Neuralgia.

tter, he knew to be white arsenic. At another time, e had two partridges sent him by the court, and water nd onions being the sauce, Mrs Turner put in cantha- ides instead of pepper; so that there was scarce nything that he did eat but there was some poison ixed.'*

It is impossible to believe that the human frame ould stand out for weeks against so hot a siege. It ould appear as if Franklin must really have confessed o much. It has already been said, that the confused ate of the whole evidence renders it difficult to find ow far a case was made out against the Earl and ountess of Somerset. Such a confession as Franklin's nly makes matters still more confused. That Sir homas Overbury really was poisoned, one can scarcely oubt, if even a portion of what Franklin and the others ay is true; but the reckless manner in which the rime was gone about, and the confusion of the whole vidence, is extremely perplexing. Not the least emarkable feature in this tragedy is the number of eople concerned in it. We find, brought to trial, the arl and Countess of Somerset and Sir Thomas Monson, ho, though said to be the guiltiest of all, were spared: Veston, Franklin, and Mrs Turner, were executed: orman, and another man of science who was said to ave given aid, had gone to their account before the ials came on. Then, in Franklin's confession, it was ated that 'the toothless maid, trusty Margaret, was equainted with the poisoning; so was Mrs Turner's an, Stephen; so also was Mrs Horne, the countess's wn handmaid;' and several other subordinate persons re alluded to in a similar manner.

The quietness and secrecy of the French and Italian oisonings have been already alluded to. The poisoners, n general, instead of acting in a bustling crowd, gene- ally prepared themselves for their dreadful task by ecretly acquiring the competent knowledge, so that ney might not find it necessary to take the aid of onfederates. They generally did their work alone, or t most two would act together. It certainly argues a adly demoralised state of society in the reign of King ames, that so many persons should be found who ould coolly connect themselves with the work of eath; but still there was not so much real danger as n the quiet, systematic poisonings of such criminals as 'ophana and the Countess of Brinvilliers. The great yer of poisoning was, however, calculated to make a ery deep impression on the public mind. It filled ondon with fear and suspicion. When rumours about oisonings become prevalent, no one knows exactly how ar the crime has proceeded, and this and that event is emembered and connected with it. All the sudden eaths within recollection are recalled, and thus accounted or. People supposed to be adepts in chemistry were in reat danger from the populace, and one man, named amb, was literally torn to pieces by a mob at Charing- ross. The people began to dwell upon the death of rince Henry, the king's eldest son, who had fallen ddenly. It was remembered that he was a youth of frank, manly disposition—the friend and companion f Raleigh and of other heroic spirits. He liked popu- arity, and went into many of the popular prejudices of he times—forming altogether in his character a great ontrast to his grave, dry, fastidious, and suspicious rother Charles, who was to succeed to his vacant lace. He had died very suddenly—of fever, it was aid; but popular rumour now attributed his death o poison. Nay, it was said that his own father, alous of his popularity, was the perpetrator; and it as whispered that *this* was the secret which King ames was so afraid his favourite Somerset might tell prosecuted to death. In a work called *Truth brought o Light*, a copy was given of an alleged medical report n a dissection of the body, calculated to confirm these suspicions: it may be found in the *State Trials*, ii. 1002. Arthur Wilson, who published his life and reign of King James during the Commonwealth, said: 'Strange rumours are raised upon this sudden expiration of our prince, the disease being so violent that the combat of nature in the strength of youth (being almost nineteen years of age) lasted not above five days. Some say he was poisoned with a bunch of grapes; others attribute it to the venomous scent of a pair of gloves presented to him (the distemper lying for the most part in the head.) They that knew neither of these are stricken with fear and amazement, as if they had tasted or felt the effects of those violences. Private whisperings and suspicions of some new designs afoot broaching prophetical terrors that a black Christmas would produce a bloody Lent, &c.' Kennet, in his notes on Wilson's work, says that he possesses a rare copy of a sermon preached while the public mind was thus excited, 'wherein the preacher, who had been his domestic chaplain, made such broad hints about the manner of his (Prince Henry's) death, that melted the auditory into a flood of tears, and occasioned his being dismissed the court.'

But suspicion did not stop here. When King James himself died in much pain, his body shewing the unsightly symptoms consequent on his gross habits, poison was again suspected; and as it had been said on the former occasion, that the father had connived at the death of his son, it was now whispered that the remaining son, anxious to commence his ill-starred reign, was accessory to hurrying his father from the world. The moral character of Charles I. is sufficient to acquit him of such a charge. But historians even of late date have not entirely acquitted his favourite, Buckingham, who, it was said, finding that the king was tired of him, resolved to make him give place to the prince, in whose good graces he felt secure. The authors of the scandalous histories published during the Commonwealth, said that the duke's mother administered the poison externally in the form of a plaster.

