

INDEXED
THE
NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE

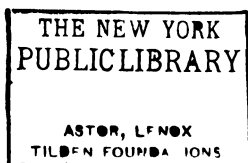
AND
H u m o r i s t.

EDITED BY
W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

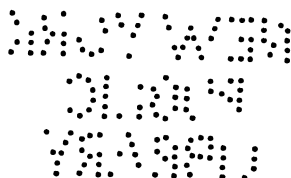
NEW YORK
PUBLISHED
BY
G. B. BROWN

VOL. 87.
BEING THE THIRD PART
For 1849.

L O N D O N :
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186, STRAND.
MDCCCXLIX



C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND, LONDON.



SUPERNATURAL STORIES.

THE Impossible is often only an unknown point in the future. That which we deem an impossibility in the present day may become even in a short time a familiar fact. We know that the discovery of the New World, and the travelling to it by steam, were each in their turn declared impossibilities, and yet are now familiar things. As it is with the physical, so it is in the moral world. A material philosophy keeps physiological discoveries in co-relation with mental phenomena; yet but a short time ago, all inquiry into the relations between mind and matter were deemed impossible and hopeless. Consciousness, it is now admitted, implies a brain, and nervous system; that nervous system being divided into parts—centres of function and threads of communication, such also imply diversity of influence. Nerves of voluntary, nerves of organic life were gradually disentangled from those which connect us with an external life; and nerves of involuntary motion were distinguished from nerves of sensation. The nerves belonging to special senses were detected; and the sense of taste was discovered to be in the same category as those of smell, sight, and hearing. The law, that size and amount of nervous tissue constitutes a direct element of functional power, became at the same time generally recognised. The brain, or encephalon, was recognised in man, not only to be the greatest nervous centre, but also the organ of the mental faculties. Whether the functions of the brain are performed as a whole or by separate parts, is not of much importance to the object we have in view. The distinctness of the external senses, and separateness of their organs—the comparative independence of the sentient, voluntary, and excito-motory system, would tend to show that action in this great centre is complex, not simple. This is the basis of the phrenological system; and the supporters of that system argue with much plausibility, that mental differences being innate, no general agreement could ever be arrived at as to what constitute fundamental or primitive faculties of the mind, so long as mental phenomena were studied apart from organisation. From that moment, psychology and physiology, marching hand in hand, left metaphysics at a remote distance. It was the light of modern civilisation succeeding to the darkness of the middle ages.

Power and energy being associated with the existence of a considerable quantity of cerebral structure in particular regions, the question presents itself, which has not yet been sufficiently inquired into, as to how far that power is like the function itself, independent and inherent. The intimate relations of assimilation with circulation, of nutrition and of functional power, and the harmony and mutual dependence in the higher animals of the different parts of the nervous system, forbid us to expect perfect independence or functional power inherent in any one centre independent of the other ordinary phenomena of life; but still this is subject to a certain modification, more marked in the lower animals, less so in a higher grade. The vitality of parts of a worm or eel is well known. Fowls, both cocks and ducks, have, when decapitated, been known to preserve so much excito-motive power as to run a distance. But in man the separation of one part from another entails almost instant death; that is to say, loss of sentient and motory power. But even this

slight exceptions ; motory powers of a very marked character have been seen in cases of death from Asiatic cholera, and manifestations of sensibility after death are upon record.

The gradual death of the extremities previous to general dissolution, the mental faculties remaining almost unimpaired, has come under the observation of most people. The possible existence of sensibility in the brain itself after the loss of life in the whole of the trunk, as by its actual separation from the body, is a more delicate question. It is one also that involves inquiries of a philanthropic character. Much discussion has arisen as to the comparative certainty and least painful modes of vindicating the rights of society by the infliction of death. The immense volume of blood flowing from the trunk to the brain, and returning by other capacious vessels, and the great nervous relations existing between head and trunk, attest that decapitation must inevitably be followed by almost instantaneous loss of sensation to both head and trunk, and that it is upon the whole as merciful a mode of putting to death as any other that is accompanied by an act of violence. But as the act is performed by the guillotine, it is so instantaneous that there is reason to believe that the brain may be cognisant for the briefest space of time of its removal from the body : under particular circumstances, where there has been great self-collection, and the shock has not produced confusion of ideas, it is possible to conceive the brain reasoning upon the circumstance with a most distressing pertinacity, which would, however, very soon be cut short by the loss of blood. Suppose, then, another case in which the loss of blood was stopped by either accidental or intentional means ; and it is not out of the range of possibility, that the consciousness of decapitation may be so prolonged as to allow even of time to communicate to the external countenance some expression of that which is for such few short and last moments—moments of supreme interest—going on in the mind. All have heard of the whole life-record of ideas, which are hurried together in the few last moments of a drowning man ; most have witnessed the supernatural lighting up of the mind of the dying young and innocent. What may not be the intensity of the last lightning-like impressions of the victims of violence, or the sacrifices of society—often, possibly, in its laws more vindictive than He who judges more by men's hearts than men's actions !

But passing over this digression, we must quote an instance from one who, though a writer of fiction, has, from a peculiar idiosyncrasy, made a particular, and in many instances a very successful study of crime and punishment, in connexion with the more obscure and oftentimes mysterious phenomena which are attendant upon both ; in which the possibility of consciousness after decapitation was accidentally and curiously illustrated.

The plaster-quarries of Montmartre are more familiar to English visitors in Paris than are the stone-quarries of the plain of Montrouge, to the south of the metropolis. Yet these latter quarries are very extensive, and form a continuation of those well-known catacombs from which old Paris was built. The population which inhabits these subterranean galleries has a peculiar character of gloomy ferocity. It seldom happens that there are riots in the capital, in which the quarrymen of Montrouge are not concerned. M. de Lamartine relates, in his "*History of the French Revolution*," how he availed himself of the combativeness of these

dwellers in subterranean passages, to strengthen the hands of the Provisional Government.

M. Alexandre Dumas relates the following story of one of these quarrymen. He was shooting one day on the plain of Montrouge, when he turned off for refreshment to the village of Fontenay.

It was striking one o'clock (he relates) when I reached the first houses of the village. I followed a wall that enclosed a property of some pretensions, and had arrived where the Rue de Diane terminates in the Grande Rue, when I saw coming towards me, from the direction of the church, a man with so sinister an aspect, that I stopped short and instinctively cocked both barrels of my fowling-piece.

