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The Mark of the Scalpel

Was the body brought to the Navy Yard at Washington, about two weeks after the assassination of President Lincoln, and there seen on a government Steamer that of John Wilkes Booth?

Such is the question I ~~have~~ was often asked at that time both orally and also by letters; ~~of the latter~~ some dictated by patriotism, and others from curiosity.

And it is well known there was much doubt on this subject ~~at that time~~; and strange as it may appear, I have credibly been told there are still persons living who do not believe that was the body of the assassin of the President of the United States.

Personal identification as we know is far from being certain; and especially may this be said of identification after death. Without citing the celebrated and extraordinary case of "the Claimant" many others might be mentioned to show that persons have often been supposed to be living, after the most indubitable evidence to prove they were dead. From them, one very remarkable historical instance

may be selected to show how far popular credulity may be extended ~~by fanatics~~, as to personal identity after death.

The Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate and favorite son of Charles the Second, and ~~also the favorite~~ of the English People, was, as is well known, taken in open rebellion against his Uncle James the Second after the battle of Sedgemoor. He was sent to the Tower, and soon after was brought into the presence of the King, from whom he abjectly begged for life on any terms. He was visited by the Earl of Clarendon Keeper of the Privy Seal, and other high functionaries of the State; and he received spiritual consolation while imprisoned from doctor Thomas Tennison then vicar of St. Martins, and two of the Lords Bishops of England (Turner and Ken), and finally in July 1685 he was publicly beheaded on Tower Hill. And yet after such positive proof of his identity and death, it was for many years afterwards a common belief among the people, that another person, who it was said strongly resembled him, had sacrificed himself for him, and that Monmouth would again appear among them; and in 1698, thirteen years afterwards, and when England was ruled by another dynasty, "the Son of an innkeeper" says Lord Macaulay, "passed himself off on

the yeomanry of Sussex for their beloved Monmouth, and defrauded many who were by no means of the lowest class. Five hundred pounds were collected for him. The farmers provided him with a horse. Their wives sent him baskets of chickens and ducks, and were lavish, it was said, of favors of a more tender kind; for in gallantry at least the counterfeit was a not unworthy representative of the original. When this impostor was thrown into prison for his fraud, his followers maintained him in luxury. Several of them appeared at the bar to countenance him, when he was tried at the Horsham assizes. So long did this delusion last, that, when George the Third had been some years on the English throne, Voltaire thought it necessary gravely to confute the hypothesis, that the man in the iron mask was the Duke of Monmouth!

The question then at the head of this article, need create no very great surprise, even at this capital of time, when all the facts connected with it are known.

Some time before the assassination of President Lincoln, a fashionably dressed, and remarkably handsome young man accompanied by a friend, entered my office in Washington, and introduced himself to me as Mr. Booth. After some ordinary conversation, he told me, "he was playing an engagement with Miss Charlotte Cushman, and [illegible]

much annoyed by a large lump on the back of his neck, which for some time past had been gradually increasing in size, and had begun to show above the collar line of the ordinary theatrical costume". He said, "he wished to have it removed"; and he has particularly enjoined me to say, (if questioned upon the fact of his having undergone a surgical operation), "that it was for the removal of a bullet from his neck". But he did not give any reason for this request. Without promising to observe this injunction, I examined his neck, and found on the back of it, and rather on the left side, quite a large fibroid tumour, but which could have no connection with a bullet, as to its origin, or in any other way. I advised its removal, but at the same time told him, I would take it out on one condition, which was, "that he should suspend his engagement at the theatre, and observe absolute rest". He replied, "he did not wish to do this, in fact, he could not". I then explained to him the importance of his remaining quiet after upon the ground of his personal appearance such an operation, that there were two principal ways, by which a wound made by a surgical operation healed. The first, and most to be desired, by primary adhesion,

by which, if the edges were brought closely together, and kept in contact for some little time, they became directly united, and left so fine a line of cicatrix, as scarcely to be noticed. But that bond of union, though daily becoming stronger, was weak for some days after the adhesion, and could easily be broken by undue violence; and if once broken, the wound would gape, and its edges not be likely to re-unite; and then the space between them would have to fill up with new tissue or flesh, and an ugly scar would be left". After quietly listening to this explanation, he told me in a very decided way he "could not stop playing his engagement, but would be very careful in acting, and moderate his movements, so as to make no strain upon the wound". I saw it was necessary to humour him; for [illegible]. There was so much determination in his manner, as to convince me, he had decided to have the offending object at once removed, and whatever might be the result, he would himself become responsible for it. Compromising with him then upon that basis, I removed it. The wound perfectly united by the primary or direct process, and I congratulated

him upon the slight scar that would be left. But in about a week after it had united, he came one morning to my office, with the wound torn open and widely gaping, and told me, that in some part of the piece he was playing with Miss Cushman, she had to embrace him, and that she did so, with so much force, and so roughly, that the wound opened under her grasp". The indirect and tedious course of healing, by granulation, now followed, and left a large and ugly scar.