* *State Trials*, 941.

NEURALGIA.*

Obstructives and sceptics are in one sense benefactors: although they do not generally originate improved modes of thought and action, they at least prevent the adoption of crude theories and ill-digested measures. To meet the criticism of these opponents, inventive genius must more carefully bring its ideas and plans to the test of practical experiment and thorough investigation; and as truth must ultimately prevail, it cannot be considered unjust or injurious to insist upon its presenting its credentials. This is, we submit, one of the benefits resulting from schools, colleges, and guilds: it is difficult to impress them with novel truths; but in a great degree they act as breakwaters to the waves of error. In no department of social life is this doctrine better illustrated than in the medical profession, which is among the keenest and most sceptical of bodies in scrutinising novelty; but it has rarely allowed any real improvement to remain permanently untested and unadopted. We believe this to be the fair view to take of a class of scientific men who have certainly had a large share of sarcasm to endure.

General readers, for whom we profess to cater, take no great interest in medical subjects and discussions; but as historians of what is doing in the world of art, science, and literature, we think it our duty to record, in a brief way, any information we can collect that may

* *Neuralgia: its various Forms, Pathology, and Treatment.* Being the Jacksonian Prize Essay of the Royal College of Surgeons for 1850; with some Additions. By C. Toogood Downing, M.D., M.R.C.S. Churchill, London.

be beneficial to the suffering portion of humanity; and in this 'miserable world' it is most probable that one-fourth part of our readers are invalids. Why should they not have their little troubles, whims, and maladies studied and cared for? The disease which gives a title to this short notice is perhaps one of the most mysterious and vexatious to which our nature is liable; both its cause and cure are equally occult, and its *modus operandi* is scarcely intelligible. A contemporary thus playfully alludes to the subject in terms more funny than precise:—'What is neuralgia? A nervous spasm, the cause of which has, however, not been satisfactorily and conclusively demonstrated; but we may, perhaps, obtain a clearer view of its nature, if we look upon it as connected with "morbid nutrition." Every one knows that the system is, or ought to be, constantly subject to a law of waste and repair; and if the operation of this law is impeded by "cold," "mental excitement," or any other baneful condition, diseases more or less unpleasant must ensue. The *vis naturæ* uses certain particles of matter in forming nerves; others in forming membrane, bones, juices, &c.; while used-up particles are expelled altogether from the system. We can readily conceive that each order of atoms is used by a distinct function, and has a different mission; and any morbid perversion or mingling of their separate destinies must end in disorder and suffering—nature's violent endeavour to restore the regularity of her operations. A cough is simply an effort of the lungs or bronchiæ to remove some offending intruder that ought to be doing duty elsewhere; and may we not call neuralgia *a cough of a nerve* to get rid of a disagreeable oppression—nature's legitimate *coup d'état* to put down and transport those "*red socialist*" particles that would interfere with the regularity of its constitution? Let us fancy, for a moment, a delicate little army of atoms marching obediently along, to form new nerve in place of the substance that is wasting away: another little army of carbonaceous particles have just received orders to pack up their luggage and be off, to make way for the advancing nerve-battalion; but in their exodus they are met by a fierce destroyer, in the shape of an east wind—a Caffre that suddenly throws the ranks of General Carbon into disorder, and drives them back upon the brilliant and pugnacious array of General Nerve: a battle-royal is the result. General Nerve immediately places lance in rest, and advances to the charge with the unsparing war-cry of: "Mr Ferguson, you don't lodge here!" and if Caffre East-wind is not despised and trifled with, he is generally beaten for a time; but great are the sufferings of humanity—the scene of this encounter—while the fight is raging.'