But, pale, his hair standing on end, his eyes starting out of their orbits, his clothes in disorder, and his hands bathed in gore, the man passed by without noticing me. His look was fixed. His progress was like that of an object carried away by its own gravity along the slope of a mountain, yet his laboured breathing spoke more of dread than fatigue.

The man turned out of the Grande Rue into that of Diane, and hurried towards the door of that residence along the walls of which I had been walking for the last few minutes. The man stretched forth his hand some time before he could reach the bell-pull, which, when he succeeded in grasping it, he agitated violently; and this accomplished, he sat himself down upon one of the two corner stones which served as advance works to the gate. Once seated, he remained motionless, his arms hanging down, his head resting upon his breast.

I retraced my steps, so certain did I feel that this man had been the principal actor in some unknown and terrible drama.

Behind him, and on both sides of the street, were several other individuals, upon whom he had no doubt produced the same effect as upon myself, and who had come out of their houses to gaze upon him with a surprise similar to what I experienced myself.

A woman of about forty or forty-five years of age answered the bell by opening a little door cut in the panel of the gate.

"What, is it you, Jacquemin?" she said; "What are you doing there?"

"Is Monsieur the mayor at home?" inquired the man, whom she thus addressed, in a muffled voice.

"Yes."

"Well, then, Mother Antoine, go and tell him that I have killed my wife, and I am come to give myself up."

Mother Antoine uttered a shriek, which was echoed by two or three other persons who had approached sufficiently near to hear this terrible avowal. I myself took a step in a retrograde direction, and feeling a lime-tree behind me, leant back against it. As to the murderer, he had slipped from the stone down upon the ground, as all strength had left him after having pronounced the fatal words.

Mother Antoine had, in the mean time, disappeared, leaving the little door open; it was evident that she had gone to fulfil her commission and bring the mayor; and after the lapse of about five minutes the functionary made his appearance, accompanied by two other persons.

"Jacquemin," said the mayor to the quarryman, "I hope Mother Antoine is gone mad; she has come to tell me that your wife is dead, and that you accuse yourself with having murdered her."

"It is too true, Monsieur the mayor," replied Jacquemin, "and I wish to be tried as soon as possible."

"Come, you are mad!" said the mayor.

"Look at my hands," answered the man.

And he held out his two brawny arms, the left covered with blood up to the wrist, the right up to the elbow.

The two assistants approached the quarryman, and had some difficulty in lifting him up, so great was both his moral and physical prostration. The commissary of police and a surgeon were sent for; and when it was proposed that the examination should be proceeded with in the quarryman's abode, the latter exhibited the most extraordinary feelings of

terror and horror. He begged to be taken at once to prison. "Go to the house," he said; "you will find the body in the cellar, and near it, in a sack full of plaster, the head; but oh, for God's sake, do not oblige me to see it! Had I known I was to have been taken back to it, I would have killed myself." It is almost unnecessary to say how much these strange expressions increased the curiosity of all who were present; and our author followed the others to the house where the crime had been committed, and where, after actually seeing, as the quarryman had described, the body swimming in a pool of blood, and the head of the woman stuck upright in an open sack of plaster, the following examination of the self-accused took place.

"You acknowledge yourself to be the author of this crime?"

"Yes."

"Relate to us the causes, then, which led you to commit so heinous an offence, and the circumstances attendant upon its commission."

"The causes which made me do it—that is useless," answered Jacquemin; "they are secrets that will remain with me and her who lies there."

"But there is no effect without cause."

"The cause, I tell you, you shall not know. As to the circumstances, I will relate them to you. You must know, in the first place, that when people live below ground as we do, working in the dark, that when we think we have a grief we allow it to eat into the depths of the heart, and thus bad ideas suggest themselves."

"Oh! oh!" interrupted the commissary of police, "you acknowledge premeditation, then?"

"What if I acknowledge everything; is not that enough?"

"Oh yes, go on."

"Well! the bad idea that came to me was to kill Jeanne. My thoughts were filled with it for upwards of a month; the heart opposed itself to the head, but at last a word that escaped from a fellow-labourer decided me."

"What was the word?"

"Oh, that is among the matters which do not concern you. This morning I said to Jeanne, 'I shan't go out to work to-day; I wish to amuse myself as if it was a holiday, and I shall go and play at bowls with some companions. Mind you have the dinner ready at the proper hour.'

"But—"

"Come, now, no observations; the dinner at one o'clock, do you hear?"

"Very well," said Jeanne, and she went out to fetch the material for the daily soup. During her absence, instead of going away to play at bowls, I took the sword which you found in the cellar and sharpened it on the back step. I then went down into the cellar and hid myself behind a barrel; and in doing so I said, 'She must come down into the cellar for the wine: when she does so we will see.' And then a voice repeated in me and around me the word which the quarryman had uttered the day before."

"But come, do tell us what this word was," repeated the commissary.

"Useless. I have already said you will never know it. After waiting some time I heard steps approaching. I saw a tremulous light, then the lower part of a dress, then the body, and next the head. I could see her head well, for she held the candle in her hand, and I repeated to myself the word my fellow-workman had cast in my teeth. All this time she kept getting nearer. Word of honour! one would have thought that she doubted that some evil awaited her, for she was frightened, and looked about her, but I remained quiet behind the cask. She then went down on her knees before the cask, put the bottle to the cock, and turned it. I, on my part, got up. You understand, she was on her knees; the noise made by the wine pouring into the bottle prevented her hearing any slight noise,—but I made none. She was on her knees like a guilty one, like a condemned criminal. I lifted up the sword, and—I do not know if she even uttered a shriek, but the head rolled away from the body. At that time I did not wish to die; I intended to make my escape. My idea was to make a hole in the cellar and to bury her. I rushed upon the head, which rolled on its side, while the body was agitated by convulsive movements on the other. I had a sack of plaster all

ready to hide the blood, and I took the head and placed it at once in the plaster. I had scarcely withdrawn my hand when—perhaps it was an hallucination—but I fancied that the head was alive. The eyes were wide open: I could see them well, for the candle was on the barrel; and then the lips—the lips began to move; and as they moved the lips said to me, ‘Wretch! I was innocent!’”

