

Now fight, although but little danger was to be apprehended, each of the attendants being experienced bear hunters, having conquered bears single handed. Their astonishment was complete when on moving the platform they perceived the mangled carcase of a wolf and a huge bear at the bottom of the pit, and when I pointed out to them the steps by means of which I had made my escape.—*London Sportsman.*

### PRIZE ESSAY ON ARDENT SPIRITS.

(Continued.)

It should be observed, that of the foregoing marks of disease some, as the serum under the arachnoid membrane and in the ventricles of the brain, the fluidity of the blood in the heart and great vessels, and perhaps the deep red upon parts of the lining membrane of the stomach, are to be regarded as the effects of the last or fatal fit of intoxication; while others, as the striking firmness confidently alleged by some anatomists to have been observed in the superficial parts of the brain;—the thickening, induration, contraction, and ulceration of the stomach and intestines—the enlargement, unevenness, hardness, fatty deposits, and orange color of the liver, the unnatural color, size, and flabby texture of the kidneys, must have resulted from the more gradual operation of the habitual use of strong drink.

It is well known, that often in cases of death by lightning, the blood does not congregate, but remains in the form of a homogeneous fluid, the principle of life having been suddenly and wholly extinguished by the electrical shock. The same thing is observable when death takes place from the influence of certain poisons, as the woorara, tianus, and tobacco.

This is also the case when a draught of alcoholic liquor proves fatal. The blood in the heart, the large vessels, and the lungs, is entirely fluid; so effectual is this poison in preventing the last natural act of vitality in the blood, its coagulation.

A difference of opinion has existed among physiologists as to the manner in which alcohol acts upon the animal machine in producing its peculiar effects. The sudden exhilaration and glow in distant organs, occasioned by the swallowing of a small quantity of it, result, probably, from the impressions made upon the nerves of that organ being communicated by sympathy to those of distant parts. From experiments practised by Rayer, it appears that an impression made by alcohol upon a sensitive surface of great extent is speedily fatal. Injected into the peritoneum of a rabbit, it extinguished life in less than a minute; an effect altogether too sudden to admit of explanation by absorption. This view will also explain the sudden recovery which takes place upon the stomach being entirely emptied, in those cases of inebriation which arise from a single and large draught; and in which the symptoms have existed only for a period too short to admit of absorption to any extent.

Mr. Brodie, indeed, from some of his experiments made upon animals, inferred, that this article is not at all absorbed or carried into the circulation. A sufficient number of facts, however, prove its capability of passing into the circulation, and sometimes in large quantities. Mr. Magendie, in an experiment upon a dog, half an hour after tying up the outlet of the stomach and injecting it with alcohol, found a strong odor of this fluid in the blood, and obtained it also from the blood by distillation.

A healthy labouring man in London, but thirty years of age, drank at a single draught, a quart of gin for a wager; within a quarter of an hour he fell down insensible, and died in about three hours from the time of falling. In the Westminster Hospital his body was dissected, and in the ventricles of the brain was found a considerable quantity of limpid fluid, distinctly impregnated with gin, both to the sense of smell and taste, and even to the test of inflammability. The liquid appeared to the senses of the examining students, as strong as one-third gin to two-thirds water.

Another case in point is related by Dr. Ogston. He says, 'that on the 23d of August, 1831, he examined, in company with another medical man, the body of a woman æt. 40, who was believed to have drowned herself in a fit of intoxication no one having witnessed the act.' 'We found,' says he, 'nearly four ounces of fluid in the ventricles of the brain, having all the physical qualities of alcohol, as proved by the united testimony of two other medical men who saw the body opened and examined the fluid. The stomach also smelt of this fluid.' That spirit exists in the circulation is obvious, from the fact of its being present in many cases in the breath, after its entire removal from the stomach, as is shown by a careful examination of its contents, discharged by vomiting, or through the aid of the stomach pump.

Does spirit pass into the circulation by the route of lacteal absorption? It has been indubitably established by a great variety of experiments that numerous articles, some of them slowly, others expeditiously, may be imbibed directly by the walls or coats of the blood vessels, and thus pass into the blood. In one experiment, less than three minutes were occupied in the passage of a strong watery solution of nux vomica through the coats of the jugular vein of a dog. In the other experiment with the dog, already referred to, in which M. Magendie found spirit in the blood, there was none detected in the chyla.

