L'Uomo di Genio. By CESARE LOMBROSO, Turin, 1888. Fifth Edition.

L'Homme de Génie. By CESARE LOMBROSO, Paris, 1889 (Alcan's Bibliothèque de Philosophie Contemporaine).

The various editions through which this book has passed have resulted in a work which is not only much larger than the original volume, but in many respects much unlike it. Never before, Prof. Lombroso tells us, has he had in the latest edition of a book to disavow so much in the preceding editions. Even the original title (as he neglects to remark) has given place to a new one. The first title—"Genius and Insanity"—was, however, perhaps more suitable. The book still deals chiefly with those men of genius and those characteristics of men of genius that are most insane in character, and at the same time with those insane and semi-insane (*Mattoidi*) persons who seem to have some resemblance to men of genius. The book is thus written on the same lines as most previous attempts to explain genius—attempts which have nearly always come from writers who were chiefly familiar with insanity, and who have thus, perhaps, been to some extent biassed. That is to say, that they have rejected usually those aspects of the subjects dealt with which, from the standpoint adopted, could not be explained. With this general deduction, it must certainly be said that Lombroso's book is by far the most rich, comprehensive, and fascinating collection of facts and generalizations concerning genius which has yet been brought together.

Lombroso sets out by bringing forward various generalizations as to the prevalent physical and psychical characteristics of men of genius, supported by copious illustrations. Thus he finds that they are usually short, and not uncommonly pale. Rickets he finds common, and among the rachitic he mentions *Æsop*, *Galba*, *Tyrtæus*, *Agésilas*, as well as *Brunelleschi*, *Scarron*, *Talleyrand*, *Goldsmith*, *Scott*, *Pope*, and *Byron*. The diagnosis seems to be a little rash in some of these cases. Baldness and leanness are both common; there is frequently muscular and sexual weakness. Lesions of the brain and skull and cranial abnormalities are very common. Stammering is common. So, also, to some extent, is left-handedness. The sterility of men of genius is

remarkable; and a long list of very eminent men have never married. Lombroso finds that in physiognomy they are frequently very unlike father or mother, and also remote from the national type. The precocity of genius is compared by Lombroso to that of the morally insane, and also of savages. On the other hand, many men of genius have in childhood shown less than average intelligence. In matters outside their own field men of genius frequently show, in a very marked way, what Lombroso calls "misoneism"—the hatred of novelty. Thus Schopenhauer, a rebel in philosophy, had nothing but contempt for political rebels; Bacon laughed at Gilbert and Copernicus; Napoleon rejected steam; and Darwin refused to believe in hypnotism. Another characteristic of men of genius is the spontaneity, often unconscious and inexplicable, of their creations—their "inspiration." They produce by a natural instinct; as Lamartine used to say: "I do not think; my ideas think for me." Poets have sometimes composed in a state of sleep or of somnambulism. During their states of inspiration, poets sometimes resemble persons in a state of mania (*Aut insanit homo, aut versus facit*), and have occasionally been insensible to severe wounds. While at such moments seeming to soar above ordinary humanity, they often sink below it. Several men of genius have said that they seemed to themselves to possess a double personality, and they have perpetrated, times without number, incredible stupidities. By studying the autobiographies of men of genius, Lombroso finds that they are characterized by extreme hyperæsthesia; he brings forward a great deal of evidence under this head. Amnesia is another characteristic concerning which many stories are current.

Lombroso next proceeds to show the connection between genius and various distinct neuroses—chorea, epilepsy, melancholia, *manie des grandeurs*, *folie du doute*, alcoholism, moral insanity, etc. Julius Cæsar, Dostoieffsky, Richelieu, Petrarch, Molière, Flaubert, Charles V., Peter the Great, and Handel were subject to epilepsy; and Lombroso also includes St. Paul, on the strength of the episode on the road to Damascus, the temperament and style of the apostle being also found to agree with this theory. Mahomet also had attacks of an epileptic character. Melancholia is very common, and the number of men of genius who have committed suicide is, as Lombroso remarks, almost endless. Hamlet is a perfect and classical expression in art of *folie du*

doute, which, in some form or other, has existed in a large number of men of genius—Flaubert, Renan, Tolstoi, Amiel, Manzoni, etc. Hallucinations are very common. So also is that defect of moral sense which is often called “moral insanity.”

In the next chapter Lombroso gives longer or shorter accounts of men of genius in various fields, and from various countries, who appear to have shown signs of insanity; among others, Vico, Harrington, Haller, Ampère, Dolce, Lee, Schumann, Gerard de Nerval, Baudelaire, Mainländer, Comte Cardan, Tasso, Swift, Newton, Rousseau, Lenau, Hoffmann, Gogol, Schopenhauer.

So far Lombroso has been dealing with the physiology and pathology of genius. In Part II. he turns to the ætiology of genius. He brings forward a number of ingenious and sometimes somewhat laboured considerations under this head. Thus, there is a chart founded on the examination of the dates at which 24,000 lunatics entered the asylum, and of the month when nearly 2,000 works of genius were produced, to show the influence of hot weather in both cases. From this chart it appears that insanity in Italy is at its maximum in June; in France in May; and that the maximum of works of genius is produced in May; the minimum in February; while there is a second rise in September. He also brings forward evidence to show that the state of the barometer must be taken into consideration; but differences in weather are by no means so important as differences in temperature.

To the influence of race in the production of men of genius Lombroso seems to attach little importance; on the other hand he attaches great importance to the climatic and atmospheric conditions of a country or district. He has made a list of several hundred Italian musicians, and finds that they abound specially in healthy, hot, maritime, and, above all, elevated regions, these influences seeming to fight against the influence, also great, of large centres of civilization. He allows some influence to the Greco-Etruscan race of Italy. Flat countries, like Belgium, Holland, and Egypt, are deficient in men of genius; in marshy countries, and in regions like Savoy and Switzerland, where the mountains are very high, and the inhabitants live in narrow valleys, the deficiency is still more marked. Most of the Swiss men of genius are of French or Italian ancestry; Florence, a town of hills and of mild temperature, has furnished Italy with

her greatest men; the neighbouring Pisa, a city of the plain, has produced very few. Another chart shows an interesting relation between the average height of the population and the frequency of the men of genius, as illustrated by the French Departments. Although men of genius are usually short they are most frequent among tall populations; thus, Doubs, which, according to Broca, stands first in regard to height, stands second in regard to frequency of genius (first, if we exclude Paris); and Charente, which stands last in the list of genius, is last but four in the list of height. "All this shows," remarks Lombroso, "that genius will only flourish in wholesome air." At the same time he connects the frequency of genius in hilly regions with the proverbial frequency of madness among mountains.

In the next chapter race and heredity are considered in their relations to genius, but Lombroso has here very little that is new to bring forward. In opposition to Galton he is not prepared to accept the heredity of genius, except in a very modified form, and even this is often much exaggerated by the prestige attaching to a great name.

Part III. is chiefly devoted to genius, literary or artistic, in the insane, with copious illustrations, and also to those persons who are on the borderland between insanity and genius. Here Lombroso is on very familiar ground, and all that he has to bring forward cannot fail to be of interest to all students of morbid psychology. At the same time it does not always throw any great light on the nature of genius.

Part IV. is devoted to synthesis. Lombroso endeavours to show that genius is a degenerative psychosis of epileptoid character. A vast mass of details is brought together from very various sources to support this position; and the moral drawn at the conclusion of this very learned and curiously interesting book is that we should respect the supreme misfortune of insanity, and not be too much dazzled by the light of genius, which is often not that of a planet, but of a falling star.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.