I do not know what effect this statement had upon others, but as to myself (says the narrator) a cold perspiration bedewed my forehead.

“Ah! that is too good!” exclaimed the doctor; “The eyes looked at you? The lips spoke to you?”

“Listen, doctor: as you are a philosopher, you believe in nothing that is supernatural, but I can tell you that the head which you see there said to me, ‘Wretch! I was innocent!’ And the proof that it said so to me is, that instead of endeavouring to escape, I went at once to the mayor’s to give myself up.”

“Examine the head, doctor,” said the commissary of police.

“When I am gone, M. Robert, when I am gone!” exclaimed Jacquemin.

“What! are you frightened that it should speak again, stupid?” said the doctor, as he took the light and approached the sack of plaster.

“M. Ledru!” exclaimed Jacquemin, “in the name of Heaven, let me be taken away to prison. I beg of you! I pray you!”

“Messieurs,” said the mayor, at the same time that he motioned to the doctor to wait a moment, “you have nothing more to ask the accused; he may be removed.”

“Thank you—thank you!” exclaimed the miserable man, as he dragged the two gendarmes with almost superhuman strength up the staircase. That man gone, the drama went with him. There remained nothing in the cellar but two things hideous to contemplate: a body without a head, and a head without a body.

The case here related is an extreme one. It is possible to believe that the blood, arrested in its descent by the plaster, gave to the head a moment of life and energy which may possibly have lent to it sufficient power to communicate to it expression; but the speaking must be laid to the hallucination of awakened conscience and pity on the part of the murderer, for the presence of the lungs would have been necessary to produce the emission of a whole sentence, like that which the murderer imagined himself to have heard. Our author, who, we have before said, has consulted learned authorities for explanations of events of a supposed supernatural character, quotes the celebrated anatomist Sömmerring, and the assertions of Alcher, and of Dr. Sue, in favour of sensibility after decapitation. The great physiologist Haller also relates, in his “*Elemens de Physique*,” t. iv. p. 35, that a decapitated head opened its eyes and looked at him obliquely, because he had touched the spinal marrow with the point of his finger. Weycard also relates in his “*Arts Philosophiques*,” p. 221, that he has seen the lips move of a head which had just been cut off. Our author also quotes Sömmerring as arguing the possibility of heads speaking. The passage is as follows:—“Several doctors, my colleagues, have assured me that they have seen a head separated from the body grind its teeth with agony; and I am convinced that if *the air still circulated in the organs of the voice, heads would speak*.” Not impossible; but in admitting the possibility of decapitated heads having actually spoken, M. Dumas is going altogether in advance of the position laid down by the distinguished anatomist.

A more curious case of sensibility of the head after death is an historical record in connexion with the last moments of the celebrated Charlotte Corday. M. Dumas gives the following version of this tradition of modern times, as related to him by an eye-witness:—

When the cart which conveyed the convict girl to the scaffold drew up, Charlotte jumped down, without allowing any one to assist her; and she ascended the steps of the guillotine, which had been rendered slippery by rain that had fallen the same morning, as quickly as a long red shift in which she was enveloped, and

the pinioning of her arms behind her, would permit her to do. When she felt the hand of the executioner placed on her shoulder to remove the kerchief from her neck, she turned pale for a moment, but a second afterwards a smile came to give the lie to that pallor; and to avoid the indignity of being tied to the infamous plank, she, with a sublime and almost joyous effort, passed her head through the hideous aperture. The knife came down, and the head separated from the body fell upon the platform and rebounded. It was then that one of the assistants to the executioner, Legros by name, seized that head by the hair, and out of vile adulation to the populace, gave it a blow. At this blow the whole face reddened—not the cheek alone which received the blow, but the two cheeks, and that with an equal glow; for sentiment still dwelt in that head, and it felt indignant at a treatment which was not included in the punishment awarded.

Every system, it may be observed, is founded upon conviction, and that conviction is based upon facts more or less authenticated. The attempts made by the sceptical to explain away as hallucinations the realities of individual experience, because the facts themselves do not carry conviction simply as recorded by others, are always legitimate where there are many obvious sources of error, or where the will to admit the truth of some popular superstitions or mysteries of a rarer description is over taxed. Few, for example, will be ready to give entire credence to the story of the worthy Vicar of Etampes, in which he details a wondrous act of sensibility on the part of a hanged man. The vicar in question, devoted to the church at an early age, had received from his mother a medal consecrated at the shrine of *Notre Dame de Liesse*. To the possession of this gift he was in the habit of ascribing an unusual amount of piety, for which he had gained credit, not only with the laity, but even among his ecclesiastical colleagues. At the period when this holy man flourished, Etampes and its environs were continually put under contribution by a daring successor of the Cartouches and the Mandrins, one Artifaillle; whose wife, living in the Etampes, was on the contrary a model of propriety, and who spent her days praying for the conversion of her husband.

It happened that one evening, exhausted by his labours, the holy man fell asleep in his confessional, and was awoke at midnight by unusual sounds in the church. When sufficiently aroused to a sense of his position, he was enabled to discern that the noise he had heard came from a man who was busy striking a light close by the choir. He was a man of moderate height, carrying in his waistband two pistols and a dagger; and, casting at once a threatening and searching glance around, he prepared, his candle being lighted, to force open the tabernacle. This he soon accomplished, and he drew forth, first the holy pyx, a magnificent cup of old silver chiselled in the time of Henry II.; and next a massive chalice, which had been given to the town by Queen Marie Antoinette; and, lastly, two crystal bottles. He then shut the tabernacle, and drew from beneath the altar a *Notre Dame* in wax, crowned with a wreath of gold and diamonds, and the dress embroidered with precious stones.

Being determined that if possible such a sacrilegious robbery should not be thus quietly effected, the abbé issued forth from the confessional, and confronted the robber. The latter, on hearing footsteps approaching, drew a pistol from his girdle; but the tranquillity of the man of God awed even the rude bandit.

"Friend," said the holy man to the robber, "you shall not commit this sacrilege."

"Who will prevent me?" replied l'Artifaillle.

"I will—not by physical force, but by persuasion. Friend, it is not for the church that I wish to save those things—the church can afford to buy other holy vessels; it is for your sake, who cannot purchase salvation from sin at any price."

"My good man, do you think that it is the first time that L'Artifaille has committed sacrilege? Besides, as to my soul, that concerns my wife; she is pious enough for two, and will save mine with hers."

