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Part I.—Original Articles.

Zola's Studies in Mental Disease. By J. BARFIELD ADAMS, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., M.P.C.

AS a rule novelists have not been very successful in their delineation of mad people. They usually overdo it; their maniacs are too maniacal, and their melancholics too melancholy. Even when descriptions of milder cases of mental disorder have been attempted, as in those of Miss Flite in *Bleak House*, or Mr. F's aunt in *Little Dorrit*, they have not been altogether satisfactory. Neither have the dramatists been more fortunate. One of the first plays that I ever saw on a London stage was a dramatised version of *Jane Eyre*, and the character of Bertha, the mad woman, as featured by the actress, was a very terrible exhibition. It is only fair to say, however, that in several modern French plays, where a person of unsound mind has been included in the *dramatis personæ*, the character has been a fairly natural study of the disease.

In Emile Zola's Rougon-Macquart series of novels with the enormous number of characters which crowd their pages—characters which represent people in almost every grade of society, and people of almost every type of mind—it is to be expected that we should meet with some who are insane. Zola studied human beings as a naturalist, as a scientist, and consequently his pictures not only of health but also of disease are drawn with a truth which is rarely found in the works of

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other novelists. His characters are not manikins, they are flesh and blood. In his analysis of the mind he does not forget the body. In his psychology he fully recognises the part played by cenæsthesia. One of his characters, Pierre Sandoz, in whom one cannot help thinking Zola portrays himself, says, speaking of a novel he is writing, that it is his object "to study man as he is, not as a metaphysical marionette, but as a physiological man, determined by his environment, and acting under the play of all his organs." "Is it not a farce," he asks, "this continued and exclusive study of the functions of the brain, under the pretext that the brain is the noble organ? Thought is the product of the entire body. What becomes of the nobleness of the brain when the stomach is sick?"

If such a method of studying and portraying normal human beings is of importance, it is ten times more so in studying and portraying those in whom the mental equilibrium is disturbed. It is this that gives almost a scientific value to Zola's studies in insanity.

Our author's pictures of mental disease are as interesting, if not more so, to the general practitioner as to the alienist. The insane characters in the Rougon-Macquart novels are rarely seen in the asylum; we are introduced to them, for the most part, in the midst of their everyday surroundings, often with their relatives about them. The general practitioner has one great advantage over the specialist; he can, if he will, study the insane in their natural habitat as the hunter or the traveller studies wild animals. While the alienist, on the other hand, studies his cases under abnormal conditions as a naturalist studies wild animals in a menagerie. One cannot exaggerate the importance of environment. If the normal being reacts to his surroundings, does not the abnormal do so also? And, further, the general practitioner has the opportunity of studying at first hand the relatives of his patient. He can sometimes note the mental or nervous condition, not necessarily diseased, of the mother, a matter often of primary importance. His observation of the behaviour of an aunt or sister may throw a flood of light upon the family history of the case, for trifling mental flaws, mere eccentricities, in spite of a woman's superior powers of dissimulation, more readily reveal themselves in the female than in the male, and such eccentricities may hint at

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ancestral blemishes, or suggest the presence of germs, which in more suitable soil would bring forth sinister disease. Finally, if the patient be married the physician may be able to notice the psychic and physical condition of his children.

It will be observed that the value of Zola's studies in insanity varies considerably in the different novels. The descriptions increase in accuracy of detail as the writer proceeds with the series. This corresponds with the greater faithfulness with which he delineates the normal characters, for he did not get into his stride until he wrote *L'Assommoir*. Even as literary productions, *La Fortune des Rougon* or *La Curée* cannot be compared with *Germinal* or *La Bête Humaine*. As psychological studies, of course, there is no comparison.

This is well shown in the first case of insanity which Zola brings before us. The portrait that he has drawn in *La Fortune des Rougon*, of Adélaïde, the mad ancestress of the family, is perhaps more full of detail than the picture of any insane woman to be met with in the works of other novelists, but it is painted in the same lurid colours. The flighty daughter of Père Fouque, who himself died mad, with her innate vice, her epileptic fits, her debaucheries, and slowly oncoming dementia, is drawn from a dramatic rather than a psychological point of view, and merely that her character should fit the part which she plays in the story. There is very little analysis of the breaking up of the woman's mind. But turn to *Le Docteur Pascal*, the novel which terminates the series, and see the same patient in the Asylum of Tulettes in the last stages of dementia. She has arrived at extreme old age. Little by little her muscles have wasted, and she is so helpless that her attendants are obliged to carry her from her bed to her armchair. She is nothing but skin and bone. She has her good and her bad days, as the attendants say, but generally she sits calm and quiet in her chair, with her eyes staring vacantly into empty space. Sometimes tears trickle down her withered cheeks, and she stammers words without meaning or connection, which seems to prove that in the midst of senile exhaustion and the irreparable dullness of dementia the slow induration of the brain is not complete, and that the patient has yet glimmers of intelligence, that she is still haunted by vestiges of ancient memories.

In *La Conquête de Plassans*, one of the earlier stories of the

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series, we meet with two cases of insanity which, although described with abundance of detail, are very inferior to the finished studies of disease which are found in the later novels. The cases are those of François Mouret and his wife, Marthe.

François Mouret.—Family history: Father committed suicide. Mother was mentally unstable, and died of phthisis. Maternal grandmother was insane. The patient had three children: the eldest was sane, the second suffered from attacks of delirious insanity, and the third was an imbecile.

Until middle life François Mouret showed no symptoms of insanity. He was a successful tradesman, and was able to retire from business with a comfortable income by the time he was forty years of age. When he is first introduced to us, we see that he is a commonplace, well-to-do *bourgeois*, a *petit rentier*, with all the virtues and all the little foibles of his class. He is fond of his wife and children, and proud of his house and garden. He has a mania for tidiness—the tidiness of a precise old maid. He is perhaps a trifle near in money matters, but not more so than a careful man would be whose income was limited. He is a bit of a gossip, is fond of company, and of jokes—when he is not the victim of them—and although he professes to have given up business, he is not above dealing in oil wine, or any other commodity, when he sees the chance of making a little money.

Retired business men are the keenest of politicians, and François Mouret was no exception to the rule. He was a republican—the time of the story was the days of the Second Empire—and an anticlericalist. In a few years he acquired so much influence among the working-men of Plassans that he was feared by the opposite party.

But there were indications that at the bottom this masterful, little man, this keen politician, this would-be leader of men, was as weak as a child, and there was, moreover, his bad family history to be reckoned with. The hour of stress came with the entrance of Abbé Faujas into his life. This priest—the character is drawn with bold strokes, but is a little wanting in colour—came to Plassans with the mission of converting the city to Imperialism, and in carrying out his plans he incidentally acquired an immense influence over Mouret's weak-minded wife, who fell in love with him.

It was the lighting-up of jealousy in François Mouret's breast

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which revealed the innate weakness of the man. At the first suspicion a strong man would have kicked the priest—Faujas lodged with the Mourets—out of the house. François did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, at first he defended the ecclesiastic when the neighbours criticised his conduct, much on the principle that a small boy speaks well of a bully, of whom he stands in hourly dread, hoping by so doing to gain his favour. But Mouret found an outlet for his jealousy in his treatment of his wife. He overwhelmed her with sarcasms, and as a further indication of his displeasure he cut down household expenses to a minimum.

As time went on, the fear which Mouret had conceived of Faujas not only increased as far as the priest was concerned, but extended by degrees to his wife and maidservant, until at last he seemed to live in abject dread of those about him. His character also altered day by day. He who had been so genial, so fond of the society of his fellows, became morose and taciturn. He left off going to his club, and he was no longer to be seen chatting with his friends in the cool of the day beneath the great plane-trees on the Cours de Sauvaire.

There were physical changes in the man. In a few months his hair turned grey. He grew thin, and stooped. There were alterations also in the sphere of the emotions. Mouret's feelings became blunted. Only one affection seemed left to him, and that was his love for his poor imbecile daughter, which love lingered to the end.

