

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Editor: DR. PAUL CARUS

Associates: } E. C. HEGELER.
 } MARY CARUS.

VOL. XVIII. (NO. 5)

MAY, 1904.

NO. 576

CONTENTS:


<i>Frontispiece.</i> MONUMENTAL TOMB OF ASIA MINOR.	
<i>Cases of Insanity in Shakespeare.</i> PROF. AUSTIN FLINT	257
<i>Buddhist View on War.</i> THE RIGHT REV. SOYEN SHAKU	274
<i>Japanese Songs and Folk-Lore.</i> JAMES IRVING CRABBE.	277
<i>The Japanese Floral Calendar.</i> (Illustrated.) V. The Wistaria. ERNEST W. CLEMENT, M. A.	282
<i>Pre-Christian Crosses as Symbols of Chthonic Deities.</i> (Illustrated.) EDITOR.	285
<i>Gilgamesh and Eabani: The Trusts and the Unions.</i> EDITOR.	291
<i>Moses.</i> EDITH STOW	293
<i>The Decadence of France.</i> A Symposium. CARMEN SYLVA, BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON, CAMILLE LEMONNIER, and others	296
<i>Dr. Phelps's Letter on "The Praise of Hypocrisy."</i>	302
<i>Religion in France.</i> PAUL TOPINARD	305
<i>How Western Scholarship Affects the East</i>	309
<i>Jesus and Paul.</i>	310
<i>The Bacon-Shakespeare Theory</i>	311
<i>The University of Jena</i>	313
<i>An American Institute of Germanics</i>	313
<i>Book Reviews and Notes</i>	314

CHICAGO

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OR

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BY

E. A. WALLIS BUDGE, M. A., Litt. D., D. Lit.

KEEPER OF THE EGYPTIAN AND ASSYRIAN ANTIQUITIES
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MONUMENTAL TOMB OF ASIA MINOR.

(After a photograph of the tomb in its present condition.)

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CASES OF INSANITY IN SHAKESPEARE.

BY AUSTIN FLINT.

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Medical Board of the Manhattan State Hospitals for the Insane.

A STUDY OF HAMLET.

IN the tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, Shakespeare intended to present either a picture of simulated insanity, with a logical and adequate motive, or a mind agitated and distracted by sudden grief and apprehension, to the extent of producing loss of reason. The question involved has been the subject of abundant and varied speculation at the hands of commentators, critics and actors, including many alienists. If Shakespeare intended to represent Hamlet as insane, he undoubtedly attempted to illustrate some definite form of insanity, recognized by alienists of his day; or if Hamlet is to be regarded as simulating insanity, it would become necessary to make such simulation clearly apparent in the action and situations incident to the play. It seems to me to be simply a question as to the impression which Shakespeare intended to convey in the development of Hamlet's character. As bearing upon this question, the sources of the story are important. Hamlet was the mythical hero of legends dating back as far as the twelfth century. It is generally conceded that the basis of Shakespeare's Hamlet is to be found in Saxo's "Amleth." In this story, the father of Amleth is murdered by his brother, who promptly contracts an incestuous marriage with Amleth's mother. Amleth feigns madness in order to avenge his father's murder. Amleth is sent by his uncle to England, where he was made way with. In the "Hystorie of Hamblet" (Belleforest, translated about 1570) it is related that an attempt was made by the king, his uncle, to entrap him by

means of a woman (Ophelia) whom he was led to meet "in a secret place;" but Hamlet was warned against the wiles of this "faire and beautifull woman" by his friend (Horatio) and did not reveal to her his intention to revenge the death of his father.