Why I have been thus particular, in giving the details of this conversation with Booth, the sequel will show.

I had never seen him before this professional interview, and I never saw him again, after he left my care, until I was called on by government detectives to examine his dead body, brought to the Navy yard at Washington, and there seen on a steamer in the river,

~~I have often spoken of his personal appearance. He was active, and strong in the vigor of health, a fine specimen of manly beauty. With a figure, to him under the medium height, yet finely

~~formed and with features regularly~~
~~and classically moulded. But his eye~~
~~was the most striking object of his~~
~~face, and I think a phrenologist~~
~~could have seen in his large dome~~
~~and boyish brow, a wide and elevated~~
~~intellect. Upon these I dwelt,~~
~~"To do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed."~~

After the death of Booth strong doubt existed whether the body brought to the Navy Yard at Washington was that of the man who had assassinated the President. In fact, ~~it was~~ it was openly asserted, it was not his body. Probably in consequence of this, a commission, of high functionaries of the government was formed to obtain evidence as to the identification of the body, and I received a summons to appear before it. As I was very busily, and as I thought more usefully engaged in rendering services to the living, than in examining the bodies of the dead, and as no authority for the summons was shown,

I did not respond to it, But in a short time, a second and more peremptory message came, directing me to appear before the commission; And as at that time the "Inter arma silent leges" power was in full force, I deemed it most prudent to obey. I therefore started for the Navy Yard with my son, then a mere lad, and now a practising physician in this city. On my way, I ~~met~~ a third messenger (was met) on his way to my house, who was no less than the Chief of the detective corps the noted (~~General~~ Colonel) Baker. He returned, conducted me on board the (steamer ~~Commodore~~), and ushered me into the Cabin where the Commissioners were in session, and by whom, notwithstanding my contumacy, I was politely received. I was then told, that the ~~examination~~ it had been stated to them I had removed a turnour from the neck of Booth, and they wished to know if I could identify the body; and to go on deck, and examine it thoroughly and make my report! The body was on deck, completely concealed by a tarpaulin cover, and Surgeon General Barnes and his assistants standing near it

By his order the cover was removed, and to my great astonishment revealed a body, in whose lineaments, there was to me no resemblance of the man I had known in life! My surprise was so great, I at once said to General Barnes, "There is no resemblance in that Corpse to Booth, nor can I believe it to be that of him". After looking at it for a few moments. I asked "if there was a Scar upon the back of its neck?" He replied "there is". I then said "if that is the body of Booth let me describe the Scar before it is seen by me"; and did so as to its position, its size, and its general appearance so accurately, as caused him to say "you have described the Scar as well as if you were looking at it; and it looks as you have described it, more like the Cicatrix of a burn, than that made by a surgical operation". The body being then turned the back of the neck was examined, and my mark was found by me, unmistakably upon it. And it being afterwards, at my request, placed in a sitting position, standing, and looking down upon it

I was finally enabled to recognize the features of Booth. But never in a human being had a greater change taken place, from the man who I had seen in the vigor of life and health, as that of the haggard corpse which was before me, in its yellow and discolored skin; its unkempt and matted hair; and its whole facial expression sunken and sharpened, by the exposure and starvation it had undergone!

The right lower limb was greatly contracted, and perfectly black, from a fracture of one of the long bones of the leg.

An autopsy was then made by the assistants of General Barnes, which proved that the bullet which killed him, had passed between two of the vertebrae of the neck, causing their fracture, and lesion of the spinal cord.

[illegible]

The body was secretly, and at night, buried in the yard of the Penetentiary, which was not generally known for some time afterwards.

