustless field of work which Nature offers him to do, as Newton did and as Hunter did, and at the same time feel himself something like a giant among the pigmies who are associated with him in doing it. We are not qualified by adequate study of Hunter's character to controvert Sir James Paget's opinion with regard to his unconsciousness of his mental powers, although we should have thought that the evidence pointed to a pretty good opinion of them on his part; but we hesitate not to question his general dictum, and to assert with some confidence the error of the notion that Shakespeare was unconscious of his mental powers. Any one who will read his "Sonnets" carefully may convince himself that Shakespeare had, even early in his career, a well-grounded conviction that he was producing work which would not soon die.

Now with the drops of this most balmy time
 My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
 Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,
 While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
 And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
 When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

Sonnet cvii.

It seems almost as improbable that Shakespeare should have done what he has done, and have been unaware of his mental greatness, as that a victor in the Olympian games should have been unaware of his superior bodily powers and training. Certainly he was no mere automaton. Hear what Coleridge, who, perhaps, of all men since Shakespeare had the most Shakespearian range and depth of thought, said of him and his work:—

No man was ever yet a great poet without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and the fragrancy of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language. In Shakespeare's poems the creative power and the intellectual energy wrestle as in a war embrace. . . . What then shall we say? Even this; that Shakespeare, no mere child of nature; no *automaton* of genius; no passive vehicle of inspiration possessed by the spirit, not possessing it; first studied patiently, meditated deeply, understood minutely, till knowledge, become habitual and intuitive, wedded itself to his habitual feelings, and at length gave birth to that stupendous power by which he stands alone with no equal or second in his own class; to that power which seated him upon one of the two glory-smitten summits of the poetic mountain, with Milton as his compeer, not rival.

Now Milton, in early manhood, set before himself with deliberate resolve the aim to produce a great work which should be immortal, showing a confidence in his powers which to others might well have seemed insane presumption. If then we are to accept Sir James Paget's test of mental greatness, we must conclude that Shakespeare and Milton, having been plainly conscious of their mental powers, were not great men. What too of Turner among painters?

An Antilunatic Remedy.

The following epitaph will perhaps be interesting to those who hold the doctrine that alcoholic indulgence has its compensating uses in the prevention of insanity. It is given by M. Lejoncourt, in his "Galerie des Centenaires :"—

Sous cette pierre git Brawn, qui, par la seule vertu de la bière forte, sut vivre cent vingt hivers. Il était toujours ivre, et, dans cet état, si redoutable que la mort elle-même le craignait. Un jour que, malgré lui, il se trouvait rassis, la mort, devenue plus hardie, l'attaqua et triompha de cet ivrogne sans pareil.

If the doctrine be true that surcease of sorrow by alcohol will hold insanity at bay, an apt emendation may be suggested in the well-known words of the Friar to Romeo—

I'll give thee armour to keep off that word
Adversity's sweet milk, *strong alcohol*,
To comfort thee, though thou art *sorrowful*.*

The Consolations of Spiritualism.

We extract from a lecture in the "Spiritualist" newspaper the following remarks, which the lecturer pours out after some reflections upon the dreary belief of materialists "inside and outside the churches":—

And in modern times, and in Christian countries, when by the side of the grave the earth falls upon the coffin of the loved one, and the cry arises of "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," how

* We put the proposed emendations in italics, lest some one should hereafter seriously quote the lines as Shakespeare's. We observe that the Editor of the "Philadelphia Medical Times" quotes with serious approval "Punch's" regulations that in all future football matches a surgeon shall be on the ground, an ambulance in attendance, a ward prepared at a neighbouring hospital, &c., and strongly recommends them for adoption in America.