The process of mental deterioration continued. The busy man—formerly busy to enthusiasm even about trifles—grew idle. Nothing interested him. He attended to nothing, and went about the house and garden gaping as though he were tired of life. He submitted to insults, he interfered with no one, and he hardly spoke. Finally, he took refuge in an almost empty room on the first floor, where he sat for hours doing nothing, as was proved by the dust which accumulated on the table.

In describing these changes Zola has indicated with no little skill that two passions, hatred and fear, continued to smoulder in the wretched man's mind. The hatred was the natural consequence of jealousy—of jealousy which could not find relief in action. In Mouret's case it was held in check by his unreasonable dread of Abbé Faujas. It seemed as though the priest exercised mesmeric influence over him. But the fear was

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probably only the result of primary weakness of character. It was an acknowledgment of another's strength.

As the story proceeds, it is seen that Faujas and his political friends took full advantage of Mouret's mental condition. They feared that his influence with the working men of Plassans would mar their plans, and they resolved to shut him up in an asylum. The man was harmless enough, but his enemies exaggerated his case, and when exaggerations failed they invented histories. They said that he ill-treated his wife, that it was dangerous for him to be at large, etc., etc.

After François Mouret was shut up in the asylum he became maniacal. Probably his case might be described as one of maniacal-depressive insanity, the melancholic phase occurring while he was at home, the phase of excitement after his internment.

Nothing shows so clearly the advance in Zola's power of describing disease as a comparison of the maniac in *La Conquête de Plassans* and the sufferer from delirium tremens in *L'Assommoir;* the one is melodrama, the othfer is a finished clinical picture.

It was a necessary part of the mechanism ot the story that Mouret should escape from the asylum, and by he connivance of an attendant he does so. Naturally he returns home—the asylum at Tulettes was not many miles from Plassans—and in the account which he gives of the thoughts which pass through the madman's brain and of his behaviour during the night walk the novelist rises to a high point of psychological description. Mouret is not in the dream-like condition of an alcoholic. He recognises familiar objects, and has some idea of time. When he sees the signs of a coming storm he regrets not having brought his overcoat and umbrella, and he takes shelter when the rain comes down in torrents. But for all that he is living in the past, in the days when he and his wife loved one another. He is going home. The hour is late, and he fears that the dinner will be cold.

It is nearly midnight when he arrives at his house. The doors are locked and the windows are dark. Everyone appears to have gone to bed. Mouret knocks. No one comes to the door. He calls to his wife. There is no answer. The madman goes round to the garden and enters the house by the cellar door. There have been great changes in his home since he was last there.

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He cannot understand them. Suddenly he hears the voices of people talking upstairs. Like a flash the idea of Faujas and all that is connected with that idea comes back to Mouret's mind. The dread, which was so characteristic a feature of the depressive stage of his disease, has disappeared. There is nothing now to hold in check the impulse of vengeance which possesses him. He finds means of setting fire to the house and destroys both himself and his enemy in the conflagration.

Marthe Mouret.—Family history good, with the exception that her paternal grandmother, Adélaïde, was insane. Marthe and her husband, François Mouret, were first cousins, and resembled each other to a remarkable degree. They also bore a marked physical likeness to their insane grandmother.

During her childhood Marthe appears to have been very delicate, and to have suffered from attacks of vertigo, strange ideas, and mental confusion. When she was about twenty years of age she probably passed through a mild attack of melancholia with delusions, one being that her head had been opened and her brain removed. After her marriage she became stronger. The quiet life of a shopkeeper's wife at Marseilles suited her. "I passed there fifteen years," she said, speaking of her past, "which have taught me to be happy in my own home surrounded by my children."

Her life, after she and her husband retired to Plassans, was tranquil enough, but there were signs that even before the arrival of Abbé Faujas she was becoming restless. Her husband's petty meanness and rough jokes irritated her. Her household duties and the care of her children no longer sufficed. She was conscious of a vague, unsatisfied desire. She longed for she knew not what. Yet she could not stand excitement. "I cannot read a novel," she tells us, "without having frightful headaches, and for nights afterwards all the characters dance in my brain. Needlework is the only thing which never fatigues me. I remain at home to avoid the noise of outside, the gossip, the nonsense, which fatigues me." She was haunted by the dread of the approach of some catastrophe, and especially by the fear that she herself would become mad.

Soon after Abbé Faujas came to lodge in her house Marthe fell under his influence. The mental changes which resulted were at first slow and almost imperceptible, but soon they became

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more manifest. The priest read the woman's mind as though it were an open book. To satisfy her vague longings he offered her the consolations of religion. She seized the proffered comfort with eagerness, and, carried away by her enthusiasm, she passed through religion to mysticism. She had periods of ecstacy which were marked by hallucinations of sight and hearing. Gradually a new passion revealed itself in the midst of these excited emotions. The woman became enamoured of the priest. At first Madame Mouret was scarcely conscious of the nature of the feeling. She hardly distinguished it from her religion. In the end it became religion itself.

It is only fair to say that Abbé Faujas did nothing to arouse this love for himself. Indeed he repulsed it. He was a hard man who cared nothing for women. One might say that he hated them as unmitigated nuisances—nuisances both in religion and in politics. He was perfectly satisfied with the influence he had acquired over the mind of François Mouret's wife, which was necessary for the success of his mission in Plassans. He did not want her love, which only hampered his designs.

It is unnecessary to unravel the tangled skein of mysticism and eroticism which the novelist exhibits to us as present in the mind of Marthe Mouret. The condition is by no means uncommon, and usually manifests itself at times of physiological stress—at or after puberty in both sexes, and about the climacteric in females, though unmarried women seem liable to it more or less at all ages. This form of mysticism differs from common-sense religion, either of the Roman Catholic or Protestant variety, by its utter want of altruism. These patients are supremely selfish, and are a perfect nuisance in their own homes—points which Zola brings out very clearly in his sketch of the character of Madame Mouret.

As time went on the patient developed cataleptic and hysterical symptoms. Sometimes, in a state of unconsciousness or semi-unconsciousness, she would throw herself on the floor or against the walls or furniture of the room, bruising herself severely. After recovering from these attacks she appeared at first to have no recollection of what had occurred. But this amnesia was only temporary, for there is no doubt that later on she remembered what had taken place.

In comparing the cases of Marthe Mouret and her husband one observes a curious difference in the effect of the mental

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disturbance on the character. In the man's case, he, who had been strong and masterful, became chicken-hearted, and gave up all initiative in life; in that of the woman, she, who had been weak and yielding, and to a certain extent a down-trodden household drudge, became self-assertive and bullying.

Madame Mouret was naturally plump, and after she had passed her fortieth year she grew stout. But as the mental malady from which she was suffering developed itself, she became rapidly thin. Presently she began to cough, and other symptoms of tubercular disease of the lungs manifested themselves. It was during this period of wasting that her passion for the priest revealed itself in its true character. Excessive eroticism is not uncommon among the phthisical. Madame Mouret's love for her family was long since dead, and now her modesty died also. The brutal way in which Abbé Faujas repulsed her seemed to crush the life out of the woman. She became a physical and mental wreck, and a little later died of phthisis.

The following four cases form a group by themselves. Although in each the nature of the psychic disturbance is different, yet they are linked together by the fact that the symptoms of mental alienation first showed themselves in adolescence or early manhood.

The first case is that of Silvère Mouret. His family history is the same as that of his brother François, and need not be repeated. Silvère was a delicate child. After his father's suicide, which occurred at Marseilles, he was brought to Plassans. At first he was pushed from pillar to post, but finally he went to live with his grandmother, Adélaïde, in a tumble-down cottage on the outskirts of the city. This was probably the boy's physical salvation, for the wild, outdoor life suited him, and he grew up strong and healthy. He was a serious lad, and was never happier than when he was acquiring information. He received a smattering of education at a school attached to a neighbouring monastery, and later on he was apprenticed to a wheelwright, who took a fancy to the boy. He became a clever workman, but his thirst for general knowledge knew no bounds. On one occasion he borrowed a work on geometry, and he spent weeks without a guide trying to understand the simplest problems. He bought second-hand books on all sorts of subjects, and studied them during the night by the light of a

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miserable lamp. A self-taught man is only too likely to get on the wrong track. Nothing, says Zola, is so bad for the mind as such a method of instruction. Silvère "became one of those learned workmen who can hardly sign their names, and who speak of algebra as a person of their acquaintance." More often than not these crumbs of knowledge give an absolutely false idea of great truths.