I have thus given a brief account of the Cause, which led to the positive identification of the body of Booth. The details, as I have related them, are still as vivid in my memory, as at the time of their occurrence, for they are inseparably connected with a deed, which brought sorrow and mourning to every house and hamlet in the land; and which produced a shock of horror, that extended not only to the limits of our own country, but whose vibrations were felt throughout the civilization of the world!

That great uncertainty was felt, and that much doubt was expressed at the time of the death of Booth, and long afterwards, as to the identity of his body, is notorious. Nor need this create surprise, for although the circumstances connected with his Capture all tended to corroborate the belief that he had been killed, yet on the body which was produced by his Captors, nearly every vestige of resemblance to the living man had disappeared.

But the mark made by the scalpel during life, remained indelible in death, and settled beyond all question at the time, and all cavil in the future, the identity of the man, who had assassinated the President.

And now ~~at last~~ I may be pardoned in offering some remarks as to the mental condition of Booth, at the time he publicly, in a theatre where he was well known, assassinated the President of the United States. That he was then sane in mind I never have believed. His antecedents and all his actions connected with that dreadful tragedy, I think sustain me in this view. Insanity through inheritance is so well recognised by all men of common sense, as to need no support from expert evidence; for unfortunately, it but too often is manifested by transmission from one, or even a more distant generation to another, to admit of any doubt as to its hereditary nature. That the father of Booth was subject to occasional or periodical attacks of that disease was the opinion of many, while others have characterised the aberrations which he often manifested, both on and off the stage, as the "eccentricities of Genius". I well recollect his acting of ~~Sixty~~ Sixty years since, and he was I think the greatest actor, (and I have seen all the best), that ever trod our stage. But no one who saw him in the latter part of his career, could form a just conception of the magnificent acting of his earlier and palmy days, for he gradually failed until he became a mental wreck. In shape, and form, and feature, as I recollect the elder Booth, the son strongly resembled the father, and if ever there was an eye, which asserted a claim by inheritance in its wild expression

it was that of the younger Booth.
And now let us look at his conduct in the Commission of the crime. He was an actor, and consequently could have disguised himself by a knowledge which was part of his art, so thoroughly, that no one could possibly have known him. Did he do this? No: but publicly in the sight of every one, and without the slightest attempt at concealment, he fired the fatal shot, and in ~~glorying~~ glorying in the act and shouting the well known motto of Virginia, he sprung from the box in which he committed the deed upon the stage breaking his leg; but yet ~~[illegible]~~ facing the audience, and in the full blaze of light he flourished aloft in a stage like attitude a dagger ~~[illegible]~~ and proclaimed "the South is avenged"; and not until he given ~~[illegible]~~ this theatrical exhibition, did he cross the stage and fly. Would any sane man have acted in this way? Would the ~~[illegible]~~ if connected only by ~~[illegible]~~ private or public ~~[illegible]~~ openly ~~[illegible]~~ have sought his victim in a crowded theatre, where he was so well known and without the least attempt at disguise proclaimed his infamy to the world as if acting a part upon the stage? I think not, but believe that Booth when he committed that dell crime, was driven to it

by another impulse than solely the gratification of diabolical malice and revenge.

The public manner of its commission; the seeming desire to make himself known from the stage as its author; the theatrical display with which he announced it; his entire conduct throughout this dreadful tragedy, all proved to me, he believed he had done a noble deed which would place his name high upon the scroll of future fame; a deed, which in the hackneyed yet expressive lines of the hump-backed tyrant he dead after impersonated on the stage, would like

"The aspiring youth that fir'd the Ephesian dome
Outlive in fame the pious fool that rais'd it"

And

If such was the motive which impelled him to it, it could only have originated in "a mind diseased"; a madmans brain!

And again let us look at the circumstances connected with his capture, the details of which though given for the greater part from my own memory, have recently been verified by the Chronicles of the times, and especially the accounts given by those who captured him. He crossed the Potomac river near Seven Point from the Maryland side, with the youth Harold, although the lower counties were swarming with Cavalrymen and detectives in his pursuit. It is stated sixteen hundred of the former, and six hundred of the latter were in lower Maryland looking for him. But a special detail of twenty five men of the 16th New York Cavalry, commanded by Lieut Dougherty, was put under the charge of Col Conger and Lieut Baker of the detective corps. After he had wandered for many days and nights, half starved and often shelterless, through the woods and swamps of the Maryland and Virginia shores, upon a broken limb they finally tracked him to Garretts farm near Port Royal on the Rappahannock river, in Caroline county, on the opposite side of the river, and found him sleeping in a barn, about two hours before the early dawn. And thus caught, caged and surrounded, but undismayed, he rose up from his lair like some wild and wounded animal brought to bay, and Gripping around it, weapon in hand, refused in a loud clarion reply, heard distinctly at the house one hundred yards distant, every proposal to surrender. The order to the Soldiers was to take him alive, but they felt it

