

Dreaming.

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To change a flounce, or add a furbelow,

on the garments of all England's daughters :—it was Fashion's graven image. The attachment of the fair to fashion, to operas, and * * * *
 ——— But I must hold my pen—I see a lovely face approaching my writing-table—it already frowns upon me for beginning my last paragraph—it asks me upbraidingly how I can presume to censure its idol, and flutters past me repeating—

Poor moralist! and what art thou!

* * * * *
 Thy joys no glittering female meets,
 No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
 No painted plumage to display;

and archly concludes, with mortifying emphasis in an old man's ear,

We frolic while 'tis May!

I.

TABLE TALK.—NO. VI.

Dreaming.

DR. SPURZHEIM, in treating of the *Physiology of the Brain*, has the following curious passage:

“The state of somnambulism equally proves the plurality of the organs. This is a state of incomplete sleep, wherein several organs are watching. It is known that the brain acts upon the external world by means of voluntary motion, of the voice, and of the five external senses. Now, if in sleeping some organs be active, dreams take place; if the action of the brain be propagated to the muscles, there follow motions; if the action of the brain be propagated to the vocal organs, the sleeping person speaks. Indeed, it is known that sleeping persons dream and speak; others dream, speak, hear, and answer; others still dream, rise, do various things, and walk. This latter state is called somnambulism, that is, the state of walking during sleep. Now, as the ear can hear, so the eyes may see, while the other organs sleep; and there are facts quite positive which prove that several persons in the state of somnambulism have seen, but always with open eyes. There are also convulsive fits, in which the patients see without hearing, and *vice versa*. Some somnambulists do things of which they are not capable in a state of watching; and dreaming persons reason sometimes better than they do when awake. This phenomenon is not astonishing,” &c.—*Physiognomical System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim*, p. 217.

There is here a very singular mixing up of the flattest truisms with the most gratuitous assumptions; so that the one being told with great gravity, and the other delivered with the most familiar air, one is puzzled in a cursory perusal to distinguish which is which. This is an art of stultifying the reader, like that of the juggler, who shows you some plain matter-of-fact experiment just as he is going to play off his capital trick. The mind is, by this alternation of style, thrown off its guard; and between wondering first at the absurdity, and then at the superficiality of the work, becomes almost convert to it. A thing exceedingly questionable is stated so roundly, you think there must be something in it: the plainest proposition is put in so doubtful and cau-

polis, at present snatches more victims than at any former period ; and its prey are, for the most part, the young, the beautiful, and the gay !

When late hours are proved to be so prejudicial to health, and we have so much time in the day for enjoyment, the evil might be remedied were it not that Fashion, like Comus, pertinaciously exclaims :—" What have we with day to do !" But, alas ! one might as well

Send our precepts to the Leviathan
To come on shore—

as by the deductions of sober sense change a particle of the mode ! Ere I conclude, I must mention the present fashion of numerous dinner-parties. What Babel confusion reigns over them ! The ancients understood such things better, and built theatres for the crowd, but kept their houses open to their friends, who, they well knew, could be but few in number really worthy the name. 'Never less than the Graces, nor more than the Muses,' was their established rule. They loved social intercourse, and preferred seeing friends every day to feasting a mob once a-year. We cannot afford a plate or two for our friends daily, because we must give large dinner-parties at such and such times ; and thus we starve our friendship to fatten our ostentation—" Out upon such half-faced fellowship !" Defend me from dinners in the fashion and routs *à la mode* ! Give me the dance, merry from the heart—the conviviality of health and reason—the communion of grace and simplicity in pleasure—interest instead of indifference—sparkling wit instead of frivolity—innocent mirth of the heart in place of that which is faint and sickly on the lip—

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace ;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free :
Such sweet neglect more taketh me,
Than all the adulteries of art,
That strike mine eyes, but not mine heart.

But every thing fashionable is constrained and servile : to be an adept, as Richelieu told Corneille, one must possess *un esprit de suite*, for Fashion takes her tone from the titled ones of the earth ; your courtiers are always slaves of the mode ; and in fashion the example of the greatest " bestrides the earth like a Colossus."

