THE

THEORY OF DREAMS:

IN WHICH

AN INQUIRY

IS MADE INTO

THE POWERS AND FACULTIES

OF THE

HUMAN MIND,

AS THEY ARE ILLUSTRATED IN THE

MOST REMARKABLE DREAMS

RECORDED IN

SACRED AND PROFANE HISTORY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ERRATA.

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— 5, — 11, for *care* read *cure*
— 29, — 2, for *distinction* read *definition*
— 55, — 3, for *stupid* read *steep'd*
— 61, — 11, for *ectrapali* read *ectrapeli*
— 63, — 5, for *to lie* read *to sleep*
— 66, — 7, for *acid* read *acrid*
— 98, note † for *qui somniant* read *quia somniunt*
— 117, — 12, for *sensation* read *sensations*

THE

THEORY

OF

DREAMS, &c.

CHAPTER XII.

FARTHER ACCOUNT OF MODERN DREAMS.

" You will own, 'tis no small pleasure with mankind to make their dreams pass for realities; and that the love of truth is, in earnest, not half so prevalent as this passion for novelty and surprise, joined with a desire of making impression and being admired. However, I am so charitable still as to think, there is more of innocent delusion than voluntary imposture in the world; and that they who have most imposed on mankind, have been happy in a certain faculty of imposing first upon themselves; by which they

have a kind of salvo for their consciences, and are so much the more successful, as they can act their part more naturally, and to the life.—*Shaftesbury's Moralists*, p. 211.

Mr. J. Beal, in a letter to Mr. Boyle, dated Yeovill, October 12, 1670, informs him, that when he was a scholar at Eton, the town was infected with the plague, so that the scholars fled away. Upon this occasion, as his father was deceased, his mother at a great distance, and his other relations at court, and he had no address to any other person, the house in which he abode being surrounded by the plague, even at the next doors; the nature and fame of the disease begat in him a great horror. "In this distress," continues he, "I had an impressive dream, consisting of very many particulars. I told it to all the family, and within three days we found every circumstance true, though very strange and seeming casual. I foretold who were sent for me, what coloured horses, and very sore accidents which fell on

them in the way. From that time to this I have regarded some dreams in myself, and others, not without advantage by the premonitions." All this admits of easy explication, and we have only to reflect, that nothing could be more natural, than that a boy, under great distress of mind, should fancy that he was sent for by those who were most likely to be employed, and even imagine the common accidents which eventually happened. The incidents of childhood excite strong impressions; they are magnified on reflection, and are exaggerated on every repetition of the tale.

The relation which Mr. Morrison gives on his travels must be noticed. "While I was at Prague," says he, "having one night sat up late drinking at a feast, the morning sunbeams gleaming in my face in my bed, I dreamed that a shadow passing by told me, that my father was dead: at which awaking all in a sweat, and affected with this dream, I arose and wrote the day, hour, and all circumstances in a paper book, which, with many

other things, I put into a barrel, and sent to England; and being at Nuremburg, a merchant, well acquainted with me and my relations, told me my father died some months past. When I returned into England, four years after, I would not open the barrel, nor look into the book in which I had written this dream, till I called my sisters and other friends to be witnesses; when myself and they were astonished to see my dream answer the very day of my father's death."

The same gentleman saith thus also: "I may lawfully swear, that in my youth at Cambridge I had the like dream of my mother's death; when my brother Henry lying with me, early in the morning I dreamed that my mother passed by with a sad countenance, and told me, that she could not come to my commencement, I being within five months to proceed master of arts, and she having promised at that time to come to Cambridge. When I related this dream to my brother, both of us awaking together in a sweat, he

protested to me that he had dreamed the very same; and when we had not the least knowledge of our mother's sickness; neither in our youthful affections were any whit moved with the strangeness of this dream; yet the next carrier brought us word of our mother's death *."

Dr. Joseph Hall, when Bishop of Exeter, speaking of the good offices which angels do to God's servants, " of this kind," saith he, " was no less than marvellous care, which at St. Maderinus, in Cornwall, was wrought upon a poor cripple; whereof, besides the attestation of many hundreds of the neighbours, I took a strict and impartial examination in my last visitation. This man, for sixteen years together, was obliged to walk upon his hands, by reason of the sinews of his legs were so contracted; and upon admonitions in his dream

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* Morrison's Itinerary. Part I. C. 2. p. 19. and A. B. Annot. on Relig. Medic. p. 294, 295.

to wash in that well, was suddenly so restored to his limbs, that I saw him able to walk and get his own maintenance. I found here was neither art nor collusion. The name of this cripple was John Trebille *."

Some dreams evidently produced their own accomplishment. When Alice, the mother of Archbishop Abbott, was pregnant, she, as was reported by the Rev. Mr. Aubrey, and many others, dreamed, that if she could eat a pike or jack, her son would be a great man. While eagerly employed in getting one, she is said accidentally to have taken up one in some river water that ran near her house at Guilford, and to have seized and devoured it with avidity. The report of this great event being noised about, many persons of distinction offered themselves as sponsors; those who were preferred maintained the future archbishop and

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* Bishop Hall's Monitor of Godliness, L. i. § 8. p. 169. Fuller's Worthies, p. 156.

his brother at school, and afterwards at the university. In this there is nothing impossible or difficult to account for, but the accidental taking up of the pike, which was probably a fiction of the good woman, who wished to excite attention to a maternal dream.

Sir Roger L'Estrange is reported, upon what authority is not known to the author, to have dreamed, that on a particular spot, in which he was accustomed to sport in his father's park, he received intelligence of his father's death, who had been long sick. He in consequence resolved to avoid the spot; but being led there by his game, he heard the account which he apprehended.

Among the most remarkable relations of modern times, is the account given by Lord Clarendon, with the solemnity of a grave historian, relating to the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham, as established upon an unusual foundation of credit. It cannot be given better than in the words of the noble

historian: "There was an officer in the king's wardrobe in Windsor Castle, of a good reputation for honesty and discretion, and then about the age of fifty years or more: this man had in his youth been bred in a school in the parish where Sir George Villiers, the father of the duke, lived; and had been much cherished and obliged in that season of his age by the said Sir George, whom afterwards he never saw. About six months before the miserable end of the Duke of Buckingham, about midnight, this man, being in his bed at Windsor, where his office was, and in a very good health, there appeared to him, on the side of his bed, a man of a very venerable aspect, who drew the curtains of his bed, and fixing his eyes upon him, asked him, if he knew him. The poor man, half dead with fear and apprehension, being asked the second time, whether he remembered him? and having in that time called to his memory the presence of Sir George Villiers, and the very cloaths he used to wear, in which, at that time, he seemed to be habited: he answered him, that he thought

him to be that person: he replied, he was in the right, that he was the same; and expected a service from him, which was, that he should go from him to his son the Duke of Buckingham, and tell him, if he did not somewhat to ingratiate himself to the people, or, at least, to abate the extreme malice they had against him, he would be suffered to live but a short time.—After this discourse he disappeared, and the poor man, if he had been at all waking, slept very well till morning, when he believed all this to be a dream, and considered it no otherwise.

"The next night, or shortly after, the same person appeared to him again in the same place, and about the same time of the night, with an aspect a little more severe than before; and asked him, whether he had done as he had required him? and perceiving he had not, gave him very severe reprehensions; told him, he expected more compliance from him; and that if he did not perform his commands, he should enjoy no peace of mind, but

should be always pursued by him.—Upon which he promised him to obey him. But the next morning, waking out of a good sleep, though he was exceedingly perplexed with the lively representation of all particulars to his memory, he was willing still to persuade himself that he had only dreamed; and considered that he was a person at such a distance from the duke, that he knew not how to find any admission to his presence, much less had any hope to be believed in what he should say. So with great trouble and unquietness, he spent some time in thinking what he should do; and in the end resolved to do nothing in the matter.

"The same person appeared to him the third time with a terrible countenance, and bitterly reproaching him for not performing what he had promised to do. The poor man had by this time recovered the courage to tell him, that in truth he had deferred the execution of his commands, upon considering how difficult a thing it would be for him to get any access to the duke, having acquaintance with

no person about him; and if he could obtain admission to him, he should never be able to persuade, that he was sent in such a manner; but he should, at best, be thought to be mad, or to be set on and employed, by his own or the malice of other men to abuse the duke; and so he would be sure to be undone.—The person replied as he had done before, that he should never find rest till he should perform what he required, and therefore he were better to dispatch it: that the access to his son was known to be very easy; and that few men waited long for him; and for the gaining him credit, he would tell him two or three particulars, which he charged him never to mention to any person living, but to the duke himself; and he should no sooner hear them, but he would believe all the rest he should say: and so repeating his threats, he left him.

"In the morning the poor man, more confirmed by the last appearance, made his journey to London, where the court then was. He was very well known to Sir Ralph Freeman, one

of the masters of requests, who had married a lady who was nearly allied to the duke, and was himself well received by him. To him this man went, and though he did not acquaint him with all particulars, he said enough to him to let him see there was somewhat extraordinary in it; and the knowledge he had of the sobriety and discretion of the man, made the more impression on him. He desired, that by his means he might be brought to the duke, to such a place, and in such a manner, as should be thought fit; affirming, that he had much to say to him, and of such a nature as would require much privacy, and some time and patience in the hearing. Sir Ralph promised he would speak first with the duke of him, and then he should understand his pleasure: and accordingly, in the first opportunity, he did inform him of the reputation and honesty of the man, and then what he desired, and of all he knew of the matter. The duke, according to his usual openness and condescension, told him, that he was the next day early to hunt with the king; that his horses

should attend him at Lambeth-bridge, where he would land by five of the clock in the morning; and if the man attended him there at that hour, he would walk and speak with him as long as should be necessary.

Sir Ralph carried the man with him the next morning, and presented him to the duke at his landing, who received him courteously, and walked aside in conference near an hour; none but his own servants being at that hour in that place, and they and Sir Ralph at such a distance, that they could not hear a word, though the duke sometimes spoke, and with great commotion, which Sir Ralph the more easily observed and perceived, because he kept his eyes always fixed upon the duke, having procured the conference, upon somewhat he knew there was of extraordinary. And the man told him, in his return over the water, that when he mentioned those particulars, which were to gain him credit, the substance whereof, he said, he durst not impart to him, the duke's colour changed, and he swore he

could come to that knowlege only by the devil; for that those particulars were known only to himself and to one person more; who, he was sure, would never speak of it.

"The duke pursued his purpose of hunting, but was observed to ride all the morning with great pensiveness, and in deep thoughts, without any delight in the exercise he was upon; and before the morning was spent left the field, and alighted at his mother's lodgings in White-Hall, with whom he was shut up for the space of two or three hours, the noise of their discourse frequently reaching the ears of those who attended in the next rooms: and when the duke left her, his countenance appeared full of trouble, with a mixture of anger, a countenance that was never before observed in him in any conversation with her, towards whom he had a profound reverence. And the countess herself (for though she was married to a private gentleman, Sir Thomas Compton, she had been created Countess of Buckingham shortly after her son had first as-

sumed that title) was, at the duke's leaving her, found overwhelmed in tears, and in the highest agony imaginable. Whatever there was of all this, it is a notorious truth, that when the news of the duke's murther (which happened within a few months after) was brought to his mother, she seemed not in the least degree surprised, but received it as if she had foreseen it; nor did afterwards express such a degree of sorrow as was expected from such a mother for the loss of such a son."

To the truth of an account so fully and circumstantially given, and on such authority, it may be thought an unreasonable attachment to system to refuse assent; and it must be admitted, that if we could suppose departed shades to be allowed to appear, the message which Sir George Villiers is represented to have instructed the officer to deliver to his son was such as argued a parental solicitude, and was calculated to produce that change in the conduct of the duke which might have averted his impending fate. The author, however, though

he presumes not to reject the account, has only to remark, that it should be remembered, that the death of the Duke of Buckingham was a subject of great national importance. That his distinguished character and influence, and the impressive circumstances under which he was assassinated, rendered it a subject of universal conversation. The imagination of men was set on float, and every one was, doubtless, eager to communicate what might interest attention. The noble historian tells us, that there were many stories scattered abroad at that time, of several prophecies and predictions of the duke's untimely and violent death. Omens of this kind were easily fabricated, and believed, in an age not free from superstition. The affection of relations is disposed to collect and exaggerate every particular connected with the death of those on whom their happiness and prosperity may have depended. It may be considered also, that it is by no means impossible that the dream and message might have been contrived by the countess, with design to produce an impression on the duke,

and a reformation, that might secure him from the effect of the unpopularity to which she saw that he was exposed. She was probably the person mentioned by the duke, as the possessor of the secrets which were disclosed; and the duke's anger might proceed from the suspicion that she had betrayed them. It may be observed, that the name of the officer is not mentioned by Lord Clarendon, though other writers indeed call him Towerson, and others Towse *.

Upon the whole, the author is inclined to consider the dream as the invention of affectionate credulity; as also that of the Countess of Denbigh, the duke's sister; who is reported to have dreamed, that as she passed through a field with her brother in his coach, she heard a sudden shout of the people, and on

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* Vid. Peck in Desid. Curios. Nichol's Leicestershire, vol. iii. p. 208, and Gent. Magaz. for Dec. 1801. The narrative was first mentioned in Lilly's Monarchy or No Monarchy.

inquiring the reason, was told that it was for joy that the Duke of Buckingham was sick. She had scarcely related this dream, it is added, to her gentlewoman, than the Bishop of Ely came to inform her of the duke's death.