was as dangerous to enter that barn, as if it held an escaped tiger. A parley of an hour and a quarter ensued, during which he seriously proposed as a condition of leaving the barn, a series of single combats or duels in the open field; that he would come out and face and fight his enemies one and all, if they would only meet him singly, and each one in his turn; a proposition so absurd and wild, that it could only have proceeded from a crazed and bewildered brain: Harold endeavoured to persuade him to surrender, but this only increased his rage, and with fearful curses on him as a coward, he bade him leave him: he did so, and was immediately seized and handcuffed by Conger. Booth had been warned the cabin would be fired unless he laid down his arms and surrendered, for it was stored with straw and hay; but his answer was "to fight the soldiers in detail". Finally, some straw was drawn through a crevice and ignited, and in a few moments the interior was in a blaze of light; and then dropping his carbine, he crouched on his hands and knees and "animal-like rapidly crept towards the point where the fire had been started", & shot with one of his revolvers the man who had applied the match. From an account written a few days after his death, and by one who had it from his captors, the appearance of a maniac at that moment cannot better be described. "His eyes were lustrous like

from fever,
and swelled and rolled in terrible beauty,
while his teeth were fixed, and he wore the
expression of one in the calmness before frenzy" *
But with vengeance gleaming in his eyes, he
sought his foe in vain; for the fire which was
fast encircling him concealed him from
his view. And thus, literally "Cribb'd, Cabin'd and
Confin'd", and surrounded by fire, he
stood firm and erect, almost envelloped in its flames,
with his carbine poised to action and defiant to
the last. At this moment, the Sergeant Corbett
the company contrary to orders, fired a shot through
an opening he found between the logs, which
put an end soon after to the existence of a man, whose
actions throughout and appearance this drunk tragedy, were those
of a madman!

Most writers on mental diseases have noticed
the insensibility of many maniacs to pain
and extremes of temperature. Foville, ~~Esquirol~~
Esquirol, Spurzheim, Rush and others have
given numerous instances of this nature.
Says Foville, under the head of "False
perceptions relative to general sensibility"
"These disarrangements, from the most simple and
circumscribed, to those which are of a more

* "Nat[l] Intelligencer" article signed G.A.T.

General and complete nature, are constantly seen in the practice of mental diseases. Many of these afflicted creatures appear to suffer, support the most intense degrees of heat and cold! "I have at this moment under my care, a man, who believes himself dead since the battle of Austerlitz, where he was badly wounded. His delirium is founded on the idea, that he no longer recognises or feels his body. He has often fallen into a state of complete insensibility, which has lasted for several days. Sinapisms and blisters applied for this condition have not caused the slightest pain. I have often examined the sensibility of his skin, by pinching his arms and legs, and to be certain he was not feigning, I have pricked him severely in the back, while talking to him, without his feeling it."*

But the most extraordinary and almost incredible case of this insensibility to pain, is that of the Maniac Damiens, who suffered for attempting, in the year 1757, the life of Louis XV, and to whom a thousand horrible tortures were

*Dictionnaire de Médecine et de Chirurgie pratiques

But [redacted] the most extraordinary instances of human endurance [redacted] under tor-
=tures unparalled in the history of criminal pun-
=ishment is that of the maniac Damiens who was
executed for an attempt on the life of Louis XV in
the year 1757. The king surrounded by his courtiers
was about to enter his carriage, when he was
slightly wounded [redacted] in the side from a knife,
by this insane man, who was immediately seized.
He was subjected to the preliminary torture, that
remnant of feudal barbarism which still remained
in France, to extort a confession of his having accomplices.
Though submitted to its most cruel tests, he denied
having any, but said he had asked to be freely
bled, (feeling no doubt his paroxysm of madness
was approaching) and that if this had been done
he would not have committed the act.
In a few days after this, the following was the punishment
inflicted.
His right hand which held the knife was burned
over a brazier filled with charcoal mixed with
Sulphur, and after this had been done, his limbs
and body were torn in pieces with red hot pincers,
and burning oil, resin, melted lead and sulphur
were alternately poured into his wounds. He was
then securely bound to a St. Andrews Cross, which
was horizontally fastened on a strong platforme
and four powerful horses were attached to his

