

THROUGH THE IVORY GATE: STUDIES IN PSYCHOLOGY AND HISTORY. BY WILLIAM W. IRELAND, M. D., Edin.; Corresponding Member of the Psychiatric Society of St. Petersburg, and of the New York Medico-Legal Society, etc. 8vo, pp. vii, 311. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1889. Price, \$3.00.

The author states in his preface that the present book was written in prosecution of the views given in a previous book by him—"The Blot on the Brain." He seeks to show that Swedenborg, William Blake, Louis II, of Bavaria, Guiteau, Louis Riel, Gabriel Malagrida, Theodore, of Abyssinia, and Thebaw, King of Burmah, all suffered from some mental derangement: "They were led away by delusions or uncontrollable passions from the right comprehension of things, or the right line of conduct. In figurative language, they were visited by spectres which passed through the Ivory Gate."

The most interesting part of the book, of course, is that devoted to an analysis of Swedenborg's life. Swedenborg's pretensions to supernatural knowledge, the author says, were made in the light of a most sceptical time, the latter half of the eighteenth century. They were advanced in the clearest and most matter-of-fact way, indeed with much repetition in his numerous books, in his letters, and in his recorded conversations. Either Swedenborg was subject to delusions and hallucinations, or his pretensions to commune with the dead, and his claim to announce a new revelation were really founded on truth. To admit the latter, says Mr. Ireland, would entail the admission of a new religion.

The author believes that Swedenborg inherited a neurotic tendency from his father, who was himself a spirit-seer. Illusions or hallucinations seem to have been manifested in his childhood, and even to have been encouraged by his parents. His delusions were due to auto-suggestion coming from his powerful predisposition. The doctrines propounded by him were the result of the speculations of his powerful mind working while still unsubdued by morbid influences; the spirit-seeing and attendant puerilities were the result of hallucinations and delusions formed after his nervous centres had become diseased.

The stories of Louis of Bavaria, and of Guiteau are also very interesting, especially to alienists and psychologists. Doubtless some will take exceptions to certain of Mr. Ireland's deductions, but all must allow that he has written a most entertaining book.