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"We do not take possession of our ideas, but are possessed by them,
They master us and force us into the arena,
Where, like gladiators, we must fight for them."—HEINE.

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THE CONFESSIONS OF A DIPSOMANIAC.

EDITED BY WILLIAM LEE HOWARD, M.D.

"WAS I insane during these attacks?" Yes, but it was a strange and weird insanity. I knew I was myself, but had no power to be myself. This appears paradoxical, but it is not. I was myself merely in the gross body-form; my ego was, for the time being, *non est*. I was rational and lucid in act and speech, but it was not the rationality and lucidity of my real self; it was always the conduct of a personality the antithesis of my own. I would be stopped in the midst of important studies or professional work—life work—and plunged into quite a different life which was taken up with enthusiasm and continued to the day when I became myself again, when I returned—and here is an astonishing fact—with freshened mental powers for the work I had been forced to leave. That is the word which expresses it, *forced* by my other powerful personality.

Some one says: "Religion is the life of God in the soul of man"; well, what is this life that enters my soul and drags me down to the level of the beast? When it leaves I suddenly rise up to that intellectual and moral plane which is my birthright. Is it my birthright? Sometimes I think not, for in my dipsomaniacal periods I am so comfortable, so mind free, so joyous and active, aimlessly moving from place to place, town to town, saloon

to saloon, dive to dive. During these periods this slothful indolence seems natural to me. I know I am not *I*, yet I am content to be what I am, for there is a hazy remembrance that when I am myself I have hard mental work, responsibilities, anxieties; all of which my second personality is free from, and which all the wealth of the city could not tempt it to assume again.

I have been free from these periodical attacks of dipsomania for several years—cursed by an understanding of the cause—and now the memory of these ruinous periods is vivid in patches, yet as I write there remain lacunæ throughout the horrible ten years which memory never has filled. My thoughts now are free from remorse or fear, for in my final rise from the cavernous depths of despair to the beautiful light of hope and the possession of an unshackled mind, I can convey to the world my experiences, and to the silent and secret sufferer give hope and encouragement.

I shall have to be a little retrospective, to go back to the early symptoms of uncontrollable impulses, which, had they been recognized by parents and physicians as forerunners of worse—ruinous in most cases—outbreaks of temporary insanity, would have saved me a life of disgraceful

periods, of lost friends, alienated relatives, and the horror, the fear, of self. That this condition was not recognized was due to that curse of Puritanism which makes so many individuals see nothing in certain acts—in reality the objective symptoms of disease—but vice and sin, and in the acts of a religious ascetic and hysteric—also the symptoms of disease—the influence of a mysterious power; the acts of a religious maniac being governed by God; those of the dipsomaniac by the Devil.

But, I forgot; I said I was now sane, and yet this latter paragraph sounds something like those repeated when volubly giving philosophic orations in some dark dive to a lot of dirty parasites who obsequiously listened for the sake of the "Come on, fellows, have another one," which they knew would be the peroration of every philippic delivered hourly throughout the days and nights.

I was bright at school; too bright for my own good, for I did not have to spend much time in studying, and this left me hours of idleness; for I could not even at that age, thirteen, apply my mind more than an hour to any one subject. After this short period any attempt at further studious application started my heart bounding upward with big, vigorous leaps. I grew nervous, would fidget about, have to slam down a book or desktop, and end in leaving the room even against the teacher's orders. The impulse to get away was so powerful that if I were restrained I would strike with any weapon handy. Now I know I was always insane during these periods—not legally (what a farce of learning and insult to science is the lawyers' idea of insanity), but medically insane, for I knew that what I was doing was wrong, but no power but death could stop that impulse to get away from restraint. Nothing could check the force of those impulses during childhood; nothing could check the wild rushes for alcohol after I grew to manhood and had a wife, children, financial and moral responsibilities. No, not even on the eve

of some great event which meant honor and riches, for when the dissolution of my first personality set in, I would be pushed, dragged away, by the displacing personality. Desiring only to elude reason, I would gleefully become submerged by this other self which cared naught but for moral palsy and mental dissociation.

