

VARIOUS

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TANFIELD ARCH, DURHAM



TANFIELD ARCH, DURHAM.

Tanfield is a considerable village, situated seven miles from Gateshead, in the county of Durham, and eight miles in a south-west direction from Newcastle-on-Tyne. The above arch is about a mile from the village, and crosses a deep dell, called Causey Burne, down which an insignificant streamlet finds its sinuous course. The site possesses some picturesque beauty, though its silvan pride be

After a season gay and brief,
Condemn'd to fade and flee.

It has much of the poet's "bosky bourne," and beside

The huddling brooklet's secret brim,

his pensive mind may feed upon the natural glories of the scene; while, attuned to melancholy,

In hollow music sighing through the glade,
The breeze of autumn strikes the startled ear,
And fancy, pacing through the woodland shade,
Hears in the gust the requiem of the year.

KIRKE WHITE'S Early Poems.

The ARCH was an architectural wonder of the last century. It was built in the year 1729, as a passage for the wagon-way, or rail-road for the conveyance of coals from collieries in the vicinity of Tanfield, which were the property of an association called "the Great Allies." It is a magnificent stone structure, one hundred and thirty feet in the span, springing from abutments nine feet high, to the height of sixty feet: a dial is placed on the top with a suitable inscription. The expense of its construction is stated to have amounted to 12,000*l.*; the masonry is reputed to be extremely good, and the arch itself is nearly perfect, though it is now only known as a foot-way, the collieries for the use of which it was built, being no longer worked: previously it was but a private road-way. In Cooke's *Topography* we find it stated, (though it is not mentioned upon what authority,) that the architect built a former arch which fell, and that the apprehension of the second experiencing the same fate induced him to commit suicide.

Before the building of the New London Bridge, the arch at Tanfield is said to have been the largest stone arch in existence. The span of the central arch of the bridge is 152 feet; and that of the arches on each side of the centre, 140 feet: the span of the arches of Waterloo Bridge is 120 feet; so that the reader may form a tolerably correct estimate of the arch at Tanfield.

THE RESTING-PLACE

Where shall this wounded, aching breast.
Find a couch of soothing rest—
A respite from its woes?
Friend! mark'st thou that grassy bed,
The cold, clay dwelling of the dead—
There, there is sure repose.

When shall this soul, so long borne down
By Fate's despite and with'ring frown,
A rescue know from care?
Friend! when that dark home is thine,
Never more thy heart shall pine—
Grim sorrow comes not there.

When thy name is of that number,
Sound and sweet will be thy slumber;—
All earthly pangs and troubles cease,
Nor dare invade that house of peace.
On that pillow, ozier drest,
The worn, the "weary are at rest."
Thy broken heart shall cease to sigh,
And tears forsake that sunken eye;—
No dreams distract that holy sleep—
No tempests break that calm so deep.
Come, then!—forsaken, wearied, come!
Here is for thee a peaceful home.

Sarum.
COLBOURNE.

THE HORSE "ECLIPSE."

A warm—hearted Correspondent, "W.C." of *Milton* (who is anxious for our accuracy on all points), wishes us to correct an error or two in the account of *Eclipse*, at p. 362, vol. xix. of *The Mirror*. It is there stated that Mr. Wildman sold the moiety of Eclipse to Colonel O'Kelly, for 650 guineas; and that O'Kelly subsequently bought the other moiety for 1,100 guineas. But, our Correspondent, who was for many years intimate with both the above gentlemen, assures us that "the Colonel gave to Mr. Wildman 2,000*l.* for a moiety of Eclipse, and subsequently 2,000*l.* for the other moiety—making the whole purchase-money 4,000*l.*"

In the page wherein the above mis-statement appears is another error, respecting the speed of *Childers*—"over the round course at Newmarket, 3 miles, 6 furlongs, and 93 yards, in 6 minutes and 40 seconds; to perform which, he must have moved 82-1/2 feet in a second of time, or at the rate of nearly one mile in a minute." We have referred to the work whence the above was quoted (*Hist. Epsom*, p. 103), and find it to correspond with our reprint. The calculation is evidently incorrect: for Childers would thus appear scarcely to have exceeded half a mile a minute.