If the significance of the incidents related in these stories was not radically changed by Shakespeare, the meaning of the tragedy is simple enough. Hamlet is determined to revenge the murder of his father. To accomplish this end, he endeavors to throw his uncle off his guard by feigning madness. His uncle fears him and becomes suspicious. He conspires with a devoted courtier (Polonius) to entrap Hamlet into an avowal of his intentions, by means of Ophelia. Hamlet escapes the wiles of Ophelia through the advice of Horatio, but he is sent to England, where the king intends he shall be murdered. These, the prominent incidents in the tragedy, are sufficiently coherent; and Hamlet's conduct is entirely logical and comprehensible, the motive of the feigned madness becoming plain.

Shakespeare introduces Hamlet as a prince, of lofty and dignified character, highly educated, and with ideas and aspirations suitable to his exalted station. It is assumed that he was about thirty years of age. The sudden death of the king, his father, causes his return from Wittenberg. Within a month after the death of his father his uncle has become king of Denmark and has married with his mother. In the tragedy the prince first appears in Act I, Scene 2. He is reproached by his uncle, the king, and by his mother, the queen, for his somber apparel and his excessive grief for his father, but two months dead. However, at the loving request of the king and queen, he consents to remain in Denmark and to forgo his intention to return to Wittenberg.

Following the exit of the king, queen and others, is the soliloquy beginning:

"O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!"

In what follows Hamlet reveals a profound melancholy expressed in a comparison of the king with his father and in reflections on the indecent haste in the remarriage of his mother, which he characterizes as incestuous.

"It is not, nor it cannot come to good:
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue."

This well-known soliloquy is not intrinsically evidence of a morbid melancholy that is not justified by the situation. It must

be remembered that the succession to the crown of Denmark was elective; and that the natural and legitimate ambition of Hamlet had been frustrated by his uncle:

“He that hath killed my king . . .
 . . . popped in between the election and my hopes.”

On the entrance of Horatio and Marcellus, his schoolfellows at Wittenberg, Hamlet greets them cordially, inquires the news from Wittenberg, and afterward speaks of the noble character of his father and the haste of his mother's wedding. Up to this time the conduct of Hamlet is entirely rational. He is then told by Horatio of the appearance of his father's ghost to the guards, Francisco and Bernardo, on the previous night. Hamlet resolves then to watch with the guard and to speak with the apparition should it present itself. It is then that his father's ghost reveals to Hamlet the story of his murder “most foul” and calls upon him for revenge. The ghost accuses his brother Claudius of seducing his “most seeming-virtuous queen,” but says:

“Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught, leave her to heaven,
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 To prick and sting her.”

Hamlet then resolves to “wipe away all trivial fond records”—presumably his love for Ophelia—he swears Horatio and Marcellus to secrecy, and it is then that he says:

“How strange and odd'soe'er I bear myself,
 As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
 To put an antic disposition on,
 That you at such times seeing me, never shall,
 With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
 As ‘Well, well, we know’ or ‘We could, and if we would,’
 Or ‘If we list to speak’ or ‘There be, an if they might.’
 Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
 That you know aught of me: this not to do,
 So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
 Swear.”

The introduction of apparitions is not infrequent in Shakespeare's plays, probably as a concession to the love of the public for the supernatural. In the times of James I. the belief in visions was quite common. James I. was regarded as an expert in demonology and wrote a work on that subject. Coke, Bacon and Hale believed in possibility of witchcraft, and a law forbidding any per

son "to take up any dead man, woman or child out of his, her or their grave . . . to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment," was on the statute books from 1536 to 1636. The apparition of the king, indeed, was quite within popular comprehension and belief in the year 1600; and Shakespeare was abundantly justified in using this method to acquaint Hamlet with the manner of his father's death. The ghost first appeared to Francisco and Bernardo, afterward to Horatio and Marcellus, all believing they had seen the dead king. Hamlet, also, not only saw but spoke with the apparition and from it received an account of the murder. The subsequent action of the play, however, shows that Hamlet was incredulous, and that he used other means to convince himself, a fact that argues in favor of a normal and well-balanced mind rather than the reverse. Still, Hamlet attached enough importance to the communication from the grave to enjoin Horatio and Marcellus to secrecy, and, in furtherance of his project to learn the truth, to form the plan of simulating insanity and entire ignorance of the supposed crime.