There is a remarkable relation in Burnet's Account of the Life and Death of John Earl of Rochester. The chaplain, we are told, of the Lady Warre, the mother-in-law of the Earl, had a dream which informed him that on such a day he should die, but being by all the family put out of the belief of it, he had almost forgotten it; untill the evening before the day which had been mentioned, there being at supper thirteen at table, according to a fond conceit that one of them must die, one of the young ladies pointed to him that he was to be the person; he remembering his dream fell into some disorder, and the Lady Warre reproving him for his superstition, he said that he was confident that he was to die before morning, but he being in perfect health it was

not much minded. It was on Saturday night, and he was to preach next day, he went up to his chamber and sat up late, as appeared by the burning of his candle, and he had been preparing his notes for his sermon, but was found dead in his bed the next morning. There can be no doubt that the earl, conversing under very serious sentiments, believed the relation which he gave to its reporter; but it is possible that he might have heard the story from friends more solicitous for his reformation, than for a scrupulous adherence to truth. There is, certainly, some slight appearance of inconsistency in the story; but admitting it to be strictly true, it only seems to furnish one among many instances of the danger of exciting or yielding to superstitious impressions. The chaplain having dreamt that he should die, and been led by the inconsiderate remark of the young lady to be struck a second time with that conviction, probably fell a victim to his terrors. If it were a divine dream, it seems not to have had any adequate object, unless indeed we suppose it to have been designed to awaken

reflection, and a belief in the superior nature of the soul, as we find it contributed to make the Earl of Rochester believe that the soul was a substance distinct from matter.

Lord Lyttelton, the son of the historian, whose ardent imagination might have kindled into terrors when he reflected on his vicious life, is said to have been scared by forebodings which probably occasioned his death; others conceive him to have put an end to his own existence, agreeably to a prediction which he had made.

Mr. Toole, the distinguished comedian, is related to have had a presentiment of his death, which was, probably, nothing but a gloomy fear resulting from ill health, and encreased on the prospect of his departure from England. Such anticipations are but the suggestions of alarm, or the feelings of approaching dissolution. As all men die, and all think on the subject of death with the deepest interest, it is not extraordinary that some should dream

about it at critical periods, and foresee its approach.

Captain Richard Hutten's ship, on the 6th of January 1701, struck on the Caskets near Alderney, and stoved to pieces; the master and six of the men were drowned, and nine men saved. The masts falling upon the rocks, some being on the shrouds fell with it and swung themselves on by part of the other rigging; not having secured any bread they subsisted fourteen days on the ship's dog which they eat raw, and on limpets and weeds that grew on the rocks. They had once sight of the Express, Advice boat, but were not perceived by its crew. About the 18th or 19th one Taskard's son, apprentice of a master of a ship at Lymington, dreamed that he was taking up several men about the Caskets, and told it to his father, but he took no notice of it; but on the 20th set sail in his bark from Guernsey bound for Southampton, and when he came in view of the Caskets, the boy remembering his dream, looked earnestly upon

them, and told his father he saw men upon the Caskets, his father chid and contradicted him; but on the boy's persisting, discovered by his glass one man on the rock waving his cap, upon which he steered and came to anchor on the leeward of the rock, it being a great sea; he took them all into his boat, and brought them safe to Southampton *. The author is not aware upon what authority this is related.

It is related of Dr. Harvey, who was one of the college of physicians, that upon setting off on his travels to Padua, he shewed on his arrival at Dover his pass, but was detained by the governor without any reason being assigned. The packet sailed without him and was lost, and next day the news reached Dover. It is added that the doctor was unknown to the governor, but that the night before the arrival of Dr. Harvey the governor had a perfect vision of him, with warning to stop him as he

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* Nocturnal Revels, p. 97.

informed the doctor. The authority upon which this account also is given is not known to the author.

A dissipated person is related to have been converted by the impression of a dream, in which he imagined that he was rescued from a pit in which he was about to sink when sporting with some companions who were revelling with him, and whom he supposed to represent the guilty pleasures which endangered his safety:

> "For pleasure's but a kind of wanton stream
> That carries men to hell as in a dream."

Some of the dreams which have been produced appear to come to us on authorities so respectable, and to have had a tendency so beneficial, that they present certainly some excuse for credulity on this subject. The author would be unwilling to invalidate any impression that might tend to keep alive a sense of God's moral government; he is himself fully convinced of the care and particular pro-

vidence of God watching over individuals, and does not mean to deny the agency and superintendency of angels appointed over every man, an opinion which seems to derive some countenance from our Saviour's words, when he speaks of the angels of children who beheld the face of God in Heaven*. He is aware also that it may possibly be contended that the promise of Joel with respect to dreams and visions, was not expressly restricted to any particular period of the Gospel; but, notwithstanding, he cannot but adhere to the conviction that revelations no longer continue to be imparted by dreams, subscribing to a remark of the great Bacon, that they ought all to be despised, and ought to serve but for winter's talk by the fire-side: "though," continues this great writer, "when I say despised, I mean it as for belief, for otherwise the spreading and publishing them is in no sort to be despised, for they have done much mischief."

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* Matt. xviii. 1.

They may, as Mr. Dacier observes, be compared to the stories of an avowed liar which casually may be true; we have, however, no criterion by which to judge whether they may bear any affinity to remote events, and it is reasonable to presume that they do not by any concerted appointment, since God cannot be supposed to have designed to harass us with fruitless premonitions, and to distract our minds with fallacious ambiguities. They may still, however, be understood to be designed for great moral purposes as affording subject for reflection, in a point of view in which they will be considered in some succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON SLEEP AND DREAMING, WITH REFERENCE TO SOME REMARKABLE ACCOUNTS.

"Next how soft sleep o'er all spreads thoughtless rest,"
"And frees from anxious care the troubled breast."

Creech's Lucret. B. 4.

In what the author has advanced in the preceding chapters, he has not presumed peremptorily to determine that dreams for great and important purposes may not have been inspired without reference to the evidence of revealed religion.

He has designed, however, to intimate as his opinion, that dreams, in general, are not to be considered as having any necessary connection with futurity, and that certainly no

general ground of confidence in them is established.

Considering then ordinary dreams as the uninspired productions of the human mind, he proceeds to enter into a slight discussion of their general nature, adverting to such causes as may reasonably be assigned for, and calculated to explain them.

In treating of such dreams, it is obvious that he speaks of those representations only which are addressed to the mind, in sleep, in a state of suspension of the corporeal powers; and he regards these as comprehending whatever is the object of our thoughts in sleep, and not merely in the restricted definition of Macrobius, who considers a dream as "that which covers with figures, and veils in mysteries," a signification that can be understood only by interpretation. The dreams of which he speaks result from the exertion of the mental faculties, and include as well those that are of obvious and direct import, as those which are enigma-

tical and figurative; and, in short, every species that does not involve the idea of inspiration.

On a general reflection that dreams take place when the body is inactive and dormant, it may be expedient to examine a little into the nature of sleep, which is one of the most remarkable regulations of Providence, and intimately connected with some of the great arrangements of his appointment, who has "established day and night for a perpetual ordinance;" the latter for sleep, which is well described as "Nature's soft nurse," as that which

> "knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care
> The birth of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
> Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
> Chief nourisher in life's feast *."

As indeed it is the fostering and gentle so other of human cares and infirmities, the guardian of that repose in which the preservation of the

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* Macbeth.

human frame is cherished. If sleep be considered in abstract distinction, it is certain that notwithstanding the effects which we experience from it in recruited strength and renovated spirits, it is a state of apathy; if considered separately from dreams, it is a suspension of the mental as well as of the corporeal powers*; it is a seeming prelude of death† however salubrious in supporting life, and the senses, though capable of being roused, are closed in insensibility; it appears to loosen the links of connection which subsist between the soul and body without breaking the chain.

"It is death's counterfeit,
We seem in it as passing to our former state
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve‡."

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* Johnson's Dict. fol. ed.

† Ὑπνος δε θανατος τοις προμελετεοις φελει·
Ὑπνος δε πασιν εστιν η υγεια βιος.
Diversorum γνωμαι.

‡ Paradise Lost, B. viii. L. 290.

"It is," says Sir Thomas Brown, "a death whereby we live, a middle moderating point between life and death, and so like death, I dare not trust it without my prayers, and an half adieu unto the world, and take my farewell in a colloquy with God. After which I close my eyes in security, content to take my leave of him, and sleep unto the resurrection*."

Thomas Tryon, a student in physick in the last century, defines sleep to be the natural rest of a living creature, or a partial temporary cessation of animal action, and the functions of the external senses, caused immediately by the weakness of the animal faculty proceeding from a steep and stupifying vapour, arising from the concoction and digestion of the alimentary food exhaled from the stomach, and hence ascending to the brain, and watering and bedewing it with unctious fumes, whereby the operation of the senses is for a time obstructed, to the end the powers of the mind

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* Religio Medici. B. ii. §. 12.

and body may be recruited, refreshed, and strengthened.

Sleep as it is a state of exemption from impressions from external objects, can occasion no positive sensations of pain or pleasure, unless by the aid of dreams. If during sleep we are safe and tranquil, yet, as insensible of our security, we derive no satisfaction from it.

To enjoy advantages we must be conscious that we possess them, and the only consciousness which we have in sleep is a conciousness of the existence of the ideal objects which our imagination creates in dreams, for when the senses are so strongly affected by external impressions as to produce sensations on the mind, sleep is disturbed, and if no impressions continue we awake.

To the unhappy sleep may indeed be considered as good, inasmuch as it intermits the agonies of pain, and closes the wounds of misery; if it bring no joys, it at least suspends

sorrow, he who mourns even that thankless ingratitude which is "sharper than a serpent's tooth" forgets the anguish of his soul in sleep, which, like the medicated wine of Circe, induces a cessation of sorrow and passion, and a forgetfulness of all evils. The tear is at least for some time checked, the sigh suppressed.

As the will seems to exercise little influence over the powers of the mind or body in sleep, though it occasionally exert a control over them, the character of sleep must take its cast from the nature of the dreams which occur; and in this state of ideal existence the man whose waking thoughts revel in festivity may pine under imaginary distress, while the wretched and depressed may enjoy the cheerful scenes of prosperity. The sovereign whose living brows are encircled with a diadem may see himself "despoiled of the pride of kingly sway" till the early courtiers attend his levee. The embarrassed debtor may be restored to opulence

and the wretched exile return to the land of his affection.

In general, however, our reflections in sleep are regulated by certain laws of association, and the predominant complection which distinguishes the mind when awake, continues to spread its influence over our waking thoughts.

"Whatever love of burnished arms obtains,
Of chariots whirling o'er the dusty plains,
Whatever care to feed the glossy steeds
By day prevails, again by night succeeds*."

Or as the idea is expressed by Garth:

"The slumb'ring chiefs of painted triumphs dream,
While groves and streams are the soft virgin's theme†."

The "memory retains the colouring of the day‡", which fades only by insensible transitions. In times of prosperity

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* Virgil. B. vi. Quæ gratia currum, &c.

† See Dispensary.

‡ Walpole's Mysterious Mother.

" Glorious dreams stand ready to restore
The pleasing shapes of all we saw before *."

In scenes of sorrow, as Job pathetically complained, the afflictions end not with the day; " when I say my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint, then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions †;" and Plutarch has expressed a similar sentiment, saying, " when grief takes me sleeping I am disturbed by dreams ‡."

To the coward conscience and guilty reflections, of that murderer of innocent sleep, and of Richard, " the dreadful minister of hell," the night, could bring but perturbation and shadowy terrors, rendering that by which wearied nature was to revive a rude state of

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* Dryden.

† Job vii. 14. 15. So Cicero, Cura oppressi animi vel corporis sive fortunæ, qualis vigilantem fatigaverit talem se ingerit dormienti. De Divin. Lib. i. C. 3.

‡ Plutarch. περι αρετης και κακιας.

disquietude shattering the human frame, while like Rufinus they might see

> " Dire shades illusive fleet before the mind
> Of men by him to cruel death consigned *."

The passions which are ruffled cannot be instantly calmed; and these agitations which impress the mind continue long to fluctuate with an impulse which resembles the dead waves that succeed a storm, subsiding only by slow and imperceptible degrees.

As the tide of our reflections is only changed by a gradual recess after we sink into repose, so the influence of dreams is often felt beyond the period of their continuance; we wake with chearfulness if we have been exhilarated in slumber, and the joy which cometh in the morning requires time to disperse the clouds of solicitude. Sleep, however, though it sometimes admits images to harass the mind, yet

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* Claud. in Rufin. L. ii.

in general serves to renew an impaired strength, and to recruit our exhausted spirits; and even when it is most interrupted and disturbed by visionary disquietudes, it still administers to the support of the human constitution. Nature cannot long subsist unless invigorated by its relief, it must collapse or be fretted to an irritation which will drive the sympathetic mind to insanity, if it experience not occasionally its solace and recruiting aid.

The necessity of sleep results from the deficiency of the quantity and mobility of the spirits occasioned by the compressure of the nerves, and by the collapsing of the nervous parts which convey the spirits from their fountain in the common sensory to circulate to all parts of the body*. As this necessity becomes more urgent in proportion to the fatigue of the body, we find that often while it refuses to weigh down the eyelids of royalty

"In the perfumed chambers of the great,
And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody;

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* Haller's Physiolog.

It will

> "Upon the high and giddy mast
> Seal up the ship boy's eyes, and rock his brains,
> In cradle of the rude imperious surge."

Sleep also is justly considered as the world's best medicine, repairing the waste and lulling the disquietudes of nature, carrying off the gross humours of the body by perspiration, and refreshing its debilitated powers. It is so favourable and restorative to nature, that some animals which sleep in the winter, as bears are supposed to do under the snow, grow fat though they are deprived of food; and swallows, bats, and many sorts of insects which enjoy a kind of alternation of sleep extended to a long period, are preserved in that state under circumstances in which they could not exist when awake.