Don't misunderstand me. I did have moral suasion, kind appreciation by one dear, good, old man—many of my readers have a warm spot for him in their hearts—and I also once had a beating from a man whose impulses were not under much better control than mine. But this was the first and last attempt any teacher made to whip me, for I broke a quart bottle of ink over his head; was dismissed as incorrigible, and it was then that I fell into the hands of the good, old man. I think he had an idea of the true state of affairs—that I needed medical attendance, not corporeal punishment. For a year or so I was allowed to have my own way; I would study at short intervals—keeping well up in my class—then with gun or rod roam the woods and pastures in solitude. Oh! how I did enjoy those solitary walks. I loved the solitude for the sense of non-irritation it gave me. I was only lonesome when with the boys.

Approaching adolescence the second phase in my psychic life began. At this period I began to realize that of the psychic side of life, even of those psychic conditions whose basic causes were physical, most physicians were ignorant. Had the doctors given a little thought to this side of human life, I might have been saved from much misery and disgrace.

Every month or so a fit of morbid despondency came over me, when I would roam the town and country for hours, and upon my return tell the most marvelous stories of deeds and sights. I was a hero; a philanthropist. O, what did I not say! Good people were accused of being bad; bad of being good; and all the statements, everything, were told with such marvelous detail of facts and ingenious methods that they would be believed

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until they were proven false. Three or four days of such conduct would end in headaches and depression, followed by attacks of wretched sickness and profuse vomiting of bile, after which I would recover with oblivion of all I had told and acted previous to the attacks of vomiting. Fear of self, remorse, agony, only came when I realized that teachers and scholars pronounced me a liar, and when I was my real self, my heart's statements of the simplest facts would not be believed. This feeling of being misunderstood, or being considered a wilful falsifier, made my days a series of misery and shame.

Conditions did not improve, and my erratic conduct at school became intolerable to me and subversive to the best interest of the scholars. I was placed under tutors and finally fitted for college. It was there I first realized what relief from my horrible periods of restlessness and fear of self could be obtained by drinking liquor.

One day the old feeling of mental and physical weakness; the clouded brain, the wavering will, the cowering timidity, all, all were forcing me to get away from myself. Then the suggestion of a medical student, an acquaintance—for I had few, if any, intimate friends—that I needed a stimulant, was acted upon, and the glory of Heaven, the waters of Lethe, the peace and mental rest of the garden of the Hesperides, were all mine, all mine!

What joy; what æsthetic relief, what a curse, what a benefit, was this discovery! How, you will ask, could it have been both a curse and a benefit? Curse, because when these periodical attacks of insanity came on, the secondary psychic self cried, shrieked for alcohol—alcohol in any form; and it was literally poured down my throat in quantities sufficient to stupefy and deaden the senses of most men, but only kept active the physical energies of my secondary self. There were no more headaches, no more wretched, nauseous vomiting; no more mental restlessness throughout fearful days and sleepless nights; but a roaming

and purposeless period devoid of care during which I was bright, but irresponsible, in speech, yet appearing sober and sane in conversation to a stranger to my other self, the true self.

As will be readily seen, such attacks broke up studies, engagements, positions and friendships. Its curse was the blackest ever placed on man. It was the stone of Sisyphus; for just as I had reached through a studious and calm period some point upward in progress, this damnable incubus would, in its insatiable and uncontrollable demand for its alcoholic pabulum, roll its blacky mass against me, and hurl me again, bruised and torn, to the bottom of the hill.

But in what lay the benefit of these horrible attacks of insanity? The discovery I made, which I hope will rebound to the future happiness and welfare of my fellow men.

Dipsomania is a symptom of disease, not the disease itself, and the disease being understood, the symptoms—which have ruined many a happy home, blighted many a brilliant brain, and placed the stigma of drunkenness on the undeserved—may be kept under control, and finally entirely suppressed, as the disease yields to modern scientific treatment. However, that is the medical side of the story, and this is not a place for a treatise on therapeutics.

For a time matters went on systematically; that is, I accepted my condition of alternating personalities as a case of *damnosa hereditas*, and when I felt the oncoming of an attack, disappeared from my residence, or wherever my normal self was occupied; and as we shall see, conditions made these places numerous. At first the periods would last but a few days, hence I easily accounted for my absence; but as the years rolled on the periods became lengthened until they began to lap over onto to those of the normal self, and I became a useless, happy vagabond, with but dim memory for my other self and no inclination to stimulate that memory.

