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PART 1.—ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Emanuel Swedenborg. By HENRY MAUDSLEY, M.D. Lond.

FEW are the readers, and we cannot boast to be of those few, who have been at the pains to toil through the many and voluminous writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Indeed, it would not be far from the truth to say that there are very few persons who have thought it worth their while to study him at all seriously; he is commonly accounted a madman, who has had the singular fortune to persuade certain credulous persons that he was a seer. Nevertheless, whether lunatic or prophet, his character and his writings merit a serious and unbiased study. Madness, which makes its mark upon the world, and counts in its train many presumably sane people who see in it the highest wisdom, cannot justly be put aside contemptuously as undeserving a moment's grave thought. After all, there is no accident in madness; causality, not casualty, governs its appearance in the universe; and it is very far from being a good and sufficient practice to simply mark its phenomena, and straightway to pass on as if they belonged, not to an order, but to a disorder of events that called for no explanation. It is certain that there is in Swedenborg's revelations of the spiritual world a mass of absurdities sufficient to warrant the worst suspicions of his mental sanity; but, at the same time, it is not less certain that there are scattered in his writings conceptions of the highest philosophic reach, while throughout them is sensible an exalted tone of calm moral feeling which rises in many places to a real moral grandeur.

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These are the qualities which have gained him his best disciples, and they are qualities too uncommon in the world to be lightly despised, in whatever company they may be exhibited. I proceed then to give some account of Swedenborg, not purposing to make any review of his multitudinous publications, or any criticism of the doctrines announced in them with a matchless self-sufficiency; the immediate design being rather to present, by the help mainly of Mr. White's book, a sketch of the life and character of the man, and thus to obtain, and to endeavour to convey, some definite notion of what he was, what he did, and what should be concluded of him.*

The first condition of fairly understanding and justly appraising any character is to know something of the stock from which it has sprung. For grapes will not grow on thorns nor figs on thistles, and if the fathers have eaten sour grapes the children's teeth will not fail to be set on edge. At the end of all the most subtle and elaborate disquisitions concerning moral freedom and responsibility, the stern fact remains that the inheritance of a man's descent weighs on him through life as a good or a bad fate. How can he escape from his ancestors? Stored up mysteriously in the nature which they transmit to him, he inherits not only the organised results of the acquisition and evolution of generations of men, but he inherits also certain individual peculiarities or proclivities which determine irresistibly the general aim of his career. While he fancies that he is steering himself and determining his course at will, his character is his destiny. The laws of hereditary transmission are charged with the destinies of mankind—of the race and of the individual.

* *Emanuel Swedenborg: His Life and Writings.* By William White. In two volumes. 1867. As the present purpose is not to make any criticism of Mr. White's laborious and useful work, we shall not again refer specially to it, although making large use of the materials which it furnishes for a study of Swedenborg; we may once for all commend it to the attention of those who are interested in obtaining an impartial account of the life and works of the prophet of the New Jerusalem. Mr. White does not appear to have formed for himself any definite theory with regard to Swedenborg's pretensions, but is apt, after having told something remarkable of him, to break out into a sort of Carlylian foam of words, which, however, when it has subsided, leaves matters much as they were. Perhaps his book is none the worse for the absence of a special theory, as we get a fair and unbiased selection from Swedenborg's conversation and writings, and a candid account of the events of his life. At the same time it will obviously be necessary, sooner or later, that the world come to a definite conclusion with regard to his character and pretensions. If man can attain to a gift of seership, and has in him the faculty of becoming what Swedenborg claimed to be, it is surely time that some exact investigation should be made of the nature of the faculty, and that he should set himself diligently to work to discover the track of so remarkable a development.

Swedenborg's grandfather was a copper smelter, of pious disposition and industrious habits, who had the fortune to become rich through a lucky mining venture. He had a large family, which he counted a blessing; for he was in the habit of saying after dinner, with a humility not perhaps entirely devoid of ostentation, "Thank you, my children, for dinner! I have dined with you, and not you with me. God has given me food for your sake." His son Jasper, the father of Emanuel Swedenborg, exhibiting in early youth a great love of books and a pleasure in playing at preaching, was educated for the ministry, in which, by zealous energy and no small worldly shrewdness, he succeeded so well that he ultimately rose to be Bishop of Skara. He was a bustling, energetic, turbulently self-conscious man, earnest and active in the work of his ministry, and a favourite of the King, Charles XI. Of a reforming temper and an aggressive character, with strongly pronounced evangelical tendencies, by no means wanting in self-confidence or self-assertion, and indefatigable in the prosecution of what he thought to be his duties, he did not fail to make enemies among those of his brethren who were unwilling to have the sleepy routine of their lives disturbed; but by the energy of his character and the favour of the king he held his own successfully. "I can scarcely believe," he says, "that anybody in Sweden has written so much as I have done; since, I think, ten carts would scarcely carry away what I have written and printed at my own expense, yet there is as much, verily, there is nearly as much, not printed." Certainly he was not less keenly careful of the things that concerned his temporal well-being than of those that belonged to his eternal welfare; and deeming himself a faithful and favoured servant of the Lord he easily traced in all the steps of his advancement the recompensing hand of his Divine Master. "It is incredible and indescribable," he exclaims, when made Dean of Upsala, "what consolation and peace are felt by the servants of the Lord when raised to a high and holy calling; and contrariwise how down-hearted they must be who experience no such elevation." Without doing any injustice to the zealous bishop, we may suppose that certain worldly advantages contributed their measure to the consolation which he felt in being raised to so high and holy a calling. By the death of his wife he was left a widower with eight children, the eldest of them not twelve years old; but he soon took to himself a second wife, distinguished for her "piety meekness, liberality to the poor," and who was moreover

“well-off, good-looking, a thrifty housewife, and had no family.” She died, and within a year after her death he married for the third time, being then in his sixty-seventh year. “My circumstances and my extensive household required a faithful companion, whom God gave me in Christina Arhusia.” In his choice of wives, as in other matters, he evinced his shrewd and practical character, acting apparently in accordance with the advice which he gives in a letter to his youngest son whom he was urging to apply himself to work:—“You write well, you reckon well, and, thank God, you are not married. See that you get a good wife, *and something with her*. Pray God to lead you in his holy way.” The mixture of piety and worldly wisdom is very characteristic of the bishop.