Some writers represent sleep to be subservient to the sustenance of vegetable life, conceiving that the plants which close with the night, and open in the morning, derive benefit from a state of rest analogous to slumber; and

all animated nature may be conceived to require repose, while unceasing vigilance may be regarded as the exclusive attribute of God "who slumbereth not." The quantity of sleep which is sufficient for the purposes of well sustained life varies with the constitution of the individual, and depends on the proportion of fatigue which he endures, and the quantity of nourishment which he receives. It may be protracted indefinitely, and during its continuance the vital flame appears scarcely to waste its supplies; if we may credit some accounts which are furnished to us, and which represent lethargic persons to have been so absorbed in uninterrupted sleep for weeks, and even years, as to require no sustenance, and to suffer so little change or consumption of the animal vigor, that the "eye was not dimmed, nor the natural force abated *."

Diogenes Laertius represents Epimenides, a distinguished philosopher of Crete, to have

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* Bacon.

slept fifty-one years in a cave, during which time if he had any dreams he could not afterwards recall them, and when he awaked he with difficulty recollected the city of his residence, and could scarcely persuade his younger brother to recognise him *. This account may probably be suspected from his connection with Cretan history, the Abbé Barthelemy represents it to import only that Epimenides passed the first years of his youth in solitude and silent meditation. There are many other relations, however, which prove that sleep may be continued without injury to the human constitution certainly to a much longer period than the body could subsist without food in a waking state †. Aristotle and Plutarch ‡ speak of the nurse of one Timon who slept two months without any indication of life. Marcus Damascenus re-

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* Diogenes Laertius, Epimen, L. i. Plin. Hist. Nat. L. vii. C. 5. p. 284.

† Introduct. au Voyage de la Grêce. Pausanias, L. i. C. 14. p. 35.

‡ Plutarch. Sympos. L. viii. Quæst. 9.

presents a German rustic to have slept under an hay-rick through a whole autumn and winter, till on the removal of the hay he awoke half dead and utterly distracted *. Crantzius mentions a scholar at Lubeck in the time of Gregory the Eleventh, who slept seven years without any apparent change †. The most memorable account, however, is that of the seven persons of Ephesus, who are reported to have slept providentially in a cave to which they had retired, from the time of the persecution under Decius till the 30th year of Theodosius. The cave, it is said, is still shewn at Ephesus, and the remains of a chapel erected to their memory ‡. These were the seven famous sleepers whose reputation is certainly unrivalled in history. But though the account be sanctioned in some Greek homilies, and in the Koran, many incredulous people have

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* Zuing. Theat. vol. ii. L. 5. p. 415.

† Crantz. Vandal. L. viii. C. 39. and other authorities in Wanley's Wonders.

‡ Ricaut's Hist. of the Greek Church.

stumbled at the marvellous relation, and consider it as a fiction of the martyrologists. There is however perhaps nothing more inexplicable in men's sleeping 196 years* than in their sleeping six, we know not at what limits to stop, and may remark as was once done on the subject of St. Denys's walking a great way without his head, La distance n'y fait rien, c'est le premier pas qui coute.

Upon this subject it may be worth while to notice a very extraordinary account which was drawn up by Mr. Gualtier at the request of the King of Sweden, and which is inserted in the Memoirs of the Academy of Berlin. The case alluded to is that of a woman of the name of Guasser, who was affected by a kind of catalepsy which attacked her twice a day, during which she sunk into a profound sleep, and was deprived of all internal and external sensation, her limbs grew hard and inflexible like stone, a

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* Niceph. Hist. Eccles. L. xiv. C. 44. Schol.

little pulse was discernible, and her respiration continued as free as in her natural sleep: she appeared to have no feeling though her flesh was scarified. The fit came on regularly every morning at a very early hour, and ceased about twelve o'clock by a gradual and convulsive recovery of the use of the limbs, which allowed her just time to take refreshments, when she again relapsed into sleep, which continued till eight o'clock, from which time she remained awake till eight o'clock in the morning. It was remarkable that this disorder sometimes lasted six months, sometimes a year, and at last two years and a half (during the latter part of which time the paroxysm returned but once a day) after which period a correspondent interval of health always intervened. During the continuance of her malady she was married, and brought to bed of two or three children, who were not affected by her complaint; she lived many years after the last attack, and having attained the age of eighty, died in 1746, of a disorder which had no apparent connection with this periodical affection, which is supposed

to have originated in some irregularity of constitution encreased by exposure to wet in an endeavour to escape from a persecution in France*.

The case of Colonel Townshend, mentioned by Dr. Cheyne, was also very remarkable; he had for many years been affected with a nephritic complaint, and had the power of dying or expiring when he pleased, and afterward of coming to life again at pleasure, a proof of which Dr. Cheyne, Dr. Baynard, and Mr. Skrine, had at Bath, where after composing himself deliberately on his back, the pulse of the colonel gradually became insensible, no motion of the heart was perceptible, nor any symptom of life to be discerned, a mirror held to his mouth being not even soiled by his breath; he continued in this state near half an hour, and then gradually recovered †.

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* Considerations sur un Sommeil extraordinaire, Mem. de l'Academ. de Berlin.

† Cheyne's English Malad. Wanley's Wonders, Ch. i.

This relation reminds us of the account given by St. Austin of Restitutus, a Presbyter, who could at pleasure deprive himself of all sense in a state of apparent death, in which he seemed not to breathe, and was not affected by any present sensations even from fire, though he professed to hear very loud voices *.

Cardan, the famous physician and astrologer of Pavia, tells us among other extraordinary things of himself, that he could at any time fall into an extasy, and had only a faint and indistinct hearing of those who conversed, becoming insensible of the gout, and every other pain †.

But some reports are still more surprising. A whole people of Lucomoria, a country of

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* August. de Civit. Dei. L. xiv. C. 24.

† Cardan de Varietat. Rer. L. viii. C. 43. p. 103. Scaliger informs us that Cardan abstained from food to verify the prediction which he had uttered of his death, as did also Robert Burton and Bayle.

farther Sarmatia, are related to die on the twenty-seventh of November like swallows, in consequence of the intense cold, and not to awake again till the twenty-fourth of April *.

These wonderful suspensions of the corporeal powers must be considered as more than common trances, such as those by which Barton, the maid of Kent, could absorb her faculties, or than such extasies as Mr. Locke describes to be dreaming with the eyes open †.

The notion of a trance with the eyes open appears very early to have been connected with the idea of divine visions ‡, and it seems in modern times to have been imagined, that the senses of those who are entranced leave the body, and are occupied in acquiring the knowledge of things secret and remote.

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* Wanley's Wonders, C. xxiv. p. 627.

† Essay on the Unders. B. ii. Ch. i, §. 2.

‡ Numb. xxiv. 4.

After the marvellous accounts which have been here produced, it must be an insipid relation to mention that Baker speaks of a William Fordey who fell asleep on Tuesday in Easter week, and could not be awakened even with pinching and burning till the first day of next term, which was full fourteen days*. These relations, it may be incidentally observed, prove the necessity of caution in not burying persons prematurely.

The circumstances under which epileptic persons have been known to think and act as if waking, and even to address other persons in long and connected discourses, are deserving of philosophical investigation.

There are other accounts of an opposite nature equally remarkable. Seneca reports that Mæcenas lived three years without any sleep,

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* Baker's Chron. p. 428.

and was at last cured of his distemper by soft music *.

Nizolius is related to have lived thirty-five years without sleep †.

The modern account of the woman of Padua, who lived fifteen days without sleep, will easily be credited by those who receive the former histories.

It is to be observed, that in these accounts no mention is made of dreams having been enjoyed by the persons thus subjected to the dominion of Morpheus, and it is doubtful whether we are to consider dreams as necessarily attendant on sleep.

Herodotus asserts of the Atlantes, the inhabitants of Mount Atlas, that they neither eat animal food nor dream. Lode professes to

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* De Providentiâ.

† Schenk's Observat. L. i. p. 64.

have seen a man who, though his memory was by no means defective, assured him that he had never dreamt till after a fever which affected him about the twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth year of his age; and Plutarch mentions his friend Cleon, who though he had attained a great age, had never dreamed, and says that the same was recorded of Thrasymenes. It is possible, however, that these persons had dreamed, though the impression made on their mind might have been so slight as not to excite any recollection. Aristotle observes, that those who never dream till grown up are generally liable after their experience of this kind to some change of constitution, a remark confirmed by Beattie, who professes to have known a gentleman who never dreamed but when his health was disordered. The habit of dreaming, however, prevails so generally, that it may be considered as an ordinary exercise of the human mind, and its tending to prove its inherent powers of reflection; and it is probable that if the mind is capable of being entirely quiescent, it rarely ceases to think

however its thoughts may sometimes be forgotten as speedily as they arise. Clemens Alexandrinus deemed an entire quiescence to be a death of the soul. Mr. Locke's argument that it is not essential to the soul to think, because it does not always dream *, is founded upon an argument which is at least disputable, for though it may be allowed that the mind cannot think without being sensible that it does think, it need not necessarily be admitted that it does not always dream, because it cannot recal its dreams when awake, or because it does not even remember that it has dreamed; since it might be conscious of its reflections when the body was asleep, though no recollection of them be retained at the return of morning, which instantly presents new scenes to the eyes, and excites new and stronger impressions on the mind. The voluntary operations of the mind seem to cease during sleep,

* Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, B. ii. C. 1. §. 1. Watts's Essays, p. 120. Aristot. de Insomn. Hobbes's Leviathan, B. ii. C. 45.

so that the mind becomes in great measure passive, and we can seldom discern any accurate recollection or powers of reasoning.

"Ebon night is no logician*."

Many things which did occur in sleep, and many things which strike the mind when we are awake, escape almost instantly from the memory, and are not recollected till perchance some remote event recall them to our remembrance: so likewise drunken persons often forget the events and actions which took place during their intoxication; and with respect to dreams, Nebuchadnezzar forgot his dream till Daniel recalled it to his mind†.

Dreams, though sometimes forgotten almost as soon as framed, are not to be considered as useless: they may serve to exercise the faculties and improve the temper of the mind, which

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* Mysterious Mother.

† Dan. ii. 5.

may derive profit from the contemplation of successive images, but could receive no advantage from apathy.

Incoherent as they are, they enable us on reconsideration to watch the temper of the mind, to regard its predominant affections, and to note its undisguised propensities; and they who are disposed to correct any mischievous tendencies, may be assisted thereby in discovering where it may be done with most benefit and effect.

Zeno was of opinion, that every one might form a judgment of his advancement in virtue from his dreams, since if he found himself not pleased with any thing disgraceful and unjust, but his powers of mind enlightened by reason, shining out for the reflection of pure images, like a placid and waveless sea, he might have ground for self approbation*; on the other

* Plutarch. Wyttenbach, vol. ii. p. 316.

hand, if in sleep the mind seemed readily to yield itself to vicious passions, there must be much cause for vigilance.

It was upon a similar conviction that Dionysius inflicted the punishment of death on Marsyas, for having dreamt that he had cut the tyrant's throat, being persuaded that it must have formed the subject of his waking thoughts *. When we are awake, as Plutarch has observed, if vice peeps out, it accommodates itself to the opinion of men, and is abashed; and veiling its passions, it does not entirely give up itself to its impulse, but restrains and contends with it, but in sleep flying beyond opinions and laws, and transgressing all modesty and shame, it excites every lust and stirs up its evil propensities, aiming even at the most dreadful crimes, and enjoying illegal things and images which terminate in no pleasure, but promote disorder †. It is observable, however, that

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* Plutarch. Dionys.

† Plut. vol. i. p. 398. Edit. Wyttenbach.

when the passions operate to excess in dreams, the mind is affected with a sense of conscious guilt, the influence of which throws a gloom over the waking thoughts; and Plato was of opinion that the mind might be so subjected to the influence of reason, as not even in sleep to be carried away by any vicious desires.

The mind appears to entertain some idea of the length of time that the body has slept, though probably this is from a consideration of circumstances when it awakes, since its estimate does not seem to depend upon the succession of images which it has contemplated; and if sleep is extended to any unusual length of time, no accurate idea of the time elapsed is preserved, as a person who had slept for a week is known to have fancied that he had slept only one night.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE NATURE AND EFFICIENT CAUSE OF DREAMS.

The mind enjoys this prerogative and honourable distinction, that it can perform many things by its own powers; but the body can effect nothing but by the impulse and suggestion of the mind.—*Levinus Lemmius de Occult. Nat. Mirac. L. i. C. 12. Hoc tamen prærogativæ, &c.*

As dreams usually obtain when the senses are closed against external objects, they must be considered as the work of the mind, sketches of the fancy, deriving its materials and objects from experience. It is the pre-eminent glory of the mind that it can thus subsist, as it were, in a separate state, independently of the body, which in none of its regular functions, is removed from the superintendance and control of the mind.

It is true, that whatever ideas the mind may enjoy are originally acquired through the senses before they become stupid in forgetfulness, all of them being formed from the observation of earthly circumstances, and not appearing to be innate. The images, however combined in extravagant pictures, and in whatever manner acquired, are composed of the representations of real objects, and are called up at pleasure by the mind, and if we should admit what Mr. Formey *, after Wolfius, has asserted, that every dream originates in some sensation, yet the independent energies of the mind are sufficiently displayed in the preservation of the successive phantoms, and in the continuance of reflection long after the sensation is excited. The scenes which pass in review before us in sleep are sometimes composed of images which are produced immediately by corporeal impressions, not sufficiently strong to destroy the enchantment of sleep. Beattie speaks of

* Essai en Mem. de l'Academ. de Berlin. Tom. ii. p. 16.

a gentleman in the army, whose imagination was so easily affected in sleep by impressions made on the external senses, that his companions could suggest any thing to it by whispering gently in his ear; and that they once made him go through the whole procedure of a duel till he was wakened by report of a pistol.

Dreams are, however, more often produced by sensation or motion of the brain, excited when we were awake, and continued, agreeably to the opinion of Aristotle, after the removal of the object. Although the powers of the mind are not limited to the contemplation of the image first introduced, but range in the wide scope of their observation to the view of every particular with which they are acquainted, and call up in the concatenation of their reflections, often extending to the most remote and forgotten images long since committed to the memory. Hence it is that we are so little able to trace any affinity between the subjects of our dreams and the sensations of recent

impression. The links which connect the successive ideas of the mind, either waking or sleeping, being in general so imperceptibly fine, as to be traced with difficulty.