At college I managed to keep my con-

dition a secret until the senior year. This is readily understood when it is remembered that the dipsomaniac never drinks except during the attacks of insanity, and it is the insanity that causes him to drink, and not the drink that causes the insanity. So I was known as a teetotaler, for I had had but two attacks each college year, and managed to get out of the town before any attack held me in its fearful grasp; though I had some narrow escapes.

I was working hard for examination; had almost finished an article for senior competition which I believe had every qualification for success, when the cursed uncontrollable impulse came suddenly over me. It was the hour when the nervous system had reached one of its lowest points of daily resistance, between three and four o'clock P. M., that I rose from my desk with bounding pulse, flushed cheeks and weakening limbs and the most horrible fear of self, and locked the door. The strange and fearful dissolution of self was about to take place. "O, I knew it!" I cried. I *would* fight it out; my work had to be done in a week; I would not go out, for I realized my great danger if I once went onto the street. O, how I paced the floor, arguing with my other self! We cursed each other; debated the matter in a scientific manner. I said: "No, I will stay here and work, I must stay here. I *must* finish this work."

My secondary self said: "True, but your nerve-cells are exhausted; they must have rest. Go; go out for a walk and get something to eat and drink; then come home, and after a night's rest you will be able to work again."

"But will you let me come back?" piteously cried my fast-failing first personality. "Won't you persuade me, force me, by all the pleasurable promises of an unworried mind, of a dream of the opium-paradise without the hellish after-effects of the drug? Won't you show me that life is joy, happiness, and free from this horrible restlessness and feverish anxiety which penetrates every nerve in my body, which paralyzes every action of my soul?"

Yes, yes, that's it, I am soul-sick; I can no longer apply my mind to my subject. What's the use? I can do no more work. It only means a hot skin, dry lips, sessile tongue, and mental misery. It's useless, hopeless. O, God! why should I suffer the tortures of Hell which mental work brings, when I can have the pleasures of Heaven with mental rest? I cannot stand it. Kill myself? I will, unless I can escape consciousness, elude reason."

"Rest, peace, oblivion," were sounded in my ears; the words came rolling into a struggling memory, hovering over fighting thoughts; my limbs trembled, and my parched lips had their skin torn as I tried to utter words of self-reproach and curses to those who gave me life. I remember rushing down the stairs and onto the street where I was at once forced by this other horrible self which took possession of my trembling body, to the end of the town, thence up an evil-smelling alley and into a dark, opprobrious den of shame.

The low-ceiled room was dimly lighted by a smoking lamp; the cheap, wet and foul bar over which fouler alcoholic drinks were served; the beetle-browed barkeeper, the mephitic atmosphere—the bi-product of diseased beings—were conditions which made for me an impression of a distant view of Paradise, while the poisonous liquors were the nectars and ambrosias of the gods, and the fear of self ceased; restlessness of body disappeared, and I stood at that bar in sweet content, elbows and arms wallowing in the wet filth, until the rays of the sun could be slightly discerned through the ragged slits in the black curtains.

So passed the second and third day; without sleep, without food, the one desire, passion, impulse controlling me, being *drink*. Not drink for its taste, not alcohol for the exhilaration it gives to the normal person, not for its intoxicating effects, but because it brought me mental rest, freedom from fear of others; a peculiar fear that was neither physical nor moral, but of something uncertain, yet threatening me, of some past existence,

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Was I not justified in believing that these were periods when the soul or life of a past personality entered my somatic entity and used it as a vehicle while enjoying its vile pleasures? Here, in this vermin-infected hole, unwashed, unhungered, I was as familiar as though born and bred in the place. Every thief, bum, drunkard and opium-smoker seemed to be an acquaintance, and I soon knew the history of each and every one; held the secrets of many a robbery and "knock-out" escape; understood the "lingo" of my companions and entered body and soul into their lives.

Remember, I had never before been in the place; had not known such a place existed, and although I have at present a vivid memory of the dive, I have no memory of its location.