THE NATURALIST

POISON OF THE HORNED VIPER

(*Cerastes Coluber.*)

Mr. Madden, whilst in Thebes, killed one of these animals, for the purpose of extracting its poison, which he found in a small membrane in the front of the jaw under the two hollow teeth. Having collected the venom carefully on a piece of glass, he examined it with a microscope, and found it to consist of sharp, saline spiculae, of a reticular appearance, extremely minute. "Half of this I gave to a dog, in a piece of meat—it produced no sensible effect; I then diluted the remainder, smeared the point of a lancet with it, and wounded the dog in the shoulder: this application he only survived three hours."—*Madden's Travels.*

MEDICUS.

FISH BATTLE

Captain Crow, in a work published a short time since, relates the following as having occurred on a voyage to Memel:—"One morning during a calm, when near the Hebrides, all hands were called up at three o'clock, to witness a battle between several of the fish called thrashers and some sword-fish on one side, and an enormous whale on the other. It was in the middle of summer, and the weather being clear, and the fish close to the vessel, we had a fine opportunity of witnessing the contest. As soon as the whale's back appeared above the water, the thrashers, springing several yards into the air, descended with great violence upon the object of their rancour, and inflicted upon him the most severe slaps with their tails, the sound of which resembled the reports of muskets fired at a distance. The sword-fish, in their turn, attacked the distressed whale, stabbing him from below;—and thus beset on all sides, and wounded, when the poor creature appeared, the water around him was dyed with blood. In this manner they continued tormenting and wounding him for many hours, until we lost sight of him; and I have no doubt they, in the end, accomplished his destruction."

W.G.C.

NOTES OF A READER

INFLUENCE OF THE MIND ON THE BODY

"Should the body sue the mind before a court of judicature, for damages, it would be found that the mind would prove to have been a ruinous tenant to its landlord."—*Plutarch*.

[We abridge these interesting facts from "An Inquiry into the Influence of the Mind and Passions on the Body, in the production of Disease"—in No. 11 of the *London Medical and Surgical Journal*.¹ The whole paper is written in as clear, concise, and popular a style as the subject will allow, and its importance demands the attention of the reader; although we have not thought it to our purpose to follow the writer to the main object—or how these causes operate in the *production of disease*.]

Descartes observes, that the soul is so much influenced by the constitution of our bodily organs, that if it were possible to find out a method of increasing our penetration, it should certainly be sought for in medicine, the connexion between the body and mind, is, in fact, so strong, that it is difficult to conceive how one of them should act, and the other not be sensible, in a greater or less degree, of that action. The organs of sense, by which we acquire all our ideas of external objects, when acted upon, convey the subject of thought to the nervous fibres of the brain; and while the mind is employed in thinking, the part of the brain is in a greater or less degree of motion; a large quantity of blood is transmitted to the brain, the action of the arteries become increased, and the nervous system sensibly affected.

Plato has remarked, with reference to the influence of the mind on the corporeal frame, "Where the action of the soul is too powerful, it attacks the body so powerfully that it throws it into a consuming state; if the soul exerts itself in a peculiar manner on certain occasions, the body is made sensible of it, for it becomes heated and debilitated." An Italian physician also observes on this subject, that the union of the soul with the body is so intimate, that they reciprocally share the good or evil which happens to either of them. The mind cannot put forth its powers when the body is tired with inordinate exercise and too close application to study destroys the body by dissipating the animal spirits which are necessary to recruit it.²

The knowledge of the influence of the passions of the mind over the bodily functions, is of ancient date. Plato, in his "*Timaeus*," states it as his firm conviction, that the spirit exerted a marked influence in producing disease. This opinion was afterwards revived by Helmont, Hesper Doloeus, and Stahl; the latter plainly says, that the rational soul presides over and directs the animal functions. In this doctrine he was followed by Nichols, in his "*Anima Medica*." According to the doctrines of Stahl, the disorders of the body proceed principally from the mind; and, according as it is variously affected, it produces different effects (diseases.) Hence, when the mind, which animates the most robust and best organized body, is violently agitated by fright, rage, grief, vehement desire, or any other passion, whether sudden, or attended by long and painful sensations, the body manifestly suffers, and a variety of diseases, as apoplexy, palsy, madness, fever, and hysterics, may be the consequence. If this be true, an attention to the regulations of the mind is of much more importance than physicians seem disposed to admit. The poet of health justly says,

"'Tis the great art of life to manage well
The restless mind."