"Yes, friend, your wife is a good and a pious woman, but who would die of grief did she know the sin you are now about to commit. For her sake and your own, I offer you 1000 crowns; 1000 francs to be given now, 2000 after I have sold my mother's heritage to obtain them, if you will restore those objects to their places."

"Your mother is rich, then?" observed the bandit.

"No; she is poor, and will be ruined; but she will give up her all gladly, if she knows it is to save a soul. Now, will you follow me to the presbytery?"

The bandit did as was desired, casting, however, many furtive glances around him, lest he should be betrayed into an ambushade. Arrived at the presbytery, he remained at the door while the abbé went in to fetch the money. He soon returned, carrying a weighty bag.

"And now," said the bandit, "I give you six weeks to pay me the other two thousand; and you may place them in the hands of my wife, but you must not tell her how I came by them."

"It shall be done; and now go, brother, and sin no more." And the good priest turned away, and bending on his knees, he prayed humbly and earnestly for the conversion of the bandit. He had not finished his prayer before there came a knock at the door. "Come in," said the abbé, without rising; and when he did so, L'Artifaille stood behind him.

"Here," he said, "I bring you back your money. I do not want it, or your other two thousand." And so saying, he deposited the bag on the side-board.

"What do you want?" said the priest to the bandit, seeing hesitation depicted on his countenance. "What you have done is well: do not be ashamed to do better."

"You believe that, by the intercession of our Lady, a man, however guilty he may be, can be saved at the hour of death?" observed L'Artifaille. "Give me then, in exchange for my three thousand francs, a relic or chaplet, such as I can carry about with me, and embrace at the last moment."

The holy man did not hesitate; he took the consecrated medal, which had wrought so much good to himself, from his neck, and he gave it to the bandit. The latter pressed it to his lips, and hurried away.

A year elapsed before the good abbé heard anything more of the bandit. At the expiration of that period, he left his diocese for a short time to visit his mother; who being unwell, he remained with her for six weeks. Upon his return, he heard that the celebrated robber had been captured near Orleans, and having been condemned to death, had been sent to Etampes, as the principal scene of his misdeeds, and that he had suffered the last penalty of the law the very morning of his return.

Without stopping even to shake the dust off his shoes, the good priest repaired at once to the house of the widow; who, he was informed, had

been incessant in her applications during his absence. He found her engaged in prayer.

"Ah! M. l'Abbé," she exclaimed, on seeing her visitor, "you come too late; he died without confession. He would not confess to any other but you; and saying so, he embraced with fervour a medal which hung suspended to his neck."

"Was that all he said?" inquired the abbé.

"No; he told me that you would come to see me to-night, and he begged me as a last request—I dare scarcely tell you what strange favour!—actually that you should go where his body hangs, and repeat five Paters and five Aves. He said you would not refuse."

"And he said right," replied the holy man; "I shall go and do his last bidding. His soul may then be in repose."

The widow embraced the hands of the priest, and wept with gratitude.

It was about half-past ten o'clock in the latter days of April; the sky was clear, and the air refreshing. The good priest followed the city walls till he came to the gate of Paris—the only one that remained open at that late hour. The point to which his steps were directed was an esplanade which domineered over the whole town, and upon which, to the present day, are to be seen the traces of the scaffold, upon which in former times three gibbets were erected. But we shall now proceed with our story in the words of the narrator—the worthy abbé himself.

My heart beat. The feeling came over me that I was going to see, not that which I came to see, but something unexpected. Still I kept ascending.

Arrived at a certain height, I began to perceive the summit of the gibbet, composed of three pillars and their horizontal beams of oak.

I distinguished at the same moment the body of the unfortunate Artifaille driven to and fro by the wind, like a moveable shade.

Suddenly I stopped; the gibbet was now exposed to me from its summit to its base, and I perceived a mass without form, that looked like an animal on four legs, and that moved about. I stopped, and hid myself behind a rock. The animal was larger than a dog and more massive than a wolf.

Suddenly it raised itself upon its hind legs, and I discovered that the animal was neither more nor less than that which Plato designated as an animal with two feet and without feathers: that is to say, a man.

What could a man be doing under the gibbet at such an hour, unless he came with a religious heart, to pray—or with an irreligious heart, to commit some sacrilege?

Under any circumstance I determined to keep aloof and to watch. At the same moment the moon came forth from behind a cloud, and shone brightly upon the gibbet. I could now distinguish a man distinctly, and see every movement that he made. The man picked up a ladder from the ground, and placed it against the upright that was nearest to the swinging body. He then mounted the ladder. The next moment he formed with the hanging body a strange group, in which the living and the dead appeared to be confounded in a mutual embrace.

Suddenly a fearful shriek resounded through the air. I saw the two bodies moving as if in conflict. I heard cries of help shouted by a voice which seemed to be strangling; and at the same moment one of the bodies detached itself from the gibbet, whilst the other remained suspended by the cord, beating with its arms and legs.

It was impossible that I should comprehend what was really taking place under the infamous machine; but certainly—work of man or work of the devil—something extraordinary had taken place—something that called for help, that claimed assistance.

I accordingly hastened forward. At the sight of a new comer, the struggles of the hanging man increased; whilst beneath him lay the body which had fallen from the gibbet, motionless and lifeless.

I ran first to the living. I hastily ascended the steps of the ladder, and, cutting

the cord with a knife, the hanging man fell to the ground, and I jumped down to him from the ladder. He was rolling on the ground in fearful convulsions, whilst the other body continued to be perfectly motionless.

I saw that the running-knot was still strangling the poor devil, so I knelt down, and with great difficulty loosened it. Whilst so doing I saw the man's face, and recognised that that man was no other than the executioner.

His eyes were starting out of their orbits; his face was blue, his jaw distorted. I placed him against a stone: gradually the fresh air revived him; he breathed more freely, and finished by looking at me. His surprise was not much less than mine had been.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," he said, hesitatingly, and with an effort, "is it you?"

"Yes, it is I. What were you doing here?"

He appeared to take some time to collect his ideas; and then, turning round, he looked at the corpse lying close by.

"Oh, Monsieur l'Abbé!" he then exclaimed; "let us hasten from this place. In the name of Heaven let us go!"

"Why so? I have promised to say five Paters and five Aves for the soul of the gibbeted man."