How long I remained in the place I cannot tell within a few days. The second personality left me—as it always did in subsequent attacks—at once, after a deep sleep, and this sleep would follow after a few hours' abstinence from liquor; but not until every tissue in my body had been soaked, steeped, for days, and later on for weeks, in the vilest spirits. I write these details to show the great difference between my periods of alternating personalities and drunken sprees. When I awoke in the dark, little room off the bar-room, I felt fresh, strong and young. Dissolution had been replaced by rejuvenescence. I was myself, and with an impulse to get away from the place equally as powerful as was the other to get there, I glided out by the rear unnoticed, and hurried into the country. Once there, I sat and pondered and waited for the night, meanwhile trying by constant bathing in a stream to rid myself of the stench and vermin carried away from the lupanars' hole. So suddenly and clearly had my first personality returned that I found myself appropriately repeating Juvenal's saying regarding Messalina: "Obscurisque genis turpis, fumoque lucernæ

foeda lupanaris tulit ad pulvinar odorem."

Night coming on, I secretly reached my room and got some money I had left there; packed a bag and left town and college with all it meant to me. I was uncertain at that time of almost everything that had occurred, but I knew some explanation would have to be given for my absence, and that I could not give a coherent one, I realized. But what I was in the most fear of was that some of my dive companions would recognize me on the street and greet me as the individual *they* knew; that other, horrible, disgusting, personality.

I readily secured a position upon a metropolitan paper where I worked industriously and successfully for eight months. I was myself during this time, and my rise to a responsible position was rapid. Fear of the recrudescence of my second personality had somewhat abated, and I began to see a joyous future, a creditable career, and had marked out my work for the next few years. One morning the managing editor called me to his room and said he had decided to intrust me with a very important and delicate mission. This involved a long journey, but if I were successful the position of the London office was mine. Could anything have been more hopeful? Could I have had any better evidence of ability to get along in life? O, how merry and light-hearted I was when I went to our little flat and told the boys!

I was to leave the next afternoon on an ocean steamer. I had been paid my salary before leaving the office and was to call in the morning for my letter of credit.

I remember how light-spirited I was during dinner, and how bright the world seemed to me as we all chatted until the boys had to go to their assignments.*

*One marked peculiarity in cases of dipsomania is the height of mental and physical content just before the psychic explosion. It is always a symptom to be watched for in dealing with these cases. [The editor of these notes is Dr. WILLIAM LEE HOWARD, of Baltimore. The "Confessions" were intrusted to his supervision, and the psychologic facts are from his pen.—Editor THE ARENA.]

I sat up studying foreign maps until about midnight, when suddenly, O, horror! that old familiar sensation passed over me. I shook, trembled, and sank into a chair. "Stop!" I cried, "Stop! No, no; you cannot, will not, take possession of me. See, I can study the maps all right," and as I said this I picked up the atlas. O, God! what is this I see. Red, red, red all over the page, with those dancing black spots scintillating by contrast. Now they are intermingled with darting flashes of blue, purple and green, each color sending a separate and intense pain through my heated brain. Yet they fascinate me; I no longer see aught save the brilliant colors; the darting, happy fairy-spots. My skin feels drawn like parchment; my eyes burn, my lips are glued together and my hair feels dry and bristly. With a start I looked into the glass. It is not myself I see, for grinning in the mirror is a face upon which are the lineaments of age, the glaring eyes of fright, the yellow, dry skin of the debauchée and the interchanging appearances of fear, joy; joy, fear, and gradually horror recedes from the burning eyes and stuporous joy and maudlin content takes its place.

I do not remember how great a struggle I made to remain in the room; not much probably, for there was little left of my first personality; hence there were no opposing forces. My true ego was gone, driven out, submerged, poisoned to deep stupor, and my poor body was driven whither this viperous second personality willed.

The story of the next nine months is not pleasant reading. I remember the tramp's camp, the hut on the mountains—which I think were in New Jersey—and the days and nights in a cellar, where the dregs—black and white—of unfortunate humanity existed and were happy. Yes, in their slothful indolence happy as far as I could understand; and even my soul was content as long as my secondary ego controlled it. There were no perception or idea of time, such belongs to the worker, not to the happy vagabond. It was not

with the lewd or distinctly criminal classes that my body possessor consorted; but with the dirty, lazy bum. Where the liquor I drank came from, I do not know. I must, of course, have used the money I had in my clothes, but as nothing but the rankest and vilest spirits satisfied us, a few dollars went a long way.