¹ A cleverly conducted work containing more popular information on Medicine, Surgery, and what are termed the collateral sciences, than we are accustomed to find in a "professional" journal.

² Rammazini.

In the course of this vitally important and deeply-interesting subject of inquiry, it is not my intention to enter into any metaphysical discussion respecting the inscrutable and mysterious union existing between matter and mind, or to endeavour to point out the manner in which the body influences the mind, and the mind the body. Such subjects we do not think to be legitimate objects of inquiry. The medical philosopher is engaged in less obscure and less uncertain researches; he does not attempt to solve the question regarding the intimate union subsisting between the natural and intellectual portions of our nature, but he wisely confines himself to an attentive examination of the phenomena which result from that union. Man is compounded of a soul and body, so closely united, not *identified*, that they frequently struggle and occasionally overpower each other. Sometimes the mind ascends the throne and subdues, in a moment, the physical energies of the most powerful of her subjects. At other times the body gains the ascendancy, and lays prostrate before her the mightiest of human intellects. Instances illustrative of both propositions are of daily occurrence. It has been said of Sophocles, that being desirous of proving that at an advanced age he was in full possession of his intellectual faculties, he composed a tragedy, was crowned, and died through joy. The same thing happened to Philippides, the comic writer. M. Juventius Thalma, on being told that a triumph had been decreed to him for having subdued Corsica, fell down dead before the altar at which he was offering up his thanksgiving. Zimmerman, in his work on Experience in Physic, has related the circumstance of a worthy family in Holland being reduced to indigence; the elder brother passed over to the East Indies, acquired considerable fortune there, and returning home presented his sister with the richest jewel: the young woman, at this unexpected change of fortune became motionless and died. The famous Forquet died on being told that Louis XIV. had restored him to his liberty. It is also related of Diodorus Chronos, who was considered as the most subtle logician of the time of Ptolemy Soter, that Stilbo one day in the presence of the king, proposed a question to him, to which he was unable to reply. The king, willing to cover him with shame, pronounced only one part of his name, and called him *ovos*, ass, instead of Chronos. Diodorus was so much affected at this as to die soon afterwards.

Perhaps there is not a more remarkable instance on record showing, in a melancholy though forcible light, the dominion of mind over the material frame, than the circumstances which attended the death of John Hunter. This distinguished surgeon and physiologist died in a fit of enraged passion; and, what is somewhat extraordinary, he had often predicted that such excitement would prove fatal to him. He died at St. George's Hospital, Oct. 16, 1793, under these circumstances: being there in the exercise of his official duty as surgeon, he had a warm dispute with Dr. Pearson, on a professional subject; upon which he said, "I must retire, for I feel an agitation which will be fatal to me if I increase it." He immediately withdrew into an adjoining room; but Dr. Pearson, not being willing to give up his argument, followed him, which so annoyed Hunter, that he vehemently exclaimed, "You have followed me on purpose to be the death of me! You have murdered me!" and instantly fell and expired! Mrs. Byron, the mother of the noble bard, is said to have died in a fit of passion. Mr. Moore, in his life of Lord Byron, in speaking of Mrs. Byron's illness, says,—"At the end of July her illness took a new and fatal turn; and so sadly characteristic was the close of the poor lady's life, that a fit of ague, brought on, it is said, by reading the upholsterer's bills, was the ultimate cause of her death." A somewhat similar circumstance is recorded of Malbranche. The only interview that Bishop Berkley and Malbranche had was in the latter philosopher's cell, when the conversation turned upon the non-existence of matter, and Malbranche is said to have exerted himself so much in the discussion that he died in consequence. Sanctorius relates an instance of a famous orator, who so far exerted his mind in delivering an oration that he became, in a few hours, quite insane.