His sublime self-assurance was a most striking feature in his character. Assuredly he never lacked advancement either for himself or his family through any modest distrust of his worth or any hesitation to urge his claims; he was, indeed, most pertinacious in his petitions to the king, in season and out of season; and if his prayer was left unnoticed, another was sure to follow in a short time, so that the only way of getting rid of his importunities was to grant something of what he asked. It is only just to him to add, however, that he was not less urgent in his petitions for the advantage of the church than he was in his petitions for his own advantage. So great was the faith which he had in himself and in the efficacy of his prayers that he was persuaded that he actually worked miraculous cures of disease. “There was,” he says, “brought to me at Starbo a maid-servant named Kerstin, possessed with devils in mind and body. I caused her to kneel down with me and pray, and then I read over her, and she arose well and hearty and quite delivered.” To this same seemingly hysterical servant, who on one occasion lay senseless and half suffocated, he called in a loud voice—“Wake up, and arise in the name of Jesus Christ!” Immediately she recovered, got up, and commenced to talk. Another of his servants had a dreadful pain in her elbow, which nothing relieved, so that for days and nights she went about moaning without rest or sleep. “At midnight she came to the room where I was lying asleep with my beloved wife, and prayed that I would for the sake of Christ take away her pain, or she must go and kill herself. I rose, touched her arm, and commanded the pain in the name of Jesus Christ, to depart, and in a moment the

one arm was as well as the other. Glory to God alone!" Not a doubt seems to have ever ruffled the serenity of his self-complacency; he had the comfortable conviction, which men of his narrow and intense type of mind sometimes get, that in all his doings the Lord was on his side. When he was nearly eighty years of age he composed his autobiography, making with his own hand six copies of it, and dedicating them "to my children and posterity as an example how to conduct themselves after my death." The grave should not quench his shining light; he was resolved, being dead, yet to speak. Of his autobiography or of any other of his cartloads of writings it is not probable that posterity will ever care to read much; the good which the restless and indefatigable bishop conferred on the world was done by his energetic and useful life; he worked well and wisely for his generation, and his generation liberally rewarded him.

Such then was Bishop Swedenborg, whose second son, Emanuel, was born on the 29th January, 1688, and was so named that he might be thereby reminded continually of "the nearness of God." Of his mother we know nothing more than what the bishop writes of her:—"Although she was the daughter of an assessor, and the wife of a rector in Upsala, and of a wealthy family, she never dressed extravagantly. As every woman in those days wore a sinful and troublesome *fontange* or top-knot, she was obliged to do as others did and wear it; but hearing that a cow in the island of Gothland had, with great labour and pitiable bellowing, brought forth a calf with a top-knot, she took her own and her girl's hoods and threw them all into the fire; and she made a vow that she and her daughters, as long as they were under her authority, should never more put such things on their heads."

The story, notwithstanding the superstition which it discovers, indicates strong self-reliance and no little force of character, but is hardly sufficient to warrant any special conclusions. As, however, Swedenborg's intellect was undoubtedly of a higher order than his father's, by nature far more subtle, comprehensive, and powerful, it is probable that he owed much to his mother's stock, as is so often the case with men of distinction. It is a small matter for anyone to have had a clever father if he has had a foolish mother. The transmission of his father's qualities of character certainly could not have been an unmixed benefit, some of them having been evidently already strained as far as was consistent with the maintenance of a sound equilibrium. A man whose

intellect moved in so narrow a current, who was possessed with such wonderful self-assurance, and who sincerely believed that he worked miraculous cures, was not unlikely to have a son in whom the exaggeration of these characters passed the limits of sanity. At any rate we may believe that the busy bishop had but little reserve power to communicate to his children, having needed and used all the force which he had for the manifold projects and works of his own active and demonstrative life: he put forth too many blossoms himself to leave much force in his stock available for the next generation. To the quiet, self-reliant, and self-denying energy of his mother's character it may well be that Swedenborg was more indebted than to the too self-conscious activity of his father.

Of the events of his childhood and early youth nothing more is known than what he himself, writing in his old age, tells us:—

From my fourth to my tenth year, my thoughts were constantly engrossed in reflecting on God, on salvation, and on the spiritual affections of man. I often revealed things in my discourse which filled my parents with astonishment, and made them declare at times that certainly the angels spoke through my mouth.

From my sixth to my twelfth year, it was my greatest delight to converse with the clergy concerning faith, to whom I observed 'that charity or love is the life of faith':—

and other wonderfully precocious things.

We shall be the more apt to believe that he did discourse in that strange way, if we bear in mind that he was bred, and lived, and moved in an atmosphere of religious talk and theological discussion, where Providential interferences were not wanting. The endless praying, the catechising, the sermonising of his father, and the parental admiration which his own childish discourse excited, would tend to engender a precocity in religious matters, which failed not to bear its natural fruits in his subsequent life. From this brief glimpse into the nature of his early training, we perceive sufficient reason to conclude that the extreme self-confidence which he inherited from his father met with a fostering applause rather than a prudent discouragement. Unquestionably, if at that early age his thoughts were constantly engrossed in reflections on God, and his mouth had become an organ through which angels spoke, both his thoughts and his mouth might have been much better employed.

A notable peculiarity which he asserts to have distinguished him in his early years, and made him unlike other children, was a power of almost suspending his breathing; when deeply absorbed in prayer, he hardly seemed to breathe at all. Another remarkable characteristic of the wonderful child! On it he subsequently founded important theories concerning respiration, and his disciples look upon it as connected with the power which he claimed to have of entering the spirit world while still in the flesh. A more commonplace explanation, however, may easily suggest itself. Physicians who are accustomed to be consulted about children of nervous disposition, predisposed to epilepsy or insanity, will call to mind instances in which the little beings have fallen into trances or ecstasies, and spoken in voices seemingly not their own. On the one hand, these seizures pass by intermediate steps into attacks of chorea, and, on the other hand, they may alternate with true epileptic fits, or pass gradually into them. So far from being conditions to admire, they are of dangerous omen, and the parent whose child is so afflicted, whether it be by airs from heaven or blasts from hell, would do well to take him to some physician, in order to have the angels or devils exorcised by medical means. If Swedenborg's youthful ecstasies, as seems not improbable, were of this character, his father, who thought his hysterical maid-servant to be possessed with "devils in mind and body," was not likely to interpret them rightly; on the contrary, like Mahomet's epileptic fits, they would be counted visitations of the Deity.

Thus much, and it is unfortunately not much, concerning Swedenborg's parentage, childhood and early training. Scanty as the account is, we may see reason to trace in some events of his life the effects of the influences then exerted. I go on now to mention briefly what is known of his youth and early manhood. He was educated at the University of Upsala, where he took the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the age of 21. Afterwards he travelled abroad in order to complete his studies, remaining some time in London, Paris, and Hamburg, wherever he went evincing an earnest thirst for knowledge, and seeking and obtaining the acquaintance of men eminent in mathematics, astronomy, and mechanics. Returning from his travels he took up his abode for some years in the little seaside university town of Griefswalde, where he certainly was not idle. In a letter to his brother-in-law, he specifies as many as fourteen wonderful mechanical inventions on which he was engaged. Among these were:—

The construction of a sort of ship in which a man may go below the surface of the sea, and do great damage to the fleet of an enemy.

