

DOMESTIC ASIDES.

OR TRUTH IN PARENTHESIS.

By Thomas Hood.

I really think it very kind
This visit, Mrs. Skinner,
I have not seen you such an age—
(The wretch has come to dinner!)

Your daughters too, what lovely girls,
What heads for painter's easels!
Come here and kiss the baby, dears—
(And give it perhaps the measles!)

Your charming boys, I see are home
From Reverend Mr. Russel's,
'Twas very kind to bring them both—
(What boots for my new Brussels!)

What, little Clara left at home?
Well now I call that shabby;
I should have loved to kiss her so—
(A shabby, dabby, baby.)

And Mr. S. I hope is well;
Ah! though he lives so handy,
He never now drops in to sup—
(The better for our brandy.)

Come take a seat, I long to hear
About Matilda's marriage,
You come of course to spend the day—
(Thank heaven I hear the carriage!)

What! must you go? next time I hope
You'll give me longer measure,
Nay, I shall see you down the stairs,
(With most uncommon pleasure.)

Good bye! good bye! remember all,
Next time you'll take your dinners—
(Now David, mind I'm not at home
In future, to the Skinners.)

ANECDOTES OF THE INSANE.

No. 3.

If, in this country, a woman were to insist on burning herself to death after the decease of her husband, we should consider her insane. But in India she is not insane; because the people there have been educated in the belief of its propriety. It was mentioned in the House of Commons by Mr. Buxton, in 1821, that in the presidency of Fort William, two thousand three hundred and sixty-six widows had destroyed themselves in the previous four years. Some of these were only twelve or thirteen years of age; one was only eight; and one woman, only eleven, was so obstinate, when not allowed to burn herself to death, that she abstained from food for four or five days; and although the local authorities prevented her from immolating herself on her husband's grave, she saved some of his bones, in order that, when the first opportunity should occur, she might destroy herself. Such an act as this, in our country, could scarcely arise from any thing but insanity. The ignorant have pronounced philosophers mad, over and over again. Democrates was pronounced mad, by the common people; because he dissected a human body, with the view of discovering the causes of insanity; but Hippocrates told the people that *they* were mad and not Democrates. A madman once complained that he was "as much in his senses as the rest of the world; but the majority was against him, and therefore he was placed in custody."

Bellingham, who murdered Mr. Perceval, was a man of weak intellect; and you will see, in the cast of his head, that the anterior parts of the brain are miserably defective; whereas the lateral parts are largely developed. That man was executed, because there was no proof at all of his being insane; but if any one look at his head, he will incline to a favourable opinion; and though he would not set him at large, to do such mischief again, yet he would not deprive him of life. When a person has committed suicide, we say that he is mad, on ten thousand times slighter ground than if he were alive. I have no doubt that thousands, whose crimes were the result of insanity, and who were therefore not responsible agents, have been executed unjustly; and that thousands more will be executed.

Occasionally it is almost impossible to ascertain whether a person is mad, owing to the cunning of the insane. "I well remember," says Lord Erskine, "that I examined, for the greater part of a day, an unfortunate gentleman, who had indicted a most affectionate brother, together with the keeper of a madhouse at Hoxton, for having imprisoned him as a lunatic; while, according to his evidence, he was in his perfect senses. I was, unfortunately, not instructed in what his lunacy consisted; although my instructions left me no doubt of the fact; but not having the clue, he completely foiled me in every attempt to expose his infirmity. You may believe that I left unemployed no means which experience dictated; but without the smallest effect. The day was wasted; and the prosecutor, by the most affecting history of unmerited suffering, appeared to the judges and jury, and to a humane English audience, as the victim of a most wanton and barbarous oppression. At last, Dr. Sims, who had been prevented by business from an earlier attendance, came into court.

From him I soon learned that the very man whom I had been above an hour examining, with every possible effort which counsel are so much in the habit of exerting, believed himself to be the Lord and Saviour of mankind;—not merely at the time of his confinement, but during the whole time that he had been triumphing over every attempt to surprise him in the concealment of his disease. I then affected to lament the indecency of my ignorant examination; when he expressed his forgiveness, and said, with the utmost gravity and emphasis, in the face of the whole court, "I am the Christ!" and so the cause ended."

Deafness is the most common disturbance of the external senses in madmen. Sometimes there is a deprivation of smell. They will imagine there is some disagreeable odour around them, and will speak with the nostrils closed. I believe mad people are generally very fond of snuff. You will sometimes observe extreme hunger, and extreme thirst; but sometimes there is an absence both of hunger and thirst. Sometimes you observe great muscular strength; so that an exertion is made far beyond what is possible in health. Sometimes insane people scarcely sleep at all. They will pass many days, perhaps weeks, without any sleep of consequence. Occasionally, too, there is great resistance to external cold; but this is by no means universal; for many insane persons having, in consequence of this notion, been left to themselves, have died from mortification of the extremities. Now and then, however, insane persons have exposed themselves to frost and snow, without suffering from them in the least. Some are extremely civil. They will beg you to stop and dine, when you have dined already; or they will beg you to stop to supper, and then to take a bed. I have been astonished at them; and have afterwards learned that these good people were in a madhouse.

You will find, even in sound writers, an account of insanity being produced by the devil. Till modern times, the chief treatment of insanity consisted in cruelty; but no corporeal punishment ought ever to be allowed. Rhazes, an Arabian physician, orders that when persons labour under "love-madness," and nothing else will do, they must be tied up, and beat well with the fists; and this again and again. Another writer says that, if the patient be a young man, he must be well flogged; and if not quiet then, must be put into the bottom of a tower, with bread and water, till he begs pardon for being mad, and becomes sane. This "love-madness" is certainly the only kind of insanity in which such treatment should be adopted;—if adopted at all.

