

forth the multiplied excellencies of their name. "Happy, happy world! with what delight must your Creator and Governor witness your conduct, and what a glorious recompense awaits you when your term of probation shall have expired!"

But we have indulged too long in these delightful speculations,—a sad reverse presents itself on our survey of the actual state of man; when, from viewing his natural powers, we follow him into practice, and see the uses to which he applies them. Take in the whole of the prospect, viewing him in every age, and climate, and nation, in every condition and period of society. Where now do you discover the characters of his exalted nature! "How is the gold become dim, and the fine gold changed!" How is his reason clouded, his affections perverted, his conscience stupified! How do anger, and envy, and hatred, and revenge, spring up in his wretched bosom! How is he a slave to the meanest of his appetites! What fatal propensities does he discover to evil! What inaptitude to good!

ANECDOTES.

INFLUENCE OF THE PASSIONS.

The powerful influence of the passions and affections upon the human frame is astonishing. How many instances are there upon record of sudden death having been occasioned by the hasty communication of joyful tidings! "Like a stroke of electricity," says Dr. Cogan, "indiscreetly directed, the violent percussion has probably produced a paralysis of the heart, by the excess of its stimulus."

Pliny informs us that Chilo, the Lacedemonian, died upon hearing that his son had gained a prize in the Olympic games.

Valerius Maximus tells us that Sophocles, in a contest of honour, died in consequence of a decision being pronounced in his favor.

Aulus Gellius mentions a remarkable instance of the effect of accumulated joy. Diagoras had three sons, who were all crowned on the same day as victors; the one as a pugilist, the other as a wrestler, and the third in both capacities. The sons carried their father on their shoulders through an incredible number of spectators, who threw flowers by handfuls on him, and applauded his glory and good fortune. But, in the midst of all the congratulations of the populace, he died in the arms and embraces of his sons.

Livy also mentions an instance of an aged rastron, who, while she was in the depth of distress, from the tidings of her son's having been slain in battle, died in his arms, in the excess of joy, upon his safe return.

The Italian historian, Guicciarddini, tells us that Leo X died of a fever, occasioned by the agitation of his spirits on receiving the joyful news of the capture of Milan, concerning which he had entertained much anxiety.

It is said of a nobleman in the reign of Henry the Eighth, that when a pardon was sent him a few hours before the time which was fixed for his execution, not expecting it, it so transported him, that he died for joy.

What an effect has grief also produced on the body! Excessive sorrow has been the cause of sudden death, of confirmed melancholy, loss of memory, imbecility of mind, of nervous fevers, of hypochondriac complaints, and the loss of appetite.

POETRY.

From Summer and Winter Hours; by H. G. Bell.

THE UNCLE.

I had an uncle once—a man
Of threescore years and three—
And when my reason's dawn began,
He'd take me on his knee,
And often talked on winter nights,
Things that seem'd strange to me

He was a man of gloomy mood,
And few his converse sought;
But it was said, in solitude
His conscience with him wrought,
And there, before his mortal eye,
Some hideous vision brought.

There was not one in all the house
Who did not fear his frown,
Save I, a little careless child,
Who gambol'd up and down,
And often peep'd into his room,
And pluck'd him by the gown.

I was an orphan and alone—
My father was his brother,
And all their lives I knew that they
Had fondly loved each other;
And in my uncle's room there hung
The picture of my mother.

There was a curtain over it;
'Twas in a darken'd place,
And few or none had ever look'd
Upon my mother's face,
Or seen her pale, expressive smile
Of melancholy grace.

One night I do remember well—
The wind was howling high,
And through the ancient corridors
It sounded drearily—
I sat and read in that old hall,
My uncle sat close by.

I read but little understood
The words upon the book,
For with a sidelong glance I mark'd
My uncle's fearful look,
And how all his quivering frame
With strong convulsions shook.

A silent terror o'er me stole,
A strange, unusual dread,
His lips were white as bone, his eyes
Sunk far down in his head;
He gazed on me, but 'twas the gaze
Of the unconscious dead.

Then suddenly he turn'd him round,
And drew aside the veil
That hung before my mother's face—
Perchance my eyes might fail,
But ne'er before that face to me
Had seem'd so ghastly pale.

"Come hither boy!" my uncle said—
I started at the sound,
'Twas choked and stifled in his throat,
And hardly utterance found—
"Come hither, boy!"
He cast his eyes around.

"That lady was thy mother once,
Thou wert her only child—
O God! I've seen her when she hold
Thee in her arms and smiled;
She smiled upon thy father, boy,
'Twas that which drove me wild!"

"He was my brother, but his form
Was fairer far than mine;
I grudged not that,—he was the prop

Of our ancestral line,
And manly beauty was to him
A token and a sign.

"Boy! I had loved her too,—nay more,
'Twas I that loved her first;
For months—for years—the golden thought
Within my soul was nursed,
He came,—he conquer'd,—they were wed—
My airy bubble burst!"

"Then on my mind a shadow fell,
And evil thoughts grew rife,
The damning thought stuck in my heart,
And cut me like a knife,
That she, whom all my days I loved,
Should be another's wife!"

"In truth, it was a fearful thing
To see my brother now,
And mark the placid calm which sat
Forever on his brow,
That seem'd in bitter scorn to say,
'I am more loved than thou!'"

"I left my home—I left the land,—
I crossed the raging sea;
In vain, in vain—where'er I turned,
My memory went with me;
My whole existence night and day
In memory seem'd to be.

"I came again, I found them bare—
Thou'rt like thy father boy,—
He doated on that pale face there;
I've seen him kiss and toy,
I've seen him lock'd in her fond arms
Wrapt in delirious joy.

"He disappear'd, draw nearer, child,—
He died, no one knew how;
The murder'd body ne'er was found,
The tale was hushed up now;
But there was one who rightly guess'd
The hand that struck the blow.

It drove her mad; yet not his death—
No—not his death alone,
For she had clung to hope when all
Knew well that there was none;
No, boy! it was a sight she saw
That froze her into stone.

"I am thy uncle, child;—why stare
So frightfully aghast?
The arras moves, but know'st thou not
Tis nothing but the blast:
I too have had my fears like these,
But such vain fears are past.

"I'll show thee what thy mother saw,
I feel 'twill ease my breast,
And this wild tempest-laden night
Suits with the purpose best.
Come hither—thou hast often sought
To open this old chest:

"It has a secret spring, the touch
Is known to me alone;"
Slowly the lid is raised, and now—
"What see'st thou that thou groan
So heavily;—that thing is but
A bare ribb'd skeleton."

A sudden crash—the lid fell down—
Three strides he backwards gave,
"O God! it is my brother's self
Returning from the grave!
His grasp of lead is on my throat
Will no one help or save?"

That night they laid him on his bed,
In raving madness toss'd;
He knash'd his teeth, and with wild oaths
Blasphemed the Holy Ghost;
And, ere the light of morning broke,
A sinner's soul was lost.