A machine, driven by fire, for pumping water, and lifting at forges, where the water has no fall.

A new construction of air-guns, by which a thousand balls may be discharged through one tube in one moment.

Schiographia universalis, or a mechanical method of delineating houses of every kind, and on any surface, by means of fire.

A mechanical chariot containing all kinds of tools, which are set in action by the movements of the horses.

A flying chariot, or the possibility of floating in the air and moving through it.

The number of projects on which he was engaged shows how great was his industry, and how fertile his ingenuity, while the character of them proves that there was no hindrance to a habit of ambitious speculation in any modest distrust of his own powers. It is evident too that at this period of his life his speculations were directed to practical ends; his daring flights were made from a basis of scientific facts, and aimed at some directly useful result; he was not yet, at any rate, a mere dreamer of inflated dreams. What, however, is particularly significant is the entire absence of self-restraint in these intellectual projects: there is no problem which he does not hold to be penetrable, and penetrable by him. To what end must such a lofty and high aspiring spirit inevitably come unless it learn by sad experience soberly to define its aims and definitely to work for them? Icarus-like in its aspiring ambition, it cannot but be Icarus-like in its disastrous fall.

In 1715, when he was 27 years old, he returned home, and received before long from the King, in compliance with his father's pertinacious prayers, the appointment of assessor in the Royal School of Mines, where, as assistant to Polhem, an eminent engineer, he was usefully employed in the practical work of his office. At the same time he did not abandon his ingenious and abstruse speculations; the results of his labours being published in numerous pamphlets, the titles of some of which will serve to indicate the nature of his studies. One is entitled "Attempts to find the Longitude by means of the Moon;" another, "On the Level of the Sea and the great Tides of the Ancient World;" another, "A Proposal for the

Division of Money and Measures so as to facilitate Calculation and Fractions.” His brother-in-law Benzelius having discouraged this last scheme as impracticable and advised him to relinquish it, he replies bravely:—

It is a little discouraging to be dissuaded thus. For myself, I desire all possible novelties, aye, a novelty for every day in the year, provided the world will be pleased with them. In every age there’s an abundance of persons who follow the beaten track, and remain in the old way; but perhaps there are only from six to ten in a century, who bring forward new things, founded on argument and reason.

A novelty for every day in the year by all means, provided it be a novelty which has some solidity of foundation and a reasonable chance of bearing the test of verification. But to pursue novelties for novelty’s sake, to disdain the beaten track merely because it is beaten, and to leap out of it for the purpose of shewing independence—these are things which are likely in no long time to bring a man to considerable intellectual grief. A habit of excogitating vague and hypothetical plausibilities is not difficult of acquirement, but is very detrimental to exact observation and sound reasoning. There is commonly greater profit, though attended with more pains and less pleasure, in scrutinizing and scrupulously testing one good theory than in putting forth a hundred empty hypotheses; self-restraint being a far higher energy than self-abandonment. It is plain that Swedenborg had, to a degree which few persons have had, the power of seizing distant analogies, but it is equally plain that he put no restraint on the exercise of this faculty. No wonder that the world, unapt to welcome warmly any new doctrine, apt indeed to shut the door resolutely in its face, did not receive his wonderful discoveries with the gratitude and interest which he imagined to be their due, but, on the contrary, went on in its prosaic way serenely disregarding of them. Writing to Benzelius he complains that his brother-in-law has estranged his dear father’s and mother’s affections from him, and that his speculations and inventions find no patronage in Sweden.

Should I be able to collect the necessary means, I have made up my mind to go abroad and seek my fortune in mining. He must indeed be a fool, who is loose and irresolute, who sees his place abroad, yet remains in obscurity and wretchedness at home, where the

furies, Envy and Pluto, have taken up their abode, and dispose of all rewards, where all the trouble I have taken is rewarded with such shabbiness!

Again—

I have taken a little leisure this summer to put a few things on paper, which I think will be my last productions, for speculations and inventions like mine find no patronage, nor bread in Sweden, and are considered by a number of political blockheads as a sort of schoolboy exercise, which ought to stand quite in the background, while their finesse and intrigues step forward.

In what way his father's affections had shown themselves estranged we do not learn. Perhaps the bustling bishop had become impatient of his son's multitudinous speculations, and was urging him to some more practical work; for he was not apt to look complacently on any neglect of the things that lead to worldly prosperity. To another of his sons he writes on one occasion—"See that you find some occupation where you are. It is no use to be in Sweden to fritter away your best days in idleness."

Notwithstanding the little favour which his inventions met with, Swedenborg did not carry into effect the resolution to abandon his ungrateful country; he contented himself with a tour of fifteen months on the continent, visiting Amsterdam, Leipzig, Liege and Cologne. During this period he continued to publish numerous pamphlets, one of which was on "New Attempts to explain the Phenomena of Physics and Chemistry by Geometry," and another on "A New Method of finding the Longitude of Places on Land or at Sea by Lunar Observations." Observing as he travelled, and reflecting on what he observed, he at once published the fancies and speculations with which his prolific mind teemed; and so serene was his self-assurance that he never seems to have doubted his capacity to deal off-hand with the most difficult subjects. Swiftly and recklessly his imagination passed to its conclusions through faint gleams of analogies, leaving deliberation and verification hopelessly in the rear, if they were ever thought of at all. He returned to Sweden in 1722, and during the next twelve years—from his thirty-fourth to his forty-sixth year—he preserved an unaccustomed silence, for he published nothing. He was, however, far from idle; the time which was not occupied in the duties of his assessorship being devoted to study and to the composition of three big folios—the

Principia, containing an account of the creation of matter, and the *Opera Philosophica et Mineralia*. These were published at Leipzig in 1734.

In his *Principia* he professes to investigate the Elemental Kingdom, the subtile and intangible particles of which, each having its own powers of elasticity and motion, combine, as he assumes, to constitute an element. But how does he get at any knowledge of these subtile particles which he postulates? By reasoning from analogy. The method of Nature, he says, is everywhere the same; Nature is similar to herself in Suns and Planets as in Particles; size makes no difference; there is the same ratio between 1,000,000 and 5,000,000 as there is between .0,000,001 and .0,000,005; what is true of the least is true of the greatest. Now, as the whole world is mechanical these intangible particles must be so also; visible matter is geometrical as to figure, mechanical as to motion; therefore invisible matter must be so also. Then he goes on to argue in an elaborate way that everything in nature originated in a point—just as the origin of lines and forms in geometry is in points—itself somehow produced immediately from the Infinite, and that from a congress of points the First Finite was produced; from an aggregation of First Finite a grosser order of Second Finites; from these an order of Third Finites; and so on until the earth and all that therein is was produced. How he contrives to get his point produced from the Infinite, and then to start it on such a wonderful career, it is impossible to explain; his disciples who discover in some parts of these barren speculations the anticipations of important scientific discoveries, and perceive everywhere the marks of a superhuman philosophic insight, do not furnish an intelligible interpretation. This is not much to be wondered at, seeing that the master himself, when he was subsequently admitted to the Spiritual World, discovered them to be vain and idle fancies. What may justly cause surprise and regret, however, is that his followers should insist on reading a wonderful meaning into what he so entirely discarded, and persist in vaguely extolling, without definitely setting forth, the science which they find so marvellous. The fact which it chiefly concerns us here to note is his infinite self-sufficiency; there is no arrogant self-assertion, no offensive conceit, but a serene and boundless self-assurance, the like of which is seldom met with outside the walls of an asylum, but is not seldom exhibited by the monomaniac who constructs elaborate theories of the universe out of the

troubled depths of his consciousness. When a man plants himself on such a platform he is certainly likely, "whether owing to the fault or discernment of his cotemporaries, to inhabit his intellectual estate unquestioned, unlimited, uncontradicted, and alone."*