Spirit, then, may sometimes enter the circulation by direct imbibition through the coats of the blood vessels; and when it has arrived at the blood, it unites with its watery part, for which it has a strong affinity, and circulates along with it through every organ, deranging, opposing, or extinguishing the actions of life. In the brain, when a portion of the watery part of the blood is thrown into the ventricles to relieve the gorged vessels, alcohol is deposited with it; and from its strong affinity for water, it is probable that a proportion of it is deposited along with the thin fluids secreted by the large glands, as the mammary glands, and kidneys; and there can be no doubt of its being exhaled in large quantities from those surfaces, as the skin and bronchial membrane, from which there is a free transpiration of aqueous matter, whether in a liquid or æriform state.

The inhalation, only, of the vapor of distilled spirit or of wine, may be carried so far as to produce deep intoxication. Received in this manner, it is probably imbibed by the blood in the fine vessels distributed upon the walls of the air cells of the lungs, and then conducted by the route of the circulation to the brain and other distant organs.

To be Continued.

## THE PEARL.

HALIFAX, FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 13, 1839.

LITERATURE.—We this week conclude our extracts from Dickens's last very popular work. About 50,000 copies of *Nicholas Nickleby* have been sold in numbers, and no doubt a large edition will yet go off when it assumes the shape of one or two volumes. A late Examiner has some remarks on this story, and as that paper is generally good authority on literary matters, we may dwell for a moment on its criticism. The popularity of this work is thus accounted for,—of the author, the Examiner says,—

"He seized the eager attention of his readers by the strong power of reality. He thoroughly individualises what he takes in hand. Our sympathies are never left to wander off, into quarters vague or undefined, from the flesh and blood to which he allies them. And this also is the reason why we cannot associate anything that is vulgar or low with his treatment of subjects that in themselves are avowedly so. In everything of that kind that he presents to us, these is, in his manner of doing it, the manliness and simplicity of nature, or the truth of life as it is. We are never repelled by the abominations of egotism, conceit, or dogmatism. We are never disgusted by misplaced ridicule. If there is good going on, there is a vivid and hearty style to bring out all its beauty; and if there is evil, it runs no chance of being mistaken for good. The quantity of invention, observation, and knowledge of character, observable in the writings of Mr. Dickens, is never more apparent than in his kindness of heart and capacity for generous emotion."

"Thousands read the book because it places them in the midst of scenes and characters with which they are already themselves acquainted; and thousands read it with no less avidity because it introduces them to passages of nature and life of which they before knew nothing, but of the truth of which their own habits and senses suffice to assure them. This is a test which only a man of genius could bear. It is only in the presence of a writer of genius that the affinities and sympathies of high and low, in regard to the customs and usage of life, are so revealed. For it is not more by the bonds of a common humanity, than by the alliances of common habits, that we are all linked together. The highest and the lowest in these respects most nearly approximate to each other. Like effects must always more or less result from being either above or below a dependence on other people's opinions."

The simplicity, earnestness, perspicuity and other good points of the author, are strongly noticed, particularly that fulness of mind, that abundance of material, which makes his work so exceedingly rich in incident, and which is the opposite extreme of that gold-beating system, by which a few small pieces of the precious metal are hammered out into the thinnest possible fabric, and made to extend over a great space. On the contrary, Dickens strews his ingots of composition, as if his rich mine was not in the slightest danger of exhaustion. Of his pictures of London, and perhaps they are among the best from his pen, the Examiner remarks:

"With him, we pass along misty streets in some cold and foggy morning, while but a few meagre shadows flit to and fro, or now and then a heavy outline of coach or cab or cart looms through the dull vapour, yet were it only for the noises he strikes from time to time upon our ears, distantly and indistinctly as though the fog had muffled them, we could not doubt that it was London. We enter with him by night, through long double rows of brightly burning lamps, a noisy, bustling, crowded scene, in which he shows us the rags of the squalid ballad-singer fluttering in the same rich light that shows the goldsmith's glittering treasures, and where one thin sheet of brittle glass is the iron wall by which vast profusions of wealth and food are guarded from starved and penniless men, and this is the same London as before. At all times, and under every aspect, he gives us to feel and see the great city as it absolutely is. Its interior life is made as familiar to us as its exterior forms. We come to know better the very places we have known best."

While admitting very great abilities, The Examiner contends that Mr. Dickens is not a perfect novelist. His story is said to be too diffuse and ill connected,—to be injured by exaggerations, which destroy truth and nature in some places,—and to be rather barthened with epithets and adjectives in the reflective parts. Having made these exceptions, which may be considered like slight flaws on a beautiful slab of marble, the critic makes amends by the heartiness of his praise.