At this time (1840–48) Europe was seething with revolution. Every man was a politician, especially in France. Every *cabaret* throughout the land was the meeting-place of a club of revolutionary amateurs, where the wildest and most impossible schemes of reform were bandied from mouth to mouth. Silvère seized all these ideas with avidity. At once generous and ignorant, he was fascinated by the crude notions of humanitarian Utopias and of universal happiness which he heard propounded all around him. He passed his nights in reading political pamphlets and abstruse dissertations on social economy, works which often he did not even succeed in understanding, but which he studied with the strange love which demi-savants have for difficult literature. About this time he came under the influence of his uncle, Antoine Macquart, a lazy drunkard, whose constant topic of conversation was the approaching golden age when no one would any longer be obliged to work.

Macquart induced his nephew to become initiated into the secret society of the Montagnards, a powerful association which at that period extended like a network throughout the south of France. From that time Silvère devoted his leisure to furbishing an old musket which he found in his grandmother's cottage, and to dreaming the dreams of the Illuminati. His reveries were of gigantic epics, of Homeric struggles, from which the defenders of liberty came forth as conquerors amid the acclamations of the whole world.

But his enthusiasm was, to say the least of it, unhealthy. "He found himself," says the novelist, "predisposed to the love of Utopia by certain hereditary influences: in his case the nervous troubles of his grandmother turned to chronic enthusiasm, with *élans* to all that was grandiose and impossible. His solitary infancy and his imperfect education had singularly developed these tendencies of his nature."

In the end Silvère died a martyr to his visionary republicanism.

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This case occurs in the first novel of the series, and Zola was more intent upon the charming romance, which he weaves about the loves of Silvère and Miette, than in psychological studies. But he has given a sketch, faint, no doubt, but of which the outlines are distinctly visible, of a mental condition which is not uncommon among the young, even among those who are in superior social circumstances and are better educated than Silvère Mouret. It is natural enough for a healthy and generous lad, when he is brought face to face for the first time with the ugly realities of life, to enter heart and soul into any plan which appears to work for the improvement of the condition of the poor and down-trodden, and the healthier the boy the more vigorously and enthusiastically will he enter into the business. But there is such a thing as unhealthy enthusiasm, a weedy sort of overgrowth, specimens of which may be found among the juvenile professors of milk-and-water Communism, Christian Socialism, and the like. The family history of such cases frequently reveals hereditary tendencies to mental disease, and the personal history is not always satisfactory from a moral point of view. Upon analysis, the vaunted altruism of these young men will be found to be only a thin veneer covering a thick bed of egoism and pride. One singular characteristic of such individuals is their fondness for ostentatious self-abasement. It is astonishing what satisfaction they find in doing some trifling and unnecessary act of menial labour. I remember a youth, physically overgrown, mentally backward, and with a very bad family history, who, though he lived in a luxurious home, yet considered that blacking his own boots was an act of righteousness. It will usually be observed that the enthusiasm grows more and more feeble as such an individual arrives at maturity. The veneer of generosity melts away, and the innate selfishness stands revealed in all its ugliness. In after-life such a man is never a success. If he be wealthy, or have much family influence, he may be pitchforked into a high position, but he is no ornament to it, and sinks rather than rises in the social scale. Often, as years go on, he exhibits signs of feeble-mindedness in one form or another. He may be the victim of some phobia or obsession, or of some group of symptoms which may be labelled neurasthenia, hypochondria, or even hysteria, at the discretion of his medical attendant.

The second of this group of four cases is that of Serge

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Mouret. He was the younger son of François and Marthe Mouret, and it is unnecessary to add further particulars of his family history.

As a child, Serge was quiet and amiable. He did well at school, being exceedingly industrious. Very early in life his thoughts appear to have turned towards religion, or, rather, mysticism, and when he became a man he entered the priesthood. Physically he was never robust.

During his career as a theological student his industry and devotion were remarkable, but his health does not appear to have been good. Frequently he suffered from hallucinations. Sometimes it seemed to him that the high, vaulted roofs of the halls of the seminary echoed with angelic voices; sometimes he felt himself touched by unseen, gentle hands; at other times he smelt a heavenly perfume which long afterwards, it appeared to him, continued to cling to his garments. He was on several occasions confined to his bed with slight attacks of fever, accompanied with great physical prostration, and one of these attacks was complicated with delirium.

For some days before his ordination, during the ceremony, and for some time after, the nervous tension was so great that the young man appears to have lived in a dream.

After his ordination Serge was placed in charge of the parish church of Artaud, a village some leagues distant from Plassans. It was a desolate country, such as one meets with here and there in Provence. The landscape was shut in by a wall of yellow hills, fringed and flecked with patches of black pine-woods. The land was terribly barren; everywhere the bare rock cropped up. The vines, dry as thistles, pushed out from between the stones. In places, where attempts at cultivation had been made, one saw red fields marked with lines of grey olives or miserable almond-trees, and far away the eye rested on the pale green of a square plot of wheat, a tender note in that scene of arid desolation. The peasants were suited to the soil they cultivated. They were brutalised by ignorance and poverty.

Here, in a presbytery in almost as ruinous a condition as the church itself, Serge Mouret lived with his half-witted sister and a rough but not ill-natured housekeeper. The young priest, filled with the enthusiasm of his mystic creed, did his best. Assisted by a boy, as mischievous as a Paris *gamin*, he

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served the altar daily, even when the church was empty, and the sparrows flew in and out through the broken windows. He tried to teach the rudiments of religion to the village children, and he endeavoured to instil morality into peasants sunk in sensuality and drunkenness. But what success could such a man, a seminarist utterly ignorant of life, expect among such people?

One day, after having said mass in the empty church, and having partaken of such a meagre breakfast that he was almost fasting, Serge Mouret walked some leagues across the arid country in the mid-day heat of the sun of Provence. It is possible that on that occasion he suffered from a slight sun-stroke, which may have been a contributory factor in his subsequent illness. The errand of mercy on which he had set out was a failure; an unexpected visit, which he had paid in the course of his journey, had disturbed him mentally, and he returned to the presbytery tired and dispirited a long time after the usual dinner-hour.

In the evening the girls of the village came to dress the church, and particularly the chapel of the Virgin, with garlands, for the morrow was the first of May. After they had gone away Serge Mouret remained for a long time kneeling in devotion before the altar. When at last he rose to his feet he became suddenly conscious of the deathly coldness of the church. He shivered, and his teeth chattered. When he reached his bed-chamber he felt so cold that he lit the fire. The whole house was wrapped in silence, but there was a buzzing in his ears, which finished by becoming what seemed to him to be the sound of whispering voices. These voices increased a feeling of anxiety, of which he had been dimly conscious during the day. It became a presentiment of some unknown trouble, and, true to his usual mode of thought, the young priest sought its origin in some sin which unwittingly he might have committed. He sank into a dreamlike condition. All his old life at the seminary passed vividly before him. He lived it over again. Presently he came to himself. He was shivering no longer. He was burning with fever. He went to the window, and opened it, that he might refresh himself with the coolness of the night air. The moon had risen, and all the plain of Artaud was spread before him, more tragic in the pale moonlight than by day. He tried to

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remember when he had first felt ill, but he could not think clearly. The events of the day just past were as dreamlike, and even more distant than his life in the seminary. His face was covered with sweat. Again he was shivering, and yet he felt as though he were on fire. Seeking a refuge from his distress, he threw himself on his knees before a statuette of the Immaculate Conception, clasping his hands and crying: "Holy Virgin, pray for me!"