The *Philosophical and Mineral Works* contain a very full description of the practical details of mining in different parts of the world; they testify how well he had observed, and how hard he had studied during his travels. He gives them the title of "Philosophical" advisedly, because it was his aim to wed philosophy to science, and to rise by steps from the investigation of the mineral to that of the organic kingdom, and through this to the study of man, and of human mind as the crowning achievement of organization.

Man did not begin to exist until the kingdoms of nature were completed, and then the world of nature concentrated itself in him at his creation. Thus in man, as in a microcosm, the whole universe may be contemplated from the beginning to the end, from first to last.

There is nothing original in this conception, which is indeed as old as thought, but if we err not, the conception of the method by which Swedenborg resolved to ascend step by step from a knowledge of the lowest forms of matter to the knowledge of its highest forms, until at last he penetrated into the secret chamber of that "noblest organization in which the soul is clad," was at that time as original as it was profoundly scientific. The grand end which he proposed to himself was the discovery of the soul; to the investigation of its nature he would mount through the different organs and functions of the body, using his knowledge of them as a ladder by which to ascend into "her secret chambers, open all the doors that lead to her, and at length contemplate the soul herself." How different in this regard from learned metaphysicians, who deem an entire ignorance of the body no bar to the most dogmatic disquisition concerning mind! Who can withhold admiration of the noble ambition of his design, of the resolute determination to undertake so vast a work, of the unflinching industry with which he set himself to execute it? It is meet that criticism stand respectfully aside for a moment, and do free homage to the philosophic genius of the mind which was capable at that time of conceiving so truly

* Dr. Garth Wilkinson's *Biography of Swedenborg*, p. 27.

scientific a method, and of the resolution to accomplish its application.

In pursuance of his great scheme of penetrating from the very cradle to the maturity of nature, he determined to undertake earnestly the study of anatomy and physiology, having inherited at his father's death, which took place in 1735, a sufficient fortune to enable him to follow the bent of his inclinations. Accordingly he started once more for a tour on the continent, visiting Brussels, Paris, Turin, Milan, Venice, and Rome, occupying himself in the study of anatomy, and amusing himself with visiting the theatres and operas, and seeing what was worth seeing in the different towns. For he was no ascetic, though he lived a solitary life: he was evidently not insensible to certain lusts of the flesh, nor sparing of the gratification of them; we learn incidentally that in Italy, though he was now fifty-two years old, he kept a mistress, as indeed he had formerly done in Sweden. At a later period of his life we find him telling in his Diary how he wondered much "that I had no desire for women, as I had had all through my life," and again, "How my inclination for women, which had been my strongest passion, suddenly ceased." Very meagre, however, are the indications of the way in which he spent his time; it would seem that he visited the dissecting rooms, if he did not himself dissect; he certainly made himself acquainted with the works of the best anatomists, transcribing from their pages the descriptions suited to his purposes; and in one way or another seven years were passed by him in travelling about and in physiological studies.

In 1741 he gave to the world the results of his studies and reflections in anatomy by publishing at Amsterdam his "Economy of the Animal Kingdom," which was followed in 1744 by his "Animal Kingdom." These works were the continuance of his great design in the region of organization. In them he made use of the writings of the best anatomists, selecting their descriptions as a basis of facts on which he founded his reflections.

Here and there I have taken the liberty of throwing in the results of my experience, but this only sparingly; for on deeply considering the matter, I deemed it better to make use of the facts supplied by others. Indeed there are some that seem born for experimental observation, and endowed with a sharper insight than others, as if they possessed naturally a finer acumen; such are Eustachius, Ruysch,

Leeuwenhoek, Lancisi, &c. There are others again who enjoy a natural faculty for contemplating facts already discovered, and eliciting their causes. Both are peculiar gifts and are seldom united in the same person. Besides I found when intently occupied in exploring the secrets of the human body that as soon as I discovered anything that had not been observed before, I began (seduced probably by self-love) to grow blind to the most acute lucubrations and researches of others, and to originate a whole series of inductive arguments from my particular discovery alone; and consequently to be incapacitated to view and comprehend, as accurately as the subject required, the idea 'of universals in individuals, and of individuals under universals.' I therefore laid aside my instruments, and, restraining my desire for making observations, determined rather to rely on the researches of others than to trust to my own.

Still he was not ignorant of the dangers which beset ratiocination when divorced from experience.

To a knowledge of the causes of things nothing but *experience* can guide us; for when the mind, with all the speculative force which belongs to it, is left to rove about without this guide, how prone it is to fall into error, yea into errors and errors of errors! How futile it is after this, or at any rate how precarious, to seek confirmation and support from experience! We are not to deduce experience from assumed principles, but to deduce principles themselves from experience; for in truth we are surrounded with illusive and fallacious lights, and are the more likely to fall because our very darkness counterfeits the day. When we are carried away by ratiocination alone we are somewhat like blind-folded children in their play, who, though they imagine that they are walking straightforward, yet when their eyes are unbound, plainly perceive that they have been following some roundabout path, which, if pursued, must have led them to the place the very opposite to the one intended.