limbs in order to seperate them from his body. These horses excited by the lashes of the Whip and the shouts of the drivers, made three seperate efforts to do this, and each time failed; such is the strength of the mechanism of the human frame. A surgeon (Boyer) who was officially present knowing this fact, advised that the great ligaments of the joints should be divided, which being done by the executioner with a hatchet his limbs finally seperated, one at a time, after this torture of one hour and a half (~~precedes~~ last), during which he lived, and only expired as the last limb (one of his arms) parted from his body!

A writer in a well known Medical journal devoted to the diseases of the mind, in alluding to the insensibility to pain and wonderful tenacity of life evinced by this ~~hero~~ Maniac says: "His torture was one hour and a half, during which no sigh or groan escaped him; on the contrary he joked, and exhibited often characteristics of a madman; and he continued to live after his lower limbs were seperated, raising his head occasionally to survey his mutilations!" *

The facts connected with the execution of Damiens are historical, and by no one who has described them can I find this account as to this complete insensibility, questioned. But it is true de bene this

* "American Journal of Insanity" for October 1846

and in the words of Sanson the executioner

fearful punishment with intrepid firmness, "at times defied and stimulated" his tormentors in their diabolical work, and gave only at the commencement of it, such signs of pain as are inseparable from human nature.

Such, for a feeble and abortive attack upon royalty, upon one of "the Lords Anointed," was the punishment something over a century and a quarter ago, inflicted by man, upon his fellow man, whose reason had been darkened by Mans Creator!

There is nothing in the history of human progress, which more clearly demonstrates the advancement of the mind in all its humane and manlier interests, than the morbid curiosity, and the depressed indifference, with which this disgusting exhibition was witnessed, at the time of its perpetration, and the disgust and horror, which the bare recital of it now creates. There was not a window or available spot around the Place de Grève, the scene of this awful tragedy, which was not bought up and filled, by the thousands of a great city. Not only the people, but the nobles of enlightened France were there; and her titled women, as well as men; The Peer and the Princess stood together, little dreaming how near was the day of their own dread retribution, to feast their eyes upon a sight which for atrocity and infernal cruelty, had never been approached, by all the devilish devices practiced on his victim at the stake, by the wild and painted Savage of America in his bygone days!

* Mémoires des Sanson Tome 2

Nor can it excite any wonder that a country in which such deeds could be committed a little more than a century and a quarter ago, was in a little more than a quarter of a century after its commission, lighted up by the fires of a Revolution, which could only be extinguished by a deluge of blood. Yet as the fire of the electric bolt though fearfully destructive in its course, purifies in its passage from the clouds, the atmosphere which surrounds it, so, the terrific fire of that Revolution purified the moral atmosphere of France, for when it had clicked out it had forever destroyed the power of her Kings and Nobles and advanced the political rights of her People.

Many pages might be filled with cases of this insensibility to both local and general pain and extremes of temperature by maniacs.

The master mind which wrote for all time, whose knowledge of nature was universal, and whose pen seldom if ever errs in portraying her in all her varied forms, aware of this truth, has thus finely expressed the insensibility of the mad king to the elements, when addressing Kent in the Storm scene in "King Lear"

Lear "

Lear. "Thou think'st 't is much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin: So 't is to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd
The lesser is scarce felt. When the mind's free
The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there."

I firmly believe it was this indifference both to the elements and to pain, from this "tempest in the mind", ~~which the greater excitement had lulled,~~ which enabled Booth to elude his enemies so long, in a section of country swarming with them and completely under their control. How else can we account for the indomitable spirit, by which unsheltered at night, and famished by day, he wandered for twelve days and nights over forest and through glen on a broken limb, and when at last hunted down with a maniacs look and rage hurled defiance at his foes, while enveloped in flames and standing on the very verge of death?