Instances of the invocation of apparitions are frequent, also, in other plays of Shakespeare. In the first part of *Henry VI.*, *La Pucelle d'Orleans*, before Angiers, calls upon her familiar spirits for aid. The unfortunate maid, who firmly believed in her supernatural power and guidance, was burned at the stake as a sorceress, at Rouen, in 1431. The ghosts of Prince Edward, *Henry VI.*, Clarence, Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan appeared to Richard and to Richmond in dreams, before Bosworth field. Richard and Richmond also had visions of the young princess smothered in the tower, of Lady Anne, Hastings and the murdered Buckingham. Posthumus saw his father and his two brothers in a dream, and learned from them the secret of his birth (*Cymbeline*, V, IV, 30). Brutus had a waking vision of the ghost of Julius Cæsar and talked with the apparition. Pericles saw Diana in a dream. Macbeth has a waking vision of a dagger:

"The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?"

Macbeth also sees the murdered Banquo's ghost in his place at the feast, although the apparition is unseen by others. The sleeping vision of angels to the good queen Katherine, with the

queen's awakening, is one of the most touching and beautiful creations of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare certainly never intended that the persons to whom these visions appeared should be regarded as insane, unless he had solved the mysterious action of the mind in sleep. Hallucinations, illusions and delusions often become a part of the mental history of sleep; and sleep, troubled with such mental operations, is insanity. During sleep the mental concepts become real, the most extravagant situations excite no surprise or astonishment, but sanity returns on awakening, illusions fade into forgetfulness, and sleeping delusions are at once corrected. During sleep old concepts take new form and arrangement, but they are soon forgotten, unless the memory makes a new record by the relation of dreams and their translation into language.

It is evident that Hamlet's interview with his father's ghost left his mind in a condition of great agitation and apprehension. He seemed from that time to distrust all but Horatio. Polonius he treated as a meddling fool, devoted to the interests of the king and hostile to his aspirations. It can hardly be doubted that this distrust extended to Ophelia, whom he regarded as probably the willing tool of her father, Polonius. His treatment of Ophelia, however, has been considered the strongest indication of an unbalanced mind. Ophelia relates her interview with Hamlet in the following words:

"My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unlaced,
 No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,
 Ungartered and down-gyved to his ankle;
 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, he comes before me."

POL. "Mad for thy love?"

OPH. "My lord, I do not know,
 But truly do I fear it."

POL. "What said he?"

OPH. "He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
 Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
 And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
 He falls to such perusal of my face
 As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
 At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
 And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
 He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
 As it did seem to shatter all his bulk

And end his being: that done, he lets me go;
 And with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
 He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
 For out of doors he went without their helps,
 And to the last bended their light on me."

POL. "Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.
 This is the very ecstasy of love."

It is almost impossible to believe that the conduct of Hamlet in the presence of Ophelia was not simulation. The disordered dress seems to have been studied. A lunatic would have hardly appeared in such guise before the woman he loved, nor would he have failed to give some verbal expression to what was in his mind. This scene indeed seems to be a rather clumsy and absurd effort on the part of Hamlet to impress Ophelia with the notion that his reason has yielded to some sudden shock. That both Ophelia and Polonius believe this, there can be little doubt. Ophelia, in obedience to her father, had denied herself to Hamlet and repelled his letters, but it is not to be supposed that such a proceeding would so far disturb Hamlet as to lead to conduct so extravagant and unnatural. It is more logical to imagine that Hamlet intended that his actions should be reported to the king and queen, who, as he hoped, would attribute them to unrequited or disappointed love, that, as Polonius says, "hath made him mad." But from that time the king speaks "of Hamlet's tranformation." Although Polonius says: "I have found the very cause of Hamlet's lunacy," the queen doubts "it is no other but the main; his father's death and our o'erhasty marriage."