Wise words! but how far Swedenborg was from realising them in practice, the perusal of a single page of his treatise will suffice to prove. His nature was too strongly bent on speculation to allow him to brook any restraint on the flights of his restless and aspiring intellect, and when experience left gaps his imagination never hesitated to fill them up with theories; the very facts indeed which he professes to record are frequently so tinged with his own hypotheses as to be made unreliable, while they are almost always too weak to bear the large conclusions which he bases upon them. One thing, however, which distinguishes him prominently from most, if not all, of those who have written upon anatomy and physiology, and which is indeed the outcome of his large

and philosophic intellect, is the clear and excellent conception which he evinces of the organism as a living social unity formed by the integration of manifold orderly disposed parts; he does not treat of the body as if it were a mere mechanism or carcass of muscle, bone, and nerve, to be carefully observed, dissected, and described or figured, nor does he deal with the functions of any organ as if this were an independent agent and had little or no concern or relation with other organs and with the whole life of the being, but throughout his treatise he grasps the idea of a vital harmony, exhibits the essential interdependence, the orderly subordination and co-ordination of parts, and brings us face to face with a *living organization*. To him there is no manifestation of the bodily life, however seemingly humble, which has not its deep meaning; everything which is outwardly displayed is symbolical of what exists in the innermost. It plainly appears that his science of the bodily organism, fanciful as it often seems, is animated with conceptions derived from the social organization; and although the latter is a later, higher and more complex human evolution than the bodily organization, it is certain that ideas obtained in its sphere may be profitably applied to the study of the life of the body. If in one wonderful flash of self-consciousness the intimate functions and relations of every part of the body, and their integration in the unity of the *ego*, were miraculously declared, who can tell, nay who can imagine, what a flood of light would be suddenly thrown upon the social relations of man?

It would be unprofitable to attempt to give here a summary of Swedenborg's physiological views; indeed it would be impossible to make an abridgement of them; among numerous wild conjectures, fanciful theories, strange conceits and empty phrases, there are many pregnant suggestions, gleams of the most subtle insight, and far reaching analogies illuminating the dry details with light from a higher sphere. Indeed, when he has gone astray, it might sometimes be justly said of him that "the light which led him astray was light from heaven." Doubtless it is an admiration of this higher intellectual light which has inspired Emerson's extraordinary estimate of his genius. He speaks of him as one who "seemed by the variety and amount of his powers to be a composition of several persons—like the giant fruits which are matured in gardens by the union of four or five single blossoms;" "who anticipated much science of the nineteenth century; anticipated in astronomy the dis-

covery of the seventh planet; anticipated the views of modern astronomy in regard to the generation of the earth by the sun; in magnetism, some important conclusions of later students; in chemistry, the atomic theory; in anatomy, the discoveries of Schlichting, Munro, and Wilson; and first demonstrated the office of the lungs."

"A colossal soul, he lies abroad on his times, uncomprehended by them, and requires a long focal distance to be seen; suggests, as Aristotle, Bacon, Selden, Humboldt, that a certain vastness of learning, or *quasi* omnipresence of the human soul in nature is possible. . . . One of the mastodons of literature, he is not to be measured by whole colleges of ordinary scholars. His stalwart presence would flutter the gowns of a university. Our books are false by being fragmentary; their sentences are *bon mots*, and not parts of natural discourse, or childish expressions of surprise and pleasure in nature. But Swedenborg is systematic, and respective of the world in every sentence: all the means are orderly given; his faculties work with astronomic punctuality; and his admirable writing is pure from all pertness or egotism."

These must appear strange and startling assertions to those who have considered deeply the slow and tedious course of scientific discovery, and they would be more strange if they were true; but the sober fact is that there is scarcely a shadow of reason for attributing to him any of these wonderful discoveries. He speculated largely and vaguely about magnetism, chemistry, astronomy, anatomy, as he did about everything else, and expressed what he thought with an unequalled self-sufficiency, but if his speculations in these sciences be compared with such exact knowledge of them as existed at the time, his information will be found to be superficial and defective, his speculations for the most part crude, barren, and fanciful. In regard of this question it should be born in mind that Swedenborg did not live and flourish in the thirteenth but in the eighteenth century—that he was contemporary with Newton and Halley in science, with Berkeley, Hume, and Kant in philosophy. It is really only by throwing him back, as it were, into the dark ages, by ignoring the intellectual development of his time, and looking on his writings as the Mussulman looks on his Koran, that it is excusable to break out into any admiration of his positive scientific acquirements. That the world received his publications with indifference was the natural and just con-

sequence of their character; it would indeed have been remarkable if men seriously engaged in scientific work had thought it worth while to examine and controvert his fanciful opinions. Vain and futile too would the attempt assuredly have been if it had been made, for sober inquiry could not meet on a common platform with imagination run riot, and self-confidence incapable of doubt.

It would be useless then to attempt to convey an adequate notion of the matter of Swedenborg's writings; it must suffice here to note their intellectual character. Undoubtedly he possessed in a remarkable degree some of the elements of greatness which have existed in the greatest men: a wonderful originality of conception; a mind not subjugated by details and formulas, but able to rise above the trammels of habits and systems of thought; an extraordinary faculty of assimilation; a vast power of grasping analogies; a sincere love of knowledge; an unwearied industry, and a matchless daring. Having all these qualities, but entirely lacking intellectual self-restraint, he is scientifically as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal: his originality unchecked degenerated into riotous fancy; his power of rising above systems passed into a disregard or disdain of patiently acquired facts; though his industry was immense, he never more than half learned what he applied himself to, never patiently and faithfully assimilated the details of what was known, but, seduced by his love of analogies and sustained by his boundless self-sufficiency, he was carried away into empty theories and groundless speculations. He was unwisely impatient of doubt, constitutionally impatient of intellectual self-control. His writings, though containing many truths excellently illustrated, and passages of great pregnancy and eloquence, are diffuse, and very tedious to read; they have neither beginning nor end, are full of repetitions, inconsistencies and even contradictions. His admirers may see in such contradictions the evidence of a persevering and single-minded pursuit of truth, by reason of which he scrupled not to abandon an opinion so soon as he discovered a wider horizon, but it is plainly also possible to discern in them the evidence of an ill-balanced intellect drifting from all real anchorage in observation and experience. Towards the end of the "Principia" he says:—"In writing the present work I have had no aim at the applause of the learned world, nor at the acquisition of a name or popularity.

To me it is a matter of indifference whether I win the favourable opinion of everyone or of no one, whether I gain much or no commendation; such things are not objects of regard to one whose mind is bent on truth and on true philosophy; should I, therefore, gain the assent or approbation of others I shall receive it only as a confirmation of my having pursued the truth. . . . Should I fail to gain the assent of those whose minds, being prepossessed by other principles, can no longer exercise an impartial judgment, still I shall have those with me who are able to distinguish the true from the untrue, if not in the present, at least in some future age."

That he was sincere in this declaration is proved by the calm, passionless tone of his writings, and by the steady, unruffled pursuit of his own line of thought in so many fields of labour. But no man is self-sufficing in this universe, and it is an irremediable misfortune to him when he imagines that he is. A due regard to the views and opinions of others is not merely useful, but it is indispensable to a sound intellectual development; these furnish a searching text whereby true theories are separated from those which are false, the former ultimately verified and accepted, and the latter rejected. Truth is not born with any one man, nor will it die with him; its progress resting on the development of the race in which the greatest of individuals has but a very small part. To profess an entire indifference to the opinions of contemporaries is not therefore a mark of wisdom but an indication either of foolish pretence, or of inordinate vanity, or of downright madness, and shows a pitiful ambition in him who makes such a declaration. How many defective theories have been promulgated, how much labour has been vainly spent, because scientific inquirers have not always set themselves conscientiously to work to learn what has been done by others before they began their studies, and how their results stand in relation to well-established truths. The monomaniac who industriously wastes his ingenuity in the construction of a machine which shall be capable of perpetual motion is, in his own estimation, a most earnest pursuer of truth, and at all events has a most sincere indifference to the criticisms of others. In all the world who more original than he?