Allowing then that dreams are sometimes prompted by immediate or recent sensations, they must in general be considered as the creation of the mind, existing, as it were, in an abstracted state, though still capable of being easily summoned to attention to the body. The sympathy and reciprocal influence which subsist between them are never destroyed, and the mutual interchange of feeling is quickly communicated. There is perhaps never a total insensibility; the moment when vigilance sinks into oblivious indifference can never be accurately marked; no one, at least, hath ever yet noted the moment which precedes sleep. The connexion between mind and body is renewed on the slightest alarm, and unusual impressions are instantly conveyed from one to the other. The hungry body suggests to the sleeping mind

visions of food *. Oppressions from repletion generate fearful dreams, and a disordered limb, if its pain increase, will attract attention. Dugald Stewart observes, that dreams are frequently suggested by bodily sensations, and states, that he had been told by a friend, that having occasion, in consequence of an indisposition, to apply a bottle of hot water to his feet when he went to bed, he dreamed that he was making a journey to the top of Mount Ætna, and that he found the heat of the ground almost insupportable. Another person, having blisters applied to his head, dreamed, in the association of ideas, that he was scalped by a party of Indians †.

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* It may perhaps be said, that when the hungry man dreams, it is rather the effect of the recollection of his waking thoughts. There are still, however, sufficient proofs of sympathy. An ancient writer attributes dreams to the immediate temperament of the body. Hi qui laborant siti cum in soporem venerunt, flumina et fontes videre sibi videntur, et bibere, hoc autem patiuntur aviditate intemperata corporis laborantes. Recog. Clem. L. ii. §. 64.

† Elements of the Philosophy of the human Mind. C. v.

Considering dreams then principally as the production of the mind ruminating on its own stores, we perceive that the imagination is ever in a state of vigilance; that it can paint and recall to its own view those scenes of nature and of life which it hath admired; and though the corporeal eye be closed, yet

> " not the more cease
> To wander where the Muses haunt,
> Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill."

That the mind retains its full and native energies in sleep, its powers of memory, and of reasoning, is evident from the circumstances of somnambules, or sleep-walkers, in which the will directs the body, though in a state of somnolency, often guiding it by an accurate recollection of accustomed circumstances and local particulars, and acting, as it seems, by its own vigour as an ethereal spirit moving a passive machine. It then appears indeed capable of performing some things better than when its attention is diverted by the senses to external objects; it seems left to

its own reflections, and free to apply to its own views. In some of these cases it has been known to solve difficulties better than when awake, as in the instance of the man mentioned by Henricus ab Heeres, of whom it is related, that when young, being a professor of a distinguished university, and engaged in the composition and improvement of verses, he has been known, after being dissatisfied with his labours in the day, to have risen in the night, to have opened his desk, and to have written and composed, reading aloud his production, and applauding himself with satisfaction and laughter, and sometimes calling to his chamber-fellow to join in his commendation: after which he has been observed to arrange his papers and shut up his desk, and then undress and retire to bed, and sleep till the morning, when he retained no recollection of the transaction of the night *."

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* Henricus ab Heeres Observat. Medic. L. i. Obs. 2. p. 32, 33. Wanley's Wonders, p. 625.

The same conclusion may be drawn from the relation of Cælius Rhodiginus, who informs us, that when he was twenty-two years of age, being busied in the interpretation of Pliny, while as yet the learned emendations of Hermolaus Barbarus on that excellent author had not performed to him all that was requisite, he was reading that place in the seventh book, which treats of those who grow up beyond the usual proportion which Nature has assigned. The word Ectrapali, by which such persons were described by the Greeks, was of some trouble to him. He knew that he had read something concerning it, but not being able to recall the author, nor the book in which the word was mentioned, and fearing the imputation of unskilfulness, he retired with uneasiness of mind to sleep, when his thoughts continuing still to employ themselves on the subject, he recollected the book, and even the page which he wanted *.

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* Schotts Phys. Curios. L. iii. C. 25. p. 50. Cæl. Rhod. Antiq. Lect. L. xxvii. C. 9. p. 1250. and Wanley's Wonders, Ch. 23.

Persons are very commonly known to walk in their sleep over ridges and parapets, at which Mad Tom would have shuddered. Upon these occasions it appears, that they often act merely from recollection, since they stumble over objects placed in their way. The recollection, however, is often defective, and however circumspectly and steadily the persons may guard against danger in some parts, they often forget where it exists in others. The imagination is also generally so ascendant, that the judgment is not allowed time to act. The eyes of the person are frequently open, but objects which appear before them are usually unheeded, the mind being so absorbed by its own contemplations, as to be inattentive to impressions conveyed by the senses. Sometimes, however, the eyes continue, even in sleep, to present objects to the mind which engage its attention; as in the case of Johannes Oporinus, a printer, who, being employed one night in correcting the copy of a Greek book, fell asleep as he read, and yet ceased not to read till he had finished not less than a whole

page, of which, when he awoke, he retained no recollection *.

The attention of the mind, in this case, appears to have been gradually withdrawn after the body began to lie. This disposition to walk and act in sleep is usually considered as a disorder occasioned, according to the opinion of some persons, by a plethora, to which young men are chiefly liable: we may conceive in these cases the turgid and foaming blood to excite sensations which affect the mind: the disorder is understood to be curable by purging the primæ viæ †. Whatever be the remote cause which affects the mind on these occasions, it certainly affords to it an opportunity of displaying its superior powers of in-

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* Plater. Observ. L. i. p. 12.

† Levinus Lemnius describes these night-walkers as men of a relaxed habit of body, and great fervour and activity of mind, as chiefly young persons; observing that old persons, in whom the vital powers begin to flag, are incapable of the exertion. De Occult. Nat. Mirac. L. ii. C. 5.

telligence, raised and excited, as it were, by new sensations, and moving the body only as an incumbrance to which it is chained. A similar but less remarkable effect is displayed, when, by an agitation of the spirits, persons are found to talk in their sleep, or to cry out and move, and even to execute their designs by external actions.

There is another faculty of the mind distinct from those hitherto specified, if we may credit a singular relation of Mr. Halley, who declared to the Royal Society, that being carried by a strong impulse to visit St. Helena, in order to make observations on the southern constellations, being then twenty-four years of age, he dreamed, before he undertook the voyage, that he was at sea, sailing towards that place, and saw the prospect of it from the ship in his dream, which exhibited the perfect representation of that island, as it afterwards appeared on his approach. It is possible, that the picture was formed agreeably to the ideas of the island, which his correct mind had formed

from the accounts of others which he might have heard or read. Every one, however, may probably have noticed instances, in which particular scenes appear, or particular events happen, of which a representation may seem before to have taken place in his mind; a circumstance certainly not easy to be explained, but upon the supposition of some presaging power of the mind; but of which the existence and limits are not sufficiently ascertained or defined, to authorize the ascribing of any prophetic intelligence to it, or to imply any design in Providence thereby to direct us, any farther than by such general intimations of the spiritual nature of the mind.

The unpleasant sensations occasioned by the incubus, or night-mare, are either accidental or habitual, and they appear to affect both mind and body. The former is often occasioned by the distension of the stomach with wind or crudities; and it is apt to prevail when people lie on their backs, for then the stomach, being dilated, presses the midriff

and muscles of the breast most, and by that means encumbers the descent of the one and the expansion of the other, which are necessary to respiration, and thus the blood becomes stagnant in the lungs.

The habitual night-mare is supposed to be occasioned by some acid lymph which disorders the spirits, and creates a paralytic or convulsive disposition of the nerves of the midriff and muscles, which press upon those of the windpipe, and produce the sense of strangling: hypochondriacal and scorbutic persons are particularly liable to these complaints.

It is doubtful, in some instances, whether dreams originate with the mind spontaneously summoning up its own ideas, or with the body prompting some sensation of solicitude. In the case of the existence of disorders in the body, the fearful or oppressive dreams which indicate a disordered habit, need not necessarily be ascribed to the immediate operation of the body on the mind commencing in sleep,

since the mind, sympathetically affected when awake *, may by its own reflections generate gloomy phantoms that scare it when the pains of sensation are suspended.

As for dreams which seem to argue a redundancy of health, it is at least disputable, whether they arise from an ardent imagination operating on the mind, or a full constitution of body, suggesting ideas to the imagination. The connexion which subsists between the mind and the body is so intimate, and their reciprocal influence so immediate, that it is difficult to discriminate the boundaries of their respective operations, and the only consideration of consequence, is the necessity of purifying the affections, and of subjecting the body to rules of temperance and self-command.

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* Per consensum et legem consortii. Levin. Lemn. de Occult. N. Mir. L. i. C. 12.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE MIND IN THE PRODUCTION OF DREAMS.

And inward spirit works, and the pervading soul,
Diffus'd o'er ev'ry part, directs with full control.
Æneid. Lib. vi. l. 727—Spiritus intus alit.

It has sufficiently appeared, it is presumed, in the preceding chapter, that dreams are to be regarded as the work of the mind, however occasionally suggested by attention to the sensations of the body. From the nature and universal prevalency of their impressions, which obtain while the corporeal functions, if not suspended, are bound up in temporary insensibility, so as to intermit the conveyance of ideas, Cicero argues the distinct and immaterial nature of the mind, and they certainly

demonstrate, as Virgil has expressed it with emphatical, if not peculiar reference to the human mind,

> "Its heav'nly spirit and celestial birth,
> However clouded by the mists of earth;
> Its force which, though confin'd by mark and chains,
> The body's perishable limbs disdains*."

For as the body is then inert, and not alive to ordinary perceptions, or capable of being rendered serviceable without the dispersion of sleep; the continued activity of the mind, during the lethargy, is a just argument of its separate and independent existence; of its capacity of thought in an abstracted state; of its energy, which requires neither intermission nor rest.

It may perhaps be urged as an argument against the presumed proof of the spiritual

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* Igneus est equidem vigor et cælestis origo. Æneid. Lib. vi. l. 730.

nature of the mind, that brute animals appear to dream, though we do not ascribe to them an immaterial soul.

Lucretius, embarrassed with the proofs in favour of the immortality of the soul, poetically urges this argument:

" Not man alone, but animals display
The same remembrance of the scenes of day.
In sleep the courser sweats with swelling veins,
And shortly breathing o'er the course he strains;
And ev'ry barrier down with eager speed,
Strives 'gainst contending rivals for the meed.
So hounds in sleep their quiv'ring limbs will try,
And give with sudden yelp their feeble cry;
With frequent inspiration air inhale,
As if they touch'd upon the scented gale:
Half-rous'd with eager wildness they pursue
Th' ideal stag, swift flying in their view,
Till to their sight th' illusive vision fail,
And real objects o'er the false prevail:
E'en those of gentler breed, who seldom roam,
Whose guardian office is to watch at home,
Shake off light slumbers oft with hasty bound,
As if a stranger seen, or heard a sound,
Each creature as its nature's fierce or tame,
When seen awake, in sleep appears the same.

E'en birds awaken'd in a sudden fright
Fly to securer groves, if chance by night
The visionary hawk should hov'ring seem
To soar and threaten mischief in a dream."

There is, it must be confessed, some force in this objection, and a parity of reasoning may seem to compel us to allow the existence of an immaterial nature in animals, as far, at least, as the proof is to rest on the power of dreaming, exclusive of other arguments; and notwithstanding, indeed, the spirit of the beast is said in Scripture to go downward to the earth, we may conceive it to be endowed with powers of reflection, and to be capable of being impressed by ideas, and therefore of a constitution which, though manifestly inferior to the human mind, and, it is presumed, not destined to immortality, may be considered as distinct from a material substance, no organization of which we can conceive to be capable of thought *.

* Nam si quid in illis rationis similitudinem imitatur, non ratio, sed memoria est, et memoria non illa ratione mixta, sed quæ habitudinem sensuum quinque comitatur. Macrob. in Somn. Scipio—L. i. c. 14. See also Locke.

There is a relation of St. Austin, in a letter to Euodius, which prettily illustrates the argument of the immateriality of the mind to be drawn from its distinct operations. Genadius, we are told, a Carthaginian physician, who doubted of the immortality of the soul, saw in his sleep a youth, who shewed to him a beautiful city, and who, returning on the succeeding night, inquired of Genadius whether he recollected him. Genadius answered that he did, and remembered his dream. The youth then asked him what he was then about: the physician replied, that he was in his bed sleeping. The apparition left him to reflect with salutary conviction, that as his mind then beheld a city, though his eyes were closed in sleep, and his body lay dormant, so the spirit of man might continue to live and exercise its powers of observation and intelligence, though the body should lie lifeless in the tomb *.

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* See Fulgosius.

It is an idea to which we have before adverted, that those faculties of the mind often display themselves with greater energy when the body is sepulchred in sleep, and when the spirit is as it were released from "the earthly tabernacle which weigheth down the mind that museth on many things *."—They seem to expatiate with uncontrolled freedom, to unfold new powers of intelligence and fancy, to range with sudden and excursive flights, in which the horizon of the prospect is varied and enlarged, and the scattered scenes of memory collected into one point of view; objects are grouped with rapid observation, our action seems uncircumscribed, and we glide in visionary celerity from scene to scene with the imperceptible flight of the eagle soaring through the trackless air, and moving as the heathen deities are represented, or as Adam describes himself,

"Smooth sliding without step †."

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* Wisdom ix. 15.

† Paradise Lost, B. viii, l. 302.

or like Shakespear, when

"Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain *."

It may perhaps be argued, that whatever excellency of thought and reflection is displayed by the mind in sleep, it is the excellency of the lesser faculties, not of reason, but of those that "serve reason as chief," of mimic Fancy, which but wakes to imitate reason, and which

"Joining or misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams;
Ill matching words and deeds long past, or late †."

