

## THE PLAINS OF ROME.

At length the vapours rolled away and the spacious plains began to show themselves, in which the most warlike of nations reared their seat of empire. On the left, afar off, rises the rugged chain of Appennines, and on the other side, a shining expanse of ocean terminates the view. It was upon this vast surface so many illustrious actions were performed, and I know not where a mighty people could have chosen a grander theatre. Here were space for the march of large armies, and verge enough for encampments; levels for martial games, and room for that variety of roads and causeways that led from the capital to Ostia. How many triumphant legions have trodden these pavements! How many captive kings! What throngs of cars and chariots once glittered on their surface! Savage animals dragged from the interior of Africa, and the Ambassadors of Indian Princes, followed by their exotic train, hastening to implore the favour of the senate. During many ages, this eminence commanded, almost every day, such illustrious scenes, but all are vanished; the splendid tumult is passed away; silence and desolation remain. Dreary flats, thinly scattered over with ilex, and barren hillocks crowned by solitary towers, were the only objects we perceived for several miles. Now and then we passed a few black, ill-favoured sheep straggling by the way's side, near a ruined sepulchre, just such animals as an ancient would have sacrificed to the *manes*. Sometimes we crossed a brook, whose rippings were the only sounds which broke the general stillness, and observed the shepherd's huts on its banks, propped up with broken pedestals and marble friezes. I entered one of them, whose owner was abroad, tending his herd, and began writing on the sand, and murmuring a melancholy song. Perhaps the dead listened to me from their narrowed cells. The living I can answer for—they were far enough removed.—*Beckford's Italy*

## SNUFF TAKING.

YET snuff-taking is an old custom. If we came suddenly upon it in a foreign country, it would make us split our sides with laughter. A grave gentleman takes a little casket out of his pocket, puts a finger and thumb in, brings away a pinch of a sort of powder, and then, with the most serious air possible, as if he was doing one of the most important actions of his life, (for even with the most indifferent snuff-takers, there is a certain look of importance) proceeds to thrust, and keeps thrusting it at his nose! after which he shakes his head, or his waistcoat, or his nose itself, or all three, in the style of a man who has done his duty, and satisfied the most serious claims of his well-being. It is curious to see the various modes in which people take snuff. Some do it by little fits and starts, and get over the thing quickly. There are epigrammatic snuff-takers, who come to the point as fast as possible, and to whom the pungency is everything. They generally use a sharp and severe snuff, a sort of essence of pins' points. Others are all urbanity and polished demeanour; they value the style as much as the sensation, and offer the box around them as much out of dignity as benevolence. Some take snuff irritably, others bashfully, others in a manner as dry as the snuff itself, generally with an economy of the vegetable; others with a luxuriance of gesture, and a lavishness of supply, that announces a moisture article, and sheds its superfluous honours over neckcloth and coat. Dr Johnson was probably a snuff of his kind. He used to take it out of his waistcoat pocket instead of a box. There is a species of long-armed snuff-taker, that performs the operation in a style of potent and elaborate preparation, ending with a sudden activity. But smaller and rounder men sometimes attempt it. He first puts his head on one side; then stretches forth the arm, with pinch in hand; then brings round his hand, as a snuff taking elephant might his trunk; and finally shakes snuff, head, and nose together, in a sudden vehemence of convulsion. His eyebrows all the while are lifted up, as if to make the more room for the onset; and when he has ended he draws himself back to his perpendicular, and generally proclaims the victory he has won over the insipidity of the previous moment by a sniff and a great "Hah!"—*Leigh Hunt's London Journal*.

## PLEASURE

TIME is the material out of which pleasure is made; and he who makes most pleasure out of it, is the man who employs it best. \* \* \* And Edith said, 'I fancy I understand you, papa. Nobody can be happy unless he is pleased at something, but it is not every pleasure that makes happiness.' 'That is my meaning, love. Happiness is made up of pleasure; but the best of pleasures are those which do not bring any pains after them. It would be a bad bargain if you were to borrow a penny to-day and have to pay a shilling to-morrow for the loan of it. Yet that is exactly what people do who never think of the consequences of a pleasure. Do you recollect when you were a little girl, how you ate the twelfth cake in excess, and how you suffered for it, and took disagreeable medicine, and felt so wretched, and made us all so uncomfortable about you? When you ate the cake, it was the pennyworth of pleasure, for which you were obliged to pay a shillingworth of pain.'—*Dr. Bowring's Minor Morals*.