He shivered again, his teeth chattered, and, overcome by fever, he fell fainting on the floor of his bed-chamber.

The fever and delirium lasted some weeks. The patient's uncle, Dr. Pascal Rougon, of Plassans, attended him during his illness. I have made a study of the character of this clever, but eccentric physician, in a recent paper (1), and I am certainly not surprised that the treatment he adopted in a case of brain fever was as eccentric as himself. It was successful as far as the patient was concerned, but it was disastrous for the nurse. But that belongs to the story, and has nothing to do with the medical aspect of the case.

When he first came to himself, Serge Mouret felt as though his head were empty. He was in a strange room, but he was not in a condition to notice the unfamiliar surroundings. His eyes wandered aimlessly from corner to corner.

"I have been dreaming. I am dreaming always," he murmured with an air of weariness. "I hear bells, and it is that which fatigues me."

He remembered something about his delirium.

"I feel as though I had arrived after a long voyage," he said, always with the same air of weariness. "But I don't know where I am. I don't even know where I set out from. I had a fever—ah! yes, I remember. It was always that nightmare of crawling along an interminable subterranean passage. The stones fell from the roof of the passage, and I was walled in. I was seized with a rage to force my way through. I worked with my head, my hands, and my feet. I was desperate."

The nurse gently put her hand on his lips to make him keep silence. "No," he said, "it does not fatigue me to talk. I am only whispering. I am thinking aloud, and you can hear me. But it was droll that in the subterranean passage I never had the least idea of going back. All I cared about

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was to force my way forward through all obstacles, even if it took me a thousand years. My knees were bleeding. I had struck my forehead against the rock, and I was conscious of the agony of working with all my strength to arrive as soon as possible. To arrive where? I don't know. I don't know."

The next day was wet. The fever returned, and towards evening the patient became delirious. It was again the nightmare of the subterranean passage. The weather seemed to influence the disease, for the nurse observed that Serge was better on fine days and worse on wet ones.

The convalescence was tedious. The patient had the mental and bodily weakness of an infant. He had to learn again to walk, almost to speak. For hours he would play with a comb, or some such object, as a child plays with a toy. Although Serge remembered something of his delirium, he recollected nothing of his life before the commencement of his illness. It was an absolute blank. His memory appeared to be grievously injured. As time went on, the delusions of his delirium faded away, and he could no longer call to mind even the events of the early days of his convalescence. Both doctor and nurse feared that the case would end in dementia. Day by day the patient gained in bodily strength, but there was no mental improvement.

The cure came about suddenly. Serge had been nursed back to health in a lonely country house some miles away from Artaud. One day, after he had regained the full vigour of his body and to a certain extent that of his mind, he climbed to the top of some rising ground, and saw in the distance the village, the church, and his own home. His whole body shook with excitement. He remembered. The past came back to him.

But it is questionable whether the cure was complete. After his illness, Serge was a changed man. The keen edge of his intellect was blunted. At least, on one occasion, there was a return of fever with slight delirium, and at times he was subject to hallucinations of sight and hearing, and even of touch.

Some years later, Serge Mouret left Artaud, and became *curé* of Saint-Eutrope, a better living, both from a pecuniary and social point of view, for it was in the district which produced the best wine of the neighbourhood, and consequently

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the peasants were better off. Here he lived in great humility. His reputation for sanctity extended far and wide, and he might have risen to a high position in the Church. But he refused all advancement, and when we last heard of him he was showing signs of commencing phthisis.

The third case is that of Lazare Chanteau. *Family history*: Father, a good-tempered, sluggish man, a martyr to gout. Paternal grandfather started life as a working carpenter at Caen. Later, he became a timber merchant on a large scale. He was always trying to improve his business by venturesome schemes, some of which were successful, but the majority were failures, and when he died his firm was in a very bad way. Mother was the daughter of a ruined yeoman-farmer. Before her marriage she was a school-mistress. She was a strong minded, ambitious woman. She died of heart disease in middle life.

Lazare's boyhood does not appear to have been remarkable. To a certain extent he was the victim of his mother's ambition. She made him work very hard at school, where he possibly over-taxed his powers. At the age of eighteen he passed his *baccalauréat*. At this period he was well-grown. He had a large forehead, and a normal growth of hair on his face. He cared little for physical comforts, was absent-minded, and given to day-dreaming, and had a young man's contempt for money.

Madame Chanteau wished Lazare to study law, but the young man had no predilection for anything but music. At the *lycée* he had been taught the violin, and his master, who predicted a glorious future for his pupil, had given him private lessons in harmony and counterpoint. As soon as he left school, Lazare, full of the idea of being a musical genius, commenced writing a symphony, which, however, he never finished.

A little later he grew tired of music, and determined to become a doctor. He went to Paris to study medicine. His enthusiasm for the art of healing increased to a white heat, and he dreamed of becoming the most celebrated physician of his age. It is to be noted that he always thought of himself as being in the first rank. Presently, his enthusiasm for medicine died down. He grew idle, failed to pass his examination, and blamed his teachers, not himself, for his want of success.

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Tired of medicine, Lazare entered the laboratory of a celebrated chemist. Here he conceived the idea of extracting bromides and iodides on a great scale from seaweed—making a gigantic business of it. He set about it immediately, for any delay in putting his plans into execution was veritable torture. But the affair proved a failure, and the young man's love for chemistry became speedily exhausted. And so it went on. Lazare went in for music again, and gave it up. Then he conceived the notion of building a defence against the encroachments of the sea, which was gradually washing away the shore near his home. This failed. He thought of emigrating, of starting a newspaper, of going in for literature, finance, politics, etc., etc. One thing is to be noted, that he grew more quickly tired of his projects as he grew older—he became more quickly mentally fatigued.

Lazare was as changeable in his affections as in his ambitions. He became engaged to his cousin, Pauline, a good-looking, sensible young woman, and, after a few months of violent love, he threw her over, and married a silly girl, who was utterly unfitted to be his wife. The poor young fellow was, as Zola puts it, "*toujours en quête d'un bonheur qui avortait.*"

Although always disappointed in him, yet Lazare's mother never lost the idea that her son was a genius. Again and again she provided him with means, not always by honourable methods, to put into execution his ill-digested plans. How often is the mother the evil genius of such unfortunates! Still, Madame Chanteau was not altogether blind to the condition of her son. More than once the thought crossed her mind that he was like his grandfather, the carpenter, who changed his business, and nearly ruined all by his hair-brained schemes.

So far there was nothing very extraordinary in Lazare's case He was only one of that multitude of young men who labour under the curse of Reuben: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." But there was a greater flaw yet in his mental make-up. He was obsessed by the fear of death.

One of the peculiar charms of Zola's novels is the skill with which he makes Nature sympathise with the moods of his human characters. When he first draws our attention to this mental affliction of Lazare Chanteau, the background is painted in harmony with the melancholy of the sufferer. The young man and his cousin, Pauline, are returning from a long walk

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along the sea-shore. Twilight is deepening into night, and the stars are appearing in ever-increasing numbers in the darkening sky. Pauline stood still for a few minutes looking upwards.

"How beautiful the stars are," she remarked gravely. "You have taught me that each one is a sun, and that there are millions and millions of them."

"I don't like to look at them," said Lazare in a voice choked with emotion. "It makes me afraid."

It was night now, and the sky, almost completely black from the zenith to the immense horizon, glittered with innumerable, twinkling points of light. The tide was coming in with a low, wailing sound like that of the lamentation of a distant crowd weeping in misery.

Pauline stood gazing in silent admiration at the brilliant vault of heaven. Suddenly, mingled with the plaintive moaning of the sea, she heard the sound of sobbing close beside her.

"What is the matter?" she asked, turning to Lazare. "Are you ill?"

The young man did not answer. He had covered his face with his hands so that he should not see. When he had mastered his emotion and could speak, he stammered: "Oh! that I must die one day, must die one day!"