And Mr. Locke indeed represents dreams as not under the rule and conduct of the understanding; but it may still be maintained, that however the fancy may appear to predominate over the judgment, and however the mind may

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* Johnson.

† Parad. Lost, B. v. L. 100. 110.

be deluded into a belief of the reality of those fictitious scenes which it forms, when it

> " With inward apprehension gently moves
> Our fancy to believe we yet have being,
> And live * :"

yet that the superior powers of the mind are often exercised in sleep with considerable effect, and its faculties of discrimination and judgment manifested in a chain of reasoning. Much of incongruity, which is supposed to prove the suspension of reason, and much of the wild discordancy of representation which appears to prevail, may arise from the defect of memory when we awake, that does not retain the impression of images which have passed across the mind in light and rapid succession; and which, therefore, exhibit but a partial and imperfect sketch of the picture that engaged the attention in sleep.

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* Parad. Lost.

We have produced, in a preceding chapter, some relations which demonstrate the exertion of the higher powers of intellect in sleep. Sir Thomas Browne was of opinion, that we are somewhat more than ourselves in sleep, and that the slumbers of the body seem to be but the waking of the soul; the ligation of sense, but the liberty of reason; and that our waking conceptions do not match the fancies of our sleep. "At my nativity," says he, "my ascendant was the watery sign of Scorpius; I was born in the planetary hour of Saturn, and I think I have a piece of that leaden planet in me. I am no way facetious, nor disposed for the mirth and galliardise of company; yet in one dream I can compose a whole comedy, behold the action, apprehend the jests, and laugh myself awake at the conceits thereof: were my memory as faithful as my reason is then fruitful, I would never study but in my dreams; and this time also would I chuse for my devotions: but our grosser memories have then so little hold of our abstracted understandings, that they forget

the story, and can only relate to our awaked souls a confused and broken tale of that that hath passed *."

Allowing what we please for the elaborate extravagancies of this learned and ingenious writer, there is still much truth in his remarks; and it is certain, that the mind exhibits great and extraordinary powers in sleep, and we may collect very striking proofs of the superiority of the human intellect working amidst the confusion of its dreams. We note the ability of the mind to withdraw itself from attention to the body to the contemplation of its own images, its comprehension of every thing within the sphere of its observation, the vivid and unexpected recovery of the past, and its bold and probable conjecture of the future; we perceive in it a spirit that only needs to be roused, a vigour which, to apply the illustration of Lactantius, requires only, as fire strewed

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* Religio Medici, P. ii. §. 11.

over and covered with ashes, to be slightly moved to break forth; we may almost say,

> The Deity within us stirs, and we maintain
> An intercourse with those in heav'n who reign *.

The mind has certainly been deemed capable of impressions of revealed knowledge when the body has been asleep; but though we should be disposed to admit any superiority in its powers of apprehension or exertion in its abstracted state, and allow, that in proportion as it withdraws from the body it exhibits proofs of its elevated nature, we do not conceive that its faculties, unaided by inspiration, can make any discoveries beyond the limits of experience. It may combine objects with every variety of representation, and it may outstrip the rapidity of time; but if it pass the bounds of present observation, it will be only to wander among scenes framed by the combination of earthly objects, however diversified by

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* Est Deus in nobis, &c. *Virgil.*

fancy, or spiritualized by abstraction *. The general picture will be formed of corporeal images, though joined perhaps in the unnatural grouping, or composed in the fantastic imagery which Horace represents of the horse's neck joined to the human head, and of the limbs feathered with various plumage. If the mind dream of heaven, it will people it with earthly objects; its angels will no more resemble celestial ministers, than those which the imagination figures to itself in its waking dreams, or than poetry and painting have portrayed. It may be concluded therefore, that whatever excellencies the mind displays, it does not appear to be endowed with prophetic powers; though from the infinite diversity of

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* The mind can have no ideas but what it has acquired by the senses. Mr. Bew, however, in his Essay on Blindness, published in the first volume of the Manchester Memoirs, professes to have gained sufficient information to convince him, that the blind feel impressions in dreaming similar to the visible appearances of bodies—as similar, we may suppose, as scarlet to the sound of a trumpet.

circumstances which crowd into the field of its observation, and from the incalculable variety of scenes which are combined, it is impossible that it should not sometimes dream of events which have an analogy, or resemblance to circumstances, that afterwards come to pass.

It is natural to suppose, that there must be occasional correspondences discovered between the particulars that occur in the endless variety of human dreams, and in the infinite diversity of human events: dreams are composed of reflections formed from experience in life, the course of which is, in many respects, uniform; and these are circumstances which daily recur.

It has been before observed, likewise, that the particulars which pass in review before us in dreams are often forgotten, and recalled only when some similitude of event revives them. As not accurately remembered, their indistinct images are more readily accommodated to subsequent circumstances, and are often conceived to bear a reference which does

not exist. Divine dreams, which were really subservient to revelation, laid the foundation of a confidence which was afterwards extended to false pretensions. There is a general disposition to a superstitious apprehension of futurity, and a general propensity to magnify trivial incidents into marvellous events. The accounts which most surprise and stagger us are not sufficient in number or clearness to authorize the supposition of preternatural interference, while many others must be rejected as " pleasant tales * :" as proofs of that love of the marvellous which overlooks simple solutions, and seeks for miracles, which neglecting

" That which is before its feet, gazes on the stars †."

It is certain, that the knowledge of futurity would by no means be conducive to human

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* Ο μυθοι καλοι αξιοι ακουσαι.

† Quid ante pedes nemo spectat, cœli spectatur plagas.

Σπυδαζομεν πολλα υπ' ελπιδων ματην πονους εχοντες.

Euripides.

happiness, if it could be obtained: it would not advance either the improvement or the present interests of man. Horace has well observed, that

> "The prudent God hath veiled in darkest night
> The future scene from ev'ry mortal sight;
> And laughs when men, with over-anxious fears,
> Anticipate the woes of future years."

And there are considerations, indeed, to demonstrate the wisdom of the appointment, of which the heathen moralists were not aware; for if it were otherwise, our existence would be regarded not as an uncertain period of probation, but as a defined possession, in which amendment would be posponed, and repentance procrastinated; our dependance on the Supreme Being would be forgotten: there would be confidence without fear, a reliance without gratitude or piety. The animation of hope, the pleasure of surprise, would be lost. The knowledge of approaching good would but deaden the enjoyment of possession; the dread of approaching evil would be fearful

and intolerable. What, says Cicero, would have been the fate of Priam, if he had foreseen the impending destruction of his family?

"O visions ill foreseen! better had he
Liv'd ignorant of future, so had borne
His part of evil only."

"Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall
Him or his children; evil he may be sure,
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent;
And he the future evil shall no less
In apprehension than in substance feel
Grievous to bear *."

Who would wish to behold his descendants, as Virgil represents Æneas to have seen Marcellus,

"In youth encircled with the shades of death."

How much would the inducement to cultivate the good qualities and excellencies of those in whom we now feel interested be diminished,

* Paradise Lost, B. xi.

especially among such as look not to the eternal fruits of virtue, if we were conscious that premature death would deprive us soon of the society of the objects of our care, and bury their virtues in an early grave: who would labour for distinction, or which the effect must finish on the morrow? What fortitude could contemplate the shade advancing on the dial of time, if the line were ascertained at which death would execute its decree?

Many writers, who have thought that they have observed proofs of a prophetic discernment of the mind, have maintained, that it displays an especial insight as it approaches the goal of its delivery *. Cicero considers its presaging powers as expressive of a divine nature, and of the excellent faculties which it will display in a future state †.

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* Xenophon. Hist. L. viii.

† Cicero de Senec.

These opinions are consistent with the current persuasions of antiquity, of which the poets and historians afford many proofs; as for instance Homer, in describing the death of Patroclus; Virgil, that of Turnus; Cicero, that of Possidonius *: and Sir Thomas Browne has observed, that men sometimes, upon the hours of their departure, do speak and reason above themselves; for then the soul, about to be freed from the ligament of the body, begins to reason like herself, and to discourse in a strain above mortality †." This, however, is nothing but the elation of the mind, to which earthly things begin to fade, and the hope and expectation of immortality to brighten: no real foreknowledge obtains, excepting as founded on conjectural reasonings from experience; nor are there any well-established accounts of such,

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* Naudæus in Bib. Casaubon Enthus. C. ii. p. 59. Boyle's Works, vol. v. p. 496.

† Religio Medici, B. ii. §. 11.

excepting in the instances mentioned in sacred history *.

"The mind of man is ignorant of fate †."

We may conclude therefore, in general deduction, from the considerations which have been stated, first, that the mind had no existence previously to its entrance into the body; since, in its most abstracted speculations, it exhibits no acquaintance with any ideas that are not acquired by the senses on earth: and secondly, that it is immaterial, and capable of independent exertions, though it sympathizes with the body in its affections, when the latter is either sleeping or waking, and is pained by its sufferings, and enlivened by its vigour. It appears also that it developes powers and faculties of a spiritual nature; and that its perfections are sometimes manifested with equal, if not greater vivacity, when it is freed from the oppressive influence of the body; and that it

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* Gen. xlviii. † Virgil.

has, in that state, been judged by God capable of receiving divine revelations. It appears likewise, that some faint notices have been discerned in it occasionally of an intuitive and prophetical discernment, though it is not naturally endowed with prophetic powers, capable of affording any light for the direction of the conduct of men.

CHAPTER XVI.

Wherefore, O Ruler of the World, impart
This heightened sorrow to the human heart;
Through fearful omens led by thy decree,
Impending griefs and slaughter to foresee *.

It has been an opinion countenanced in the preceding chapters, that the human mind is not naturally endowed with any power of foreknowing or presaging future events, however it may occasionally have been inspired with prophetic apprehensions by the immediate impulse of God's Spirit. It may be proper, therefore, to consider now what may be alledged in favour of the second sight, which has often been maintained to prevail in the Highlands of Scotland, as this inquiry is intimately connected

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* Lucan's Pharsalia, L. ii.

with the subject of our present discussion; and since if it can be admitted that such faculty does really exist, it may be judged unreasonable to dispute the existence also of a prophetic power of the mind operating in dreams.

That full scope may be allowed for the examination of this subject, I shall set down the result of the inquiries which were made by Dr. Johnson in his celebrated Tour with Mr. Boswell to the Highlands, accompanied with his reflections which are philosophical and just, and which it would be an injury to give in any other words than his own.

"The second sight," says this great writer, "is an impression made either by the mind upon the eye, or by the eye upon the mind, by which things distant or future are perceived, and seen as if they were present; a man on a journey far from home falls from his horse, another who is perhaps at work about the house sees him bleeding on the ground, commonly with a landscape of the place where the

accident befalls him; another seer driving home his cattle, or wandering in idleness, or musing in the sunshine, is suddenly surprised by the appearance of a bridal ceremony, or funeral procession, and counts the mourners or attendants, of whom, if he knows them, he relates the names, if he knows them not, he can describe the dresses. Things distant are seen at the instant when they happen, of things future I know not that there is any rule for determining the time between the sight and the event.

"This receptive faculty, for power it cannot be called, is neither voluntary nor constant, the appearances have no dependance upon choice, they cannot be summoned, detained, or recalled, the impression is sudden, and the effect often painful.

"By the term second sight seems to be meant a mode of seeing superadded to that which nature generally bestows.

"I do not find it to be true, as it is reported, that to the second sight nothing is presented but phantoms of evil; good seems to have the same proportion in these visionary scenes, as it obtains in real life. Almost all remarkable events have evil for their basis, and are either miseries incurred or miseries escaped. Our sense is so much stronger of what we suffer, than of what we enjoy, that the ideas of pain predominate in almost every mind. What is recollection but a revival of vexations, is history but a record of wars, treasons, and calamities? Death, which is considered as the greatest evil, happens to all, the greatest good be it what it will is the lot but of a part.

"That they should often see death is to be expected, because death is an event frequent and important, but they see likewise more pleasing incidents. A gentleman told me that when he had once gone far from his own island, one of his labouring servants predicted his return, and described the livery of his attendant which he had never worn at home,

and which had been without any previous design occasionally given him.

" It is the common talk of the Lowland Scots, that the notion of the second sight is wearing away with other superstitions, and that its reality is no longer supposed but by the grossest people. How far its prevalence was extended, or what ground it has lost, I know not. The islanders of all degrees, whether of rank or understanding, universally admit it, except the ministers, who universally deny it in consequence of a system against conviction: one of them honestly told me that he came to Sky with a resolution not to believe it.

" Strong reasons for incredulity will readily occur: this faculty of seeing things out of sight is local and commonly useless, it is a breach of the common order of things, without any visible reason, or perceptible benefit; it is ascribed only to a people very little enlightened, and among them, for the most part, to the mean and ignorant.

" To the confidence of these objections it may be replied, that by presuming to determine what is fit and what is beneficial, they presuppose more knowledge of the universal system than man has attained; and, therefore, depend upon principles too complicated and extensive for our comprehension, and that there can be no security in the consequence when the premises are not understood; that the second sight is only wonderful because it is rare, for considered in itself, it involves no more difficulty than dreams, or perhaps than the regular exercise of the cogitative faculty; that a general opinion of communicative impulses, or visionary representations, has prevailed in all ages and all nations; that particular instances have been given with such evidence as neither Bacon nor Boyle has been able to resist; that sudden impressions, which the event has verified, have been felt by more than own or publish them; that the second sight of the Hebrides implies only the local frequency of a power which is no where totally unknown, and that where we are unable to decide by antecedent reason, we

must be content to yield to the force of testimony.

" By pretension to second sight no profit was ever sought or gained, it is an involuntary affection in which neither hope nor fear are known to have any part, those who profess to feel it do not boast of it as a privilege, nor are considered by others as advantageously distinguished; they have no temptation to feign, and their hearers have no motive to encourage the imposture.