## CATCHING THE TARTARS.

AMONG the first settlers of Brunswick, Maine, was Daniel Malcolm, a man of undaunted courage, and an inveterate enemy of the Indians, who had given him the name of Sungurnamby, i. e. very strong man. Early in the spring he ventured alone in the forest, for the purpose of splitting rails from the spruce, not apprehensive of the Indians so early in the season. While engaged in his work, and having opened a log with small wedges about half its length, he was surprised by Indians, who crept up and secured his musket standing by his side. 'Sungurnamby,' said the chief, 'now we got you, long we want you; you long time speak Indian, long time worry him; me have got

you now; look up stream to Canada.' 'Well,' said Malcolm, with true sang froid, 'you have me, but just help me to open this log before I go.' They all, five in number, agreed. Malcolm prepared a large wooden wedge, carefully drove it, took out his small wedges, and told the Indians to put in their finger to the partial cleft wood, and help to pull it open; they did; he then suddenly struck out his blunt wedge, and the elastic wood instantly closed fast on their fingers, and he secured them.

## HOLLAND.

EVERY flower that wealth can purchase diffuses its perfume on one side; whilst every stench a canal can exhale poisons the air on the other. These sluggish peddles defy all the power of the United Provinces, and retain the freedom of stinking in spite of any endeavour to conquer their filthiness. But perhaps I am too bold in my assertion; for I have no authority to mention any attempts to purify these noxious pools. Who knows but their odour is congenial to a Dutch constitution? One should be inclined to this supposition by the numerous banquetting-rooms and pleasure-houses which hang directly over their surface, and seem calculated on purpose to enjoy. If frogs were not excluded from the magistrature of their country (and I cannot but think it a little hard that they are) one should not wonder at this choice. Such burgomasters might erect their pavillions in such situations; but, after all, I am not greatly surprised at the fishiness of their site, since very slight authority would persuade me there was a period when Holland was all water, and the ancestors of the present inhabitants fish. A certain oysterousness of eye and flabbiness of complexion are almost proofs sufficient of this aquatic descent; and pray tell me, for what purpose are such galligaskins as the Dutch burden themselves with contrived, but to tuck up a flouncing tail, and thus cloak the deformity of a dolphin-like termination?—*Mr. Beckford*.

## THE PACHA OF EGYPT.

HE sleeps very little, Europeans who have happened to repose in the same tent with him, while on a journey, complain of having been often disturbed in the night by his asking them questions, and afterwards continuing to talk on when they wished to sleep. He rises at or before day-break; and, very shortly afterwards, leaves his harem on horseback, and repairs to his divan for the despatch of business. Here he receives all memorials, petitions, dispatches, &c. Shortly after his arrival, the secretaries walk in with large bundles of letters, received since the day before, the contents of which are read to him. He then commands, and sketches out, *viva voce*, in a rapid manner, the necessary replies. Then the answers to letters and papers, ordered to be made on the preceding day, are brought in, and read to him by the secretaries; and when he has heard and approved of their contents, he orders his signet, which he delivers into their hands, to be affixed to them; while he generally paces up and down the room, turning over the matter in his mind, and probably deliberating whether there shall any postscript be added. This sort of business usually occupies him till about nine o'clock; at which hour all those consuls, and other persons, who desire a public audience arrive. In an hour or two these individuals take their leave; upon which he retires to his harem, where he remains until about three or half past three in the afternoon. Even here, however, he is still employed; and his general orders are, that, if any verbal message be forwarded to him, it is to be delivered to the chief of the eunuchs; but that, if any letter or note arrive, whether by day or night, he is to be immediately awakened from sleep. Boghos Iousouff often attends him in the harem, for the despatch of important business. At half-past three o'clock he again returns to the divan; where, except that the order of proceeding is reversed, as he first gives audience, and then enters into the affairs of the interior, the same round of business takes place as in the morning. About an hour after sunset he takes a slight repast, and remains in the divan until ten or eleven o'clock at night. During these evening hours he generally finds time for a game of chess, a person retained for the purpose being always in attendance to play with him; and this fellow, being his highnesses buffoon as well as companion in amusement, always effect to be inconsolable, and makes a sad outcry, when the pieces are taken from him.—*St. John's Travels in the Valley of the Nile*.