"For his soul, Monsieur l'Abbé! He is Satan personified. Did you not see him hang me?"

"Hang you! why, I thought it was you who had rendered him that particular service."

"Truly so; and I thought that I had hung him as well as a man could be hung; but it appears that I was deceived. I wonder, when he made me take his place, he did not take advantage of the circumstance to run away."

"Run away! why, he is dead and motionless. There is some mystery beneath this. Tell me what brought you here."

"Well, I suppose I must tell you, in confession or otherwise. The miscreant, then, do you know, Monsieur l'Abbé, would not confess, even at his last moments. He always asked for you on his way here, and again at the gibbet. 'Is the abbé not come?' he repeated at each step. 'No,' I answered. There is nothing so annoying as to be perpetually asked the same question. I put the cord round his neck, and bade him mount the ladder. 'Stop a moment,' he said, when he had got up about one-third, 'let me see if the abbé is not arrived.' 'You may look,' I answered; and I thought I had nothing to do but to push him off, but he anticipated me. 'One moment more,' he said; 'I wish to kiss a medal of our Lady, which is suspended to my neck.' 'Well, as to that,' I said, 'it is but fair—kiss away.' 'And my last wish,' he added, 'is to be buried with this medal.' 'Hum!' says I, 'all that is upon a man that is hung belongs to his executioner.' 'That does not concern me,' he insisted; 'I will be buried with this medal.' 'You will, will you?' said I, losing all patience; 'you may go to the devil.' And so saying, I threw him off, and jumping at the same moment upon his shoulders. 'Our Lady have pity!' he said; but the cord strangled the man and the sentence at the same time."

"Well, but all this does not explain to me why you came here this night."

"That is because that is the most difficult part of the story to relate."

"Well, I will save you the trouble; you came to take the medal."

"You are right. The devil tempted me. I said to myself, 'You will? That is all very good; but when night is come we will see.' So when night came I returned to the gibbet. I had left my ladder in the neighbourhood, and knew where to find it. After carefully looking around, and seeing that nobody was watching me, I placed my ladder against the nearest upright, I got up, and drew the corpse towards me."

"Well! and what then?"

"Why, I had got hold of the medal, and had just succeeded in drawing it off the neck, when, believe me if you will, the corpse seized me bodily, and withdrawing its head from the running knot, passed my head in instead of his, and just threw me off as I had thrown him off. That is exactly what happened."

"Impossible! you must be mistaken."

"Did you find me hanging, or not? Well, I promise you that I did not hang myself."

"And the medal? Where is it?" I inquired.

"You must search for it on the ground. When I felt that I was hanging, I was glad enough to get rid of it."

I accordingly sought for the medal, and was not long in discovering it. Having picked it up, I once more fastened it to the neck of the ex-bandit. At the moment that it came in contact with his chest, a shudder pervaded his whole frame, and he uttered a sharp and painful cry. The executioner made a spring on one side, and trembled like a leaf. I, however, insisted upon his replacing the corpse in its former situation. He at first refused, but by pointing out to him that the bad demon had left the corpse, I ultimately prevailed, and once more the body swung in the void, motionless and inanimate. I then went down on my knees and repeated the prayers which the sufferer had demanded of me. As I finished, midnight struck at Notre Dame.

"Come," I said to the executioner, "we have nothing more to do here."

We quitted the Esplanade together, my companion turning round every ten paces to see if the body was really there.

The next morning, when I woke up, I was told that the bandit's wife was waiting for me below.

Her face wore an expression of satisfaction, and of a mind relieved.

"M. l'Abbé," she said to me, "I have come to thank you: my husband appeared to me last night, just as it struck twelve by Notre Dame, and said to me, 'Go to-morrow morning to the Abbé's, and tell him that, thanks to him and to our Lady, I am saved!'"

In our times, when the marvellous and the supernatural are fast disappearing; when the superstitions which have chequered the horizon of the human mind in different ages have been found to have foreshadowed the revelation of important scientific truths; when the law of sensorial illusions has explained away the mysteries of second sight, ghosts, and dreams; when the phenomena of mesmerism, including mesmeric coma, sleep-talking, convulsions and insensibility, have explained satisfactorily the whole history of witchcraft and imputed demoniacal possession—we must not despair of some explanation being offered, even of the above strange and half ludicrous incident. There may have been a magnetic power in the medal which plays so important a part in the good abbé's story; but allowing a magnetic or mesmeric shock to have thrown the corpse out of the halter, why the executioner should have put his head into it, unless the same jerk that loosened the one threw it over the other, or that he was in such a dreadful state of trepidation as not to know what he was doing, would be difficult to say.

There are still those who believe that there is a class of superstitions which are purely imaginary, and the elements of which escape any mode of palpable demonstration. Such more particularly is the vampire tradition, which has been generally assumed to be a pure fiction. A well-known medical philosopher, Dr. Herbert Mayo, has, however, in a work recently published at Frankfort, and entitled "Letters on the Truths contained in Popular Superstitions," undertaken to vindicate the possible authenticity of even this most incredible and horrible of all traditions. Dr. Mayo does not actually go so far as to believe in vampires; but believing, as *we* do, that there is a certain amount of truth in every delusion—that as there can be no effect in the physical world without some fixed cause, so no belief will attain popularity without some cause for its prevalence,—he supposes that the bodies found in the so-called vampire state, instead of being in a new or mystical condition, were simply alive in the common way, or had been so some time subsequent to their interment; that, in short, they were the bodies of persons who had been buried alive, and whose life, where it yet lingered, was finally extinguished through the ignorance and barbarity of those who disinterred them.

Having premised so much, we must leave it to the reader to determine

how far in the following story the possible solution offered by the medical philosopher can be made to explain away the difficulties of the case. The story is told by Dumas, as related to him by a Polish lady, a native of Sandomir.

The year 1825 [says the narrator], witnessed one of those terrible struggles between Russia and Poland in which one would expect all the blood of a nation would be exhausted, as we sometimes see in the case of a family.

My father and my two brothers had taken arms against the new Tsar, and had gone to fight under the flag of Polish independence, always struck down, yet always raised up again.

One day I learnt that my youngest brother was slain; the next day I was informed that my elder brother was mortally wounded. At length, after a day, during the whole of which I had been listening in horror to the sound of guns and musketry, which kept coming nearer and nearer, I saw my father arrive with 100 horsemen, all that remained of 3000 men whom he had led to battle!