What were my thoughts and memories during these periods? Did I realize that I had lost all? That from a respected and brilliant man I had sunk beneath the level of beasts, who at least wash; that never again could I regain the confidence of my employers whom I had so disgracefully deceived? Did I realize in any manner that my prospects were gone? That I was morally *dead*? Did I, you will ask, have any such knowledge of myself?

No, I did not. My second personality was almost, not quite, oblivious to the first. When I was myself, I had indifferent recollections of the life and habits of the second personality; all of which, however, I tried to drive away; for fear, discouragement and remorse several times pushed me to the point of suicide. But I did want to succeed; to try again; and I was always hopeful when governed by my first personality. The reputation in newspaper work and literature my first personality had made enabled me to always get a position, though I never applied for one in any city from which I had been driven by my cursed second personality.

On account of the peculiar conditions existing in my double personality it may interest the reader if I offer some explanation anent alternating personalities.

I believe all phenomena to be natural phenomena, and hence explainable by natural methods of observation and induction. While some phenomena are at present unexplainable, yet there is a daily increase of our knowledge, in our application of that knowledge, and a vast improvement in the development of human individuality, all of which argues for a clearer understanding of these phenomena in the future. I think I may state

without fear of contradiction that to-day the referring of any unexplainable phenomena to supernatural causes belongs to a class outside of the medical and allied scientific circles.

In speaking of double personality, I refer to a physical condition which dissociates the elements of the mind and then combines them into a distinct, separate and strange personality. During this state the individual has no true recognition of his normal state. He bears a different name, has another occupation, perhaps resides in a distant town from his own, acts rationally, and is fairly successful in his new vocation. He suddenly returns to his primary self, and goes back to home and business. During the period of time he is another individual, another personality; a period of time which may last for weeks or years, and during which he has no consciousness of the existence of his normal body, or rather, no lucid consciousness belonging to that body. Under such conditions an individual has a perfect dual existence, so far as continuity of conscious events is concerned. These cases are not as uncommon as one unfamiliar with morbid states would imagine.

It is undoubtedly true that it is some physical state which causes these interesting phenomena of double and multiple personalities; but, as we have no certain knowledge as to the manner in which physical states cause certain mental states, so we are uncertain in our knowledge as to the methods by which morbid physical factors give rise to morbid psychological events. This is true in most cases, but in dipsomania I think we can trace the change in personality to certain toxic materials, due to faulty metabolism, circulating in the brain.

Whichever way we look at the subject a throughgoing materialistic formula must provide a material accompaniment for every apparent activity of the mind. In other words, before we can reach any rational and scientific method of provisional reasoning we must set aside the idea

that the real self is an immaterial, invisible, mysterious, unfathomable something, which metaphysicians call mind, and another class of non-investigators call soul.

Self can only be considered the consciousness of effort. We recognize our entity, our existence, the current elements of our inner life, by our efforts. Consciousness, then, is the recognition of the thinking self. This is possible only through molecular activity of the brain elements. If these brain elements are added to or subtracted from, if they break up and reunite in a different form, we get a change of personality. This change of brain elements can be brought about in various ways. It can be brought about by disease, drugs, alcohol, hypnotic suggestion and a psychical state which it is at present difficult to satisfactorily explain.

One of the facts associated with self-consciousness is memory, and as this memory may be in abeyance for minutes or years, while a new or secondary memory takes its place, it is readily seen how such a state will result in an apparent second personality, the absence of memory destroying the individual's sense of his normal self.

"While it appears on a cursory glance at these alternating personalities that when there has been a new combination of the elements of personality the other character has been extinct, a close examination will disclose a connecting link of memory elements observable to the investigator, but apparently unrecognized by the consciousness of the altered self."* My case is peculiar in the fact that there is a gradual filling up of many blanks in my memory. That is, details and facts which I was not conscious of ten years ago are springing up in my mind daily, and there is nearly, though not quite, a connecting chain of past events.

After three or four years of these alternating periods of hope and despair, I found my true self depressed and discouraged to the point of giving up the

*I am indebted to Professor W. R. Newbold for many of the foregoing statements.

fight. I had been through some awful experiences of success and failure; yet every city between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans had given me opportunities to rehabilitate myself; but they were all futile. Editor after editor extended the hand of fellowship, but finally so pronounced became my unreliability that when I reached the Pacific coast I could obtain just enough space work to keep from starving. Imagine my feelings if you can, when men said to me: "Look here, if you would stick to your work, if you could be relied upon to use that brain of yours, if you would only keep your word and promises, you could have the highest position in journalism. You know it; now why do you make such a fool of yourself, and of those who are your friends?"