I might trace fashion in a thousand other shapes—in operas, at watering-places, through town and country ; but I will only briefly notice it in one more. The natural desire of the fairer part of creation is to please the other sex, and this accounts for the extreme love of fashion among women. What less than life would it cost a lady of the *ton*, to be obliged to dress for the remainder of her days like a quaker ? The worship of the goddess of " many colours" is, however, more venial in woman than in man. From the earliest time ocean has been dived into, deserts crossed, mines ransacked, invention tortured, and art only not quite exhausted, to minister to her wants and changes. A female twelve months behind the mode, would be considered as outlandish as a mermaid. A man, if he be a gentleman, may wear a one-year-old coat and pass well enough in society ; but a lady, in a dress completely out, would be scorned and shunned, ridiculed and slandered. The ladies formerly had a doll imported monthly from Paris, when that city led the fashion. This waxen beauty was the sylph that gave her aid—

tious a manner, you conceive the writer must see a great deal farther into the subject than you do. You mistrust your ears and eyes, and are in a fair way to resign the use of your understanding. It is a fine style of *mystifying*. Again, it is the practice with the German school, and in particular with Dr. Spurzheim, to run counter to common sense and the best authenticated opinions. They must always be more knowing than every body else, and treat the wisdom of the ancients, and the wisdom of the moderns, much in the same supercilious way. It has been taken for granted generally that people see with their eyes; and therefore it is stated in the above passage as a discovery of the author, "imparted in dreadful secrecy," that sleep-walkers always see with their eyes open. The meaning of which is, that we are not to give too implicit or unqualified an assent to the principle, at which modern philosophers have arrived with some pains and difficulty, that we acquire our ideas of external objects through the senses. The *transcendental* sophists wish to back out of that, as too conclusive and well-defined a position. They would be glad to throw the whole of what has been done on this question into confusion again, in order to begin *de novo*, like children who construct houses with cards, and when the pack is built up, shuffle them all together on the table again. These intellectual Sysiphuses are always rolling the stone of knowledge up a hill, for the perverse pleasure of rolling it down again. Having gone as far as they can in the direction of reason and good sense, rather than seem passive or the slaves of any opinion, they turn back with a wonderful look of sagacity to all sorts of exploded prejudices and absurdity. It is a pity that we cannot *let well done alone*, and that, after labouring for centuries to remove ignorance, we set our faces with the most wilful officiousness against the stability of knowledge. The *Physiognomical System* of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim is full of this sort of disgusting cant. We are still only to *believe in all unbelief*—in what they tell us. The less credulous we are of other things, the more faith we shall have in reserve for them: by exhausting our stock of scepticism and caution on such obvious matters of fact as that people always see with their eyes open, we shall be prepared to swallow their crude and extravagant theories whole, and not be astonished at "the phenomenon, that persons sometimes reason better asleep than awake!"

I have alluded to this passage because I myself am (or used some time ago to be) a sleep-walker; and know how the thing is. In this sort of disturbed, unsound sleep, the eyes are not closed, and are attracted by the light. I used to get up and go towards the window, and make violent efforts to throw it open. The air in some measure revived me, or I might have tried to fling myself out. I saw objects indistinctly, the houses, for instance, facing me on the opposite side of the street; but still it was some time before I could recognise them or recollect where I was: that is, I was still asleep, and the dimness of my senses (as far as it prevailed) was occasioned by the greater numbness of my memory. This phenomenon is not astonishing, unless we choose in all such cases to put the cart before the horse. For in fact, it is the mind that sleeps, and the senses (so to speak) only follow the example. The mind dozes, and the eyelids close in consequence: we do not go to sleep, because we shut our eyes. I can, however, speak to the fact of the eyes being open, when their sense is shut; or rather,