Hamlet's interview with Ophelia in Act III, in its coarse brutality, is regarded by many commentators as evidence of an unbalanced mind. In the action of the play the impression is given that Hamlet at least suspects that he is overheard by Polonius. Hamlet asks, "Where's your father?" He has said to Ophelia, "I did love you once," and immediately after, "I loved you not;" he refuses to receive back his gifts; he speaks of what he has heard of Ophelia, of her wantonness, and says, "It hath made me mad." If Hamlet believed that his meeting with Ophelia had been planned by Polonius, who overheard him, and if he had in his mind the intention to convince Polonius of his insanity, what he said to Ophelia was not inconsistent, and the motive for his disconnected tirade was sufficient. But the king does not really believe in Hamlet's madness or that his peculiar actions are due to love for Ophelia. His guilty conscience scents danger in Hamlet's presence in Elsinore, and he decides to send him "with speed to England."

In Act II, Scene 2, Hamlet meets Polonius, whom he fails to recognize. Is this real or assumed? He says to Polonius, who asks, "Do you know me, my lord?" "Excellent well; you are a fishmonger." Such mistakes as to identity are not uncommon in the insane; but throughout the play Hamlet makes no other error of this kind. Immediately after the exit of Polonius he recognizes and greets by name Guildenstern and Rosencrantz. When Polonius reënters Hamlet no longer speaks to him as a fishmonger, but jokingly calls him "Old Jephthah." He recognizes one of the players, who is then introduced. After he has arranged to have the players represent the murder of the king in his garden, Hamlet meets Horatio. To Horatio he discloses his plan:

"There is a play to-night before the king;
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance
 Which I have told thee of my father's death:
 I prithee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
 Even with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe my uncle: if his occulted gilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy. Give him a heedful note;
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
 And after we will both our judgements join
 In censure of his seeming."

As a matter of fact, a study of Hamlet, from his first interview with Ophelia, in which he was mute, his second interview, in which he loaded her with reproaches, his apparent mistaking of Polonius for a fishmonger, his cordial recognition of the player, to the rational and logical plan to surprise his uncle into some evidence of his guilt and the communication of this plan in reasonable and connected terms to Horatio, does not afford a picture that belongs to any recognized form of insanity. If we include in this the soliloquy beginning, "To be or not to be," it becomes almost inconceivable that Shakespeare could have intended to represent Hamlet as insane. A few rare instances are on record, one of which came under my own observation, in which persons, actually insane, have feigned insanity, but it is not supposable that this idea occurred to Shakespeare.

It is not difficult to analyze the mental condition of Hamlet up to the time when he practically accused Claudius of the murder of his father. He is now considered mad. The king, horrified at the representation of the murder in the garden, precipitately leaves the

scene in terror, and makes preparations to send Hamlet at once to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He says:

“I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you;
I your commission will forthwith despatch,
And he to England shall along with you:
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.”

The events in the few months since the return from Wittenberg had plunged Hamlet into a profound melancholy. The apparition of his father revealed the manner of the murder, and this was rendered certain by the conduct of the king at the close of the play. With this melancholy came distrust of all about the king. Hamlet distrusted Polonius, Ophelia, his mother, the queen, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. This distrust was not delusional, but was based on logical premises. It amply accounts for his treatment of Polonius and Ophelia. Horatio is his only trusted friend. To him he had confided all his plans, including the project of feigned madness, a condition that he had simulated so well as to deceive the entire court. He resolves to kill the king, but refrains, as the first opportunity that presented itself found the king at prayer.

In his interview with his mother Hamlet lays bare his inmost heart. His mother, at first alarmed at his words, calls for help, a call which Polonius, hidden behind the arras, echoes. Hamlet makes a pass with his sword through the arras and kills Polonius, whom he mistakes for the king. He then reveals the story of his father's murder; at this instant the ghost enters, who is seen but by Hamlet. As the apparition steals away Hamlet denies his madness:

“My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music; it is not madness
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test.”

