

MENTAL DELUSIONS.

A striking instance is on record, which does not on first sight seem to admit of explanation. It is that of Nicholai, of Berlin, related by himself to the Royal Society of that city in 1799. He was a man of much imagination and great industry; during the year 1790, he had been subjected to causes of great anxiety and sorrow; and it would seem that he had that year also neglected to lose blood by venesection or leeches so frequently as for some years, in consequence of vertigo and other complaints resulting from studious and sedentary habits of life, he had been accustomed to do. Early in February, several incidents of a disagreeable nature occurred to him; and on the 24th of that month he relates:—"At ten o'clock in the forenoon my wife and another person came to console me: I was in a great perturbation of mind, owing to a series of incidents which had altogether wounded my moral feelings, and from which I saw no possibility of relief; when suddenly I observed at the distance of ten paces from me a figure, the figure of a deceased person. I pointed at it, and asked my wife whether she did not see it. She saw nothing, but being much alarmed, endeavoured to compose me and sent for a physician. The figure remained some seven or eight minutes, and at length I became a little more calm."—"In the afternoon a little after four o'clock, the figure, which I had seen in the morning, again appeared. I was alone when this happened: a circumstance, which, as may easily be conceived, could not be very agreeable. I went, therefore, to the apartment of my wife, to whom I related it. But thither also the figure pursued me. Sometimes it was present, sometimes it was absent, but it was always the same standing figure."—"After I had recovered from my first impression of terror, I never felt myself particularly agitated by these apparitions, as I considered them to be, what they really were, the extraordinary consequences of indisposition: on the contrary I endeavoured as much as possible to preserve my composure of mind, that I might remain distinctly conscious of what passed within me. I observed these phantoms with great accuracy, and very often reflected on my previous thoughts, with a view to discover some law in the association of ideas, by which exactly these or other figure might present themselves to the imagination."—"The figure of the deceased person never appeared to me after the first dreadful day, but several other figures showed themselves afterwards, very distinctly; sometimes such as I knew, mostly, however, of persons I did not know; and amongst those known to me were the semblances of both living and deceased persons, but mostly the former: and I made the observation that acquaintance with whom I daily conversed, never appeared to me as phantasms: it was always such as were at a distance. When these apparitions had continued for some weeks, and I could regard them with the greatest composure, I afterwards endeavoured, at my own pleasure, to call forth phantoms of several acquaintance, whom I felt that reason represented to my imagination in the most lively manner, but in vain."—"The phantasms appeared to me in many cases involuntarily, as if they had been presented externally like the phenomena of nature, though they certainly had their origin internally; and at the same time I was always able to distinguish, with the greatest precision, phantasms from phenomena. Indeed I never once erred in this, as I was in general perfectly calm and self-collected on the occasion. I knew extremely well when it only appeared to me that the door was opened, and a phantom entered, and when the door really was opened, and a person came in." These figures appeared to Nicholai when alone or when in company, or even in the street, and continued to haunt him for about two months:—at last they disappeared; sometimes returning for a time, and lastly, during the time in which he was writing an account of them. (Nicholson's Journal of Nat. Phil. Sophy, Chemistry, and the Arts, vol. vi. p. 161.) A correspondent in the Journal from which I have quoted the case of Nicholai, describes himself as having been the subject of such hallucinations during an attack of fever: he saw innumerable faces all very agreeable, but fancying that these appearances indicated a breaking up of the system, and that the confusion of his senses was but the precursor of his speedy destruction, the spectra assumed a character associated with this uncheering belief; and instead of the very prepossessing faces which had before visited him, he beheld a visage of an unaged expression, which seemed to belong to a figure which pointed again at him. The patient began to

perceive the influence which his thoughts had upon his waking visions, and voluntarily directed them towards architectural recollections and natural scenery; and, after some time, a corresponding change came over the appearances which were presented to him.—He then turned his thoughts towards music, and dreamed during a short sleep that a cat leaped upon his back, and awoke him with shrill and piercing screams. The sleeping and the waking dreams were thus plainly enough proved to be formed very much in the same manner.

A distinguished physiological writer of our own country has related something similar which occurred in his own person. "I was labouring," he says, "under a fever, attended with symptoms of general debility, especially of the nervous system, and with a severe pain of the head, which was confined to a small spot situated above the right temple. After having passed a sleepless night, and being reduced to a state of considerable exhaustion. I first perceived figures presenting themselves before me, which I immediately recognized as similar to those described by Nicholai, and upon which, as I was free from delirium, and as they were visible for three days and nights with little intermission, I was able to make my observations. There were two circumstances which appeared to me very remarkable; first, that the spectral appearances always followed the motion of the eyes: and secondly, that the objects which were the best defined, and remained the longest visible, were such as I had no recollection of ever having previously seen. For about twenty-four hours, I had constantly before me a human figure, the features and dress of which were as distinctly visible as that of any real existence, and of which, after an interval of many years, I still retain the most lively impression: yet neither at the time nor since, have I been able to discover any person whom I had previously seen who resembled it. During one part of this disease, after the disappearance of the stationary phantom, I had a very singular and amusing imagery presented to me. It appeared as if a number of objects, principally human faces or figures, on a small scale, were placed before me, and gradually removed, like a succession of medallions. They were all of the same size, and appeared to be all situated at the same distance from the face."—(Dr. Bostock's System of Physiology, vol. iii. p. 204.) Conolly's Inquiry concerning the Indications of Insanity, p. 105. et seq.

NEGRO LABOUR.—Those who have been in the habit of supposing that the Negroes were a lazy race, who would rather starve than work, and whom nothing but the cart-whip could rouse to exertion, will be surprised to learn that the earth-work on the Jamaica railway was executed by negro labour alone, at a much cheaper rate than the same kind of work is performed on the English railways. In the hope of inducing the negroes to perform the work in as short a time as possible, the contractors offered them two shillings a day, which is double the amount usually paid in the Island; and such was their vigour and industry, that they did as much of this heavy work for two shillings as is usually done in this country for three shillings and sixpence. This shows that though the negroes are no fonder than other men of working for nothing, they are quite as willing to do a good days work for a good days wages as even Lancashire navigators.—*Liverpool Times.*

FATHER MATHEW.—The Cork Examiner says Father Mathew still perseveres in his work, declaring that the few cases of backsliders which have come to light may be clearly traced to the very great temptations which have been presented by the dealers in strong drink, or by persons who employed strong drink as the instrument for effecting some nefarious purpose." He still numbers more than five millions of consistent teetotalers. A distinguished writer gravely questions, whether there are any backsliders, except such as habitually use tobacco.

The Rev. Thomas Spencer states that "The people of England, Ireland, and Scotland, with a population of 27,000,000, pay annually \$35,000,000 in poor rates; \$25,000,000 for the support of Government; and \$300,000,000 for intoxicating drinks! He states that there were among the 27,000,000 people, 600,000 drunkards, and that 50,000 of them die annually, whose places were supplied by 50,000 more from the ranks of the moderate drinkers!

THE TIDE OF EMIGRATION.—The emigration from Germany this year, it is represented, will be immense. Preparations are being made on an extensive scale in parts of the country where hitherto there has not been much emigration. The emigration spirit prevails, not among the poor, but among persons in good circumstances, and even among the rich and wealthy. People who own large and beautiful estates are selling off their property, and getting ready to emigrate, with family and friends, to America.