

General Articles.

POWER OF THE WILL OVER THE ACTIONS OF THE BODY.

(From Dr. Reid, on Nervous Affections.)

Dr. CHEYNE, in one of his medical treatises, narrates a case, the accuracy of which is established by a combination of evidence, of a man who could die to all appearances at any time that he chose, and, after having lain for a considerable period exactly as a corpse, was able, as it should seem, by a voluntary struggle, to restore to himself the appearance and all the various functions of animation and intellect. It is to be inferred from the latter part of the story, that the unnatural and painful exertions by which this person assumed the semblance of decease, produced at length a real fatal result. Death would be no longer mocked with impunity. The counterfeit corpse, a few hours after its last revival, relapsed into a state which was capable of no subsequent resuscitation. But the case is so interesting and remarkable, as to deserve our giving it in all the detail with which Dr. Cheyne presents it to his readers.

He could die or expire when he pleased, and yet by an effort, or somehow, he could come to life again. He insisted so much upon our seeing the trial made, that we were forced to comply. We all three felt his pulse first; it was distinct, though small and thready, and his heart had its usual beating. He composed himself on his back, and lay in a still posture for some time; while I held his right hand, Dr. Baynard laid his hand on his heart, and Mr. Skrine held a clear looking-glass to his mouth. I found his pulse sink gradually, till at last I could not feel any by the most exact and nice touch. Dr. Baynard could not feel the least motion in his heart, nor Mr. Skrine perceive the least sort of breath on the bright mirror he held to his mouth. Then each of us by turns, examined his arm, heart, and breath; but could not, by the nicest scrutiny, discover the least symptom of life in him. We reasoned a long time about this odd appearance as well as we could, and finding he still continued in that condition, we began to conclude that he had indeed carried the experiment too far; and at last we were satisfied that he was actually dead, and were just ready to leave him. This continued about half an hour. By nine o'clock in the morning, in autumn, as we were going away, we observed some motion about the body, and upon examination found his pulse and the motion of his heart gradually returning; he began to breathe gently, and speak softly. We were all astonished to the last degree at his unexpected change, and after some further conversation with him, and with ourselves, went away fully satisfied as to all the particulars of this fact, but not able to form any rational scheme how to account for it. He afterwards called for his attorney, added a codicil to his will, &c., and calmly and composedly died that evening.

EDITORIAL DUTIES.—The miseries of editors have become a trite subject of remark; however oft-repeated a tale they may have grown, they are not the less painful and perplexing. Most people think that the great difficulty in conducting a newspaper is to find matter with which to fill it; but the reverse is the fact. The difficulty consists in selection from the great mass of matter which presents itself. A large sheet may be more easily filled than a small one, as its contents are not required to be quite so select. A majority of newspaper readers also imagine, that editors' great care is to make their papers good; but, on the contrary, what puzzles them most, and is the most difficult to guard against, is the danger of their being too good. For instance, they may be too amusing, and they will not please those who prefer weighty matters: or, on the other hand, they may be of too useful a character, and be dry and dull to those who seek entertainment merely. They may be made too entertaining, by crowding them with exciting fictions, and high-wrought details of the events and crimes of real life; this will be satiating and sickening to those whose good taste rejects such excitement. They may contain too much of politics, of news, of literature, of science, or of poetry; and those readers who are not interested in such matters, will throw aside the paper, as destitute of interest. A proper medium must be preserved; and in this manner a newspaper may become useful, instructive, interesting, and entertaining. But a proper medium is difficult to hit; and few editors have the felicity to succeed in every respect. To interest every class of readers, without giving too much place to any particular class, is the object of all; and happy is he who acquires, even by long experience, the secret of success.

MR. HORNOR'S OBSERVATORY.

What a living poet, Mr. Haynes, as observed in his tragedy of *Durazzo*, of an ambitious man, that,

“Had he but wings to fly,
He'd bear his very appetites to heaven,
And slake his thirst i' the clouds,

may well be applied to the young artist who passed whole nights in an observatory erected over the cross of St. Paul's cathedral, in order that he might take a panoramic of London; and yet such a dangerous and difficult enterprize was achieved by an English artist. If any proof were wanting of the aspiring ambition and elevated and extensive views of the present age, such an undertaking as this would certainly supply it.

It was when the cross of St. Paul's was taken down, in 1821, to be repaired and regilt, that an ingenious and enterprising young artist, Mr. Thomas Hornor, availed himself of the circumstance to obtain permission to erect an observatory above the usual site of the cross, for the purpose of making panoramic drawings of the metropolis and the surrounding country.

Mr. Hornor had been for some time engaged in executing pictorial delineations of landed estates in perspective panoramic views. In the course of his pursuits this way, he constructed an apparatus by which the most distant and intricate scenery may be delineated with mathematical accuracy. The metropolis and its beautiful environs furnished a fine subject for Mr. Hornor's delineation, and in order to effect this object, he passed the whole summer of 1820 in the lantern of St. Paul's immediately under the ball, in executing a general view.

When this view was nearly completed, preparations were made for removing the ball and cross; and the scaffolding, which excited such general admiration, as a stupendous and most ingenious structure, was erected. But even this was not sufficient for the aspiring artist's ambition, that

“Desire of active souls,

That pushes them beyond the bounds of Nature,
And elevates the hero to the Gods.”

Mr. Hornor obtained permission to erect an observatory, supported by a platform, several feet above the highest part of the present cross: and having succeeded in fixing the apparatus in the interior of the observatory, he commenced a new series of sketches, on a greatly enlarged scale, so as to admit the introduction of minute objects at a distance of some miles. In doing this he had to contend against numerous obstacles; sometimes portions of the scene would be in bright sunshine, and at others in total obscurity, producing an incessant alteration in light and shade. Other difficulties also presented themselves, but Mr. Hornor surmounted them all, and he made a complete panoramic view of the metropolis and its environs, on 280 sheets of drawing paper, comprising a surface of 1680 square feet.