Yes, why? How little do you, who are born with an equitable nervous system, understand the innermost gnawings of psychic pain we cursed dipsomaniacs have to suffer! Accused of vices and habits that are symptoms of disease, is it strange that we ignore your advice when we see you pity the born cripple whose distorted limbs are evidence of his infirmity, yet will not see in our attacks of psychic epilepsy the evidence of brain distortion? Is it strange that I should have been discouraged, morbidly suspicious, at odds with the world, after these fights with this demon personality which would take possession of me at the most important crises of my life? Yes, this was the most heart-tearing part of it all. I had gotten so that I refused responsible positions, would take no big assignments for the fear, the awful dread, of the clutches of that slimy other self; for, and here entered an important factor in the discovery of my disease, the greater responsibilities I had, the greater interest I took in a subject, and the keener the ability I demonstrated in working it up, the quicker, the more degrading would be my downfall. O, the horror of it all! to live with a brilliant intellect, but, Tantalus-like, to have it always just beyond your

complete grasp—friends lost, opportunities gone forever, the stigma of drunkenness preceding and following you wherever you went, and over all hanging the fear and dread of momentary bodily degradation.

Are there many such unfortunates? Look around, you who have had brilliant friends. Do you not recall one who would have made a great name in the musical world, "only he would go on sprees." How about another one who was fast making a name in literature, but died in a sanatorium? "Such a pity, was n't it, that he drank?" Had he been clubfooted you would have extended your sympathy, but because certain cells in his brain were twisted which brought about an uncontrollable passion, a frantic desire for relief, you all said: "Is n't it too bad he's throwing away his life through drink?" Yes, and do you not recall some men who "dropped out of sight"?

The man who leaves his happy home and family in the morning, and on the thronged street falls down in an epileptic fit, has his head held by some sympathizing friend, a carriage is called; he is taken home where physicians render their best aid and friends their sympathy. Another man, a brilliant writer, suddenly has come over him an attack of psychic epilepsy; he sinks down also, but in a different manner. Down he goes to the gutter, he is conscious of his mere physical acts, but as helpless to control them as is the epileptic—yet the public pities one and scorns the other. It is this stigma of drunkenness placed upon the blameless that has sent many a brilliant and hopeful man down; down into the dungeon of remorse, whence he emerges to the dark cellar of forgetfulness, where he breathes out his vagabond existence uttering curses to God and sneers at mankind.

The degrading associates, the unmoral atmosphere, the sad sight of the human wrecks I met and gabbled with, make up a composite picture of sadness and despair. In spite of the terrifying memory of musical genius, of scientific attain-

ments, of literary ability, of professional achievements, floating aimlessly on the scum of life's river, there breaks through a smile, forced by many humorous incidents.

I had given up the fight; my last position in Chicago had resulted in a disgusting fiasco. Unwashed and sleepless, surrounded by a zone of insipid content, I stood at the bar of one of the dirtiest dives in Chicago listening to a monologue by one of the most talented musicians in the country. It was a scholarly exposition of Wagner's *Der ring des Nibelungen*. It was forcibly and beautifully expressed, and illustrated by tonal colors from his violin. This musically-illustrated talk would have made his fortune, but only under the condition I saw him in could he be made to talk or play, for there was not that nervous force or vital energy necessary to bring about his mental activity, when the dipsomaniacal attack had passed. It was in his case the sad effects of precociousness and the ill-advised and ignorant actions of his parents, for his concert-work as a boy had used up his nervous system; he had drawn constantly on the principal, and now was a psychic bankrupt.