As in the case of obsessions generally, the date when this one originated is uncertain. It was hardly noticeable before Lazare was twenty years of age, but soon afterwards it began to make his life miserable. He could hardly lay his head at night upon the pillow without the idea of death presenting itself to his mind. Insomnia developed itself—insomnia made horrible by the lugubrious images which passed before his fancy. Worn out by fatigue he would fall asleep, only to wake with a start, stammering in the darkness, with clasped hands and eyes full of horror: "My God! my God!" When he was fully awake he was ashamed of this fright. He was a professed atheist, a pessimist, a disciple of Schopenhauer, and he found it the act of an imbecile thus to appeal to a God whom he denied: It was the heredity of human feebleness crying for help.

Even in the daytime a chance word or thought, an unexpected occurrence, or a paragraph in a newspaper would conjure up in his mind the horrible fear of death.

It is to be remarked that Lazare lost this dread at the actual

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approach of the King of Terrors. His cousin, Pauline, whom at that time he loved with all the strength of his ill-balanced mind, was seized with a grave disease, and for some days her life hung by a thread, and Lazare was himself astonished at the calmness with which he faced the idea of death. He trembled, it was true, at the thought of losing his sweetheart, his dear companion, but this was another sort of fear, totally different from that which possessed him when he had contemplated the notion of his own annihilation in days gone by.

But the respite was short. Pauline recovered, and hardly was her convalescence established before Lazare fell again under the power of his obsession. One night he awoke with a start, and with eyes dilated with horror. The fear of death had reappeared in his sleep, in a dream probably. "My God! my God! must I die one day?" he cried in abject terror.

The man was ashamed of his affliction, and tried to conceal it from those around him. But he nursed it privately in a thousand little ways. It was not every night or day that the dread overpowered him. Sometimes two or even three nights passed without his being disturbed, and he got into the habit of noting down the dates on an almanac.

Gradually the fear of death, which, though certain, might not occur until some date more or less distant, took the form of the dread of immediately to be expected dissolution. Obsessed with this new phase of the disease, Lazare could not go out of a room, nor close a book, nor make use of any object, without believing that it was the last time he would do so. Thus he contracted the habit of continually saying adieu to the things about him. Little by little these morbid ideas gave rise to others. Unconscious probably of its origin, he became possessed with the notion that by performing certain actions he might delay the advent of the inevitable. Ideas of symmetry intruded themselves into his mania. He felt himself compelled to take three steps to the right, and then three to the left, without any apparent object. He must touch the furniture on both sides of the chimney-piece or door, and he must touch each article an equal number of times. He even appeared to attach a superstitious idea of value to certain numbers. For example, five or seven touches, distributed in a particular fashion, would prevent the adieu from being final; or, in other words, would ward off for the moment the approach

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of death. "In spite of his intelligence and of his denial of the supernatural, he practised this imbecile religion with the docility of a brute. It was the revenge of the nervous derangement of the pessimist and the positivist, who declared that he believed only in facts and experience."

The man became a nuisance to his friends.

"What are you wasting your time about?" cried Pauline to him on one occasion. "Three times already you have returned to that cupboard to touch that key. What do you do it for? What a maniac you will be when you are eighty!"

Occasionally his fear of death crystallised into a morbid dread of some special malady, or of some particular form of accident. His mother died of heart disease, and he became convinced that he would die of the same complaint. He was always observing his own symptoms—generally imaginary—with the anxiety of a hypochondriac. "His two years of medical study had not demonstrated to him the equality of all diseases in the presence of death." On the contrary, his superficial knowledge of medicine only aggravated his terror of the malady in question. Later, he was seized with a dread of fire. He was living in Paris at the time, and his *appartement* being on the third floor, he moved down to the first, in order that he might escape more easily in case of fire breaking out in the building.

Physically, as time went on, there was little to be noted in Lazare's case. He stooped somewhat, and seemed older than his years. Sometimes a slight trembling of the muscles of his face was observed—a trembling which, in moments of agitation, communicated itself to the muscles generally of his whole body. He was exceedingly sensitive to perfumes. I have noticed an increased olfactory sensibility in several cases of obsession which have come under my observation. Lazare had one child, and Zola remarks how quickly, when they played together, both father and son became fatigued.

Gradually the man became listless and idle. His ambition seemed dead, or if some phantastic project flitted for a moment across his mind, it had no longer the power to raise even a flicker of enthusiasm. When we last hear of him, he is leading an aimless life on his wife's money.

The fourth and last of this group of cases is that of Claude

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Lantier. His family history was bad. Brother, a sexual pervert. Mother, a drunkard. Maternal grandfather and grandmother, both drunkards. Maternal great-grandmother, insane. Claude had one child, who died of hydrocephalus in his ninth year.

Claude Lantier was the eldest child of his parents, his father being eighteen years of age, and his mother little over fourteen when he was born. He was a native of Plassans in Provence, but was taken at an early age to Paris. He was one of those gifted children who, as soon as they can hold a pencil, can draw, and draw well. Some of Claude's child-sketches were brought to the notice of a wealthy old gentleman, an amateur authority on Art, who, enraptured at the idea of playing the part of Maecenas, adopted the boy, and took him back to Plassans to be educated.

At school Claude Lantier did not distinguish himself, but he appears to have escaped the moral infection which is not unknown even in scholastic establishments of the present day, and his boy friends were those who, like himself, were, or thought they were, budding literary or artistic geniuses. The pleasure of these lads was to escape from the dull school-room and spend long days exploring the wild neighbourhood of Plassans. It was in these expeditions that Claude learned to love the beauties of Nature, changing with the ever-changing sunshine; that he acquired that feeling for atmosphere, which, in spite of all their defects, became the charm of his mature works. One of his companions, who afterwards became a distinguished novelist, had always a book in his pocket, and was accustomed to read aloud while Claude worked at his sketches. Thus, at the age of fourteen, these boys fell under the influence of Victor Hugo, and of that writer's ideas, his vast pictures, his "eternal battles of antitheses." Later, Alfred Musset came to fascinate them "with his passion and his tears. A more human world revealed itself, which conquered them by pity, by the eternal cry of misery which they must henceforth hear rising from everything."

One can quite imagine what sort of a young man Claude Lantier was when he went to Paris to study Art in earnest. He had learned all that he knew from Nature herself, and he rebelled against the drudgery of the school. After six months' work, his master told him he would never be able to do any-

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thing, and Claude left the *atelier* in disgust. He went then to study the nude in a free studio, where, having paid his twenty francs to the *massier*, he could work after the dictates of his own fancy, and where he was not bothered by the stereotyped advice of a fossilised pedagogue. Here his time was not altogether thrown away. In after years, hanging on the walls of his own studio, were to be seen studies which he had made at that period. They were admirable pieces of work, painted with the breadth of a master. There was a girl's foot, for example, exquisite in its delicacy and truth. There was especially the torso of a woman with flesh like satin, living, palpitating, with the suggestion of the blood which flowed beneath the skin.

Art in France, at the time when Zola introduces Claude Lantier upon his stage, was in more than its usual state of flux and change. The Academicism of David, and later that of Ingres, though it still lingered in influential quarters, had to a great extent been swept away by the rising tide of Romanticism, which found its noblest expression in the work of Delacroix. But Romanticism, before even it could completely gain the ascendant, found itself involved in a struggle with the artists of the Barbizon School, men like Millet, Rousseau, Corot and others, men to whom Realism, work done in the open air, was everything. The students, the radicals of the artistic world, the rising generation in short, embraced the creed of *plein air* with enthusiasm. To no one did it appeal more strongly than to Claude Lantier, brought up as he had been in the vivid sunshine of Provence. Even in Paris he was always obsessed with the beauties of changing light—dawn, sunrise, the splendours of noon and sunset, and the soft tones of twilight. But he carried Realism too far. He became an unbridled Impressionist. Some of his sketches were terrifying, the colour crude and violent, and the shadows indicated by great strokes of the brush. However, glaring as his faults were, he soon found himself at the head of a small band of enthusiastic followers, who hailed him as the coming Master.