" To talk with any of these seers is not easy, there is one living in Sky with whom we would gladly have conversed, but he was very gross and ignorant, and knew no English. The proportion in these countries of the poor to the rich is such, that if we suppose the quality to be accidental, it can very rarely happen to a man of education, and yet on such men it has sometimes fallen. There is now a second sighted gentleman in the High-

lands, who complains of the terrors to which he is exposed.

"The foresight of the seers is not always prescience, they are impressed with presages of which the event only shews them the meaning, they tell what they have seen to others who are at that time not more knowing than themselves, but may become at last very adequate witnesses by comparing the narrative with its verification.

"To collect sufficient testimonies for the satisfaction of the public or of ourselves, would have required more time than we could bestow. There is against it the seeming analogy of things confusedly seen and little understood, and for it the indistinct cry of national persuasion, which may be perhaps resolved at last into prejudice and tradition. I never could advance my curiosity to conviction, but came away at last only willing to believe*."

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* Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands, Murphy's edit. vol. viii. p. 343—347.

From this account no satisfactory conclusion can, I think, be drawn subversive of the opinion maintained in these disquisitions, that the human mind is not naturally endowed with any prophetic powers.

It is possible, indeed, that it may experience gloomy presages which are the result of the conviction of the uncertainty of human affairs, or the effect of apprehension and moral feelings. The faculty claimed in the Highlands is peculiar to countries where knowledge and true philosophy have not yet diffused their full light, nor religion put to flight these gloomy superstitions which are apt to linger in retired and secluded scenes, amidst vallies soon overspread with the shades of evening, and where the vapory mists float incessantly on "the mountains' brow."

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE RECURRENCE OF THOSE REFLECTIONS IN SLEEP, WHICH HAVE ENGAGED OUR ATTENTION WHEN AWAKE.

"And the same image still returns."
Eademque recurrit imago.

DIVERSE as are the circumstances, and varied as is the character of our dreams, and difficult as it sometimes is to trace their connection with preceding reflections and events, it appears that, in general, they take their complection from particulars of a recent occurrence, and are tinctured by the colouring of our thoughts before we close our eyes in forgetfulness, however the shades may gradually change, and insensibly assume a different hue.

This connection between our waking and sleeping thoughts was noted by Solomon, who observes " that a dream * cometh through the multitude of business," and it is alluded to with poetical illustration by Lucretius in the following lines :

" The scenes on which our thoughts have chiefly dwelt ;
The pain and pleasures which we oft have felt ;
Whate'er pursuits employ us when awake,
Possession of our minds in sleep will take.
Statutes and laws the lawyers still engage,
Contending chieftains furious battles wage,
And sailors struggle with the tempest's rage.
I Nature's principles explore, and seek
Establish'd truths in native strains to teach.

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* The Hebrew word חלם חלום, a dream, according to Parkhurst, implies broken parts or fragments being composed of ideas or images received by our senses, particularly by our sight, while awake ; it is, indeed, often applied to supernatural dreams, which, like natural dreams, consisted of broken and familiar images, as in Gen. xxxvii. xl. xli, Daniel ii. vii. Other lexicographers, however, derive the word חלם, valuit, qui sani somniant, and suppose it to denote the temperament of the constitution.

And other arts illusively beguile
The mind in sleep with fascinating smile:
Those who on idle sports consume the hours
Which pleasure varies with its changing powers;
Where transient objects to the mind convey'd,
In quick succession speedily must fade;
Still though the scene be closed, in dreams descry
Traces of all that ha amused the eye.
Oft do the images recur. In graceful form
Some the soft movements of the dance perform,
While liquid measures float upon the ears,
And the whole splendid theatre appears.
With such a strong dominion custom reigns,
So pleasure binds the mind in silken chains;
Those whose great souls with lofty projects teem,
Renew these projects nightly as they dream.
Monarchs attack, are taken, seem to feel,
Or shrink affrighted from the threatening steel;
Some, as they bleed, their hapless fate bemoan,
And midst the battle's shouts unheeded groan;
Some as if torn by furious panthers cry,
Some seem beneath the lion's rage to lie *."

Ovid avails himself of this renewal of the sensations which engage our waking thoughts, in the following pathetic lines, in which he

* Lucretius, B. iv. Et quos quisque.

vented his sorrows when in exile among the Sarmatians.

" When rest and sleep their medicine prepare,
Vainly I hope the night devoid of care;
Then dreams which copy real woes revive
My grief, and every sense to sorrow is alive.
I seem to shrink from the Sarmatian spears,
Or raise my hands to chains with captive tears;
Or soothed to happier scenes my mind regains
My long deserted seat and native plains;
With you, my friends, sweet converse I maintain,
Or thee, beloved, to my bosom strain."

The learned and engaging Sir Henry Wotton in a survey of education, speaking of a child, says, " Let not his very dreams be neglected, for without question there is a great analogy between these apprehensions which he hath taken by day into his fancy, and the nocturnal impressions, particularly in that age which is not yet troubled with the fumes and cares of the world, so as the soul hath a freer and more defecated operation*."

* See Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.

This recurrence of images which have previously engaged the mind, is also neatly expressed by Claudian.

"Whate'er by day our contemplation views,
Sweet sleep's reflection in the night renews;
Scarce on his bed the wearied sportsman lies,
Than back into the woods his fancy flies.
In dreams the judge decrees, the charioteer
Guides round the goal his courser's swift career,
Softly the lover treads. The merchant deals,
The miser starting for his treasure feels.
Sleep to the thirsty land, in fruitless dreams,
Draws from ideal springs refreshing streams;
Me too the Muses, in the silent night
With arts seductive, to their haunts invite *."

The connection between our waking and our sleeping thoughts appears from the curious circumstance of our dreaming often that we do dream, which results from the conviction that we have before been deceived.

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* Omnia quæ sensu, &c. Claud. pref. iii.

It is remarkable that the mind when we dream is the theatre of action, and at the same time the agent, the whole mimic scene is a fictitious world collected in the mind, in which objects and persons, as actors and spectators, are multiplied with endless fertility of imagination. St. Basil represents dreams to be the vestiges of our daily thoughts, and observes that our reflections and discourse generate correspondent circumstances in sleep. It is certain that the mind after the storm and convulsion of disturbed passions, continues long like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, of which the waters cast up mire and dirt *. This is very sensibly experienced by persons whose affections are agitated by love, their sleep being generally harassed by the hopes and fears which distract them when awake, and tormented by those dreams, of which Dido complains, finding, like her, that the words and features of the beloved object

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* Isaiah lvii. 20.

"Are deep imprinted in the anxious breast,
And care precludes the wearied limbs from rest*."

As, on the other hand, the visions of the sanguine or favoured lover present to him the object of his affections, though, perhaps, when he awake he must embrace a cloud.

Dugald Stewart justly observes, that as a proof that the succession of our thoughts in dreaming is influenced by our prevailing habits of association, it may be remarked that the scenes and occurrences which most frequently present themselves to the mind while asleep, are the scenes and occurrences of childhood and early youth. The facility of association is then much greater than in more advanced years, and although during the day the memory of the events thus associated may be banished by the objects and pursuits which press upon our senses, it retains a more permanent hold of the mind than any of our subsequent ac-

* Hærent infixi, &c.

quisitions; and like the knowledge which we possess of our mother tongue is, as it were, interwoven and incorporated with all its most essential habits. Accordingly in old men, whose thoughts are in a great measure disengaged from the world, the transactions of their middle age, which once seemed so important, are often obliterated, while the mind dwells as in a dream on the sports and companions of their infancy *.

On this subject Mr. Schwab, who is professor of philosophy in the university Caroline of Stutgard, remarks with ingenious illustration, that the vivacity of strong sensations continues an impression after the cause which gave birth to it is removed, as a circle of fire is presented by a burning coal that is turned round with rapidity †.

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* Elements of the Philosophy of Human Mind, C. 5.

† See Essai sur la Reduction des Facultes de l'Ame dans les nouveaux Memoires de l'Academie des Sciences, et des Belles Lettres a Berlin, A. D. 1785.

In consequence of this recurrence of images in sleep, similar to those which engage our waking attention, it happens that the slumbers of men conscious of integrity are composed and peaceful, while those of persons who are harassed by evil and turbulent passions are perturbed and miserable.

"Scarce can they close their eyes, they wildly start,
And in the fear of vengeance feel the smart;
Renew their rage, and their dark thoughts resume
Their stormy passions and their guilty gloom *."

Nothing can be more wretched than the sleep of those

"That feel
Those rods of scorpions, and those whips of steel
Which Conscience shakes, when she with rage controls,
And spreads amazing terror through their souls.
Not sharp revenge, nor hell itself can find,
A fiercer torment than a guilty mind,
Which day and night doth dreadfully accuse,
Condemns the wretch, and still the charge renews †."

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* Claud. in Rufin. L. ii.

† Dryden's Translat. of Juven. Sat. L. xiv. 248—255.

This consideration is the more important if we reflect farther, that circumstances which have strongly interested and affected the mind, are apt frequently to return in dreams; and the same impressions are renewed in many persons almost every night; hence Shakespear makes Aufidius say to Coriolanus when burning with indignant emulation in consequence of the defeats which he had experienced from the Romans,

> "I have nightly since
> Dream'd of encounters 'twixt thyself and me,
> We have been down together, in my sleep,
> Unbuckling helms, fisting each others throat,
> And wak'd half dead with nothing*."

He then who would not sleep in the affliction of terrible dreams which shake the mind, should be careful to retire with composed sentiments and unruffled passions, and should do well to follow the example of Sir Thomas Brown, who tells us that in his solitary and

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* Coriolanus, Act iv.

retired imagination, (Neque enim cum porticus, aut me lectulus accepit, desum mihi.) I remember I am not alone, and therefore forget not to contemplate Him and his attributes who is ever with me, especially those two mighty ones, his wisdom and eternity *.

It may be well also to remember, that as a night of terror succeeds a day of wickedness, so the reflections of eternal suffering will necessarily follow a life of misconduct.

It is related that Ptolemy enquired of one of the translators of the Septuagint, what would make one sleep in the night, and received for answer, that the best method was to have divine and celestial meditations, and to perform honest actions in the day †.

If we adopt the notion countenanced by Baxter, who supposes dreams to be the sug-

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* Religio Medici, Book i. Sect. 11.

† Aristæus.

gestions of immaterial beings, we must admit with the ancients that these beings are divided into two classes, since if the office of some appear to be like that of the guardian sylph, whom Pope represents with friendly intentions of warning his charge against danger, to have prolonged the balmy rest of Belinda, and to have

"Summoned to her silent bed
The morning dream that hover'd round her head."

The malevolent employment of others must be like that of Satan, as

"By devilish arts to reach
The organs of the fancy, and with them forge
Illusions as they list, phantoms and dreams;
Or if inspiring venom they can taint
Th' animal spirits that from pure blood arise,
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure; thence raise
At least distemper'd discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires
Blown up with high conceits engendering pride *."

* Paradise Lost, B. iv.

In consistency with this opinion God may be supposed to render dreams subservient to good purposes, and by his good angels who as represented

> "With gentle dreams have calmed
> Portending good, and all his spirits composed
> To meek submission *."

And so far it may be said

> "God is also in sleep, and dreams advise,
> Which he hath sent propitious, some good
> Presaging †."

Whenever dreams have a bad tendency we may be persuaded that they are not the suggestion of good spirits, or that they are not to be literally followed. There is some instruction in the story of Sabaco, one of the pastoral kings of Egypt ‡, who, when the tutelary

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* Paradise Lost, B. xii. 593.

† Ibid. B. xii. L. 611—613.

‡ Diodorus, L. ii. as cited by Montesquieu.

deity of Thebes appeared to him in a dream, and ordered him to put to death all the priests of Egypt, very wisely judged that the gods were displeased at his being on the throne, since they advised him to commit an action so contrary to their ordinary will, and therefore retired into Æthiopia *.

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* Herod. L. ii. C. 139.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE BODY ON THE MIND IN SLEEP.

"The heavy body loaded by excess
The sympathetic mind will oft depress,
Weigh down the spirit of celestial birth,
And chain its glorious faculties to earth."

Horace. Sat. i. L. ii. Corpus onust.

ALTHOUGH it has appeared in the preceding chapters that dreams are to be regarded as the creation of the mind, it has been admitted that the feelings of the body often interfere in suggesting sensations which affect the character of our thoughts, and are productive of reflections correspondent to the impressions excited.

Much of the composure and satisfaction of our dreams was attributed by the ancients to the

sobriety of our bodies when committed to sleep, and no dreams that could be subservient to divination were supposed to arise from the fumes of indigestion. Socrates is represented by Plato to have remarked, that when the intelligent spirit of the mind languishes in a profound sleep, and the fierce or and more sensual affections intoxicated, as it were, by immoderate food exult in ascendancy; the ideas that present themselves are devoid of reason, and full of incestuous and evil fancies; but when we take rest after wholesome and moderate food, that part of the mind in which there is reason and judgment being erect and capacious of good thoughts, and the body being neither distressed by want, nor loaded by satiety, the mind shines forth fresh and lively, and tranquil, and sure dreams arise *. On similar consideration dreams which obtain towards the morning, as not likely to be the suggestions of heavy sensations, were regarded as most clear and prophetic.

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* Cicero de Divin.

In a composed state of the body there is certainly a more even tenor in our dreams, which resemble the calm reflections of our waking thoughts in tranquillity; the same scenes are renewed, and the same particulars recur. Unusual dreams argue often not only a disturbed state of mind, but a body gross and abounding with humour; and hence it is that physicians, as did particularly Hippocrates, with some degree of truth deduce conclusions concerning the temperament of our body from the nature and cast of our dreams. It is notorious that persons drunk, or in fevers, contemplate horrid spectres in their sleep; those who are oppressed with bilious melancholy behold triste and cadaverous figures; those whose constitution is choleric dream of fire and slaughter; those who are phlegmatic, of water, and those who are sanguine, of merriment. Levinus Lemnius was, however, perhaps, too fanciful when he affirmed, that to dream of wallowing in filth and mud argued fetid and putrid humours; but to dream of odoriferous and fragrant flowers

proved that pure and wholesome juices predominated *.