The effect of a too close application of mind to study on the bodily health has long been a matter of common observation. The Roman orator, Cicero, points out forcibly the dangers arising from inordinate exertion of mind; and he has laid down some rules for guarding against the effects of

study. M. Van Swieten, in alluding to this subject, relates the case of a man whose health was severely injured, by what he calls "literary watchings." Whenever he listened with any attention to any story, or trifling tale, he was seized with giddiness; he was in violent agonies whenever he wanted to recollect any thing which had slipped his memory; he oftentimes fainted away gradually, and experienced a disagreeable sensation of lassitude. Rousseau has very justly remarked, that excessive application of mind "makes men tender, weakens their constitutions, and when once the body has lost its powers, those of the soul are not easily preserved. Application wears out the machine, exhausts the spirits, destroys the strength, enervates the mind, makes us pusillanimous, unable either to bear fatigue, or to keep our passions under."³

Shakspeare appears to have formed a just conception of the great injury which the corporeal frame experiences from a too close application of mind. The immortal bard observes,—

"—Universal plodding poisons up
The nimble spirits in the arteries
As motion and long-during action tires
The sinewy vigour of the traveller."

Love's Labour Lost.

In the consultations of Wespser we find related the history of a young man of family 22 years of age, who, having applied himself incessantly to intense mental exertion, was seized with a fit of insanity, in which fit he wounded several persons and killed his keeper. Catalepsy has been known to have been produced by great mental application. Fomelius gives us a remarkable instance of it. A man (says he) who passed whole nights in writing and studying, was suddenly attacked with a fit of catalepsy: all his limbs stiffened in the attitude he was in when the disease first seized him. He remained upon his seat, holding the pen in his hand, and with his eyes fixed on his paper, so that he was considered to be still at his studies, till being called to, and then shaken, he was found to be without motion or sensation.⁴

Many extraordinary instances are on record, of remarkable changes having been produced in birds by an affection of the animal passions. The following fact is related by Mr. Young, in the Edinburgh Geographical Journal. A blackbird had been frightened in her cage by a cat; when it was relieved, it was found lying on its back, quite wet with perspiration. The feathers fell off, and were renewed, but the new ones were perfectly white.

A similar phenomenon has been observed in the human species, who have been exposed to the effects of inordinate passion. Borrelli relates the case of a French gentleman, who was thrown into prison, and on whom fear operated so powerfully as to change his hair completely grey in the course of one night. Dr. Darwin ascribes this phenomenon to the torpor of the vessels, which circulates the fluids destined to nourish the hair. Nothing will, perhaps, demonstrate more fully the effects of moral causes in producing disease than the structural alterations discoverable in the bodies of those who have died whilst labouring under nostalgia, or the Swiss malady. This disease is considered peculiar to the Swiss, and is occasioned by a desire of revisiting their own country, and of witnessing again the scenes of their youth. This desire begins with melancholy sadness, love of solitude, silence, bodily weakness, &c. and is only cured by returning to their native country. Avenbrugger says, that in dissecting the bodies of those who have died in consequence of this disease, organic lesions of the heart generally are detected. A particular musical composition, supposed to be expressive of the happiness of the people, is in great vogue in Switzerland. If this tune or piece of music is played among the Swiss in any foreign country, it tends strongly to recall their affections for their native soil, and their desire of

³ Preface de Narcisse Oeuvres, Diverses, t. 1. v. 172.

⁴ Pathol. lib. 3. cap. 2. Oper. Omm. p. 406.

returning, and to induce the desire called nostalgia consequent on their disappointment. The effects of this musical composition is so powerful, that it is forbidden to be repeated in the French camp on pain of death, it having at one period had the effect of producing a mutiny among the Swiss soldiers, at that time in the employ of the French king.

Predictions of death, whether supposed to be supernatural, or emanating from human authority, have often, in consequence of the poisonous effects of fear, been punctually fulfilled. The anecdote is well attested, of the licentious Lord Littleton, that he expired at the exact stroke of the clock, which in a dream or vision, he had been forewarned would be the signal of his departure. In Lesanky's voyage round the world, there is an account of a religious sect in the Sandwich Islands, who arrogate to themselves the power of praying people to death. Whoever incurs their displeasure, receives notice that the homicide litany is about to begin, and such are the effects of the imagination, that the very notice is frequently sufficient with these people to produce the effect.

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