In his study of Claude Lantier Zola has presented us with the portrait of a genius who fails. A man's failure may be looked at from two points of view: the purely objective, that is to say, the value of his work, or, if you will, the value that the world puts upon his work; and the subjective or psycho-

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logical, that is to say, the mental defects or deficiencies which are the real causes of his want of success.

In the case of Claude, his objective failure, his failure as an artist, was primarily due to his lack of a sense of proportion. His composition was lamentable. He was an artist. His technique was admirable, and he had an exquisite feeling for colour. Taken piecemeal, certain portions, *morceaux*, of his pictures were excellent. A group of figures, a clump of trees, the sunlight as it filtered through the leaves, or fell upon the water, the painting of living flesh, or even of drapery, were charming. But, taken as a whole, his canvases were more than disappointing. Possibly, in addition to faulty composition there may have been something wrong with the perspective, though the novelist does not lay stress on this point. It was the quality of his work in detail which pleased his admirers, who were not only inexperienced students, but even celebrated artists. This may be partly accounted for by the fact that it is the creative faculty, the workman's faculty, which most fully appreciates detail, while it is the critical faculty which, though not underestimating detail, gives the proper value to the *ensemble*. Zola has further emphasised the point that it was only portions of Claude Lantier's work which were really valuable by remarking that it was his first sketches, his studies, not his finished pictures, that were readily bought by picture-dealers, men who are usually keenly alive to the value of the wares in which they trade.

The psychological causes of Claude's failure were more complex. He was a man of great ideas, and they were not only vast, but they were happy. Had his ideas been realised, his pictures would have been masterpieces. But they were not realised. It seemed as though, in spite of his mastery of technique, his hands could not fully work out the conceptions of his brain. One might say that he suffered from a form of motor apraxia. Probably, to a certain extent, this is the case with every artist.

When Claude conceived the idea of a picture he threw himself heart and soul into his preliminary studies, which were admirable in their way, and then with his enthusiasm at a white heat he attacked the canvas. He worked all day from dawn to sunset, and the result of his work was a sketch which was a masterpiece—a sketch in which every stroke of the brush was a

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stroke of genius. Then came the inevitable. In working together the details of his picture he spoiled his sketch. It was the irony, as Zola calls it, of a clever man who himself brings misfortune on his handiwork. His faulty composition marred everything. There was no coherence, and what was worse, fascinated by the beauty of an after-thought, he introduced some object which had no connection with the subject of his picture.

It is not to be supposed, however, that Claude was blind to the fact that there were faults in his work; on the contrary, he was often painfully alive to it. His critical sense was sufficiently developed to warn him that something was wrong, but it was not keen enough to point out the error; a condition which was intensified by his defective artistic education. From this it resulted that, in spite of his vanity, and in spite of his belief in himself, at times he was plunged into crises of doubt, which were veritable hours of torture.

It is Zola's habit, when he wishes to bring into stronger light a mental trait, to place the character in which he is depicting it beside other personages, some of the very opposite mentality, others in whom the same trait is seen from a different standpoint, or is modified by varying circumstances. Thus, in order to throw into higher relief Claude Lantier's affliction of doubt, he shows us, first, a sculptor who turns out sometimes excellent work, sometimes monstrosities, but who believes that everything touched by his hand is a masterpiece, and who never for a second doubts the excellence of his own genius; then, a celebrated painter who, having gained fame by his first picture, lives ever after in dread lest his later productions should fall below his own high-water mark.

Step by step, as the story proceeds, Zola traces the decadence of an artist and a man in the case of Claude Lantier. The novelist is true to life when he shows that mental deterioration, while it destroys the good qualities, accentuates the bad, as a wasting disease mars the beauty of the human form and leaves only the ugliness of the skeleton. At first the declension was slow and almost imperceptible. Claude passed through a period which was marked by laziness and day-dreaming. He commenced half a hundred pictures, but finished none. Before he had half painted one his mind was busy with ideas for another, and consequently both were failures. His temper,

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which had always been bad, grew worse. His outbursts of passion became more and more violent and more frequent. Whatever love he may have once had for wife and child grew cold; he neglected them both.

As time went on, it became evident that Claude's hand was losing its cunning. His technique no longer redeemed, or at least softened, his errors of composition. His pictures became so bad that those who formerly admired his work turned from them with pain. Here Zola paints a feature of mental deterioration with considerable skill. In progressive forms of psychic disorder the fading of the critical sense in its various manifestations is commonly observed. However, in the early stages of disease it is not altogether lost, but may be aroused, and even aroused to the point of great suffering, by acute emotion. The novelist tells us that as each picture rejected by the Salon came back to Claude, he saw their defects, saw them too late, and in a fury cut the canvases to pieces. The pictures were so bad—one, a painting of his child after death, must have been a terrible affair—that the artist, in his days of comparative health, even with his originally mal-developed critical faculty, could never for a moment have thought of exhibiting them. But his failing mind saw no fault in them, and he sent them in. Then, stung by the pain of rejection, his dying powers of discernment revived, and he saw in all their nakedness his errors of execution. His new crises of doubt were terrible. Sometimes he was sunk in profound despair, sometimes his vanity, the last of human passions to disappear, buoyed him up. His mind was a battle-field, strewn with hundreds of dead ambitions, on which struggled his belief in himself, already wounded unto death, and his growing consciousness of his inability to realise his conceptions.

As his mental deterioration proceeded, Claude developed a sort of superstition, a religious belief in the importance of the medium in which he painted. He would have nothing to do with oil, which he spoke of as a personal enemy. In the place of it he used secret preparations, solutions of amber, of resin, etc., etc. He became fastidious about his palette knife and the shape and texture of his brushes. He invented a theory of complimentary colours which would have astonished Chevreul, and which was fatal to his own originality of notation, so clear, and so vibrating with sunshine.

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Later, the poor fellow became the victim of delusions of suspicion. He began to suspect his friends, particularly those who had fallen away from him since the deterioration in his painting. The expression of his face altered. His wife saw something in his eyes which frightened her. Sometimes she saw him in the attitude of listening, as though he heard a voice which was calling to him. She began to be haunted with the idea that her husband was going mad.

One night, when he was dining with some friends, he actually overheard his former admirers depreciating him in no measured terms. It was a mortal blow. All his suspicions were confirmed. After his return home he went out again, telling his wife he was going for a walk. His manner during the evening had been so strange that the poor woman, fearful of his intention, followed him at a distance. He walked down to a bridge over the Seine, and remained for some time leaning on the parapet. The scene before him was fraught with painful memories, for he had used it as a background for one of his fatal pictures, the one in which he struggled more than any other against his failing powers. Once and again he made a movement as though he were about to throw himself into the river, but if he were tempted to commit suicide, for the time he conquered the impulse. When at last he turned to go home, his wife hurried before him, and was in bed by the time he arrived. He appeared to have recovered himself completely. He talked with calmness, and was more affectionate than he had been for a long time. When his wife awoke in the morning she missed him from her side. She was seized with a horrible presentiment, which was only too terribly realised when she hurried into the studio. Claude had hung himself in front of a picture on which he had laboured for years, striving to create a masterpiece, and always failing in the execution.

Cases of alcoholism are numerous in the Rougon-Macquart novels. One of them, which we meet with in *L'Assommoir*, is described with considerable detail. It is that of Coupeau, the husband of Gervaise Macquart. His father met with a fatal accident when he was drunk, but with that exception Coupeau's family history appears to have been good, for all his blood relations mentioned by the novelist were healthy and temperate, and probably his case may be regarded as one of acquired alcoholism.

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Coupeau was a plumber by trade, and when he first steps upon Zola's stage he is a hard-working man, leading a respectable life, and expressing sentiments on the drink question which would have done credit to the president of a Total Abstinence Society. For some years after his marriage Coupeau lived happily and soberly with his wife, who bore him one child, of whom he was passionately fond. One day he fell from the roof of a lofty building on which he was working and broke his thigh. It was six months before the man was about again, and then it was observed that a marked change had come over him. Possibly he had contracted lazy habits during his convalescence; possibly also the shock of the accident produced cerebral changes which resulted in weakened self-control. The formerly industrious man was in no hurry to go back to his employment, but was content to live on the earnings of his wife, who had set up as a laundress, and by skill and hard work had acquired an extensive business.