The laborious toil, which he had daily to undergo, in ascending the infinite staircases and ladders to reach his aerial habitation, independently of the danger of a journey so often repeated, would have damped the ardour of most men. Few artists, however enthusiastic, possess the requisite courage and physical ability to encounter such herculean labour, attended with such imminent personal risk. But our readers will form a better conception of Mr. Hornor's impressions from his own characteristic description.

“On entering the cathedral at three in the morning, the stillness which then prevailed in the streets of this populous city, contrasted with their mid-day bustle, was only surpassed by the more solemn sepulchral stillness of the cathedral itself. But not less impressive was the development, at that early hour, of the immense scene from its lofty summit, whence was frequently beheld the Forest of London, without any indication of animated existence. It was interesting to mark the gradual symptoms of returning life, until the rising sun vivified the whole into activity, bustle, and business. On one occasion the night was passed in the observatory, for the purpose of meeting the first glimpse of day; but the cold was so intense, as to preclude any wish to repeat the experiment.

“In proceeding with the work, every assistance was readily afforded by the gentlemen connected with the cathedral; and, through their kind attention, all possible precautions were taken for the prevention of accidents to be apprehended in such an exposed situation. But the weather was frequently so boisterous during the stormy summer of 1821, as to frustrate the judicious contrivances for security. Indeed scarcely a day passed without derangement of some part of the scaffolding, or machinery connected with it; and so strong became the sense of

danger arising from these repeated casualties, that notwithstanding the powerful inducement of increased remuneration, it was difficult on these emergencies to obtain the services of efficient workmen. This will not appear surprising, when it is known that, during the high winds, it was impossible for a person to stand on the scaffolding without clinging for support against the frame-work; the cracking and whistling of the timbers, at such times, resembled those of a ship labouring in a storm, and the situation of the artist was not unlike that of a mariner at the masthead. During a squall, more than usually severe, a great part of the circular frame-work of heavy planks, erected above the gallery for the prevention of accidents, was carried over the house-tops to a considerable distance. At this moment a similar fate had nearly befallen the observatory, which was torn from its fastenings, turned partly over the edge of the platform, and its various contents thrown into utter confusion. The fury of the wind rendered the door impassable; and after a short interval of suspense, an outlet was obtained by forcing a passage on the opposite side. * By this misfortune, independently of personal inconvenience, considerable delay and expense were occasioned ere the work could be resumed; and it became necessary to provide against similar misfortunes, by securing the observatory to a cross-beam, and constructing a rope fence.

* An accident somewhat more perilous befel Mr. Gwynn, when occupied in measuring the top of the dome, for a section of the Cathedral. While intent on his work, his foot slipped, and he slid down the convex surface of the dome, until his descent was fortunately obstructed by the lead. He thus remained until released from the danger which threatened him, by one of his assistants, who providentially discovered his awful situation.

Baneful Effects of Drinking!—In the course of last week a respectable lady, residing we need not say where, discovered that a cask of home-made wine, at least a “twomond auld since lint was i' the bell,” had become so acid as to be nearly undrinkable. To have given it away would have done little good; for the truth is, British wine at the best is so poor a substitute for the generous juice of the Tuscan grape, that it has in a great measure ceased to be prized since the duties were lowered on the foreign article. Of this fact the lady was well aware, and had heard, moreover, that *dreg*, or the refuse of distillery worts, is an excellent thing for fattening pigs. To the pigs, therefore, the wine was sent, and carefully emptied into a stone trough, in the presence of four greedy grumphies. In a moment their lugs were immersed in the liquor, and so far from finding any fault with it they grumphed out in concert a vote of thanks to their generous benefactress. More than one person witnessed the *bouse*, and we have their authority for stating, that more determined toppers were never seen. At first all was mirth and good fellowship, but as the wine began to *tell*, a very different scene was exhibited, and in the course of half an hour or so, the whole had become as drunk as *Davie's sow*. Whiskey was prohibited at the Clare election, and if we may judge from the effects of liquor on swine, the Priests acted with great wisdom. Like a different class of debauchees, they began to quarrel about the merest trifles; offence was taken where none was intended; and in the melee that ensued two of the pigs got their ears lacerated, and torn from their necks, while a third, after fighting gallantly, was minus a full half of its tail. The fourth, which appeared to be the most drunken of the whole, was repeatedly knocked about and over, and died the same night, less, as is supposed, from injury than intemperance. The roaring and squeeling, which were quite tremendous, brought a great number of persons to the spot, and as the combatants bit and kicked pell-mell—right and left—behind and before,—without either method or visible cause, those who were ignorant of the previous fuddle believed that they were either bewitched or possessed. Some, however, were wicked enough to enjoy the joke, and slyly suggested that either the riot act should be read, or a surgeon sent for to try the effects of the stomach pump! Such an instrument, had there been one in town, might have saved the life of the defunct animal, but still we suspect few operators would have ventured at such a critical moment to open the jaws of an unruly swine. In the above paragraph there is no exaggeration, and we have only to add, that though three of the revellers are slowly recovering, they will never, in point of ears and tails, be any thing like themselves again.—*Dumfries Courier*.

THE Glebe Rents having become due on the 24th March last, it is requested they be forthwith paid into the hands of Jedediah Slason, Esquire.

GEORGE BEST, Rector.

Frederickton, April 8, 1828.