

From the Christian Guardian.

The following accounts are certainly sufficient to produce wonder in the most incredulous minds. The first shows a singular power in a certain person over the issues of life and death. The 'odd sensation' taught him that in his will lay the power, apart from any act, save that of 'composing' himself. Men have the power of life and death, but it is to be shared by the will and the deed. A man having willed, might gently

'His quietus make with a bare bodkin.'

But in the instance before us there is the will, and, apparently, no act at all. The second account is of a late instance of that curious phenomenon, called *mesmerism*, or *animal magnetism*. Anton Mesmer, of Mersburg in Swabia, was the discoverer of the fluid formed by impregnating steel plates with the loadstone, and which he applied for the cure of diseases in Paris in 1778. Somnambulism or sleep-acting, or acting in a state of sleep, is an effect of mesmerism, and of which there are many instances on record. But none perhaps more strange than the one lately in London. We cannot stay to philosophize on the matter.

#### POWER TO LIVE OR DIE.

The most singular instance of the power of the will over the functions of the body, and, taken altogether, perhaps the most remarkable case on record, being supported by the testimony of unquestionable authority, is related by Dr. Cheye, in his "English Malady." It is the case of the Hon. Col. Townsend, who for many years had suffered from an organic disease of the kidney, by which he was greatly emaciated. He was attended by Drs. Baynard, Cheye, and Mr. Skrine; and these gentlemen were sent for one morning to witness a singular phenomenon. He told them he had for some time observed an odd sensation, by which, if he composed himself, he could die or expire when he pleased, and by an effort come to life again. The medical attendants were averse, in his weak state, to witness the experiment; but he insisted upon it, and the following is Dr. Cheye's account:—"We all three felt his pulse first; it was distinct, though small and thready, and his heart had its usual beating. He composed himself on his back and lay in a still posture some time; while I held his right hand, Dr. Baynard laid his hand on his heart, and Mr. Skrine held a clean looking-glass to his mouth. I found his pulse sink gradually, till at last I could not feel any by the most exact touch. Dr. Baynard could not feel the least emotion in his heart, nor Mr. Skrine perceive the least soil of breath on the bright mirror he had held to his mouth; then each of us by turns examined his arm, heart and breath, but could not by the nicest scrutiny discover the least symptoms of life in him. We reasoned a long time about this odd appearance as well as we could, and all of us judging it inexplicable and unaccountable, and finding he still continued in that condition, we began to conclude that he had indeed carried the experiment too far, and at last were satisfied he was actually dead; and were just ready to leave him. This continued about half-an-hour, by nine o'clock in the morning in autumn. As we were going away, we observed some motion about the body, and upon examination found his pulse and the motion of the heart gradually returning; he began to breathe gently and speak softly. We were astonished to the last degree at this unexpected change, and, after some further conversation with him and among ourselves, went away fully satisfied as to all the particulars of this fact, but confounded and puzzled, and not able to form any rational scheme that might account for it. He afterwards called for his attorney, added a codicil to his will, settled legacies on his servants, received the sacrament, and calmly and composedly expired about five or six o'clock that evening." His body was examined, and all the viscera, with the exception of the right kidney, which was greatly diseased, were found perfectly healthy and natural. This power of the will to die or live at pleasure is perhaps one of the most remarkable phenomena connected with the natural history of the human body. Burton alludes to cases of the same kind, and reports that the celebrated Carlan bragged he could separate himself from his senses when he pleased. Celsus makes reference to a priest who

possessed the same extraordinary power.—*Peltigera on Superstitions connected with Medicine.*

