

prising weakness of this faculty in the Emperor Claudius, who not only forgot the names and persons of those to whom he wished to speak, but even of what he desired to converse about. Holland relates that, having descended in one day two deep mines in the Hartz Mountains, his exhaustion from fatigue and want of food suddenly deprived him of memory, which was not restored till he had taken food and wine, and been some time at rest. These transient fits of loss of memory are not indicative of organic disease, but result from a want of proper circulation in the brain.

Curious effects are sometimes produced by accident or disease, upon the memory of language. An injury to the head, occasioned by a fall from a horse, has caused a person to entirely forget a particular language with which he had been acquainted, though in other respects his memory remained unimpaired; and the same peculiarities are not uncommon in cases of brain disease. In such circumstances, the mind usually recurs to the ideas engraven upon it in childhood, subsequent impressions being often wholly effaced. At the approach of death, persons who have for years talked a foreign language, will pray in their native tongue. Dr. Johnson, who furnished a remarkable exception to this rule, is said, when dying to have forgotten the Lord's Prayer in English, and to have attempted its repetition in Latin, which was, however, the language in which he habitually thought. A patient of Dr. Rush, subject to attacks of recurrent insanity, was always warned of their approach by inability to converse in anything but a kind of Italian *patois*. As the disease advanced and reached its height, the lady could only talk in French; when her illness abated she was obliged to express herself in German, and in the convalescent stage she spoke her native tongue. In perfect health she rarely used any language but her own, and in fact found it difficult to speak those which, during her attack of insanity, she spoke with great fluency and, with the exception

of Italian, with singular correctness. The fact that the mind, in fever, somnambulism, and other abnormal states, should betray knowledge and capacities of which it was at other times wholly unconscious, is, as Sir William Hamilton observes, one of the wonders of psychology. This sudden exaltation of the memory is, however, a warning of the existence of dangerous disorders; being often symptomatic in children of scrofulous and cerebral affections, and in old age, as Forbes Winslow has pointed out, indicative of approaching fatal apoplexy.

The revival of mental impressions which accident or disease has seemingly annihilated, at the exact stage at which they left off, is one of the most remarkable curiosities of memory. A British captain, whose brain was injured at the battle of the Nile, remained unconscious for fifteen months at Greenwich Hospital, till, by the operation of trepanning, his sensibility returned, and he at once rose in his bed and finished giving the orders which had been interrupted amid the din of battle. Still more remarkable is the case of the New England farmer mentioned by Pritchard, who, after splitting some timber for a fence, put his beetle and wedges into the hollow of a tree, intending to direct his son to bring them home. That night he was seized with delirium, and remained in this condition for several years, when his mental power was suddenly restored. The first question he asked was whether his son had brought in the beetle. Fearing that explanations would result in bringing on a return of the disease, they replied that he could not find them, whereupon the old man rose from his bed, went straight to the hollow tree, and found the wedges and the rings of the beetle, the beetle itself having mouldered away. Thus the solid wood proved less durable than the delicate, unused nerve vesicle which preserved the impression where the tools had been placed, and which, though "wax to receive," was "marble to retain."