an extreme degree of bodily weakness for some days. The case is certainly remarkable in the severity of the symptoms from such an apparently trivial cause.

HEART DISEASE AND PREGNANCY.

Many years ago, it was shown that during pregnancy the heart becomes somewhat larger and stronger than under ordinary circumstances, these results evidently being Nature's effort to provide for the increased stress on the circulation. It has been generally accepted, therefore, that in those forms of Heart disease which are associated with weakness, Pregnancy might exercise a useful influence; while others, in which the stress on the valves of the heart is always a source of danger, would be rendered materially worse by the pregnant condition. A careful article on this subject based on some thousands of observations has recently appeared in a French journal, and in brief, the conclusions arrived at, endorse the opinions already expressed. But it is shown that repeated pregnancies tend to weaken a diseased heart to a serious extent, and therefore, even under the most favourable circumstances, it is considered that the condition of the heart, if there be any valvular disease, is always more or less deteriorated by the effects of pregnancy.

GENIUS OR INSANITY.

The old question as to whether or not genius is a form of insanity has been recently discussed, once more, and a large number of instances have been cited to prove that if not identical, they are, at any rate, in many instances, closely allied. The following examples given in support of this theory are certainly noteworthy:—Martin Luther had hallucinations; Peter the Great and Napoleon I. were both epileptics; as was Julius Cæsar; Raphael was afflicted with suicidal mania; Richelieu on occasions imagined himself a horse; Descartes was followed by a spectre; Cromwell was a hypochondriac and had visions; J. J. Rosseau was a melancholy madman; Swedenborg imagined that he went to heaven on a white horse; Mohammed was an epileptic; Dean Swift was partially insane by inheritance; Shelley had hallucinations; Charles Lamb and his sister were both victims of insanity; Coleridge was a morbid maniac; Milton was of a morbid temperament—modern ideas of hell being formed on his descriptions of a diseased imagination

The Present Position of Nursing in the United Kingdom.

During next week, distinguished Nurses, from all parts of the world, will meet together to discuss with their English sisters, in the Nursing Section of the International Congress of Women, various subjects connected with the work and organization of their profession. It may, therefore, be of some service, and will certainly be of some interest, to them to understand the present position of Nursing in Great Britain and Ireland.

In order to explain this, a brief historical retrospect is necessary. During the best part of this century, the impulse given by the great work of Mrs. Fry—who must always be regarded as the mother of modern Nursing—has been slowly tending to raise the position and improve the work of nurses; but, until the latter half of the century, the progress made in other countries was perhaps greater than in our own; and in German hospitals, especially that of Kaiserwerth, the principles of Nursing were more carefully taught than in this country. In fact, it was the Crimean War, which, by its terrible exposure of Governmental incapacity and unreadiness, afforded the opportunity to Miss Florence Nightingale to initiate a national movement by the attention drawn to the value of nursing work in the care of our sick and wounded soldiers. Fortunately for this country, Miss Nightingale not only possessed the pecuniary means, but also the skilled knowledge, which enabled her to devote the funds subscribed by a grateful nation in her honour, and to initiate a definite system of nursing education. Indeed, the Nightingale School must always be regarded as the first serious and properly organized attempt to place the training of nurses upon a sound and scientific basis. For the first half of the intervening forty years, the movement thus inaugurated spread with comparative slowness. Indeed, it is only within the last two decades that nursing progress has been so great and so universal. About twenty years ago, gentlewomen commenced to enter hospitals as probationers, and their influence was speedily felt in every department. The whole tone of the hospital was undoubtedly elevated by their presence and quiet influence. The care and comfort of the patients were greatly enhanced. The interest taken by the medical staffs in nursing education was naturally

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