Little by little Coupeau contracted the habit of loafing about and drinking. He did hardly any work, and on several occasions came home drunk.

Zola traces the mental and physical decadence of a drunkard with a realistic pencil. At first, when the man is three parts drunk, his brain seethes with big and happy ideas; later, he becomes quickly fuddled. In the early stages something of his good nature remains, but he is very obstinate, and resists his friends when they try to get him to go home quietly, and his wife when she endeavours to put him to bed. He becomes very emotional. A trifle moves him to tears, and his sobs mingle with his hiccoughs. Later, his temper suffers. When he is drunk he would kill his father or mother in his anger, and when he becomes sober he has forgotten all about it. Gradually he loses all pride and ideas of respectability, and his habits become unclean and beastly. He loses even the sense of shame.

In his description of the case Zola lays stress on one mental change, namely, that hard drinking destroys the passion of jealousy, which is, I think, unusual. He says: "There are some husbands very jealous at twenty years of age, whom at thirty drink renders very complacent on the chapter of conjugal fidelity." I have, on the contrary, frequently noticed that drunkards are exceedingly jealous, even when they have not the slightest grounds for their suspicions.

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One of the first physical symptoms that Coupeau complained of was a form of neuralgia of the scalp, which troubled him in the morning when he had slept off his drunkenness. Later, when he became a confirmed alcoholic, he suffered from intolerable itching and tickling sensations, prickings, particularly of the hands and feet, and a strange feeling as though icy cold water were running down his back. Early in the case he suffered from dyspeptic symptoms. In the morning after a drunken bout his tongue was furred, and he had the well-known taste of copper in his mouth. He grew thin. The expression of his face changed, and he had a shifty look in his eyes. He complained of attacks of giddiness, and the trembling of his hands, as time went on, became so great that he could not carry a glass to his lips without spilling its contents. But these symptoms were always cured by a stiff dose of alcohol, which also relieved his profuse expectoration. Age came on apace. He became deaf in one ear, and his sight became defective at a comparatively early age.

The downfall of Coupeau was not one unbroken descent. There were pauses, when the man seemed for the time to recover himself. Once he got a job at Étampes, and was absent from Paris for three months. Away from his companions—companions count for a lot in the temptations of a drunkard—he gave up drink, worked hard, and appeared to be cured by the country air. He returned to Paris "fresh as a rose, and with four hundred francs in his pocket, with which he payed two terms of rent which was owing." But the improvement was only temporary. In a short time the man had resumed his old habits.

One evening he returned home wet to the skin. In the night he was attacked with cough and fever, "his sides beating like a broken pair of bellows." In the morning the doctor who was called in diagnosed pneumonia. Coupeau was taken to the hospital. The next day the lung symptoms had disappeared, and the patient was transferred to another ward suffering from an attack of delirium tremens. When he was cured he promised reformation, and for eight days was reasonable. But what says the proverb? "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

In three years Coupeau is said to have had seven attacks of delirium tremens. This, however, is not very remarkable. I

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attended a patient for at least twelve such attacks in the same period of time. In the end Coupeau died of this disease. Zola has painted the final scenes in vivid colours. His description of the restlessness, the eternal going to and fro, the trembling of the limbs, the raised temperature, the profuse sweat, the hallucinations of sight and hearing, and withal, the dreamlike condition of the patient, is true to life.

In his terrible novel of *L'Assommoir* Zola preaches one of the most powerful sermons against the sin of drunkenness that it is possible to read, and he drives the lesson home with all his unrivalled powers of description. He hesitates at nothing, however ghastly, however disgusting, that will enforce the moral of his story. In the lurid picture of Coupeau's downfall he shows us a man, who has not only ruined himself by vice, but has dragged down with him his wife and child, killing the one and throwing the other on the street.

In the Rougon-Macquart series of novels there occurs a case of impulsive insanity, which has been worked out with considerable skill. It is one of homicidal impulse complicated with sexual perversion. The story is too long to be given in full, but it possesses several points of special interest which may be briefly referred to.

The family history was bad, and remarkable for the number of alcoholics occurring in the ancestry. The sufferer was Jacques, the younger brother of Claude Lantier, and it will be remembered that in the latter's case the mother and both the grandparents were drunkards. Zola blames, and probably correctly, this alcoholic heredity for Jacques' peculiar mental flaw. He says: "He paid for the others, the fathers and grandfathers, who had drunk, the generations of drunkards from whom he derived his tainted blood, his slow poisoning, his savageness which made him as one of the wolves which eat women in the depths of the forest.". In the case of the sufferer himself alcohol aggravated the disease, or lit it up when it was quiescent. Jacques rarely drank. Often he refused even a *petit verre*, having remarked that the least drop of *eau-de-vie* rendered him mad.

The disease made its appearance early, soon after the age of puberty. Jacques was sixteen years old when he was first seized with the overpowering desire to kill. Impulsive insanity often appears early in life. The cases of suicide which

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occur among young boys and girls, particularly in Germany, the country *par excellence* for the manifestation of mental disease—suicides which are either motiveless, or for which the assigned motives are either trivial or senseless—are probably of this nature. Pyromaniacs are frequently adolescents. Some years ago I had under observation a boy of twelve who, among other acts of incendiarism, set fire to a hayrick simply for the pleasure it gave him to see things burn.

In describing the crisis of the attack in the case of Jacques Lantier, Zola points out the annihilation, or rather the inhibition, of the sufferer's own will. It was as though another will had taken possession of his body. His hands did not belong to him. He no longer belonged to himself. He obeyed his muscles like a mad beast.

Linked to this inhibition of his own will is the dreamlike condition in which the sufferer lives. It is of the nature of somnambulism. Zola brings this out very graphically in his description of Jacques' journey through the streets of Paris intent on the murder of some woman, friend or stranger, no matter who she be. It is a veritable case of Jack, the Ripper. Jacques does not lose his way, but as he walks on he forgets the connecting links in his perambulations. Chance prevents the satisfying of the horrible craving which appears to become weakened and finally extinguished by sheer physical fatigue. Instinct brings the man back to his lodging as it brings a sick dog back to its kennel. Then occurs a profound sleep, a sleep that reminds one of that which sometimes follows post-epileptic mania. Jacques awakes with the sensations of one recovering from a fainting fit. He remembers an engagement which he had made before the oncome of the crisis of his disease, but of the crisis itself, of his long walk through the streets of Paris, of his thirst for blood, he has only the vaguest recollection.

In the novel Jacques only commits one murder, but, as that crime is the point to which the whole story has been gradually working up, we are provided with ample details of the mental condition of the murderer both before and after the deed. The murder was unpremeditated, and it was only the opportunity, that is to say, the alluring presence of the victim and the proximity of the fatal weapon, which awoke the insane impulse in Jacques' mind. The phrase "beside himself"

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accurately describes the man's mental condition immediately before committing the crime. One can hardly say he thought. He was living in a dream of undefined horror. All he was conscious of was the object of his temptation and his own overwhelming thirst for blood. He hardly breathed. A noise like the clamour of a crowd thundered in his ears, and prevented him from hearing. In the intoxication, which had invaded his whole being, his hands seemed no longer to belong to him. But hardly had the fatal blow been struck than a change came over him. He was conscious of an immense feeling of relief, of joy, almost of pride.

One knows that when a man suffering from post-epileptic mania commits a crime, he often shows great skill in making his escape from the scene, and in covering up his tracks. The same ability may be observed in the conduct of the victim of impulsive insanity under similar circumstances. Full use is made of this feature of the disease in the story of Jacques Lantier.