#### MESMERISM.

A young gentleman, known as Alexis the Somnambulist, has just arrived from Paris under the care of Mr. Marcellet, and was exhibited for the first time (we believe) in London, at the residence of Dr. Elliotson. Alexis has for some period excited much interest in Paris by the wonderful powers of clairvoyance which he manifested whilst in a state of magnetic sleep. Without admitting that we have become believers in the possibility of producing such a condition as known by the name of *clairvoyance*, we must nevertheless honestly confess that we have been much staggered by what we saw after Mr. Marcellet had thrown his patient into the magnetic state, and exhibited the tetanic spasm or rigidity of the muscles of the arms and legs which usually accompanies this condition of the nervous system. Preparatory to the phenomena of *clairvoyance* being shown, the patient's eyes were bandaged. We pledge ourselves that he did this effectually. To see, in the ordinary sense of the word, a ray of light was physically impossible. Two large pieces of wood were placed over each eye, and above this were bound with great care two linen handkerchiefs folded several times. Thus blindfolded he was placed at a table, and commenced playing *carte* with a strange gentleman in the room. It was, indeed, wonderful to see with what accuracy he played, not only knowing every suit he had in his own hands, but by a species of divination, being able to detect the condition of his opponent's hand! Several persons played with him, and among others Dr. Jordan, who, however, was fortunate enough to beat the Somnambulist. To exhibit the man's extraordinary powers, a large book of plates, nearly two inches in thickness, was placed between Alexis and his opponent; and, notwithstanding this physical impediment, the Somnambulist was able to tell the person with whom he was playing the cards he held in his hand. It may be said there was collusion. We know such was not the case. Alexis then had a letter placed in his hands by Col. Gurwood, with the view of ascertaining whether he was competent to make out the name of the party who had written the letter. It appears that Col. Gurwood had placed himself in communication with Alexis, some time back, in Paris, in order to discover whether he had it in his power to give him any hint by which to enable him to discover the residence of a French soldier, whose life Col. Gurwood had saved during the siege of Badajoz. Alexis, during the magnetic state, gave Colonel Gurwood some valuable information on the subject of inquiry; and acting upon this, he was fortunate enough to find not only the name of the person, but his place of abode. Col. Gurwood wrote to the soldier, and the letter which he placed in Alexis' hands was the answer which he had received. Alexis, after a little examination, wrote down the person's name, and told Col. Gurwood the purport of the letter which he held in his hand. He made certainly one mistake in the final letter of the person's name; but this did not in the slightest degree detract from his extraordinary penetration. Another gentleman, who had not seen Alexis previously, (Colonel Gardener, we believe) asked the Somnambulist to describe his residence. This he did with great accuracy, telling him the number of pictures he had in his drawing-room, their position, and the subject of the pictures. Watches were then placed in his hand, and, by merely feeling on the back of the case for a few minutes, he pointed out, with one exception, the exact position of the hour and minute hands. A larger book of plates was subsequently held to the back of his head, and, to the amazement of every person in the room, Alexis was able to describe the various prints to which his attention was directed. We have thus endeavoured faithfully to record the facts which we witnessed. It is our belief that the experiments were performed fairly, and that not in one single instance did anything like collusion exist. We do not pretend to account for the strange, the wonderful phenomena which this youth certainly manifests. With his eyes almost hermetically sealed, he was able to read a book taken from among a number of works on the table. Independently of this, a

handkerchief, twice folded, was placed over the printed page of a large volume, and through this the Somnambulist was able to read with facility.—*Times.*

#### THE CASKET.

SUMMER—balmy summer—with its bright skies and luxuriant herbage—is making glad the hills and valleys of our Acadia. The sternest heart cannot but relax beneath its genial influence; the coldest breast cannot but feel a glow of gratitude in the contemplation of its numberless blessings.—From the wealthy, who may choose to be whirled by their carriage along our pleasant forest "drives,"—to the child which, bare-footed and bare headed, wanders along the road-side, supremely happy if its watchful eye can discover a ripe strawberry, half hidden by its delicate vines, or a cluster of raspberries—coral red—pendant from their more aspiring stem,—a feeling of gladness, a kind of internal sun-shine, the reflection of that without, seems to pervade every bosom.

In the fields, too, and on the breezy hill-side, this feeling finds expression in the cheerful tones of the haymakers, as they mow, and turn, and bind, their fragrant harvest. And if, in the languid beat of moon, they find their refreshing beverage in the clear stream which, exhilarating without depressing, flows near,—they may indeed rejoice at the bounteous provision for the long and unfruitful months of winter.

"The widely devious morning walk" is, in this month, especially delightful. In October we shall find a harbinger of winter in the chilly air of the late and early hours; but now, the soft and perfumed breeze of the morning awakens the most exquisite sensations.

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,  
With charm of earliest birds.

The dark green of the pines, the lighter verdure of the herbage, the bright hues of the wild-wood flowers, among which the wild rose has taken the place of Acadia's emblem—the dew-drops that, glistening in the sunshine, seem to mimic the stars with which, a few hours before, the firmament was spangled, all unite to make a morning ramble in the woods one of surpassing delight.—*Olive Branch.*

#### AN ORIENTAL STORY.

The enjoyment of virtue is wholly internal, and the chief pleasure of her real votaries is that of doing good.

God, in his divine mercy, says Sadi the philosopher, introduced a certain vicious man into a society of religious people, whose manners were pure and holy. Struck with their virtues, he quickly began to imitate them, to shake off all his former habits—in a word, to be a model of justice, of sobriety, of patience, of industry, and of benevolence. His good works were undeniable, but people imputed to them unworthy motives.—They were always judging him by what he had been, not by what he was. Overwhelmed with sorrow, he poured forth his tears into the bosom of an ancient hermit, who was more just, as well as more human, than the rest.

"O my son," said the old man to him, "return thanks to the Almighty, that thou art superior in thy reputation. Happy he who can say, My enemies and my rivals stigmatize me for vices of which I am not guilty. If thou art good, what matters it to thee, that men persecute, and even punish thee, as being one of the wicked? Hast thou not, for thy comfort, two unerring testimonies of thy actions, God, and thy conscience?"

ADVANTAGES OF A MILD TEMPER.—Dr. Caldwell, an American writer on Physical education, contends that a well balanced brain contributes to a long life, while a passionate and turbulent one tends much to abridge it; and if persons knew how many dangers in life they escape by possessing mildness of temper, instead of the opposite disposition, how eager would be the aim of all men to cultivate it!

Obviate the first emotion of passion: if you cannot resist the first; you will far less resist the second, and it still grows worse and worse; for the same difficulty, which in the beginning might have been surmounted, is greater in the end.