Such theories must not be too much depended upon, since it is certain that our imagination, even in its most sober and confined exertions, frames every variety of circumstance, and wanders through every change of scene.

" Fantastic Morpheus!
Ten thousand mimic fancies fleet around him,
Subtle as air, and various in their natures;
Each has ten thousand thousand different forms,
In which they dance confused before the sleeper,
While the vain god laughs to behold what pain
Imaginary evils give mankind †."

We may believe the account of Apuleius, who tells us, that when he retired somewhat intoxicated, the night produced grievous and fierce images ‡; without, in general, considering

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* De Occult. Nat. Mirac. L. ii. C. 3.

† Rowe's Ulysses.

‡ Plut. Sympos. L. viii. Quest. 10.

the body as the principal agent in the production of dreams, as they certainly may originate independent of its influence in the sole recollection and energies of the mind, which in its ordinary speculation revives the days of childhood, recalls the friends and events of distant periods by sudden and unexpected starts unconnected with present sensations, places them in circumstances in which we never have beheld them, and in which they never have existed, blends and diversifies particulars fantastically with novel combinations, and metamorphoses persons into a thousand forms, who with Protean versatility appear to practise the frauds of every shape.

" Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes,
When monarch Reason sleeps then mimic wakes,
Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
A court of coblers, and a mob of kings.
Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad,
Both are the reasonable soul run mad ;
And many monstrous things in dreams we see
That never were, nor are, nor ere can be.
Sometimes we but rehearse a former play,
The night restores our actions done by day,
As hounds in sleep will open for their prey.

Sometimes forgotten things long cast behind
Rush forward to the brain and come to mind,
The nurses legends are for truths receiv'd,
And the man dreams but what the boy believed.
In short the farce of dreams is of a piece,
Chimeras all, and more absurd or less *."

If Mr. Hobbes speak of dreams universally, the author does not agree with him, that different dreams are to be attributed to different distempers, though he feel no inclination to refute the position, that lying cold may produce dreams of fear, as it would unquestionably produce the symptom of fear, shivering, and chattering teeth. We must allow for poetical representation when we read that

" All dreams
Are from repletion and complection bred
From rising fumes of undigested food,
And noxious humours that infest the blood.
When choler overflows, then dreams are bred
Of flames, and all the families of red;

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* Dryden from Chaucer's Tale of the Cock and Fox.

Red dragons and red beasts in sleep we view,
For humours are distinguished by their hue.
From hence we dream of war and warlike things,
And wasps and hornets with their double stings.
Choler adust congeals our blood with fear,
Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear.
In sanguine airy dreams aloft we bound,
With rheums oppress'd we sink, in rivers drown'd;
The dominating humour makes the dream *."

The whole is, that our sleeping as our waking thoughts may be changed from their own course by attention excited by the sensation of the body, and those who would enjoy quiet and pleasing dreams, should attend to the preservation of the sobriety and temperance of the body. The ancients were very particular in their diet when they were desirous of obtaining such, and particularly regarded beans, and the head of a polypus, as calculated to produce perturbed slumbers; and upon the same consideration the crude and undigestible peacock mentioned by Juvenal as the cause of

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* Dryden from Chaucer's Cock and Fox.

sudden and intestate death must have been avoided *, as all who do not wish like the lazy glutton of Persius to

" Indulge their sloth, and batten with their sleep †,"

should avoid excess in turtle and venison, and may do well to observe the rule of Levinus Lemnius, who recommends to sleep with the mouth shut, which contributes to promote regular digestion, excluding the too rapid ingress of the external air, and cherishing the proper warmth of the stomach; a precaution, it is said, generally serviceable to weak stomachs, as we see that a cough or the hickup is often stopped by it when we are awake.

Dr. Hartley with more scope of allowance than Hobbes, considers dreams as reveries deducible from three causes--natural impres-

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* Sat. i. L. 143. Plutarch. περὶ δεισ. Vol. i. p. 56. Edit. Wyttenbach.

† Hic Satur. &c. Sat. v. L. 56. Dryden's Transl.

sions—redundancy of watery humours—and great heat. Whatever effect these may have in storing or colouring the mind in sleep, they cannot be considered as the primary cause of the operations which are displayed in dreams, and which are here considered as the effects of the exertion of the mental powers: even dreams which are occasioned by the ephialtes, or night mare, and which assume a gloomy or terrific character from the clouds raised up from flatulency, repletion, or stagnation of the blood, or crudity of the stomach, are in fact but reflections of the mind affected in sympathy to the sufferings of the body *.

The night mare is well described in the following lines of Dryden's translation of Virgil.

"And as when heavy sleep has closed the sight,
The sickly fancy labours in the night;

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* Young persons are particularly subject to this disorder, they should be awakened when they appear to be affected by it, and on changing their position it will cease.

We seem to run; and, destitute of force
Our sinking limbs forsake us in the course:
In vain we heave for breath; in vain we cry;
The nerves unbraced their usual strength deny;
And on the tongue the falt'ring accents die *."

Mara, from whence our night mare is derived, was much feared in the old Gothic or Scandinavian superstition. In the Runic Theology it was regarded as a spectre of the night which seized men in their sleep, and suddenly deprived them of speech and motion †; it was vulgarly called witch-riding, and in popular estimation considered as the immediate suggestion of fuliginous spirits incumbent on the breast.

As it appears then, that the mind may be thus indirectly harassed by phantoms resulting from repletion; we agree with Cicero, that our dreams will, in general, be most clear and regular when we retire to bed without being

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* Æneid, B. xii.

† See Warton's History of Poetry, Dissert. i.; and Bourne's Popular Antiquities.

loaded by meat and drink, and obtain the pure thoughts which are

"From light digestion bred."

Haller, and other writers, who conceive that dreams do not inseparably accompany sleep, suppose them to result from some strong stimulating cause, some forcible impression excited by the influence of undigested food, and not to obtain in sound sleep. It appears, however, that we dream as much towards the morning, though the impression of occurrences is then less immediate, and the effects of indigestion less perceptible, than towards the beginning of night.

Some physicians have asserted that we sleep best after eating plentifully, and alledge that as the ventricle is then full of blood, there is an open passage to the aorta, but daily experience may show the bad effects of going to sleep with a full stomach, however the fumes which ascend from it may operate as narcotic in

stupifying the brain. If we indulge even in a nap after dinner, we shall be convinced that though it may be useful to refresh exhausted nature in hot countries, and where the food is light, it is extremely heating and prejudicial, where, as in northern climates, animal food is eaten in great quantities.

Dr. Cheyne, who was a very distinguished physician, and effected a most remarkable change in his own constitution by attention to regimen, advises the valetudinary, the studious, and contemplative, either to abstain entirely from supper, or to restrict themselves to vegetable food, and to take a due time before they retire to bed after their meal *.

While we smile, therefore, at the pleasantry, we cannot approve the advice of Robert Burton, who, in his Anatomy of Melancholy, observes that some recommend to promote sleep by music, or falls of water, or frications;

* Essay on Health, p. 40.

and Andrew Borde by " a good draught of stronge drinke, but I, says he, by a nutmeg and ale, or a good draught of muscadine with toast and nutmeg, or a posset of the same *. The fumes of indigestion certainly contribute to produce by their effect on the mind perturbed and oppressive dreams, we shall, therefore, on all accounts do well to abide by the old rule

" That your sleep may be light,
Let your supper be slight."

A traditionary precept handed down to us from classical antiquity †.

In sleep, it has been said, either the mind thinks not at all of what it knows and retains in memory, or else it only attends to the corporeal species of past objects reposited in the common sensory, vivid representations of which excite altogether the same perceptions as are made by

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* P. 2. §. 2.

† Somnus ut sit levis, sit tibi cœna brevis.

the impressions from external objects upon the organs of sense by which they were first received. These representations, which are called dreams, happen whenever a small portion of the brain or common sensory is by the refluent motion of the spirits kept in a state of vigilance, whilst all the rest of the empire of sense and voluntary motion is silent and at rest. It is, however, by no means certain that the mind is ever so dormant as not to be harassed or amused by its own fancies, which in proportion as they are more or less strong may be remembered or forgotten. Those which excite vehement and interesting sensations, as particularly of fear and danger, as when

> " In dreams we fearful precipices tread,
> Or shipwreck'd labour to some distant shore * ;"

as likewise those of excessive exultation and joy, are probably always remembered.

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* Dryden.

Some writers have pushed the notion of complexional dreams to a great extent, maintaining that the mind is so tinctured with the colouring of the predominating sentiments and passions, that the choleric uniformly dream of quarrelling, and the melancholy of gloomy objects, while the sanguine aud cheerful exhibit the vivacity of their thoughts in the most agreeable dreams.

CHAPTER XIX.

There are whose shrewd conjectures can foreshew,
In various shades, our happiness or woe.
But dreams avaunt, precarious visions fly
To polar regions and a changing sky;
Where restless storms th' unsteady clouds constrain
To forms fantastic, transitory, vain. *Auson.*

Sunt et qui fletus, &c.

From the nature of dreams, as they have been described in the foregoing chapters, it abundantly appears, that they have no claim to be regarded as having any necessary connexion with future events. In their images they are often confined, and in their issue precarious. Inasmuch as they are representations of life:

the "resemblances of one thing to another*:" they exhibit scenes, from the contemplation of which instruction may be derived; but they cannot be considered as more than casually predictive, or be understood to be subservient to divination. They may enable us to judge of the predominant features and undisguised propensities of the mind, but ought not to excite superstitious fears and conceits. The futility of dreams, with reference to futurity, is evident from the uncertainty of their import, and the variety of construction of which they have been judged capable. The great Bacon justly observes, that the interpretation of natural dreams does not stand upon a good foundation; and nothing can be more capricious and vain, than

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* Dream, Droom, Dutch. The word is derived by Casaubon, with more ingenuity than truth, from Δρᾶμα τε βιȣ, The drama of life. Junius has dwelt on the conceit, quoting the Greek epigram σκηνη πας ο βιος, &c.

"Life is a scene, a sport, depose your care,
Or careless laugh, and learn your griefs to bear."

that the principles upon which the notable diviners of modern, as well as of ancient times, have practised their vagabond art; foretelling often, like the prophecy of Nostradamus, mentioned in Quevedo's Visions,

> "When the married shall marry,
> Then the jealous shall be sorry;
> And though fools will be talking,
> To keep their tongues walking,
> No man runs well, I find,
> But with his elbows behind."

Herodotus informs us, that the Egyptians were accustomed to note any prodigy, and to observe the events which ensued, and when any similar circumstance occurred, to expect a similar result *.

From the general character of the dreams indeed, which have been produced in the foregoing chapters, it is evident, as Solomon remarked, "that in the multitude of dreams there

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* Lib. ii. C. 82.

are divers vanities." If some occasional coincidences have appeared to prevail between some of those which have been reported and historical events, it is conceived, that they may in general be accounted for on the grounds which have been mentioned; or that they may be referred to the casual concurrences that might naturally happen between the fictions of the imagination and the incidents of many-coloured life. Men, as Lord Bacon has observed, mark when they hit, and not when they miss *. Whatever the ancients have related, says Fontenelle †, whether good or bad, was liable to be repeated; and what they themselves could not prove by sufficient reason, are at present received on their authority. Even among the ancients, however, we find the most philosophical and reflecting minds rejecting dreams

* Si sæpe jactaveris quandoque Venerem jacies—If the dice be often thrown, they must sometimes produce doublets.

† Histoire des Oracles.

as fallacious, and deriding the arts of interpretation as arbitrary impositions,

> " Laughing at those who to their ears instill'd
> Vain promises, while they their pockets fill'd *."

The want, indeed, of any accredited interpreters, or sure principles for the explication of dreams, are considerations which justly incline us to reject the idea of their being designed to furnish any knowledge of futurity. If we except the patriarchs and prophets, employed under God's acknowledged dispensation, who had understanding in visions and dreams, " imparted by God for great purposes," there is no sufficient proof that any person was ever endowed with the gift of intepreting dreams with any assurance. The Magi, indeed, were consulted by the Persians †; but their skill, we know, was little to

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* Nil credo Auguribus.

† Dan. ii. Ch. 2. Herod. Polyhym. 19. Cli. 107, 108. 110.

be depended upon, and the Greek and Roman soothsayers were deceitful to a proverb.

Alexander ab Alexandro mentions one Julianus Majus, who, by an unequivocal interpretation, explained dreams, and enabled, as he states, many persons to escape death or trouble*: and others have been represented to have had the same science; but we cannot pay much attention to such accounts, collected by compilers of marvellous tales, who produce no authority in support of their assertions.

Favorinus has justly observed of fortune-tellers in general, that it is absurd to attend to them, since, as he states the consideration, either they predict propitious or unfavourable circumstances: if they foretel the former, and are deceived, we incur the vexation of disappointment; if they predict calamities which do not happen, we suffer from unfounded appre-

* Lib. i. C. 11.

hension. If, on the other hand, when their predictions are well founded, they foreshew adversity, they only lead us to anticipate misery; and where they promise prosperous events, we gain but little in the view of objects of precarious attainment, and in gathering prematurely the fruits of future joy.

Cicero observes, that it is not even useful to know what is about to happen, for that it is only misery to be rendered solicitous, when we cannot do any thing that may avail us *. Let us be satisfied with enjoying and profiting by the present, which is the only means by which we can influence our future destinies.

The heathens were constantly the dupes of those who professed the vain arts of discovering the future; every one might have said,

"I fall a prey to ev'ry prophet's schemes,
And to old women who interpret dreams."

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* De Natura Deorum L. iii. C. 6.