He came to shut himself up in our castle, determined to be buried under its ruins.

My father, who feared nothing for himself, trembled for me. Choosing ten from among the hundred men that remained to him, and collecting all the gold and jewellery that was at hand, he remembered that at the time of the second depopulation of Poland, my mother had found a safe asylum in the monastery of Sahasten, situate in the heart of the Carpathians; and he ordered the house steward to conduct me, under the appointed guard, to that monastery, which having preserved the mother, might also shelter the daughter.

I hastened to put on the dress of an Amazon, in which I was accustomed to accompany my brothers upon hunting expeditions. My horse was brought out; my father gave me his own pistols. Our last interview was not a long one: the Russians were approaching.

All night long, and during the whole of the next day, we kept along the banks of a tributary to the Vistula, and got twenty leagues from my ancestral home. This took us beyond the reach of the enemy. By the falling rays of the sun we had seen the snowy summits of the Carpathians. By the end of the next day we reached the outlying ranges of this great mountain barrier, and the day following entered into its rugged passes.

The scenery was magnificent—rocks, and wood, and water, in every kind of wild contrast. Ten days passed by without accident. We could already perceive the summit of Mount Pion, which lifts its head above all the surrounding family of giants, and on whose southern slope is the monastery of Sahasten. Three days more, and we were there. It was near the end of July: the day had been extremely hot, and we had just begun to enjoy the cool breeze of evening, when the sound of a gun was suddenly heard, and our guide, who was a little in advance, fell dead. At the same moment a loud shout was heard, and about thirty bandits showed themselves from among the rocks. Every one seized his arms; they were old soldiers that accompanied me, and they soon returned the fire of the brigands, while I set the example of endeavouring to force our way to a plain beyond. But this movement had been anticipated. While the bandits kept up annoying us on our flank, our further progress was soon disputed in front by a young man, who awaited us at the head of a dozen mounted followers. All these men were covered with sheep-skins, and wore great round hats like Hungarians. As to their leader, he was scarcely twenty-two years of age, of a pallid complexion, with large black eyes, and his hair fell in locks on his shoulders. He wore a Moldavian habit trimmed with fur, and fastened to the waist by a sash of silk and gold. A curved sabre glittered in his hand, and four pistols sparkled in his waistband. The bandits on foot kept up a continual fire with their long Turkish muskets; and as, the moment they had discharged their pieces, they threw themselves on the ground, they avoided the shots that were given in return.

One after the other, two-thirds of my defenders had fallen. Four that remained grouped themselves around me, resolved to die rather than forsake me. The young chief pointed expressively with his sabre to this little group, and in a moment a dozen muskets were directed towards us. At that instant another young man rushed down from among the rocks, shouting out in a loud tone of voice "Enough!" This arrival of unlooked-for help had more effect upon me than the combat. I fainted away.

When I came to myself, I found that I was lying on the grass, supported in the arms of the young man who had come to my assistance, whilst before me stood, his arms crossed over his chest, the young chief who had led the attack.

"Kostaki," said he who supported me, in good French, "you must withdraw your men, and leave this young woman to my care."

"Brother! brother!" answered the one to whom these words were addressed, and who appeared with difficulty to restrain himself, "brother, do not try my patience too far. I leave you the castle: leave me the forest. In the castle you are all-powerful, but here I am the master."

"Kostaki, I am the eldest; that is, I am master everywhere. I am of the blood of the Brancovans as well as yourself—royal blood, and am accustomed to command. This young woman shall not go to the cavern; she shall be conveyed to the castle, and given in charge of my mother."

"Well, Grégoriska," replied the other, "let it be so, but she shall not be less be mine. I find her pretty, and I won her by conquest."

Upon this the young man who supported me placed my head on a stone, and rose up to speak in Moldavian to the bandits. He about twenty-four years of age, tall, handsome, with expressive blue eyes and long light hair, indicating his Slavonian origin. But at the same moment Kostaki took me up in his arms, and calling for a horse, placed me upon it, and then vaulted into the saddle. But Grégoriska was as quick as he; and seizing the horse of one of the bandits, he hurried along without saying a word by the side of his brother.

It was a singular sight to see these two young men galloping along side by side without uttering a word, through woods, and amid rocks, and by frightful precipices. Nor was our perilous course stopped till I found myself in the courtyard of a Moldavian castle of the fourteenth century. The servants hastened forward on seeing the two young men arrive thus in charge of a female; and Grégoriska spoke in Moldavian to two of the women, who showed me the way to an apartment. This apartment, naked as it was, was in keeping with everything else in the castle. A large divan, covered with green baize, served as a seat in the day time, as a bed at night; as to curtains, either for the bed or for the windows, there were none. I had not been long in the room before my trunks were brought to me. Soon afterwards some one knocked at the door.

"Come in," I said in French.

"Ah, madame," said Grégoriska, as he entered, "I am glad to hear you speak French."

"I also, sir, am happy in understanding that language, since it enabled me to appreciate your generous conduct towards me."

"Thank you, madame. How could I do otherwise than be interested in a lady placed in such a situation? Might I inquire by what accident a lady of quality like yourself should thus be found in the midst of our mountains?"

The Polish lady related her history in a few words; and in return for her confidence, Grégoriska narrated that of his family.

"My mother," he said, "was the last princess of the house of Brankovan. She had wedded first Serban Voivode, whose son I am, and with whom I travelled throughout Europe. During our absence my mother had guilty relations with a Count Giordaki Koproli—half Greek, half Moldavian, and a chief of partisans; so we call in the mountains," added Grégoriska, smiling, "the gentry with whom you had to do in the pass. My father dying, left my mother free to wed the count; this was after the birth of Kostaki, the child of adultery, whose passions are his only law, and who knows nothing sacred in this world save his mother. The count did not dwell long in this castle, having been killed, it is said, by some of my father's followers. And at his death I returned to the home of my ancestors—for I loved my mother, notwithstanding her faults; and, as eldest, I was made master; but the indomitable creature you saw yields to me but a nominal obedience, and it was on that account I came to warn you to keep your room for a time, and not to attempt to leave the castle. Within, I will defend you with my life: once outside, I cannot answer for anything."