when we are unable to draw just inferences from it. It is generally in the night-time indeed, or in a strange place, that the circumstance happens; but as soon as the light dawns on the recollection, the obscurity and perplexity of the senses clear up. The external impression is made before, much in the same manner as it is after we are awake; but it does not lead to the usual train of associations connected with that impression; *e. g.* the name of the street or town where we are, who lives at the opposite house, how we came to sleep in the room where we are, &c.; all which are ideas belonging to our waking experience, and are at this time cut off or greatly disturbed by sleep. It is just the same as when persons recover from a swoon, and fix their eyes unconsciously on those about them, for a considerable time before they recollect where they are. Would any one but a German physiologist think it necessary to assure us that at this time they see, but with their eyes open, or pretend that though they have lost all memory or understanding during their fainting fit, their minds act then more vigorously and freely than ever, because they are not distracted by outward impressions? The appeal is made to the outward sense, in the instances we have seen; but the mind is deaf to it, because its functions are for the time gone. It is ridiculous to pretend with this author, that in sleep some of the organs of the mind rest, while others are active: it might as well be pretended that in sleep one eye watches while the other is shut. The stupor is general: the faculty of thought itself is impaired; and whatever ideas we have, instead of being confined to any particular faculty, or the impressions of any one sense, and invigorated thereby, float at random from object to object, from one class of impressions to another, without coherence or control. The *conscious* or connecting link between our ideas, which forms them into separate groups, or compares different parts and views of a subject together, seems to be that which is principally wanting in sleep; so that any idea that presents itself in this anarchy of the mind is lord of the ascendant for the moment, and is driven out by the next straggling notion that comes across it. The bundles of thought are, as it were, untied, loosened from a common centre, and drift along the stream of fancy as it happens. Hence the confusion (not the concentration of the faculties) that continually takes place in this state of half-perception. The mind takes in but one thing at a time, but one part of a subject, and therefore cannot correct its sudden and heterogeneous transitions from one momentary impression to another by a larger grasp of understanding. Thus we confound one person with another, merely from some accidental coincidence, the name or the place where we have seen them, or their having been concerned with us in some particular transaction the evening before. They lose and regain their proper identity perhaps half a dozen times in this rambling way; nor are we able (though we are somewhat incredulous and surprised at these compound creations) to detect the error, from not being prepared to trace the same connected subject of thought to a number of varying and successive ramifications, or to form the idea of a *whole*. We think that Mr. Such-a-one did so and so: then, from a second face coming across us, like the sliders of a magic lantern, it was not he, but another; then some one calls him by his right name, and he is himself again.

We are little shocked at these gross contradictions; for if the mind was capable of perceiving them in all their absurdity, it would not be liable to fall into them. It runs into them for the same reason that it is hardly conscious of them when made.

—"That which was now a horse, a bear, a cloud,
Even with a thought the rack dislimns,
And makes it indistinct as water is in water."

The difference, so far then, between sleeping and waking seems to be, that in the latter we have a greater range of conscious recollections, a larger discourse of reason, and associate ideas in longer trains and more as they are connected one with another in the order of nature; whereas in the former, any two impressions, that meet or are alike, join company, and then are parted again, without notice, like the froth from the wave. So in madness, there is, I should apprehend, the same tyranny of the imagination over the judgment; that is, the mind has slipped its cable, and single images meet, and jostle, and unite suddenly together, without any power to arrange or compare them with others, with which they are connected in the world of reality. There is a continual phantasmagoria: whatever shapes and colours come together are by the heat and violence of the brain referred to external nature, without regard to the order of time, place, or circumstance. From the same want of continuity, we often forget our dreams so speedily: if we cannot catch them as they are passing out at the door, we never set eyes on them again. There is no clue or thread of imagination to trace them by. In a morning sometimes we have had a dream that we try in vain to recollect; it is gone, like the rainbow from the cloud. At other times (so evanescent is their texture) we forget that we have dreamt at all; and at these times the mind seems to have been a mere blank, and sleep presents only an image of death. Hence has arisen the famous dispute, *Whether the soul thinks always?*—on which Mr. Locke and different writers have bestowed so much tedious and unprofitable discussion; some maintaining that the mind was like a watch that goes continually, though more slowly and irregularly at one time than another; while the opposite party contended that it often stopped altogether, bringing the example of sound sleep as an argument, and desiring to know what proof we could have of thoughts passing through the mind, of which it was itself perfectly unconscious, and retained not the slightest recollection. I grant, we often sleep so sound, or have such faint imagery passing through the brain, that if we awake by degrees, we forget it altogether: we recollect our first waking, and perhaps some imperfect suggestions of fancy just before; but beyond this, all is mere oblivion. But I have observed that whenever I have been waked up suddenly, and not left to myself to recover from this state of mental torpor, I have been always dreaming of something, *i. e.* thinking, according to the tenor of the question. Let any one call you at any time, however fast asleep you may be, you make out their voice in the first surprise to be like some one's you were thinking of in your sleep. Let an accidental noise, the falling of something in the next room, rouse you up, you constantly find something to associate it with, or translate it back into the language of your slumbering thoughts. You are never taken completely at a *nonplus*—summoned, as it were, out of a state of non-existence. It is easy for any one to try the expe-