The queen says:

“Be thou assured, if words be made of breath
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.”

In the scene that follows the queen relates to the king that Hamlet, in his “brainish apprehension,” has killed Polonius. The king commands Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to embark with Hamlet for England that very night:

“How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must we put the strong law on him:
He's loved of the distracted multitude.”

Hamlet, then, is embarked for England, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who bear letters enjoining:

“The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,
How'er my hopes, my joys were ne'er begun.”

The form of insanity known as melancholia is a depressed mental condition, usually without adequate cause, and is attended with varied delusions. Among these delusions are prominent delusions of suspicion, persecution, conspiracy, often visual and auditory illusions and hallucinations. The access of true melancholia is seldom sudden, and the delusions are not systematized. In the case of Hamlet, his melancholy undoubtedly dated from the death of his father and was sudden; the apparition of the ghost was seen by others, who certainly were not insane; his suspicion that the king murdered his father was justified by the declarations of his father's ghost and afterward confirmed; it was true that he was surrounded with enemies at the court, and his distrust of Polonius, and even of Ophelia, was amply justified. There is no good reason, indeed, to believe that Hamlet was subject to delusions of any kind, and certainly he had reason to regard with suspicion all with whom he was brought in contact. His temporary exile to England was to be in company with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, schoolfellows, indeed, but “whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd.” Under these conditions, was it reasonable that Hamlet should simulate madness? Hamlet mad, especially if mad from love of Ophelia, is simply a crazied and disappointed man, incapable of plotting against the king in his insane follies. Hamlet sane, and “loved of the distracted multitude,” is an element of danger. It seems to me an error to regard Hamlet as weak and vacillating in purpose. His cloak of madness, assumed calmly and deliberately, covers no lack of personal courage. If he hesitates to kill the king, it is because the time is not yet come. In the agony of death, at the grand climax of the tragedy, Hamlet's thoughts are of Denmark:

“But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.”

“The potent poison quite o'er-comes my spirit;
I cannot live to hear the news from England;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice:

So tell him, with the occurrents, more or less,
Which have solicited. The rest is silence."

The meeting on the plain in Denmark with the captain in Fortinbras' army reveals nothing important in regard to the mental condition of Hamlet. He goes with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to England. Then follows the letter to Horatio in which he gives an account of his capture by pirates and asks Horatio to repair to him "with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have much to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet they are much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows (the sailors) will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee." This letter to Horatio gives no evidence of a disordered mind, nor does the letter addressed to the king.

"High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I by leave to see your kingly eyes, when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. HAMLET."

It is not pertinent to this inquiry to recount the madness of Ophelia. Crazied by the tragic death of her father, her loss of Hamlet's love, and probably by remorse for the part she played in obedience to her father, she is drowned, but not by her own act. Her madness had taken the form of acute mania, with fleeting and changeable delusions.

From the scene with the grave-diggers to the end of the tragedy there appears nothing to show that Hamlet was not sane and coherent. He relates to Horatio his discovery of the packet enjoining England to kill him forthwith and his change of the instructions so that the bearers, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, should be put "to sudden death,

"Not shriving-time allowed," which Hamlet sealed with his father's signet. The scene at Ophelia's grave, Hamlet's grappling with Laertes, the fencing scene with the unbated and envenomed foil, the poisoned cup, ending with the death of Laertes, the king, the queen and Hamlet himself close the tragedy. To the very end, however, Hamlet maintains that he is mad and offers madness as an excuse to Laertes:

"Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;
But pardon't as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punished
With sore distraction. What I have done,

That might your nature, honour and exception
 Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
 Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet:
 If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
 And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
 Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
 Who does it then? His madness: if't be so,
 Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
 His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
 Sir, in this audience,
 Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
 That I have shot my error o'er the house,
 And hurt my brother."