While we are constrained then to pronounce Swedenborg's treatment of scientific subjects often shallow, vague and fanciful, and for the most part barren of exact knowledge and sound principles, it must be allowed that it is character-

ized by a comprehensive grandeur of method,—a method informed throughout with the truth which Bacon earnestly insisted on, that all partitions of knowledge should be accepted rather “for lines to mark and distinguish than for sections to divide and separate, so that the continuance and entirety of knowledge be preserved.” He drew large and inspiring draughts from the common fountain of all sciences—the *philosophia prima*, tracing with subtile insight “the same footsteps of nature treading or printing upon several subjects or matters.” Hence his works are profitable for instruction and correction to all men who are engaged in special branches of scientific research, and whose minds are apt to be fettered by the methods and formulas to which their special science has been reduced, and according to which they have studied and worked; who have, as Bacon says, “abandoned universality, or *philosophia prima*. For no perfect discovery can be made upon a flat or level: neither is it possible to discover the more remote and deeper parts of any science, if you stand but on a level of the same science, and ascend not to a higher science.” Beyond the principles of each science there is a philosophy of the sciences; beyond the artificial and sometimes ill-starred divisions which men for the sake of convenience make, there is a unity of nature. The principles of one science, fully comprehended, are a key to the interpretation of all sciences; they are the same footsteps of nature treading upon several subjects. How mischievously has the human mind been enslaved by the fetters which itself has forged! Is not the most exalted imagery of the true poet fundamentally the highest science? And shall not a philosophy of science be found the highest poetry?

We must now pass to a period of Swedenborg's life when a great change took place in his views, his work, and his pretensions. Hitherto his speculations had preserved a scientific semblance; they had been made from some basis of facts and had evinced some practical tendency, although the speculations went on increasing out of proportion to the facts until these became little more than the occasions of theories. Now he abandoned the ground of experience entirely, and entered the spiritual world. His subsequent career as seer and theologian was the natural development of his character, but it was a morbid development; and the history which remains to be told is the history of a learned and ingenious madman, the character of whose intellectual

aberration testifies to the greatness of his original intellectual structure.

The manner of the great change by which Swedenborg imagined that his eyes were opened to discern what passed in the world of spirits, and he was chosen by God to unfold the spiritual sense of the Holy Scriptures, was in this wise. One night in London after he had dined heartily a kind of mist spread before his eyes, and the floor of his room was covered with hideous reptiles such as serpents, toads and the like. "I was astonished, having all my wits about me, and being perfectly conscious. The darkness attained its height and then passed away. I now saw a man sitting in the corner of the chamber. As I had thought myself entirely alone, I was greatly frightened when he said to me, 'Eat not so much.' My sight again became dim, but when I recovered it I found myself alone in the room."

The following night the same thing occurred.

"I was this time not at all alarmed. The man said, 'I am God, the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer of the world. I have chosen thee to unfold to men the spiritual sense of the Holy Scripture. I will myself dictate to thee what thou shalt write.'"

Thenceforth he abandoned all worldly learning and laboured only in spiritual things; the Lord had opened the eyes of his spirit to see in perfect wakefulness what was going on in the other world, and to converse, broad awake, with angels and spirits. Such is his description of the vision in which the scales fell from his eyes and he was called, like the Apostle of the Gentiles, to a new and spiritual mission. What will the ordinary reader say of it? Without doubt one of two things: either that it was a nightmare engendered by indigestion following too heavy a meal, or that it was the hallucination of a disordered brain. The former might seem a probable and sufficient explanation were it not for some important information which exists with regard to Swedenborg's mental condition at the time. In 1858 a Diary kept by him between 1743 and 1744 was discovered, and purchased for the Royal Library at Stockholm. It contains tedious and wearisome records of the dreams which he dreamed night after night, and the spiritual interpretations which he gave to them. They are of all sorts, running through the gamut from the lowest note of despair to the highest pitch of exaltation; some are ecstatic visions of bliss in which he feels himself in

heaven; others are distressing visions of temptations, persecutions and sufferings; while others are filthy details of obscenities. The following dream occurred in the night between the 6th and 7th April, 1744:—

I went to bed . . . Half an hour after I heard a tumbling noise under my head. I thought it was the Tempter going away. Immediately a violent trembling came over me from head to foot with a great noise. This happened several times. I felt as if something holy were over me. I then fell asleep, and about 12, 1 or 2 the tremblings and the noise were repeated indescribably. I was prostrated on my face, and at that moment I became wide awake and perceived that I was thrown down, and wondered what was the meaning. I spoke as if awake, but felt that these words were put into my mouth—

‘Thou Almighty Jesus Christ, who by Thy great mercy deigns to come to so great a sinner, make me worthy of Thy grace.’

I kept my hands together in prayer, and then a hand came forward and firmly pressed mine. I continued my prayer, saying—

‘Thou has promised to have mercy upon all sinners; Thou canst not but keep Thy word.’

At that moment I sat in His bosom, and saw Him face to face. It was a face of holy mien and altogether indescribable, and He smiled so that I believe His face had indeed been like this when he lived on earth. . . .

So I concluded it was the Son of God Himself, who came down with the noise like thunder, who prostrated me on the ground, and who called forth the prayer.”

It is plain that he was afflicted with such painfully vivid and intensely real dreams as occur when the reason is beginning to totter, and when it is impossible to distinguish between dreaming and waking consciousness. “I was the whole night, nearly eleven hours,” he says on one occasion, “neither asleep nor awake, in a curious trance.” Every one must have experienced at some time or another what Spinoza long ago observed, that the scenes of a dream may persist for a time as hallucinations after awakening, and produce a feeling of helplessness or even terror. When the nervous system is prostrated and the threatenings of mental disorder declare themselves, these half-waking hallucinations acquire a distressing reality, and not unfrequently, a disgusting or appalling character. While dreams may be considered a temporary insanity, insanity is a waking dream, and there is a border land in which they are so confounded as to be indistinguishable. This confusion is abundantly exemplified in the records of Swedenborg’s dreams and visions at this time.

I had horrible dreams: how an executioner roasted the heads which he had struck off, and hid them one after another in an oven, which was never filled. It was said to be food. He was a big woman who laughed, and had a little girl with her.