Such are the principal grounds which have always led me to believe, Booth was a monomaniac, when he assassinated President Lincoln, and the consideration of many of his acts, prior to that time, have only tended to confirm this belief. Inheriting by nature the temperament of his father, like him he became madly excited in the ordinary performance of his art; for his passions rose to a fevered heat, in the mimic acts of the characters he personated on the Stage, & in the fleeting scenes of some of the plays of the great dramatist, such as Richard and Macbeth, he became so "madly frenzied", that his fellow actors actually feared to encounter him; for his onslaught on them was often more real than feigned, and the records of the Stage are full of their mishaps. On one of those occasions he wounded McCulloh, and while the blood was streaming from his face, quietly asked if he had hurt him; On another he threw or drove "the Richmond of the night among the drums and fiddles of the Orchestra". Thus fitful and tempestuous by nature in the mimic drama of the Stage, and ever brooding for months over the greater drama of the war as it was culminating in & towards the subjection of the South, his distorted vision

converted the red and emblematic stripes of his Countrys flag into "bloody gashes in the face of heaven", inflicted on her by the north.* And thus with blood ever streaming on its folds, when they floated before his distempered brain, (as the red flag displayed in the arena infuriates the bull,) it goaded and maddened him to the commission of a crime which has forever consigned his name to infamy!

There have been three attempts to assassinate the President of the United States since the foundation of the Republic, two of which unfortunately were fatal but two were not. The first was by a crazy fool, an Englishman by birth, who attempted by a pistol shot, to kill General Andrew Jackson, while he was attending a funeral ceremony at the Capitol, in the month of January 1835. The President was about to pass through the eastern door of the rotunda, escorted on either side by a Senator, when this foreign lunatic, whose name was Lawrence, at about the distance of eight or ten feet, either snapped or fired a pistol at him. Colonel Benton states in his "Thirty years in the U.S. Senate", that the weapon snapped, and that a second pistol was also snapped by Lawrence at the President; and this is also the statement given by Parton

* See Booths letter, written some months before he committed his crime, and addressed "To all whom it may concern", in which he thus describes the flag of the Union as appearing to him.

This is also the statement given by Benton in his "Life of General Jackson". But I believe their account is at least doubtful. Mr Thomas Scrivener of this City, who is still living, was at the time one of the regular police of the Capitol building, and in that capacity was present, and not only witnessed the whole occurrence, but assisted in searching Lawrence after he was arrested. In a very recent interview I had with him, he was very positive, that the pistol was fired, and that the impression made by the bullet was plainly visible on the frame work of the door. He was also equally positive, that no second pistol was snapped, or found upon the prisoner. "The old hero", says my informant, "was for some moments perfectly unmanagable, and his hair seemed to bristle from rage, and he was with much difficulty restrained from attacking his assailant with his cane; and only when he was told the man was known to be insane, could he be pacified."

The insanity of Lawrence was clearly established, and he was sent to an Insane Asylum, and kept there until he died.

The second, and but too fatal attack upon the President was that of Booth.

The third, and let us devoutly trust it may be the last, that of comparatively recent date, which happened at a time of profound peace and prosperity, and when none of the exciting causes existed from a fratricidal war to unbalance the mind. Yet the evidences of quite as much insanity were to my mind conclusive. His vacillating conduct prior to the commission of his crime; the place and manner of its execution; the motive which he assigned that impelled him to it; his expectation of immunity from punishment, and protection from the second officer of the Government; and his subsequent behaviour, especially during his trial, all clearly proved to me he was an insane man. But a long and most patient trial satisfied the Court and jury that tried him of his responsibility for his crime, and the verdict was fully ratified by the nation. And for its further satisfaction an autopsy of his brain was ordered, and it was confidently stated by those who made it, that it was in a normal condition, and consequently indicated no traces of insanity. And it may be added, nor was there much likelihood of proof being furnished from that or

~~Could~~ any autopsy to have established the converse of that statement; for the anatomist is unable with any degree of certainty, to demonstrate by physical examination the mysterious cause of the varied mental phenomena of the brain either in health or in disease; or to prove from it after death, what must have been the mental condition of the individual during life.

What, we may ask, is it, in its construction which leads forth individual thoughts and actions, that leave their impress not only upon the age in which they are born, but which cause the names that have produced them to live for all time? What is it in the organization of that earthly tenant of

"The dome of thought, the palace of the Soul",

which has enabled it during its brief sojourn here below, to determine the laws that govern matter, and by their aid to survey the starry vault above, and measure with unerring precision the forces that direct not only the planet on which it lives, but those of the countless worlds that are ever revolving in the infinitude of Space? And again, what is it in that same Organ which reduces man in his instincts and in his passions, lower than the lowest animal of the brute creation? Compare the brains of the two; of the brilliant genius and the Stupid human brute, and they will be found in appearance alike. In form, in texture, in color, in consistence, in internal and external arrangement they are the same; and even in size and quantity that of the fool will occasionally outweigh that of the philosopher;

that of the philosopher; and the anatomist might be puzzled even though aided by phrenology to tell to which each brain belonged. Science is compelled to pause here, and perhaps it has gone no further. It cannot give a satisfactory explanation of this mental mystery. It is a psychological enigma which the scalpel cannot solve; for it cannot reveal the mysterious connection between the brain and the mind; the relation between the material and the spiritual; the link which connects perishable matter with the immortal Soul!