This should be contrasted with what Hamlet has said to Horatio:

"But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
 That to Laertes I forgot myself,
 For, by the image of my cause, I see
 The portraiture of his; I'll court his favours:
 But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
 Into a towering passion."

What Hamlet said to Horatio is sane. The actual apology to Laertes confesses madness, but no madman ever had so clear and intelligent an idea of his madness or made so full and complete an avowal. In chronic delusional insanity the "insight" or self-appreciation of a morbid mental condition is absent. It is more reasonable to assume that Hamlet wished, to the very last, that Horatio should heed his injunction, given after the first meeting with his father's ghost.

In Act I, Scene 2, Hamlet is in the presence of the king, queen, Polonius, Laertes, Voltimand, Cornelius, lords and attendants. It is in this scene that Hamlet consents to remain in Elsinore and not to return to Wittenberg. His conduct here is natural and consistent. At the end of the scene is the noble soliloquy beginning, "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt." While Hamlet, in this soliloquy, compares the reigning king with his father and deploras the "most wicked speed" of the marriage of his mother, there is no word or expression that is not rational.

In the course of this scene is the meeting of Hamlet with Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo, who say that they have seen the ghost of the late king. In Scene 3 Laertes takes leave of Ophelia before his return to France. In Scene 5 Hamlet meets his father's ghost. In Act II occurs the meeting of Hamlet with Ophelia, which she relates to Polonius. This is the first evidence of Hamlet's as-

sumed madness. From this time, it is impossible to find in the play any evidence of Hamlet's madness in his interviews and conversation with Horatio; but to the king, the queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and to all others, Hamlet appears insane. Hamlet, indeed, carries on this deception—if deception it be—to the end of the play and throws off the mask only in his interview with the queen and with indifferent persons, such as the players. In Act III, Scene I, is the wonderful soliloquy, "To be or not to be," the intellectual expression of which rises to the highest point of grandeur. One must be bold indeed to call this insanity.

If we contrast what Hamlet says to Horatio with his conduct toward all others we have the picture of a man, perfectly sane in his relations at all times and under all circumstances, with a single friend whom he trusts, but a rambling, incoherent lunatic with all others, whom he distrusts, having, at the same time, avowed his intention to simulate insanity. It is impossible that such a mental condition should exist, and the only rational explanation of Hamlet's conduct, from the point of view of an alienist, is that his insanity was simulated for a rational purpose.

In the preparation of this article I have taken the pains to read carefully the hundred or more quotations from Hamlet given by Bartlett, which have become a part of our language. In no single quotation is there any evidence of an unbalanced mind, and I venture to say that no one can read these familiar words and avoid the conviction that Shakespeare's "Hamlet" is one of the grandest and most thoroughly sane intellectual conceptions to be found in English literature.

KING LEAR.

The tragedy of King Lear presents the contrast of an old man, affected with senile dementia, and the young Edgar, assuming the character of a Tom o' Bedlam. When Lear resolves to divide his kingdom and apportion it between his three daughters and their prospective husbands, relieving himself of the cares of state, the action plainly shows the mental condition under the influence of which this decision was made. Lear reserves for himself simply his hundred knights and provides for their entertainment by his daughters in turn. This sudden resolve, although in itself, perhaps, not irrational, in its execution betrays a lack of judgment that is inconsistent with a "sound and disposing mind." His furious denunciation of Cordelia reveals an impatience and irritability that does not belong to a normal intelligence. Such unreasoning and

extravagant conduct pervades the entire tragedy, from the banishment of Cordelia to the scene in which the unfortunate king appears, fantastically decked with flowers, incoherent, delusional and maniacal.