## FROM ROGET'S BRIDGEWATER TREATISE ON ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE PHYSIOLOGY.

## DECLINE OF THE HUMAN SYSTEM.

To follow minutely the various steps by which nature conducts the individual to its state of maturity, would engage us in details incompatible with the limits of the present work. I shall only remark, in general, that during the period when the body is intended to increase in size, the powers of assimilation are exerted to prepare a greater abundance of nourishment, so that the average supply of materials rather exceeds the consumption; but when the fabric has attained its pre-

scribed dimensions, the total quantities furnished and expended being nearly balanced, the vital powers are no longer exerted in extending the fabric, but are employed in consolidating and perfecting it, and in qualifying the organs for the continued exercise of their respective functions, during a long succession of years.

Yet, while every function is thus maintained in a state of healthy equilibrium, certain changes are in progress which, at the appointed season, will inevitably bring on the decline, and ultimate destruction of the system. The process of consolidation, begun from the earliest period of development, is still advancing, and is producing in the fluids greater thickness, and a reduction of their total quantity; and in the solids, a diminution in the proportion of gelatin, and the conversion of this element into albumen. Hence all the textures acquire increasing solidity, the cellular substance becomes firmer and more condensed, and the solid structures more rigid and inelastic; hence the tendons and ligamentous fibres growing less flexible, the joints lose their suppleness, and the contractile power being also impaired, the muscles act more tardily as well as more feebly, and the limbs no longer retain the elastic spring of youth. The bones themselves grow harder and more brittle; and the cartilages, tendons, the serous membranes, and the coats of the blood-vessels acquire incrustations of ossific matter, which interfere with their uses. Thus are all the progressive modifications of structure tending, slowly but inevitably, to disqualify the organs for the due performance of their functions.

Among the most important of the internal changes consequent on the progress of age are those which take place in the vascular system. A large proportion of the numerous arteries, which were in full activity during the building of the fabric, being now no longer wanted, are thrown, as it were, out of employment; they, in consequence, contract, and becoming impervious, gradually disappear. The parts of the body, no longer yielding to the power applied to extend them, oppose a gradually increasing resistance to the propelling force of the heart: while, at the same time, this force, in common with all the others, is slowly diminishing. Thus do the vital powers become less equal to the demands made upon them; the waste of the body exceeds the supply, and a diminution of energy becomes apparent in every function.

Such are the insensible gradations by which, while gliding down the stream of time, we lapse into old age, which insidiously steals on us before we are aware of its approach. But the same provident power which presided at our birth, which superintended the growth of all the organs, which infused animation into each as they arose, and which has conducted the system unimpaired to its maturity, is still exerted in adjusting the conditions under which it is placed in its season of decline. New arrangements are made, new energies are called forth, and new resources are employed, to accommodate it to its altered circumstances, to prop the shattered fabric, and retard the progress of its decay. In proportion as the supply of nutritive materials has become less abundant, a more strict economy is practised with regard to their disposal; the substance of the body is husbanded with greater care; the absorbent vessels are employed to remove such parts as are no longer useful; and when all these adjustments have been made, the functions still go on for a considerable length of time without material alteration.

The period prescribed for its duration being at length completed, and the ends of its existence accomplished, the fabric can no longer be sustained, and preparation must be made for its inevitable fall. In order to form a correct judgment of the real intentions of nature, with regard to this last stage of life, its phenomena must be observed in cases where the system has been wholly intrusted to the operative of her laws. When death is the simple consequence of age, we find that the extinction of the powers of life observes an order the reverse of that which was followed in their evolution. The sensorial functions, which were the last perfected, are the first to decay; and their decline is found to commence with those mental faculties more immediately dependant on the physical conditions of the sensorium, and more especially with the memory, which is often much impaired, while the judgment remains in full vigour. The next faculties which usually suffer from the effects of age are the external senses, and the failure of sight and of hearing still farther contributes to the decline of the intellectual powers, by withdrawing the occasions for their exercise. The actual demolition of the fabric commences whenever there is a considerable failure in the functions of assimilation; but the more immediate cause of the rapid extinction of life is usually the impediment which the loss of the sensorial power, necessary for maintaining the movements of the chest, creates to respiration. The heart, whose pulsations give the first indications of life in the embryo, generally retains its vitality longer than any other organ; but its powers being dependant on the constant oxidation of blood in the lungs, cannot survive