It is, therefore, in vain that the pathologist has endeavoured to explain with any certainty from the organ of the mind, the changes which it presents when diseased. It is true he has found certain conditions, such as increased vascularity effusions in its ventricles and elsewhere; alterations in consistence and color adhesions and other structural changes in the brains and skulls of maniacs, but these are far from being constant, and the same have been found in others, in whom no symptom of insanity had existed. In fact the same appearances which some pathologists have given, as to be sometimes seen in insane persons have also been found in those whose minds have been remarkable for intellectual power. The brain of the celebrated mathematician Lagrange presented the same condition as that which had been described by Morgagni as characteristic of

certain ~~cases~~ (29) forms of mania, in chronic
The truth is, that ~~in many persons~~ insanity the
often
brain gives no ~~certain~~ evidence of the disease.

A celebrated writer (Foville), who has studied as profoundly the state of the brain in mental derangement, as any one of our time, and who has obliged us
~~although~~ he has ~~not~~ shown by innumerable dissections, the alterations which it presents when diseased, yet if different
thus Speaks of the labors of others who had preceded him upon the same subject.
"Many physicians reject altogether the results of patho-logical anatomy applied to mental derangement; for one of their arguments is, that the results are different in different subjects, and consequently nothing Conclusive Can be reached. I admit the various results which I have enumerated, seem to one too vague to enable us to draw any precision from them." And Pinel who devoted his life to the same study affirmed, "that the most exact dis-Sections have as yet shown us nothing, as to the seat of mental diseases, and that the derangements of the functions of the mind, which ordinarily are the result of alterations of the brain, do not enable us positively to draw the Conclusion that the brain is exclusively the organ of the soul".

While Gall and Spurzheim who assert that the brain is not a single organ, but an assemblage of as many organs as there are particular moral and intellectual fac-ulties, which they have located and classified upon it, and have thus endeavoured to give precision to their sep-arate functions, have yet been Compelled to admit that "there are a great number of cases, where notwithstanding the most considerable derangements of the intellectual faculties, no defect has been discovered in the brain."

~~Prichard has observed with~~ ~~Esquirol~~ Esquirol observes

So uncertain has physical exploration in insanity proved that some have sought its primary cause ~~in acting~~ upon the brain in other organs of the body as the liver the stomach and intestines the heart and even the spleen; While others more visionary have endeavored to show it was not a physical affection but ~~that~~ of the soul itself; a doctrine too absurd for serious consideration, and repulsive to every feeling of reason, for evil must crop the dark line of the materialist to suppose that the soul like vile perishable matter is susceptible of decay or change.

When the ancient philosophers located the seat of the soul in the Pineal Gland of the brain, I think they approached about as near the truth as does modern science when it undertakes to give positive proof through physical research of those conditions of the brain, which produce the varied phenomena of mental derangement.

And to the three things which the wise man of old confessed were "too wonderful for him"* for they left no trace of their passage, might be added that of the mysterious working of the human brain both in health and in disease!

My Object, when I commenced this article, was only to give an account of the identification

* Proverbs Chap XXX ver 18

of the body of Booth; but I have incidentally
stated
been led to express the opinion I have always
entertained and often expressed of his mental condition, and that
also of his fellow assassin, at the time of the
commission of their crimes. If in alluding
to the autopsy of Guiteau, I have expressed
views as to the uncertainty of examina-
tions of the brain after death throwing
positive or certain light upon its actions
during life, it has been to disabuse a popular
belief which I think exists upon this subject;
that such proof is conclusive. And it may
be added, its length has been extended from
my desire to show, what it has given me much
consolation to believe, that for the credit of our
Country none but madmen have assailed
with murderous intent the Chief Magistrate
of the Nation since the foundation of the
Republic.

Jno. Fredk. May. M.D.

Washington
Jan'y 10' 1887