As a study of the form of insanity known as senile dementia the conception of Shakespeare is not entirely accurate. Torn by violent and conflicting emotions—a logical sequence to the base ingratitude of Goneril and Regan—the unhappy king abandons himself to the most abject despair, and the loss of reason is complete, as is shown in the scene with Edgar in the hut. The touching incident of meeting with Cordelia in the French camp, whom he fails to recognize, with the restoration of reason following sleep, is the only part of the picture which falls short of reality. A senile dement may present all the characters of mental breakdown depicted in Lear, including the intense melancholia, followed with illusions and hallucinations, but the condition known as transitory mania is never observed in the aged, and transitory mania is the only psychosis that is rapidly and suddenly arrested by a profound sleep. Lear, however, fourscore and upward, awakes, with fresh garments on him, to perfect reason and to recognition of his surroundings, but it is fair to say that the tragedy would be far from complete without this inconsistency. It became at the end a necessary part of the action of the play that the king should be restored to a full appreciation of the wickedness of Goneril and Regan, as well as the devotion of Cordelia.

The simulated madness of Edgar is a more careful and consistent study. Toms o' Bedlam were well known in England in the time of Shakespeare. It is related that in 1644 only forty-four lunatics could be admitted into what was known as Abraham's ward in Bedlam. Lunatics at large were called Abram men, a class of wandering mendicants, who terrorized the country with their mad freaks, laying violent hands on what they could find to steal. Edgar could have assumed no more convenient and secure cloak for his purposes. Under the guise of Poor Tom, he could live where and how he chose and no one took account of his movements. Shakespeare depicts the form of insanity assumed by Edgar with admirable fidelity, and, although but a sketch, it is consistent throughout.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

It is curious to note that while Shakespeare represented in Hamlet a character that commentators have been unable to under-

stand, in *Lear* there is a fairly good picture of senile dementia, contrasted with a faithful study of simulated insanity in *Edgar*. No commentator, however, has analyzed carefully the mental condition of *Leontes*, a victim of what certainly was an insane jealousy. The jealousy of *Othello* is easily enough understood and is consistent with the savage character of the semi-barbarous Moor. But with *Leontes* it is different. Unconsciously, as it appears, Shakespeare has depicted, in *Leontes*, an exaggeration of jealousy that is incompatible with mental balance, from its inception to the close of the play.

There is absolutely nothing in the conduct of *Hermione* that is not consistent with the character of a virtuous and faithful wife. It is in obedience to the wishes of *Leontes* that she urges *Polixenes* to prolong his stay in *Sicilia*, but at once, and without the slightest foundation, *Leontes* gives way to a jealousy that all around him regard as insane. He doubts the paternity of his son *Mamillius* and indulges in a disconnected and irrational tirade that leads *Polixenes* to inquire:

“What means *Sicilia*?”

Hermione replying:

“He something seems unsettled.”

Leontes at one time says that:

“Next to thyself and my young rover, he’s
Apparent to my heart.”

In the next breath he urges *Camillo* to poison *Polixenes* and openly accuses the queen of infidelity. When *Antigonus*, one of the lords of *Sicilia*, remonstrates with the king and says to him, after the escape of *Polixenes* and *Camillo*:

“And I wish, my liege,
You had only in your silent judgement tried it,
Without more overture.”

Leontes replies:

“How could that be?
Either thou art most ignorant by age,
Or thou wert born a fool. *Camillo*’s flight,
Added to their familiarity,
Which was as gross as ever touched conjecture,
That lacked sight only, nought for approbation
But only seeing, all other circumstances
Made up to the deed,—doth push on this proceeding.”

Paulina, wife to Antigonus, firmly believing in the innocence of the queen, says:

“I dare be sworn:
These dangerous unsafe lunes i’ the king, beshrew them!”

The insane jealousy of the king leads to farther excesses:

“This brat is none of mine;
It is the issue of Polixenes:
Hence with it, and together with the dam
Commit them to the fire!”

To Paulina, Leontes says:

“I’ll ha’ thee burnt.

PAUL.

I care not:

It is an heretic that makes the fire,
Not she which burns in’t. I’ll not call you tyrant;
But this most cruel usage of your queen—
Not able to produce more accusation
Than your own weak-hinged fancy—something savours
Of tyranny, and will ignoble make you,
Yea, scandalous to the world.”