"Cannot I get, then, to the convent of Sahasten?"

"You would never be allowed to get there. Wait here a time. You shall be introduced to my mother, who is good and generous in her disposition, and a princess by birth—that is saying everything. She will defend you from the brutal passions of Kostaki, and you can then await events in safety."

After thus advising with me, Grégoriska led the way to the dining-room, where I was introduced to and kindly received by the Princess Brankovan. The prin-

ness was dressed in a semi-oriental costume of great splendour, and by her side was Kostaki, in the brilliant costume of a Magyar noble. Each took his place at dinner, Gregoriska seating himself next to me. He had also put on the dress of a noble Magyar, and from his neck hung the splendid nishan of Sultan Mahmoud. The repast was gloomy enough; Kostaki did not address his captive once, although his brother spoke to me several times in French—a language understood by both, but not by the princess. On retiring to my room at night I found a note upon the table; it was to the effect that I might sleep in tranquillity, and it was signed “Gregoriska.”

From this time henceforth I was fairly established in the castle, with both brothers in love with me. Kostaki had openly avowed his love; had declared to me that I should be his and no one else's; and that he would kill me before I should belong to another. The princess seconded the younger son, and was, if possible, more jealous of Gregoriska than Kostaki himself. Gregoriska on his side said nothing, but paid me a thousand little attentions. Before three months had elapsed, Kostaki had told me a hundred times that he loved me; and I hated him. Gregoriska had not spoken a word of love; yet I felt that whenever he asked me, I was his.

One night after I had retired to my room, I heard some one knock gently. I asked who was there.

“Gregoriska,” was the answer.

“What do you want?” I inquired, shaking from head to foot.

“If you have faith in my honour, open the door; I wish to speak to you.”

I admitted the young man, but trembled so that he led me to a chair. Taking my hand in his, “I love you,” he said; “Do you love me?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“If you love me, then, you will follow me. We have no safety but in flight.”

“I will follow you anywhere.”

“Listen then,” he said. “I have sold lands, and herds, and villages, to the monastery of Hango, so that I can support you in comfort, if not in affluence. To-morrow, at nine o'clock, horses will be in readiness a hundred paces from the castle. I will be here again at the same hour, and we will fly together.”

Saying this, Gregoriska pressed me to his heart, and bade me farewell. I could not sleep for thinking of my hoped-for escape. Day came: I went down to breakfast. Kostaki appeared to me to be even more gloomy and more morose than usual. Gregoriska ordered his horse after breakfast, and said he would not return till evening. Kostaki did not appear to take much notice of his brother's departure, but about seven o'clock, as it was growing dark, I saw him cross the court and go to the stables. I was anxious, and watched him. He soon came out with his favourite horse saddled, and mounting, he issued forth from the castle, and I saw that he took the road of the monastery of Hango. Then my heart shrank within me; I knew that he was going out to meet his brother.

I remained at the window till the darkness of night prevented me distinguishing one object from another. I then went down-stairs, convinced that the first news of either of the brothers would come to me there. The princess was then giving her orders for supper as usual; nothing in her countenance betrayed that anything extraordinary was going on. As to me, I shuddered at every noise. A few minutes before nine, the usual supper-hour, I heard a horse gallop into the yard. I knew that only one rider would return, but which was it to be?

I heard steps in the antechamber the door opened, and Gregoriska walked in calm and quiet, but his face pale as death.

“Is it you, Gregoriska?” said the princess mother; “Where is your brother?”

“Mother,” Gregoriska replied, with a calm voice, “my brother and I did not go out together.”

At the same moment, a loud noise was heard in the court, and a valet rushed into the saloon, exclaiming,

“Princess, Count Kostaki's horse has just come into the castle without rider, and covered with blood!”

“Oh!” muttered the princess; “it was thus that his father's horse also came in one night;” and, with a resolute threatening look, she took up a light and descended into the courtyard. Looking at the saddle, she saw a large stain of blood on the pommel. “I expected it,” she said; “Kostaki has been killed face to face—in a duel, or by one assailant.”

She then gave orders for the attendants to go out by the gate of Hango, and search for the body. As if convinced that the search would not be long, she re-

mained in the court. Gregoriska stood near her; I, by Gregoriska. Soon the torches which we had watched disappearing in the distance were seen again; but this time they were grouped around a common centre. Ten minutes more, and by their light we could distinguish a litter, and on it a body. The heart-broken mother said nothing, but motioned that the corpse should be borne into the hall.

The attendants being dismissed, there remained the princess, Gregoriska, and myself alone with the corpse. The princess had turned the gory hair from off the dead man's brow, and contemplated it for some time in silence, and without shedding a tear. Then opening his dress, she looked at the wound.

"It has been inflicted by a double-edged sword," she remarked. Then asking for some water, she dipped her handkerchief in it, and washed the wound. A stream of clear and fresh blood gurgled forth!

"Gregoriska!" she said, turning round to her son, "I know that you and Kostaki did not love one another; but you were children of the same mother. Now, Gregoriska, you must swear that the murderer of your brother shall die—that you will never cease to pursue him until death, or the curse of your mother rest upon you!"

"I swear," said Gregoriska, stretching out his hand over the corpse, "that the murderer shall die!"

At this strange oath, the bearing of which I and the dead man could alone comprehend, a strange prodigy took place. The corpse opened its eyes, and fixed them upon me with a gaze more earnest than when alive. I felt them like a ray of fire penetrating to my heart; and, unable to bear the trial any longer, I fainted.

When I came to myself, I was in my own room. Three days and three nights I remained there, buried in painful thought. Flight was no longer necessary; Kostaki was dead: but marriage was also out of the question. Could I wed the fratricide? The third day they brought me a widow's mourning. It was the day of the funeral, and I went down-stairs. The princess met me in the hall. She appeared like a statue of grief. When she embraced me she said, as she used to say before Kostaki's death,

"Kostaki loves you."

I cannot describe the effect these words had upon me. This protestation of love made in the present instead of the past tense—this profession of affection coming from the tomb—terrified me so, that I leant against a door for support. The princess, seeing that I was so much afflicted, would not allow me to join the procession. I was led back to my own apartment.