"What a host of beauties crowd on our grateful recollection, which we have not opportunity or space to give even a passing glance to. With what pleasant thoughts it has stocked our memory, with what true and tender sentiments enriched our hearts, with what a healthy and manly moral instructed our minds. With how much vivid distinctness each character takes its place before us, how plainly we see the individualities of each, the form of their faces, the accident of their habits, the nicer peculiarity of their minds. These are triumphs which only belong to a first-rate writer. The creative powers of the novelist, when properly directed and well sustained, take rank with history itself."

Some might be inclined to make more serious objections than those made by The Examiner; we allude to persons who require a strict abidance by the rules of morality, in all matters intended for general perusal, and who therefore are not pleased at the parts in which the profanity of some of the characters is exemplified rather plainly. Dickens had errors in this way, but most readers will be inclined to consider his faults venial, considering his subject, and those who have preceded him in depicting similar phases of life. Nevertheless the objection is one of moment, and the gifted masters of the pen should learn the difficult task of erasing occasionally, and of sometimes making sacrifices of wit and verisimilitude, to the cause of good morals. The Examiner itself, exaggerates somewhat, when it asserts that the creative powers of the novelist take rank with history. By the way, the critic made a slip when he compared the powers of the novelist to history,—the novelist and the historian, or the novel and the history, should have been the subjects of comparison,—but not the novelist, or his powers, and history. It would not do to say, that the talents of the architect, take rank with statuary,—although the merits of first rate buildings, and of statues might be considered on a par.—But returning to the exaggeration, however delightful and just and instructive works of imagination may be, they can scarcely ever be placed as equal in value to works which have important facts, in every particular, for their foundation, and which are built up with all the skill lavished on the lighter edifices. "The children of the mind are not of clay;" and some of those children we would no more think of parting with, than if they had indeed once worn the garb of mortality,—but still we should not confound real life with the scenes of fairy land, and place the latter on the same level because its deceptions are of fascinating beauty. Dickens however has produced some of the "children of the mind" alluded to by the poet, and the world will place among acquaintances, which are not to be forgotten, Nicholas, and Kate, and Ralph, and Newman, as surely almost, as they have placed Waverly, and Jennie Deans, and Rob Roy, and Old Mortality.

Of the Heads of the People, extracts from which we closed last week, the Examiner says:

"These heads, issued in quadruple sets, have during the year proved very pleasant monthly visitors to many; and, collected in a neat volume, they form a gallery of character which will unquestionably repay more than a casual glance. The plan of the work was novel, and likely if well executed to secure popularity, but only on that condition. Its success shows that the condition has been fulfilled. The best compliment that has been paid to the work is the adoption of the project by the French, who are now busily illustrating and criticising themselves on the same principle and with similar effect."

The French, however, do not, it appears, bear to have their heads so roughly handled as the English. They are not so willing to laugh at themselves,—and instead of allowing themselves to be taken by the horns, like John Bull, they do not seem inclined to admit that they have any horns to be taken by. An artist who has been sketching some of their heads, had a narrow escape of having his own overhauled with a rougher weapon than a pencil,—and was finally obliged to have a police guard accompanying him about Paris, to shield him from the fury of some classes who felt hurt at his portraits.

The new volume by Thomas Moore, which has been sometime spoken of, has made its appearance. Some of the Journals give it high praise, but others make many drawbacks from its fame. The volume consists of the *Epicurean*, a republication, and a poem, called *Alciphron*, which is a versification, with some additions, of a part of the former.

The London Atlas notices the work in a very friendly strain,—but the Spectator takes a different view of the matter, as the following will show:

"The story of *Alciphron*, it will be observed, is complete; and it would not perhaps be very intelligible without some previous idea of the *Epicurean*. There are also objections, both critical and moral, to the incidents and sentiments, which apply to the prose tale as well. But it is useless to waste elaborate criticism on that which the tenderest censor must pronounce a failure. In its structure, and the parts which compose it, *Alciphron* is merely the bones of the *Epicurean*, wanting the fulness, the roundness, and the colour which covered the skeleton, and gave shape to a form not very natural. In its poetry, *Alciphron* only exhibits the ghost of the writer's former powers. There is a tripping verse—though it sometimes stumbles, in the accent at least; there are turns and conceits—sometimes tolerable, or a shade more, but generally feeble and puerile, if not silly; and there is the sensual philosophy of Mr. Little, without the buoyancy and animation which whilom set it off—reminding one of a hoary-headed rake playing the gallant. There is also a deficiency of fitting character throughout the poem: it is not Egyptian, it is not classical, it is not antique, it is only *Tom-Moorish*. The lighter parts remind