

PROPHETIC DREAMS.

That dreams have been employed by the Almighty for the conveyance of instruction to mankind, is indisputable from the pages of sacred writ. Many, too, have been recorded by the Greek and Latin historians, some of them, no doubt, apocryphal. Of the following examples, our readers may believe as many or as few as they choose.

Cæsus dreamed that his accomplished son, Atys, was transfixed by a javelin, headed with iron; he did all that he could to prevent it by removing him from the command of the Lydian forces, but his precautions were of no avail. Atys was killed accidentally by the javelin of an attendant whilst hunting the boar. Justus, a Roman Patrician, dreamed that the purple issued from his loins; he told his dream to the emperor, who, from jealousy, put him to death; but Justus's daughter, a handsome young woman, was appointed attendant to Severa Augusta. Shortly after, she was seen by Valentinian, and so engaged his affections that he married her, having obtained a special law for the purpose, and made her joint-partner of the empire with his empress. Cicero, during his flight from Rome, imagined that he beheld in his sleep Caius Marius, preceded by the fasces, bound with laurel, who condoled with him on account of his being obliged to leave the country, and consigned him to the care of a lictor, who was instructed to place him on the monument of Marius, where, it was said, were the hopes of a better fortune. Sallust, on hearing the dream, is said to have foretold the speedy return of Cicero, and downfall of Marius. Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, are each declared to have foreboded in their dreams the indignation of the gods, which was manifested in their several fates. According to Xenophon, a form appeared to Cyrus in his sleep, directing him to prepare for death. In the full persuasion that the dream was a divine warning, Cyrus is stated to have performed sacrifices to Jupiter, the Sun, and other gods, according to the Persian custom, and to have returned his thanksgiving for the blessing vouchsafed to him. Three days afterwards he expired. The dream of Julius Cesar's wife, Calphurnia, the night preceding his assassination, that she saw him lying on her bosom covered with wounds, has been rendered immortal by Shakspeare. The fate of Caius Gracchus is said to have been announced to him by his brother, who informed him, in a dream, that he must not hope to escape the catastrophe which had overwhelmed himself, and driven him from the capital. In like manner, Caracalla, who was assassinated, is related to have dreamed that his father threatened to kill him, as he had before slain his brother. Glasschryra, the wife of Archelaus, who had been married to Alexander, his brother, and afterwards to Juda, king of Libya, dreamed that Alexander, her first husband, visited her, and carried her off, somewhat after the manner of "Alonso the brave." She had scarcely repeated her vision to her maidens, when she died. The mother of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, dreamed that she brought forth a satyr; and the Sicilian interpreters explained the vision to import, that her son would be the most illustrious and prosperous among the Greeks. Domitian dreamed, a few days before his death, that a golden head rose upon the nape of his neck; which was applied to prefigure the Golden Age.

MODERN MARRIAGES IN HIGH LIFE.

BY THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

The unmarried men in London are remarkable for a degree of selfishness indulged even to an oblivion of all else, and for a prudent forethought, even in their affections, not so much the result of wisdom, as the dictate of this all-engrossing egotism. Venus herself, without a fortune, could hardly tempt them to wear any other fetters than those of her cestus; while a very Gorgon, with a large domain, would soon find them eager candidates for the hymeneal chains. They regard every young beauty with distrust and alarm, as having designs on their freedom; or as being likely, by her fascinations, to tempt them into a rash marriage, which they consider as the premature grave of their selfish enjoyments. They look on dowerless wedlock as on death, a misfortune to be encountered, perhaps, at some remote period, when age and infirmity prevent the pursuit of pleasures, or satiety has pallied them. With the distant prospect of settling down at last with some fair young being, who is to be the soother of his irritability, and the nurse of his infirmities, the man of pleasure systematically and ruthlessly pursues a round of heartless dissipation; until his health broken, and his spirits jaded, he selects his victim, and in the uncongenial union (which, like the atrocious cruelty of Mezentius chains the living to the dead,) seeks the reward of his selfishness. The men forming the upper classes, generally marry for what they term love, which is nothing more than an evanescent caprice, an *envie* to possess some object not otherwise to be obtained. They are so little in the habit of denying themselves any thing they conceive necessary to their pleasure, that one of their race makes little more difficulty of marrying the girl that has struck his fancy, than he does of buying some celebrated horse, for which he has to pay an extravagant price, and probably gets tired of one as soon as the other. During the first brief months—say, three or four—of his union, he considers and treats his young wife, not as the dear friend and companion of his life, the