riment upon himself; that is, to examine every time he is waked up suddenly, so that his waking and sleeping state are brought into immediate contact, whether he has not in all such cases been dreaming of something, and not fairly *caught napping*. For myself, I think I can speak with certainty. It would indeed be rather odd to awake out of such an absolute privation and suspense of thought as is contended for by the partisans of the contrary theory. It would be a peep into the grave, a consciousness of death, an escape from the world of non-entity!

The vividness of our impressions in dreams, of which so much has been said, seems to be rather apparent than real; or, if this mode of expression should be objected to as unwarrantable, rather physical than mental. It is a vapour, a fume, the effect of the "heat-oppressed brain." The imagination gloats over an idea, and doats at the same time. However warm or brilliant the colouring of these changing appearances, they vanish with the dawn. They are put out by our waking thoughts, as the sun puts out a candle. It is unlucky that we sometimes remember the heroic sentiments—the profound discoveries—the witty repartees, we have uttered in our sleep. The one turn to bombast, the others are mere truisms, and the last absolute nonsense. Yet we clothe them certainly with a fancied importance at the moment. This seems to be merely the effervescence of the blood or of the brain, physically acting. It is an odd thing in sleep, that we not only fancy we see different persons, and talk to them, but that we hear them make answers, and startle us with an observation or a piece of news: and though we of course put the answer into their mouths, we have no idea beforehand what it will be, and it takes us as much by surprise as it would in reality. This kind of successful ventriloquism which we practise upon ourselves, may perhaps be in some measure accounted for from the short-sightedness and incomplete consciousness which were remarked above as the peculiar characteristics of sleep.

The power of prophesying or foreseeing things in our sleep, as from a higher and more abstracted sphere of thought, need not be here argued upon. There is, however, a sort of profundity in sleep; and it may be usefully consulted as an oracle in this way. It may be said, that the voluntary power is suspended, and things come upon us as unexpected revelations, which we keep out of our thoughts at other times. We may be aware of a danger, that yet we do not choose, while we have the full command of our faculties, to acknowledge to ourselves: the impending event will then appear to us as a dream, and we shall most likely find it verified afterwards. Another thing of no small consequence is, that we may sometimes discover our tacit, and almost unconscious sentiments, with respect to persons or things in the same way. We are not hypocrites in our sleep. The curb is taken off from our passions, and our imagination wanders at will. When awake, we check these rising thoughts, and fancy we have them not. In dreams, when we are off our guard, they return securely and unbidden. We may make this use of the infirmity of our sleeping metamorphosis, that we may repress any feelings of this sort that we disapprove in their incipient state, and detect, ere it be too late, an unwarrantable antipathy or fatal passion. Infants cannot disguise their thoughts from others; and in sleep we reveal the secret to ourselves.

It should appear that I have never been in love, for the same reason. I never dream of the face of any one I am particularly attached to. I have thought almost to agony of the same person for years, nearly without ceasing, so as to have her face always before me, and to be haunted by a perpetual consciousness of disappointed passion, and yet I never in all that time dreamt of this person more than once or twice, and then not vividly. I conceive, therefore, that this perseverance of the imagination in a fruitless track must have been owing to mortified pride, to an intense desire and hope of good in the abstract, more than to love, which I consider as an individual and involuntary passion, and which therefore, when it is strong, must predominate over the fancy in sleep. I think myself into love, and dream myself out of it. I should have made a very bad Endymion in this sense; for all the time the heavenly Goddess was shining over my head, I should never have had a thought about her. If I had waked and found her gone, I might have been in a considerable taking. Coleridge used to laugh at me for my want of the faculty of dreaming; and once, on my saying that I did not like the pertematural stories in the Arabian Nights, (for the comic parts I love dearly,) he said, "That must be because you never dream. There is a class of poetry built on this foundation, which is surely no inconsiderable part of our nature, since we are asleep and building up imaginations of this sort half our time." I had nothing to say against it: it was one of his conjectural subtleties, in which he excels all the persons I ever knew; but I had some satisfaction in finding afterwards, that I had Bishop Atterbury expressly on my side in this question, who has recorded his detestation of Sinbad the Sailor, in an interesting letter to Pope. Perhaps he too did not dream!