Zola lays great stress on the absence of remorse in impulsive homicide, and in the concluding portion of the novel he again points out the amnesia or semi-amnesia which occurs after the crisis of the disease. After the murder, Jacques resumed his every-day life. He discussed the affair with calmness when it happened to be mentioned in his presence. As far as he was concerned, the crime might have been committed by another individual altogether. Even in giving evidence at the trial of two men wrongly charged with the murder, Jacques was perfectly tranquil. "This cross-examination, which ought to have troubled him profoundly, left him in an absolute lucidity of mind, as though the affair in no way concerned him. He gave his evidence as a stranger, as an innocent man; since committing the crime not a fear had disturbed him, he did not even think of such a thing. With memory abolished, his organs in a state of equilibrium, his health perfect, he stood there in the witness-box, with neither remorse, nor scruples, with only an absolute unconsciousness of his crime."

Among the many degenerates who play their parts in Zola's great tragi-comedy, it is natural that we should find a few imbeciles. The *rôles* assigned to them are not, of course, important, but, allowing for perspective, their characters are as real and life-like as those of the heroes and heroines of the various dramas.

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As in the case of those whom we meet in the world, Zola's imbeciles differ greatly in mental endowments. One of the most intelligent, and at the same time the least vicious, is Désirée Mouret. Her family history is the same as that of her brother, Serge Mouret. The case appears to have been one of congenital imbecility. When the girl is first brought under our notice she is fourteen years of age, tall and strong, but mentally a child of five. She was apparently incapable of learning anything. If one attempted to teach her to sew, she had headaches and giddiness. All she cared about were birds and animals, and the insects and other creeping things she found in the garden. Her laugh was that of an infant, and she was easily moved to tears.

During the next three years there was no improvement. She cared nothing about her clothes, or about personal cleanliness. It was dangerous to leave a box of matches within her reach, for she was as fond of playing with them as a little child would be. She showed herself affectionate to those who were kind to her, but her love had no depth.

About this time she was sent from her home, where she was neglected by everyone, to the country to live with her old nurse. Here she was well fed and cared for, and allowed to amuse herself all day long in the poultry yard. A year or two later she went to live with her brother, Serge Mouret, the parish priest of Artaud. These changes were beneficial. Désirée became happy and contented, and although there was little real mental improvement, physically her development left nothing to be wished for. The picture which the novelist draws of her in her twenty-second year might be that of the antique statue of a young goddess. She had a fresh, fair, and rosy complexion, a graceful figure, and well-formed limbs. But her brain was empty, and she had no serious thoughts of any kind. In short, she was a magnificent animal—an animal endowed with the gift of laughing, for her sonorous laughter resounded from morning to night in the house, in the garden, and especially in the poultry yard, where she reigned supreme. "Without doubt," says Zola, "it was her feebleness of mind which made her love animals so much. She was only at ease in their company. She understood their language better than that of men, and she cared for their wants with maternal tenderness." One might say that her maternal instinct found expression in her care for animals.

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But her love for animals was as shallow as her affection for her human friends. She could wring the neck of a fowl or chop off the head of a goose, when the birds were wanted for table, with perfect *sangfroid*, and she stood by perfectly unmoved while the butcher killed a favourite pig. Possibly in this may be seen something analogous to the love of cruelty which one observes in certain degenerates.

Zola tells us no more about the girl, and one is left to speculate as to what became of her in later years.

The case of Charles Saccard is very different. His family history was fairly good, for we have to go back four generations to find a case of insanity among his ancestors. But probably there was a more immediate cause for his imbecility. He was the illegitimate child of a young maidservant, who subsequently, however, had healthy children by a strong and healthy husband. Charles' father was the dissipated and feeble Maxime Saccard, who was little more than seventeen years old at the time of the procreation of his son, and who, there is reason to suppose, was even then a syphilitic, for he died comparatively young of locomotor ataxia.

At the age of fifteen Charles Saccard had the appearance of a boy of eleven or twelve, but intellectually he was only a child of five. He was very handsome, and bore an extraordinary likeness to his ancestress, Adélaïde. With his long, fair, and silky hair, and his large, expressionless eyes, he reminded one of those *rois fainéants* who terminate a royal race. "He had neither heart nor brain," says the novelist, "and was nothing better than a vicious little dog, which rubs itself caressingly against people's legs."

And he was vicious. In spite of his tender age and his poverty of intellect, hereditary vice already revealed itself in the boy. Once the experiment was made of sending him to school, but he learned nothing, and in six months was expelled on account of his disgusting practices.

He was physically very delicate, and suffered from hæmophilia. He bled at the slightest scratch, and the hæmorrhage was with difficulty controlled. Before he had completed his sixteenth year he died of profuse epistaxis.

Another of Zola's imbeciles is the foundling, Marjolin. The child was discovered one morning in a vegetable market, half hidden in a heap of cabbages. He appeared to be between two

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and three years of age. He was fat and healthy, but not very precocious, for he could only lisp a few words. The women of the Halles adopted him. He was a handsome little fellow, with auburn hair, and so plump and ruddy that he might have found a corner in one of Rubens' pictures. It was no use sending him to school; if you did so, he only fell ill. So he was allowed to run wild in the great markets, every nook and corner of which were soon well known to him.

Marjolin grew up strong and healthy, but was always very backward. At the age of eighteen physically he was already a man, but he had no intelligence. He lived, as Zola expresses it, only by his senses, one of which, namely that of smell, was remarkably developed. Like many other victims of mental infirmity he was abnormally sensual, being as lecherous as a buck rabbit. In spite of his apparent amiability, at the bottom he was horribly cruel, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to inflict pain, or to see it inflicted on birds or animals.

When he was about twenty years of age Marjolin met with a severe injury to his head. There was concussion of the brain undoubtedly; possibly there was fracture of the skull—the details given by the novelist are not very clear. When he left the hospital he was as fat and robust as before, but he was far more of an idiot. He laughed at nothing in particular. He stammered and lisped, and many words he was not able to pronounce properly. He was as obedient as a sheep. When anyone asked him a question, he would repeat the speaker's last word monotonously in a sing-song voice. And so, little better than a brute beast, the poor youth passes from the scene.

As is well known, some idiots and imbeciles are fairly good-looking. But they are rare; the majority are ugly, and often deformed and repulsive in appearance. It will have been observed that the three which have been selected from Zola's novels are described as being remarkably handsome. This is due, I think, to the idiosyncrasy of the novelist. Zola was peculiarly susceptible to physical beauty. He worshipped the charm of form and colour as revealed in the human figure. It is exceedingly rare to meet with an ugly person in his novels, and when one does so, it is generally obvious, I think, that the ugliness is employed to throw into higher relief the beauty of

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the other characters which happen to be on the stage at the same time. Consequently the writer could not refrain, there being no reason to make them repulsive, from clothing even miserable idiots with physical attractions.

Apart from his studies in actual insanity, in his delineation of normal character Zola has made ample use of the symptoms of mental disturbance which are found among the sane. In several places he has shown the effect of fatigue and of starvation on the mind. In others he has described the delirium of sickness and of approaching death. In his novels are to be found examples of delusions, illusions, and hallucinations, particularly of the latter, probably because they lend themselves more than the others to dramatic treatment. He points out with great justness the part played by fatigue, either physical or emotional, in the production of the phenomenon of hallucination. In one of his most realistic descriptions he employs a hallucination, in the production of which both fatigue and expectancy are factors, to heighten the tone of the picture. A railway-train is rushing through a terrible snowstorm, and the engine-driver, worn out by the long journey, is straining his eyes as he endeavours to make out the expected signals in the dazzling whiteness. Again and again he imagines that he sees the red glare which should warn him of danger in the distance. His hands tremble as he grips the lever. But before his muscles can contract, the illusion fades away, and he realises that he is deceived.

Zola's great charm is his mastery of colour, and consequently his power of describing the concrete, but most of his readers will, I think, admit that he also takes a place in the front rank of psychological novelists.

(1) "Dr. Pascal Rougon: Zola's Study of a Savant," *Edin. Med. Journ.*, January, 1917.

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