Moved by the vigorous remonstrances of Antigonus, Paulina and the lords of Sicilia, Leontes brings the queen to formal trial on the charge of adultery and conspiracy with Camillo to take away the life of her husband, King of Sicilia. Leontes, however, admits:

“Your actions are my dreams;
You had a bastard by Polixenes,
And I but dreamed it.”

In the course of the trial, an appeal is made to the oracle of the great Apollo. The reply of the oracle is:

“Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless; Camillo a true subject; Leontes a jealous tyrant; his innocent babe truly begotten, and the king shall live without an heir, if that which is lost is not found.”

Leontes, in his mad fury, refuses to believe the oracle:

“There is no truth at all i’ the oracle:
The sessions shall proceed: this is mere falsehood.”

All writers on mental diseases concur in the opinion that one of the most dangerous forms of mental disturbance is delusional insanity associated with jealousy. In the case of Leontes the jealousy assumed the form on an insane delusion. In the first place, his suspicion of the queen had no logical foundation and was not shared by anyone. Associated with the delusion of infidelity was a well-

marked delusion of poisoning, a combination that is not uncommon. Yielding to these imperative delusions, the king denies the paternity of his child and resolves to put both the infant and the mother to death, the one by abandonment and the other by means of an absurd form of trial, a homicidal outcome that also is not unusual. It seems impossible, indeed, not to regard all these acts and feelings as the natural results of a highly delusional mental condition. The best definition of insane delusions—one that exactly fits the mental condition of Leontes—is the following, borrowed from Kraepelin: "Delusions are morbidly falsified beliefs which cannot be corrected either by argument or experience." Delusions are not the result of experience, and they persist so long as and no longer than the morbid mental condition upon which they depend. It is quite within the history of insane delusions, especially delusions of jealousy, that they should suddenly disappear under the influence of violent emotions. The delusions cherished by Leontes, indeed, did suddenly disappear when he was informed of the death of his son and saw "This news is fatal to the queen." As is usual, the disappearance of the delusion was followed with the most poignant remorse:

"Apollo, pardon
 My great profaneness 'gainst thy oracle!
 I'll reconcile me to Polixenes;
 New woo my queen; recall the good Camillo,
 Whom I proclaim a man of truth, of mercy;
 For, being transported by my jealousies
 To bloody thoughts and to revenge, I chose
 Camillo for the minister to poison
 My friend, Polixenes: which had been done,
 But that the good mind of Camillo tardied
 My swift command, though I with death and with
 Reward did threaten and encourage him,
 Not doing it and being done: he most humane
 And filled with honour, to my kingly guest
 Unclasp'd my practice, quit his fortunes here,
 Which you know great, and to the hazard
 Of all uncertainties himself commended,
 No richer than his honour: how he glisters
 Through my rust! and how his piety
 Does my deeds make the blacker."

It does not seem possible that Shakespeare did not realize that in Leontes he presented a complete and accurate picture of insane jealousy, followed with penitence and remorse; a striking contrast to the jealousy of Othello, which had a basis resting on the diabolical machinations of Iago, was not, therefore, an insane jealousy, but

a perfectly sane, and, from this point of view, justifiable delusion. These two tragically emotional pictures speak for themselves.

The interest in Leontes ceases with the fancied death of Hermione, and when he exclaims to Paulina :

“Go on, go on :

Thou canst not speak too much ; I have deserved

All tongues to talk their bitterest.”

The repentance of Leontes endures for the sixteen years which elapse between the exposure to death of the princess Perdita, her adoption by the shepherd, the resurrection of Hermione and her reunion with the king. Thus the comedy ends, with Leontes restored to reason, Paulina married with Camillo, and the kingdoms of Sicilia and Bohemia united through the marriage of Perdita with Florizel.