A gentleman, from great anxiety of mind, became deranged; but his insanity subsided to a great extent; and he told me he should like to see his wife, for it was very hard he should be kept from seeing his family. I stopped with him two hours, and satisfied myself it would do him good. He wished to leave his bed-room, and to see different parts of the house. I took off his jacket, and led him down stairs, and gratified him by letting him see, first one part of the house, and then another. I watched the effects; and found that it did not throw him off his balance, but that he seemed to gain intellect and power over himself, as we proceeded. There were many little gratifications which he wished for, and which I let him have. One curious thing was to kill a bantam-cock, which he saw from a window, and which he took for a spectre, or a fiend. The colours, he said, had been terrific to him, and he should not be happy till it was killed. I gratified him with it, and he was exceedingly thankful. I watched him carefully for some time after this, and at last I satisfied myself that the sight of his wife would not be dangerous. I brought her from a neighbour's house, and the interview was most affecting. From that moment to this he has been in his perfect senses.—*Dr. Elliotson's Lectures.*

LOVE

Is a dose which, if not administered with judgment, speedily becomes somewhat sickening. Where one particular ingredient is allowed to predominate, physic soon nauseates on the palate.

Some practitioners recommend it in the form of a powder, mingled with a certain portion of the golden ointment: this no doubt renders it more agreeable to the eye;—but I am not aware that the golden ointment in the present day has any very material advantage over the *Draft*.

For myself, I give the preference to the mixture, where the soothing qualities are better preserved, and a scruple more or less is never of serious moment. An infusion of a few grains of common sense, though somewhat bitter, adds to its strengthening powers, and improves its taste.

Nature is no doubt a subtle chemist, but yet she too frequently leaves the preparation of this medicine to boys, who, unaware of the rapid effects of ardent spirits, place it on too fierce a fire, and consequently suffer the strength to evaporate before it acquires the requisite consistency to keep through all seasons and in all climates. This genuine Love, and genuine Love only, will do; and any other kind I should say, however puffed and labelled, however attractive its outside, and seductive its appearance, is little better than a quack medicine.

Another mistake is that of having it administered by the old;—for when the hand trembles, and the nerves become feeble, it is time that the physician leaves off practice.

Too much caution cannot be shown in the recommendation of this powerful stimulant, for there have been instances in which an improper application has affected the brain, and some lamentable cases, where neglect and bad treatment have been followed by suicide;—such a melancholy result as the latter, proceeding, I am convinced, from the weak patient having unexpectedly been deprived of that on which the system fed. The symptoms attending such deplorable cases are these:—The eye becomes jaundiced—the head giddy—a sinking at the heart—great irritation and heat of temper—loss of appetite—depression of spirits, and an increased liking for water, which clearly proves that the wiseacres who pretend to say that "Love is like the bite of a mad dog," are wrong. There appears not to be the least affinity.

The precise period at which Love may safely be discontinued, it is difficult to determine.—Many men of advanced age have an inclination for it; but it then dwindles into dotage, and they themselves (for they seldom think of taking it but as a night-cap) are rapidly verging into old women.

I have sometimes thought, as the disease for which Love is prescribed is invariably seated in the heart, no safer remedy can be adopted than that of applying it to the part affected in the form of a Bosom-Friend, which keeps up an equal and kindly glow, and never grows cold. The fair patient, therefore, who will condescend to consult me, may depend on secrecy; and though I may not be borne out in prophecying a speedy or a certain cure, I pledge myself she shall have the benefit of my best advice gratis.

P.

CONJUGAL HARMONY.—A man in Germany advertised that he had an organ that would play any tune out of an enumerated set at the command of any one of the audience; this made a great noise at the time, and puzzled all the conjurers and philosophers of the place. The organ was placed on a table with its back against the wall, the company were invited to examine it, then ask for a tune, which was immediately played, and if any one desired it to stop it was instantly silent! This went on for a long time, and the ingenious inventor was making a rapid fortune, and the secret would have been buried with him, had he not behaved most inharmooniously towards his loving wife one day, just before the performance was about to commence. The room was crowded, as usual, and a tune was called for, but not a note was heard; the owner became uneasy, and said, in a soothing coaxing tone, "do blay, my coot organs;" still not a sound was heard; he got out of patience, and threatened to smash the instrument to pieces, when a hoarse female voice was heard to growl out—"Ay, do, you tyrel, preak de organs, as you proke my head dis morning." This was too much for the choleric German; he took a chair, and gave the instrument such a whack, that it drove it through a paper partition in the wall, carrying with it another organ, which had been placed at the back of the sham one, at which sat the obstinate grinder—his wife!

DAYS OF OLD.—Forty years ago—Literature meant learning, and was supported by common sense. Refined nonsense had no advocates, and was pretty generally kicked out of doors.

Forty years ago—there were but few merchants in the country—few insolvent debtors, and they rarely imprisoned for debt.

Forty years ago—young ladies of the first respectability learned music, but it was the humming of the spinning wheel, and learned the necessary steps of dancing in following it. Their forte piano was a loom, their parasol a broom, and their novels the Bible.

Forty years ago—the young gentlemen hoed corn, chopped wood at the door, and went to school in the winter to learn reading, and writing, and arithmetic.

Forty years ago—there was no such thing as balls in the summer, and but few in the winter, except snow-balls.

Forty years ago—if a mechanic promised to do your work, you might depend on his word; it would be done.

Forty years ago—when a mechanic finished his work, he was paid for it.

Forty years ago—printers were paid, and therefore enabled to pay their debts. What a falling off.—*Old Paper.*

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