Yet I dream sometimes; I dream of the Louvre—*Intus et in cute*. I dreamt I was there a few weeks ago, and that the old scene returned—that I looked for my favourite pictures, and found them gone or erased. The dream of my youth came upon me; a glory and a vision unutterable, that comes no more but in darkness and in sleep: my heart rose up, and I fell on my knees, and lifted up my voice and wept, and I awoke. I also dreamt a little while ago, that I was reading the New Eloise to an old friend, and came to the concluding passage in Julia's farewell letter, which had much the same effect upon me.—The words are, "*Trop heureuse d'acheter au prix de ma vie le droit de t'aimer toujours sans crime, et de te le dire encore une fois, avant que je meurs!*" I used to sob over this passage twenty years ago; and in this dream about it lately, I seemed to live these twenty years over again in one short moment! I do not dream ordinarily; and there are people who never could see any thing in the *New Eloise*. Are we not quits!

THE HOUNDSDITCH ALBUM.—NO. II.

Second Letter from Miss Hebe Hoggins.

MISS CAUSTIC, I am sorry to say, is elected a member of our society, in spite of my blackball, and has already begun to gratify her envy, hatred, and malice. Mr. Skinner, the tanner, of Norton Falgate, has undertaken a poem of the most comprehensive and daring kind, entitled the Creation, which promises completely to eclipse Sir Richard Blackmore's, and of which the headings of the different chapters are already composed. We are told, exclaimed Miss Caustic, after reading the plan of this noble work, that at the creation every thing was made out of nothing, but it appears to me, that this author has made nothing of every thing. In answer to my observation, that Mr. Schweitzkoffer's verses were destined to immortality, she cried with a sneer,—“Yes, because he writes them to no end;” and when an erudite sonnet of Mr. M'Quill's was pronounced to smell of the lamp, she peevishly whispered,—“Ay, it would smell of the fire if it were treated as it deserves.” But the chief object of her illnatured ridicule is a literary phenomenon whom I am patronizing, a genius of the first order, although at present in the humble occupation of carman to Messrs. Tierce and Sweetman, grocers in Whitechapel. This prodigy, if I be not grievously mistaken, will speedily eclipse all the Bristol milkwomen, farmers' boys, Ettrick shepherds, Northamptonshire peasants, and Dumfries stonecutters, that ever burst their bonds, and set themselves to work with their heads instead of their hands; and yet the members of our club make him the subject of their jealous banter and illiberal sarcasm, venting their misplaced jokes upon his employment, which constitutes his principal claim to admiration. Miss Caustic observes that he will be able to *drive* a good bargain with the booksellers, and that, as he goes every morning to take orders, he will be soon qualified for the living of Horselydown, or the curacy of Whitehall, in which case he would be quite at home in the Stable-yard; but Mr. M'Quill suggests that he may be one of Horace's *Carmen Seculare*, and of course ineligible to spiritual dignities, although by the nails in his shoes he seems already to be of the order of Pegasus. This gentleman sneeringly calls him the philosopher Descartes, and at other times terms him my Lord Shaftsbury, observing that his bad grammar is one of his Characteristics. Even Mr. Schweitzkoffer, who ought to have been superior to such vulgar raillery, anticipates that his wit will be attic, because he must always have dwelt in garrets, and have frequently been to Grease, unless his wheels were scandalously neglected.

My bosom beat high at the interesting moment when I first introduced him to our Academus that he might recite one of his poems, and I felt assured that he would make these jeerers ashamed of their witticisms, which, after all, were nothing but a string of miserable puns. He appeared with his whip in his hand, to which instant exception was taken, as completely reversing the established order of things, and the customary relation between poets and critics, it being exclusively reserved to Lord Byron to lash his reviewers. Mr. M'Quill accordingly went up to him, and exclaiming,—“*Parce, puer, stimulis,*” took the instrument from him, and deposited it on the table. George Crump,