Horrible and impious thoughts often caused him agonies of suffering:—

I had troublesome dreams about dogs, that were said to be my countrymen, and which sucked my neck without biting. . . . In the morning I had horrid thoughts, that the Evil One had got hold of me, yet with the confidence that he was outside of me and would let me go. Then I fell into the most damnable thoughts, the worst that could be.

He is persecuted with sensual dreams on many occasions:—

April 26 and 27.—I had a pleasant sleep for eleven hours, with various representations. A married woman persecuted me, but I escaped. It signifies, that the Lord saves me from persecution and temptation.

A married woman desired to possess me, but I preferred an unmarried. She was angry and chased me, but I got hold of the one I liked. I was with her, and loved her: perhaps it signifies my thoughts.

Some of the entries which follow, made in the month of May, are of a very mysterious character; and how much of what they relate may be vision and how much reality, it is impossible to say:—

On the 20th I intended going to the Lord's Supper in the Swedish Church, but, just before I had fallen into many corrupt thoughts, and my body is in continuous rebellion, which was also represented to me by froth, which had to be wiped away. . . .

I nevertheless could not refrain from going after women, though not with the intention of committing acts, especially as in my dreams I saw it was so much against the law of God. I went to certain places with Professor Ohlreck. . . . In one day I was twice in danger of my life, so that if God had not been my protector I should have lost my life. The particulars I refrain from describing.

Certain passages in the Diary are of such a character as to be quite unfit for publication, or suitable only for publication in a medical journal; and they are omitted therefore by his biographer.

A person may of course dream extraordinary dreams, and keep a record of them, without justly incurring the suspicion of any mental derangement. The notable circumstances in connexion with Swedenborg's dreamings are the indistinguishable blending of dreams and waking visions, and the entire faith with which he accepts and interprets them as spiritual revelations. As a peculiarly endowed being having gifts which no other man had, and the mission to proclaim the church of a New Jerusalem, which he believed himself to have, he looked upon the wildest and most obscene of his dreams as of mighty spiritual significance: even in the dirtiest details of an unchaste dream he discovers a wonderful spiritual meaning. Had it not been for this spiritual interpretation of his dreams and visions, probably no one would ever have doubted the derangement of his intellect. But what is there which, coming in the name or guise of the spiritual, some persons will not be found to accept? Those, however, who reject angrily the supposition of any unsoundness of mind must admit, if they know anything of its morbid phenomena, that if he was not at this time fast gliding into madness he imitated exceeding well the character of the incipient stages. But there is no need of conjecture where something like certainty is attainable.

At this period there occurs a break of three weeks in the Diary, the interruption corresponding with what appears to have been a positive attack of acute mania. He was lodging at the house of a person named Brockmer in Fetter Lane, who, twenty-four years afterwards, related the following story to Mathesius, a Swedish clergyman, by whom he was questioned on this subject:—

Brockmer's Narrative.

In the year 1744, one of the Moravian Brethren, named Seniff, made acquaintance with Mr. Emanuel Swedenborg while they were passengers in a post-yacht from Holland to England. Mr. Swedenborg, who was a God-fearing man, wished to be directed to some house in London, where he might live quietly and economically. Mr. Seniff brought him to me, and I cheerfully took him in.

Mr. Swedenborg behaved very properly in my house. Every Sunday he went to the church of the Moravian Brothers in Fetter Lane. He kept solitary, yet came often to me, and in talking expressed much pleasure in hearing the gospel in London. So he continued for several months approving of what he heard at the chapel.

One day he said to me he was glad the gospel was preached to the poor, but complained of the learned and rich who, he thought, must go to hell. Under this idea he continued several months. He told me he was writing a small Latin book, which would be gratuitously distributed among the learned men in the Universities of England.

After this he did not open the door of his chamber for two days, nor allow the maid-servant to make the bed and dust as usual.

One evening when I was in a coffee-house, the maid ran in to call me home, saying, that something strange must have happened to Mr. Swedenborg. She had several times knocked at his door without his answering, or opening it.

Upon this I went home, and knocked at his door, and called him by name. He then jumped out of bed, and I asked him if he would not allow the servant to enter and make his bed? He answered "No," and desired to be left alone, for he had a great work on hand.

This was about nine in the evening. Leaving his door and going upstairs, he rushed up after me, making a fearful appearance. His hair stood upright, and he foamed round the mouth. He tried to speak, but could not utter his thoughts, stammering long before he could get out a word.

At last he said, that he had something to confide to me privately, namely, that he was Messiah, that he was come to be crucified for the Jews, and that I (since he spoke with difficulty), should be his spokesman, and go with him to-morrow to the synagogue, there to preach his words.

He continued 'I know you are an honest man, for I am sure you love the Lord, but I fear you believe me not.'

I now began to be afraid, and considered a long time ere I replied. At last, I said,

'You are Mr. Swedenborg, a somewhat aged man, and, as you tell me, have never taken medicine; wherefore I think some of a right sort would do you good. Dr. Smith is near, he is your friend and mine, let us go to him, and he will give you something fitted for your state. Yet I shall make this bargain with you, if the Angel appears to me and delivers the message you mention, I shall obey the same. If not, you shall go with me to Dr. Smith in the morning.'

He told me several times the angel would appear to me, whereupon we took leave of each other and went to bed.

In expectation of the angel I could not sleep, but lay awake the whole night. My wife and children were at the same time very ill, which increased my anxiety. I rose about five o'clock in the morning.

As soon as Mr. Swedenborg heard me move overhead he jumped out of bed, threw on a gown, and ran in the greatest haste up to me, with his night-cap half on his head, to receive the news about my call.

I tried by several remarks to prepare his excited mind for my answer. He foamed again and again, 'But how—how—how?' Then

I reminded him of our agreement to go to Dr. Smith. At this he asked me straight down, 'Came not the vision?' I answered, 'No; and now I suppose you will go with me to Dr. Smith.' He replied, 'I will not go to any doctor.'

He then spoke a long while to himself. At last he said, 'I am now associating with two spirits, one on the right hand and the other on the left. One asks me to follow you, for you are a good fellow; the other says I ought to have nothing to do with you because you are good for nothing.'

I answered, 'Believe neither of them, but let us thank God, who has given us power to believe in His Word.'

He then went down stairs to his room, but returned immediately, and spoke; but so confusedly that he could not be understood. I began to be frightened, suspecting that he might have a penknife or other instrument to hurt me. In my fear I addressed him seriously, requesting him to walk down stairs, as he had no business in my room.

Then Mr. Swedenborg sat down in a chair and wept like a child, and said, 'Do you believe that I will do you any harm?' I also began to weep. It commenced to rain very hard.

After this I dressed. When I came down I found Mr. Swedenborg also dressed, sitting in an arm-chair with a great stick in his hand and the door open. He called, 'Come in, come in,' and waved the stick. I wanted to get a coach, but Mr. Swedenborg would not accompany me.