Now comes the question: How to get rid of this cruel invader? Dr Downing has undertaken to give an answer, which we believe to be satisfactory. In addition to the proper medical and hygienic treatment, which is carefully and ably stated in the work before us, Dr Downing has invented an apparatus which appears to be very efficacious; and we will therefore allow him to describe it in his own words:—'From considering tic douloureux as often a local disease, depending on a state of excessive irritability, sensibility, or spasm of a particular nerve, and from reflecting upon its causes, and observing the effect of topical sedatives, I was led to the conclusion, that the most direct way of quieting this state was by the application of warmth and sedative vapour to the part, so as to soothe the nerves, and calm them into regular action. For this purpose, I devised an apparatus which answers the purpose sufficiently well. It is a kind of fumigating instrument, in which dried herbs are burned, and the heated vapour directed to any part of the body. It is extremely simple in construction, and consists essentially of three parts with their media of connection—a cylinder for igniting the vegetable matter, bellows for maintaining a current of air through the burning material, and tubes and cones for directing and concentrating the stream of vapour. The chief medicinal effects I have noticed in the use of this instrument are those of a sedative character; but its remedial influence is not alone confined to the use of certain herbs. A considerable power is attributable to the warm current or intense heat generated. When the vegetable matter is ignited, and a current of air is made to pass through the burning mass, a small or great degree of heat can be produced at pleasure. Thus, when the hand is gently pressed upon the bellows, a mild, warm stream of vapour is poured forth which may act as a *douche* to irritable parts; but by strongly and rapidly compressing the same receptacle the fire within the cylinder is urged like that of a smith's forge, and the blast becomes intensely hot and burning.'

Those who wish to know more of this mode of treatment, had better refer to the work itself. We must content ourselves with having simply drawn our readers' attention to it.

ANCIENT GLACIERS IN THE LAKE COUNTRY.

Mr Robert Chambers, in a recent tour of the lakes of Westmoreland (April 1852), has discovered that the valleys of that interesting district were at one time occupied by glaciers. Glacialised surfaces were previously observed in a few places not far from Kendal, but without any conclusion as to the entire district. By Mr Chambers conspicuous and unequivocal memorials of ice-action have been found in most of the great central valleys, such as those of Derwentwater, Ulleswater, Thirlwater, and Windermere. The principal phenomena are rounded hummocks of rock on the skirts of the hills, and in the middle of the valleys; and as these hummocks, whatever may be the direction of the valleys, invariably present a smoothed side up, and an abrupt side downwards (*stoss-seite* and *lee-seite* of the Scandinavian geologists), it becomes certain that the glaciers proceeding from the mountains at the upper extremities were local to the several valleys. The smoothed hummocks are very noticeable in Derwentwater or Borrowdale, the celebrated Bowderstone resting on one; a particularly fine low surface appears at Grange, near the head of the lake. At Patterdale in Ulleswater Valley, the rocks are so much marked in this manner, that the whole place bears a striking resemblance to the sterile parts of Sweden; and some small rocky islets, near the head of the lake, are unmistakable *roches moutonnées*. The two valleys descending in opposite directions from Dunmail Raise, have had glaciers proceeding from some central point: in that of Thirlwater, the rounded hummocks are conspicuous at Armboth; in the other, near Grasmere, and near the Windermere Railway Station. In all these cases, the characteristic striation, or scratching produced on rock surfaces by glaciers, is more or less distinct, according as the surface may have been protected in intermediate ages. Where any drift or alluvial formation has covered it, the polish and striation are as perfect as if they had been formed in recent times, and the lines are almost invariably in the general direction of the valley.

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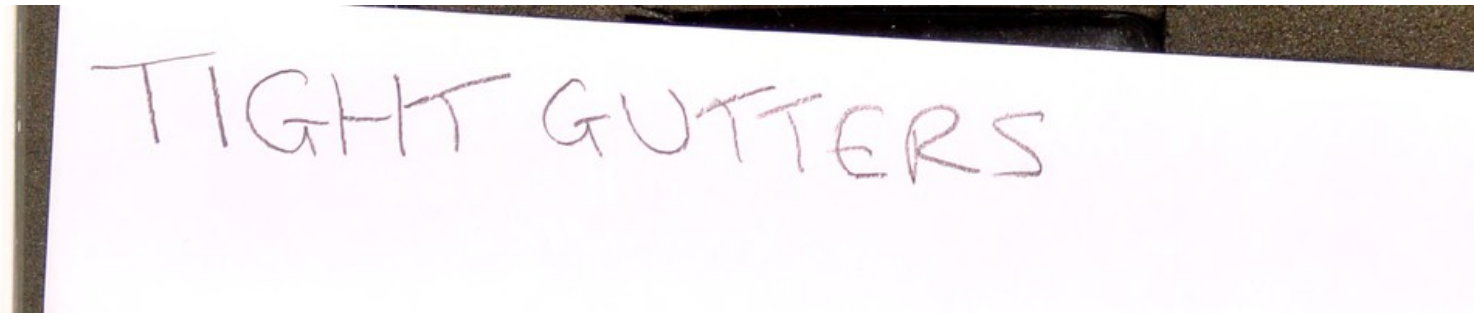
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