future mother of his children, but as an object of passion; to be idolized while the passion continues, and to be left in loveless solitude—cast, like a faded flower, away—the moment satiety is experienced. She has been indulged to folly, doted on to infatuation, for three months; and then, spoiled by flattery, and corrupted by unwise uxoriousness, she sees herself first neglected, and ultimately abandoned, to hear, as best she may, this humiliating, this torturing change. If she loves her husband, jealousy with all its venomous pangs, assails her young breast. She knows how ardently, how madly, he can adore, compares his present undisguised coldness with the fervour of the happy past, and concludes, (not in general without cause,) that another object has usurped her place in his heart. Love, pride, and jealous rage, are now in arms; and how strong must be the virtue, and how steadfast the principles, that enable her to resist the temptations offered by vanity and vengeance! Reproaches or tears await the inconstant at home; his selfishness makes him loathe both, and he seeks abroad a *dedommagement* for the *ennui* they produce. The result generally is, that his wife either breaks her heart or her marriage vows, or sinks into that humiliating and humiliated being, an unloved and unpitied hypochondriac, who details her wrongs and maladies, in a whining tone, to the vegetating dowagers and spinsters, who have no better occupation than to listen to the tedious catalogue.

PROGRESS OF INTEMPERANCE.

BY THOMAS H. STOCKTON.

There is something wonderful, in the degree and extent of evil that may be caused by the improper indulgence of a single appetite. Behold the effects of pampering thirst! In the morning of time, when the earth retained much of its original glory; when the unimpaired fertility of its soil, and purity of its waters, and vitality of its atmosphere were evident in the unfailing freshness and glowing beauty of all vegetable existence; and in the protracted lives, and untiring vigour, and delighted sensibilities of all animate nature:—this unvitiated desire sought nothing better for its gratification than the bubbling coolness of the crystal spring. In after ages, the trickling juice of the bursting grape was regarded as a precious luxury. Time lapsed away, and the sense that this at first regaled began to cloy; and the ingenuity of the intellect, excited by a new and craving want, obtained, by the process of fermentation, in all its sparkling strength, the rich, inspiring wine. Ere long, however, even this choice drink,—the praise of a thousand songs in every century, became insipid to multitudes. Then the palm tree was laid under tribute for its dates, and a more stimulating drink lent its aid in the enkindling of the loved excitement. But this also soon became too weak, and then the pure wine was inflamed by the addition of spices and drugs; and millions of mankind employed the fiery mixture as a certain restorative of their wasting energies, and the grateful means of enlivening their drooping spirits. Ages rolled on, and the unhappy discovery of alcohol opened the way for the unbounded gratification of the depraved and burning passion. We have seen, some of the sad, the dreadful, the unspeakable evils that have followed. The rich have been made poor, and the poor have sunk lower and lower, until they have been almost pressed out of life. Countless diseases, of the most loathsome, the most agonizing, and the most fatal character, have ravaged the globe. Thousands of intellects, endowed with power to have won the gratitude and admiration of mankind, have been enfeebled and ruined. Thousands of hearts, that might have overflowed with the enjoyment of love to all, and love from all, have been visited by the scorn of the world, and have boiled against the world with implacable wrath. Thousands of tongues that might have spoken words of wisdom in tones of music to be celebrated for ever, have been devoted to railing and slander and profanity, and every sin of speech. And thousands of the noblest human forms that ever stood up in the eye of day, have gone staggering in corruption and filth, to the darkness and rottenness of the grave. Besides these, millions less distinguished have withered and perished in the same way. Millions upon millions of broken hearted widows, with weeping and wailing, have mourned over the tombs of their husbands prematurely destroyed, and multiplied millions of helpless orphans have felt their little bosoms throbbing at the thought that they were all alone—alone in a wide and friendless world. A vast proportion of all the graves of the earth are occupied by the corpses of the intemperate; and the thunders of the ocean, as if tolling the bell of vengeance, peal among the billows the funeral dirge of a numberless host lost in the depths below.