I then went to Dr. Smith. Mr. Swedenborg went to the Swedish Envoy, but was not admitted, it being post-day. Departing thence he pulled off his clothes and rolled himself in very deep mud in a gutter. Then he distributed money from his pockets among the crowd which had gathered.

In this state some of the footmen of the Swedish Envoy chanced to see him and brought him to me very foul with dirt. I told him that a good quarter had been taken for him near Dr. Smith, and asked him if he was willing to live there. He answered, 'Yes.'

I sent for a coach, but Mr. Swedenborg would walk, and with the help of two men he reached his new lodging.

Arrived there, he asked for a tub of water and six towels, and entering one of the inner rooms, locked the door, and spite of all entreaties would not open it. In fear lest he should hurt himself the door was forced, when he was discovered washing his feet and the towels all wet. He asked for six more. I then went home, and left six men as guards over him. Dr. Smith visited him, and administered some medicine, which did him much good.

I went to the Swedish Envoy, told him what had happened, and required that Mr. Swedenborg's rooms, in my house, might be sealed. The Envoy was infinitely pleased with my kindness to Mr. Swedenborg, thanked me very much for all my trouble; and assured me that

the sealing of Mr. Swedenborg's chamber was unnecessary as he had heard well of me, and had in me perfect confidence.

After this I continued to visit Mr. Swedenborg, who at last had only one keeper. He many times avowed his gratitude for the trouble I had with him. He would never leave the tenet, however, that he was Messiah.

One day when Dr. Smith had given him a laxative, he went out into the fields and ran about so fast that his keeper could not follow him. Mr. Swedenborg sat down on a stile and laughed. When his man came near him, he rose and ran to another stile and so on.

When the dog-days began, he became worse and worse. Afterwards I associated very little with him. Now and then we met in the streets, and I always found he retained his former opinion.

Mathesius adjoins to his copy this testimony—

The above account was word by word delivered to me by Mr. Brockmer, an honest and trustworthy man, in the house and presence of Mr. Burgman, minister of the German Church, the Savoy, London, while Swedenborg lived.

ARON MATHESIUS.

Stora Hallfara, 27th August, 1796.

Here then is a well authenticated narrative of an outbreak of acute insanity such as any medical psychologist, acquainted with what had gone before, might have almost ventured to predict. Some of Swedenborg's admirers have tried eagerly but vainly to impugn the veracity of Brockmer's story, as related by Mathesius; it was not only confirmed by other enquirers, but it accords singularly with the revelations which Swedenborg makes of his mental state in the Diary, and it assuredly bears in its circumstances the evidence of truth. Admitted, as it must be, to be true in its main features, there remains no doubt that Swedenborg was insane at the time when he claimed to have been first admitted to intercourse with the spiritual world. After the acute attack had passed off, as it did in a few weeks, was he perfectly restored, or was he still the victim of a chronic mania or monomania, such as not unfrequently follows acute madness? There were two circumstances in this case which would have prevented an experienced physician from looking forward with hope to an entire recovery. The first was the age of the patient, for Swedenborg was at the time fifty-six years old; and the second was that his madness was not a strange calamity coming on him unexpectedly from without, foreign to his

nature, extrinsic, but that it was native to his character, the result of an unsound development of its tendencies—it was a natural, an intrinsic madness. In the former case the *ego* regaining power, may throw off the intruding affliction and re-establish itself; in the latter, the mania absorbs and becomes the *ego*, wherefore no return to entire sanity is possible. It was not then scientifically probable that Swedenborg would recover; it was, on the contrary, probable that he would suffer for the rest of his life from the monomaniacal form of chronic mania. The few records in his Diary which occur after his acute attack tend to confirm the presumption of a continued derangement.

Thus:—

July 1 and 2.—There happened to me something very curious. I came into violent shudderings, as when Christ showed me his Divine mercy. The one fit followed the other ten or fifteen times. I expected to be thrown on my face as before, but this did not occur. At last, trembling, I was lifted up, and with my hands I felt a (human) back. I felt with my hands all along the back, and then the breast. Immediately it lay down, and I saw in front the countenance also, but very obscurely. I was then kneeling, and I thought to myself whether or not I should lay myself down beside it, but this I did not, for it seemed as if not permitted.

The shudderings came all from the lower parts of my body up to my head. This was in a vision when I was neither waking nor sleeping, for I had all my thoughts about me. It was the inward man separated from the outward that was made aware of this.

What then are the conclusions, broadly stated, which we may hold to be thus far established? That in the year 1744 or 1745 Swedenborg suddenly abandoned all his former pursuits and interests; that he claimed to have been then admitted to the spiritual world and to have the power of talking with angels; that coincidentally with this great change and new mission he was writing what an unprejudiced person must affirm to be the product of madness; and, lastly, that he had undoubtedly an acute attack of madness. Is it not reasonable to infer that his new and strange pretensions were the outcome of his madness? Not so, his disciples may perhaps say; for throughout his previous career he had been gradually rising from the earthly to the spiritual; he had mounted step by step from the study of the lowest forms of matter to the investigation of its highest organic evolution; and his new mission was the bright and blessed development,

the glorious inflorescence, of a consistent life. No question that it was the natural evolution of his previous intellectual career: a self-sufficiency knowing no bounds had risen to the preposterous pretensions of monomania, and an imagination habitually running riot had at last run mad. To live a life of complete seclusion, to pursue contentedly an individual line of thought, isolated from communion with men, estranged from their doings and interests, is nowise the way to preserve a sound mental equilibrium; it is indeed the sure way to engender a morbid style of thought and feeling, to lead to a moral or intellectual monomania. Speculative philosophers, impracticable theorists, self-inspired prophets, and other able men unhappily insulated by undue self-esteem, may retire to the solitude of their chambers, and launch forth their systems, their theories, their denunciations, or their scorn, but the greatest men, who have preserved a healthy tone of mind and displayed the highest intellectual energy, have not separated themselves from other men, but have lived in sympathy with them, and have moved and had their being among them. As outward expression of idea is essential to its clearness of conception, so a life of action is essential to the highest life of thought. It is in the social as it is in the bodily organism: the surrounding elements of the structure ever exert a beneficial controlling influence on any element which has taken on an excessive individual action; and if this escape from such modifying influence, its energy runs into disease, and it becomes an excrescence.

(*To be continued.*)

Observations on the causes of death in Chronic cases of Insanity.
By R. BOYD, M.D. Edin., F.R.C.P.

(*Read at the Third Quarterly Meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association, held at the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society, April 29, 1869.*)

As the necessity of providing accommodation for chronic cases of insanity in lunatic asylums, as well as for the aged and infirm, or chronic, cases in workhouses, is becoming more and more urgent, and is engrossing the attention of those concerned in the relief of the poor at the present time, it occurred to me, that enquiry into the causes of death amongst