Then there was another genius, an organist who had held some of the best positions in the United States, but, of course, had lost them all. He was his mother's spoiled and misunderstood darling. He had just returned from a much-advertised institution for the cure of inebriety—an entirely different thing from dipsomania—and brought with him another "graduate." This organist was young, but an acknowledged genius, and as the violinist poured out his soulful agony; as the strings sang of remorse and weariness of the world suddenly to break into the staccato of recklessness and oblivion; he stood, glass in hand, enraptured. The trembling player stopped for a drink, in which we all, of course, joined; but before taking his, the organist went into the back room which was dimly lighted by one gas jet. Here were three or four

young, tired and homeless creatures sleeping off the effects of liquor. The trembling musician placed a dollar bill in the hand of each girl, and returned with a pleased expression, for well he knew the happiness that would follow the awakening. Poor fellow; he died in that very room while the wealth and culture of the city were waiting for him to play merry peals on the organ in a fashionable church as the bride walked up the aisle. The wedding ceremony had been rehearsed the day before, and weeks had been spent in perfecting the music to play at the wedding. O, but these are sad memories, not humorous!

Well, to go back to our story: The organist remained in the "Institution for the Cure of Inebriety" for six weeks. He had been promised, if he brought back a diploma certifying his complete cure, a position of great value. Upon his return he presented his credentials and was sincere, conscientiously so, in promising to never go on another spree. But unfortunately conscience has no control over a brain periodically poisoned by the bi-products of the body.

On the strength of this diploma he was given a position, and for over a year was a reliable and successful musician, and much sought by young brides who desired him to conduct the music at their weddings. I have mentioned the last wedding he did—or rather did not—take charge of. At the end of the year he disappeared and had little if any memory of his acts up to the time he found himself in the town where he had received his certificate of "cured." He seemed to have had a semi-lucid period in this attack, for he carried out semi-conscious ideas. Upon reaching the town he hung his framed diploma on his back and paraded the streets, going from saloon to saloon. It was not long before he was offered a good sum by the Institution to leave the neighborhood. Thus it was that he was able to contribute to the comfort of those unfortunate girls sleeping in the back room.

About this time certificates from this "Institution for the Cure of Inebriety" had some value, and the young writer who had come into the dive this night with the organist, had gotten some blank diplomas—he also was an alumnus of this "Institution"—and made quite an income selling them to young men who used them to satisfy anxious mothers, or as a means of securing positions.

What a merry, useless, brainy, educated, irresponsible, crazy lot we were. Not a man of mediocre talent among us;

not a man who could for ten consecutive months be depended upon to finish any allotted task. Not a man among us who in his normal state could be persuaded to take a glass of liquor or pass the portals of a saloon. For months at a time mentally, morally, and bodily clean, at intervals there swept over the brain of each and every individual a storm which carried the toxins of moral degradation and filth that neither shame nor want could subdue.

Baltimore, Md.

THE TENDENCIES OF RECENT FICTION.

BY FREDERICK W. NICOLLS.

THE first seventy-five years of the nineteenth century were the golden age of the English novel. Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and Eliot were the great masters of English fiction and even those of lesser rank compare favorably with the writers who preceded or have followed them. The death of Thackeray marks the close of this epoch and recent literary history embraces the period from that date until the present day, roughly speaking about twenty-five or thirty years. During this time there has been a literary flood of the most overwhelming nature and the torrent of fiction has completely overwhelmed all other forms of composition. But, unfortunately, this flood has not been the rising of a clear, pure stream, strong, deep, and beautiful, but of a muddy, shallow one, often filled with weeds, refuse, and filth. Quality has given place to quantity, story-telling to the novel with a purpose, dramatic force to theatrical sensationalism, and study of character to morbid specialization. It is hard for recent novelists that they must by the very nature of things be compared with their immediate predecessors, for otherwise, perhaps, the merits of the present might seem greater and its defects not quite so

glaring. But in literary criticism, as in every other art and science, some standard must be selected, and as the standard set by the great masters of the past is high, their successors by comparison are naturally placed upon a lower level.

The fiction of the last thirty years is instinct with the same qualities which characterize our overwrought, materialistic, and swift-moving civilization. Influences and tendencies in style and thought which in former times required a generation or more to develop, now manifest themselves in quick transitions from one form of fiction to another, with as much greater rapidity over the novelists of the past as the steam-engine outstrips the ancient stage-coach, though not with the same advantages to the reading as to the traveling public. The romantic novel on one hand and the character study on the other, were both matters of slow development, passing through many phases of style and often proceeding side by side, until they reached their highest points respectively in the works of Scott and George Eliot. Nor would there be a rush of all minor authors to the romance for some ten years and then a sudden and unaccountable rush towards realism for

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