ROMANCE READING.—Perhaps the perusal of Romances may, without injustice, be compared with the use of opiates, baneful when habitually and constantly resorted to, but of most blessed power in those moments when the whole head is sore, and the whole heart is sick. If those who rail indiscriminately at this species of composition were to consider the quantity of actual pleasure which it produces, and the much greater proportion of real sorrow and distress which it alleviates, their philanthropy ought to moderate their critical pride or religious tolerance.—*Sir Walter Scott.*

THE GRAVE.—How little reflection is expended upon,—yet how much is called for by, the grave,—by the lowliest hillock that is piled over the icy bosom, by the grassiest hollow that has sunk with the mouldering bones of a fellow creature! And in this narrow haven rots the bark that has ploughed the surges of the great vital ocean! in this little den, that the thistle can overshadow in a day's growth, and the molewarp undermine in an hour of labor, is crushed the spirit that could enthral a world, and dare even a contest with destiny! How little it speaks for the value of the existence, which man endures so many evils to prolong; how much it reduces the significance of both the pomp and wretchedness of being, reducing all its vicissitudes into the indistinguishable identity which infinite distance gives to the stars,—a point without parallax, a speck, an atom! Such is life,—the grasp of a child that inspires the air of existence but once,—a single breath breathed from eternity. But the destiny that comes behind us,—oblivion! It is not enough that we moralize upon the equality of the sepulchre; that the rich man, whose soul is in the ostentation of a marble palace, and his heart in the splendor of the feast, should consider how small a pit must contain him, or that the proud, who boast their 'pre-eminence above the beasts,' should know that the shaggy carcass and the lawn-shrouded corse must fatten the earth together.—We should teach our vanity the lesson of humiliation that is afforded by the grave; neglecting the mighty mausoleums of those marvellous spirits which fame has rendered immortal, we should turn to the nameless tombs of the million, and in their deserted obscurity, discover the feeble hold which we ourselves must have upon earth and the memory of men. Friendship forgets what the devouring earth has claimed; and even enmity ceases at last to remember the resting place of a foe. Love ourselves as we may, devote our affections to others as we can, yet must our memory perish with us in the grave.—*Dr. Bird.*

TALKATIVENESS.—The wise man observes, that *there is a time to speak, and a time to keep silence.* One meets with people in the world, who seem never to have made the last of these observations. And yet these great talkers do not all speak from their having any thing to say, as every sentence shows, but only from their inclination to be talking. Their conversation is merely an exercise of the tongue; no other human faculty has any share in it. It is strange these persons can help reflecting, that unless they have in truth a superior capacity, and are in an extraordinary manner furnished for conversation, if they are entertaining, it is at their own expense. Is it possible that it should never come into people's thoughts to suspect, whether or no it be to their advantage to show so very much of themselves? *O that ye would altogether hold your peace, and it should be your wisdom.* Remember likewise there are persons who love fewer words, an inoffensive sort of people, and who deserve some regard, though of too still and composed temper for you. Of this number was the son of Sirach; for he plainly speaks from experience, when he says, *As hills of sands are to the steps of the aged, so is one of many words to a quiet man.*—*Bp. Butler.*

PETER AND JOHN.—They form, indeed, a very remarkable contrast to each other, and while we muse upon the moral lessons which time cannot efface, we recognize him who would have died for his Master, and him who would have died with him; the one who drew his sword in his defence, the other who lay in his bosom; the disciple to whom he bequeathed his flock, the friend to whom he entrusted his mother! Their spirits still look out from their Epistles. In Peter, religion speaks with a powerful, an alarming, an impetuous energy; in John, she beseeches with a tenderness, a sweetness, and an affection: one menaces us like a father, the other exhorts us like a brother: nor is this love of gentleness confined to his Epistles. Who has not lingered with tearful eyes and saddening heart over the narrative of the sufferings of his Divine Master, which "runs like a stream through flowery pastures?" All that is most lovely, most affecting, most delightful in the character of Jesus, is collected in the Gospel of John. But however they may have differed in the utterance of their feelings, their hearts were fondly united. In loving their Saviour, they loved one another; and in loving one another, they felt their love for him. John must have wept over the denial of Peter, but his soul rejoiced when standing by his side at the tomb of their Lord, or before the enraged enmity of the Sanhedrim.—*Church of England Quarterly Review.*

THE BIBLE.—The Bible loses much by not being considered as a system, for though many other books are comparable to cloth, in which, by a small pattern, we may safely judge of a whole piece, yet the Bible is like a fair suit of arras, of which, though a shred may assure you of the fineness of the colours and richness of the stuff, yet the hangings never appear to their true advantage but when they are displayed to their dimensions and seen together.—*Hon. Robert Boyle.*

IMAGINATION.—The mountain-air of poetry, like the rarified atmosphere of great elevations, brings all objects nearer to the eye and heart of the poet.