Cicero illustrates, pleasantly enough, the views of interpreters of dreams, relating, that a man dreamed there was an egg laid under his bed; the soothsayer told him, that where he imagined he saw an egg, there was a treasure; and in digging he discovered silver, and some gold in the midst of it. Upon which, in testimony of his gratitude, he brought some silver to the soothsayer, who asked him, why he did not give him some of the yolk also.

Nothing could be more precarious than the grounds upon which men formed their conjectures; or more superstitious than the opinions and practices which they built upon them.

Herodotus relates of the Nazamenes, that when they dreamed, they approached the monuments of their ancestors, and there slept, and were influenced by the images which occurred, and these were probably considered as the suggestions of those spirits which haunted the receptacles of the dead. Ghosts are

called by Homer, " people of dreams * ;" and by Lycophron, " night-walking terrors."

The number of dreams increased probably with the anxiety which prevailed in the apprehension of great events, and the solicitude to avert their inauspicious intimations produced many vain rites.

Tibullus speaks of dreams

" With thrice-consecrated cates to be repell'd †."

The vanities and evil arts to which men had recourse in the delusion of these errors, were so soon displayed, that many of God's earliest precepts were directed against them, forbidding his people to use divination, or to become observers of times, or enchanters, or consultors with familiar spirits or wizards, or necromancers.

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* Δημος ονειρων. Odyss. ψ.

† Lib. i. Eleg. 5. See Ovid's Metamorph. L. xii. l. 10,

Philo informs us, that the law of Moses banished from the Jewish republic all persons of this description, because they were led by specious and plausible conjectures, and were unprovided by any sure and fixed maxims *.

Among the heathens were many whose good sense and philosophy revolted at the follies of this kind which prevailed. Jocasta says, in the Œdipus Tyrannus of Sophocles,

> " Let not a fear perplex thee, Œdipus:
> Mortals know nothing of futurity,
> And these prophetic fears are all impostors †."

Menander ridiculed the disposition to be affected by the impressions which prevailed; we are tortured, says he, if any one sneeze; we are enraged, if any one speak in an unpleasant tone; we are terrified at a dream, and scared out of our wits if an owl scream.

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* Lib. de Monarch.

† Act. iii.

Quintius exclaims in the words of Ennius,

"I value not the Marsyan arts, nor start
At ought that vain diviners can impart;
I laugh at him who augury esteems,
Or listens to expositors of dreams:
They nor in art nor science are inspir'd,
But slaves in superstitious service hired.
Idle, or mad, or poor, they fain would shew
The path to others which themselves don't know.
They promise riches, but a fee request,
Secure their portion, and give you the rest."

Many, however, who might be supposed to have been superior to all such credulity, appear to have been unable to shake off the superstitious fetters of the times in which they lived. Among the Romans, Tacitus, who is justly regarded as a philosophical historian, but who sometimes betrays a confined habit of thinking, as well as great want of information, seems, with other writers, to have attributed more to the Chaldæan arts than they probably merited. He appears particularly, as well as Suetonius *, to have credited the

* In August. 98. Dio. 55. p. 555. 58.

pretensions of Thrasullus, who was the preceptor of Tiberius, when at Rhodes, in this mysterious science. He relates, in the sixth book of his Annals, that Tiberius, as often as he had occasion to consult in such concerns, was accustomed to ascend a lofty part of his house with the privity of one freedman, who was ignorant of letters, and of robust body, and who generally preceded the person whose art Tiberius wished to prove, conducting him through broken and precipitous paths (for the house hung over a rock), and who, if there was any suspicion of ignorance or fraud, was employed to precipitate the diviner into the sea, that no informer against his secret practices might exist. When Thrasullus was conducted over these rocks, after he had moved Tiberius by his answers, predicting his accession to the empire, and other future events, with much skill, he was inquired of whether he had also cast his own nativity, and what year and day he was to have. He having measured the position and space of the stars, began first to hesitate, and then to tremble; and the more

he examined, he appeared the more and more filled with wonder and fear; and at length he exclaimed, that an ambiguous and almost the extremest danger threatened him. Upon which Tiberius embraced him, acknowledging his skill, and assuring him of his safety; and receiving what he had said as oracular, he afterwards held him among his intimate friends.

Upon which relation the historian professes, that after hearing these and such like accounts, he is at a loss to determine whether mortal affairs roll on by fate and immutable necessity, or by chance; and after discoursing concerning various opinions not easily explained, he represents it as a general persuasion not inconsistent with the convictions of most men, that the future events of every man's life are predestined from the beginning; but that some things happen differently from what is predicted, through the error of those who proclaim what they are ignorant of; that so the fame of the art is destroyed, of which his own and former ages furnished illustrious proofs;

since, as he adds, the empire was promised to Nero by the son of the same Thrasullus.

All that can be said upon this subject is, that as the heathens were not enlightened by revealed religion, we cannot wonder that they wandered into all the labyrinths of error; and it perhaps may be admitted, that their delusions were increased by the arts and suggestions of evil spirits, who, before the coming of Christ, seem to have ruled with considerable ascendancy in every department of superstition, and possibly even promoted a delusive confidence in the arts of divination, by communicating some intimations of such events as their knowledge or sagacity might discover or conjecture.

The arts of divination, therefore, and their professors in every department, appear to deserve nothing but contempt; and attention to them is more especially reprehensible, since the diffusion of knowledge which has been produced by the communication of the Gospel

Their professors indeed, have been justly ridiculed,

" They may attempt to tell us
What Adam dreamt of, when his bride
Came from the closet in his side ;"

but it is extreme folly to suffer them to harass our minds, or to mislead us to a delusive confidence in their pretences. The intelligence which they furnish amounts to little more than what Quevedo, in his harmless Discovery collected, who tells us,

" From second causes this I gather,
Nought shall befall us good or bad,
Either upon the land or water,
But what the great Disposer wills."

If dreams have any foundation, and foreshew events which must happen, there must in general be but little use in contemplating their prophetic scenes. If they predict circumstances which are contingent and conditional, their accomplishment can be influenced only by an adherence to the general rules of the Gospel, and we should therefore endeavour

that our faith stand not in the wisdom of man, but in that of God; and reject all those indications as dangerous, by which artful men have imposed on credulity, as

> "Richard laid plots by drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,
> To set his brother Clarence and the king
> In deadly hate one against the other."

The regard paid to dreams has generated, in modern as well as ancient times, many silly practices and extravagant contrivances, now insensibly falling into neglect and oblivion.

Among the fanciful arts which were practised in the seclusion of the convent, the Franciscan mode was remarkable; like many other customs, it originated in pagan folly. These good fathers, in imitation of ancient priests, (who, after performing their religious rites and sacrifices, laid down on the skins of the victims in order to obtain dreams,) were accustomed to commit themselves to sleep on mats upon which some ecstatical brother had slept, ex-

pecting, after the performance of their sacrifices of the mass, to be favoured with the suggestions of inspiration.

Some writer of natural magic has prescribed perfumes for the procuring of pleasant dreams, and some have represented prophetic dreams to be attainable by the operation of such physical impressions as vegetable substances may produce. Flax, flea-wort, and other productions, are mentioned as efficacious in this respect *; and probably they produce as good effects as the fasting on St. Agnes' Day, a custom which originated in a pretended miracle that occurred to the parents of the saint when lamenting at her tomb; or as that of depositing the first cut of the cheese at a lying-in, called "the groaning cheese," under the pillow, which was supposed to cause lovers to dream of the objects of their af-

* Bacon, vol. iii. p. 195.

fection, a practice now remembered only in the politer superstition of the bride cake.

There is a connexion in all these follies, and those who yield to the impressions excited by dreams, may soon be led to hang up, agreeably to ancient custom in the North, holy shoes in stables to counteract the malevolence of the night-mare; or in the same bias of reflection to watch with solicitude the favillous particles of a snuff of candle, the filmy appendage of the grate, or the bouncing coffin from the fire: to regard with anxiety the spilling of salt, or the position of the knives and forks: despising such trifles, the enlightened mind will learn,

" Not with perplexing thoughts
To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
And not molest us, unless we ourselves
Seek them with wand'ring thoughts and notions vain.
But apt the mind in fancy is to rove
Uncheck'd, and of her roving is no end,
Till warn'd, or by experience, she learn
That not to know at large of things remote

From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom, what is more is fume
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
And renders us in things that most concern,
Unpractis'd, unprepar'd, and still to seek *."

Dreams are considered in Scripture as the vainest of shadows, and human life, in its fleeting and empty pursuits, is exhibited in its vainest shew when compared to a dream.

" We are such stuff as dreams are made of;
A little life is ended with a sleep †."

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* Paradise Lost.

† Tempest.

CHAPTER XX.

OF THE USE OF FICTITIOUS DREAMS IN LITERATURE.

That dreams, which were considered in their nature as so important, should be imitated in fictitious representations by ancient and modern writers, was consistent with the general objects of literature, which might be expected to avail itself of the strongest and most popular impressions. Divine dreams, which actually were imparted to God's servants, formed a basis of conviction on this subject, handed down by tradition, and enlarged by superstitious additions: the idea of an intercourse with beings of the spiritual world, and with objects of fear or affection, though departed from life, was natural to the human mind, and became

the foundation of much religious apprehension among the heathens. Those therefore who sought, either to amuse the fancy, or to instruct the judgment, naturally employed the agreeable fictions, which they knew were best calculated to engage the imagination. Hence divine dreams became the constant appendages of the heathen mythology, and accounts, real or fictitious, of communications in vision, were interwoven in every production.

Information which was superior to the vulgar philosophy of the time, modestly intimated its discoveries as suggestions imparted by revelation to the mind, and conjectures concerning the interests and future dispensations of the invisible world were delivered with striking impression as divine communications. If a warning was to be conveyed, what so affecting as the exhortation of a departed friend! If advice was to be given, what so persuasive as the voice of a revered character, which had long carried great weight!

Such machinery was particularly calculated for works of imagination, and the poems of antiquity, as well as those of modern times, were frequently decorated with its ornaments.

It is perhaps doubtful, whether the sublime vision described in the fourth chapter of the Book of Job, and which has been cited in a former part of this work, is to be regarded as a real scene imparted to the mind of this righteous man, or as merely a vehicle for the religious instruction which is communicated in its awful description.

A very early example of a dream designed to enliven poetry, is furnished in the Iliad of Homer, which was possibly introduced, not merely as ornamental, but with some view of exposing the danger of listening to ambiguous suggestions in sleep. It represents Agamemnon as deluded by a promise of victory, if he should lead out all the Grecians to battle, and

as suffering a defeat in consequence of Achilles joining in the engagement.

The circumstances, as described by the poet, remind us of the particulars recorded in the twenty-second chapter of the First Book of Kings, in which Ahab appears to have been seduced by a lying spirit to destruction.

Historians and orators, likewise, were by no means insensible of the value conferred on their works by embellishments so interesting: they therefore invented similar relations, and it is probable, that many of the dreams which have been examined in this work, were no more genuine than the speeches ascribed to distinguished characters, being originally only agreeable inventions contrived for rhetorical effect.

Instances of these may be found in the celebrated dream of the choice of Hercules, furnished in the Memorabilia of Xenophon, or

in that of Lucian, which was probably designed as a humourous imitation of it.

If, however, some dreams are so interwoven with historical accounts, that it is doubtful whether they are related as real or not, there are many which are evidently employed as ornamental modes of instruction. Such is the dream, for instance, which is described to have expressed the anger of the gods against Numenius, who had pried into the Eleusinian mysteries, and published the secrets of philosophy. This was said to have represented the Eleusinian goddesses meretriciously attired, and sporting before a public brothel; who, upon inquiry into the cause of such indecent conduct, informed Numenius, that they resented his having driven them from retirement, and exposed them to the common gaze of men *. It is evident, that this was only a reproof of the folly of exposing the mysteries

* Macrob. in Somnum Scipion. L. ii. C. 2.

of a licentious superstition to public animadversion, a measure very impolitic and injurious to the interests of those who lived by its support; and similar to the presumption, censured by Callimachus, of those who, with Actæan audacity, ventured to contemplate the undisguised charms of Minerva *.

One of the most beautiful fictions employed by ancient writers in prose is that of Cicero, written probably in imitation of one of Plato. In this, which is entitled the Dream of Scipio, the Roman orator † has conveyed the most sublime instruction concerning many points in natural philosophy and the immortality of the soul. And the tendency of the work was to encourage a patriotic affection for the country of a man's birth, and a contempt of human glory, upon principles which sometimes almost

* Ειδεν αθαναιας στηθεα και λαγονας.

† De Repub. Lib. vi.

approach to those which Christianity has consecrated.

Some writers, it is true, have conceived such fictions as discreditable to the gravity and truth of philosophical instruction; but the dream in question is vindicated in an elaborate commentary by Macrobius, who considers it as an engaging veil under which truth may be usefully presented to the mind.

We have already observed at sufficient length on those divine dreams, which were imparted in evidence of the authority and instruction of the evangelical dispensation, and have considered them as furnished exclusively in support of Revelation, and as having ceased with the other miraculous testimonies of Christianity.

The persuasion, however, of preternatural intelligence being communicated in dreams, has continued so forcibly to operate at all

times, that Christian writers, who have reported and invented dreams of pretended inspiration, have obtained more credit and success than they have merited; and however little claim to regard they may be thought to have when philosophically examined, they have at least been allowed so much authority in popular estimation, that they have at all times been employed, not only with a view to impose on credulity, but as ingenious fictions agreeable to common apprehension, framed for the expression of instruction in an allegorical manner.

Among those which are of earlier production, we may notice the Shepherd of Hermas, a moral vision of the second century, in which are represented the characters and circumstances of the Church at that time; and many other instances might be produced, if it were necessary, from works of later times, none of which, perhaps, are more ingenious and agreeable, than those which have been published in

this country; as particularly the allegorical visions and dreams which have appeared in the Spectator, and other periodical papers.

The consideration of these belongs more properly to the subjects of general literature.

THE END.

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