We were now in the month of November. The days were short and cold. By five o'clock it was already night. The night of the funeral, overwhelmed by conflicting emotions, and terrified by the strange incidents that had taken place, I was more melancholy than usual. It was a quarter to nine, the hour at which Kostaki, four days previously, had been so mysteriously deprived of life by my lover; and I was pondering on the circumstance, when I suddenly experienced an extraordinary feeling: a cold icy shudder pervaded my whole frame; my mind felt stupified, and I involuntarily fell back on my bed. At the same time I was not so completely deprived of my senses as not to hear the door open, and the step of some one approaching me. Beyond that I heard or saw nothing: I only felt a sharp pain in my throat. I then fell into a complete state of lethargy, from which I did not awake till the morning. When I attempted to rise I was surprised at the weakness that I felt, and at the same time I felt a slight pain in my neck. I looked in the glass, but nothing was visible save a slight mark, like that of a prick of a needle. All day I remained listless and uneasy. I felt no wish to leave my room, or indeed to put myself to the slightest inconvenience. To this feeling of extreme debility was superadded the sentiment of some unknown horror.

The next night, at the same hour, I experienced the same strange sensations. I wished to rise up and call for assistance, but I had not the power. I felt the pain at the same point: that pain was followed by the same insensibility, only I awoke the next day more feeble even than the day before, and the unearthly pallor of my countenance filled me with strange terrors.

The next day Gregoriska came to see me. He uttered a cry of surprise.

"What is the matter?" he exclaimed. "What makes you so pale? That pallor is not natural!"

"If I was to tell you, Gregoriska," I answered, "you would think I had lost my senses."

"No! no!" replied the young man; "you are here in a family that resembles no other family. Tell me everything, I beg of you."

I accordingly related to him the strange feelings by which I was overcome every night at the period when Kostaki fell, the noise I heard of approaching footsteps, and the sharp pain I experienced in my neck, followed by total prostration. When I had finished my narrative, which Gregoriska listened to with a profound and melancholy interest, he asked to look at the wound. Having done so, he said—

"You must not be terrified when I remind you of a tradition that exists in your own country, as well as in ours."

I shuddered, for the tradition presented itself at once to my mind.

"You mean vampires," I said. "I have heard of them in my childhood. I saw forty persons disinterred from a neighbouring village, among whom seventeen exhibited signs of vampirism—that is to say, they were found in a fresh and rosy condition; the rest were the victims."

"And what did they do," asked Gregoriska, "to deliver the country of them?"

"A stake was stuck through the chest of each."

"And so it is with us," muttered Gregoriska; and after a hurried farewell he repaired at once to the monastery of Hango, where he communicated to a worthy monk, Father Basile, in whom he had every confidence, the dangerous position in which I was placed. It was accordingly agreed, with the consent of the superior of the monastery, that a party of monks should proceed at once, armed with pickaxes and holy water, to disinter the body of Kostaki. Gregoriska in the mean time kept me company, to prevent another attack. Leaning upon his arm, it seemed to me that the mere contact with his noble heart infused new blood and new life into me. I felt certain of triumphing over my mysterious enemy.

A little after dusk Father Basile came to us, to say that the body had been disinterred, and had been found as fresh as when first put under ground. The bad spirit had, however, been exorcised, but not until he had been fairly despatched in the domicile he had taken up within the deceased count's body.

It is almost unnecessary to add, that after this, the vampire no longer persecuted the young Polish maiden, but she gradually regained her strength and youthful bloom. Gregoriska having explained the circumstances of the fatal night, upon which Kostaki, having unfortunately become suspicious of his intentions, went out to slay him, but himself fell a victim to his treachery, she could no longer see an act of fratricide in one of mere self-defence; nor did she longer refuse her hand to her noble protector, but by the death of the princess mother soon afterwards became sole mistress of the castle of the Brankovans, where herself and her husband laboured not ineffectually in introducing civilisation, a happier and more pleasing aspect, and especially a higher tone of morality.

The notion of a vampire is not, as is imagined by many, a mere romancer's dream. It is a superstition which to this day survives in the east of Europe, where little more than a century ago it was frightfully prevalent. At that period vampirism spread like a pestilence through Servia and Wallachia, causing numerous deaths, and disturbing all the land with fear of the mysterious visitation, against which no one felt himself secure.

The Polish maiden in Dumas's story makes allusion to the disinterment of a number of vampires in one single village. As this is probably the most extraordinary case of vampirism on record, we shall transfer an account of it to our pages from Dr. Herbert Mayo's newly-published work, previously quoted.

In the spring of 1727 there returned from the Levant to the village of Meduegna near Belgrade, one Arnod Paole, who, in a few years of military service and varied adventure, had amassed enough to purchase a cottage and an acre or two of land in his native place, where, he gave out, he meant to pass the remainder of his days. He kept his word. Arnod had yet scarcely reached the prime of manhood; and though he must have encountered the rough as well as the smooth of

life, and mingled with many a wild and reckless companion, yet his naturally good disposition and honest principles had preserved him unscathed in the scenes he had passed through. At all events, such were the thoughts expressed by his neighbours, as they discussed his return and settlement among them in the Stube of the village Hof. Nor did the frank and open countenance of Arnod, his obliging habits, and steady conduct, argue their judgment incorrect. Nevertheless, there was something occasionally noticeable in his ways, a look and tone, that betrayed inward disquiet. Often would he refuse to join his friends, or on some sudden plea abruptly quit their society. And he still more unaccountably, and as it seemed systematically, avoided meeting his pretty neighbour Nina, whose father occupied the next tenement to his own. At the age of seventeen, Nina was as charming a picture as you could have seen, of youth, cheerfulness, innocence, and confidence, in all the world. You could not look into her limpid eyes, which steadily returned your gaze, without seeing to the bottom of the pure and transparent spring of her thoughts. Why then did Arnod shrink from meeting her? He was young, had a little property, had health and industry, and he had told his friends he had formed no ties in other lands. Why, then, did he avoid the fascination of the pretty Nina, who seemed a being made to chase from any brow the clouds of gathering care? But he did so. Yet less and less resolutely, for he felt the charm of her presence. Who could have done otherwise? and how could he long resist—he did not—the impulse of his fondness for the innocent girl, who often sought to cheer his fits of depression.

And they were to be united; were betrothed; yet still an anxious gloom would fitfully overcast his countenance, even in the sunshine of those hours.

"What is it, dear Arnod, that makes you sad? It cannot be on my account, I know, for you were sad before you ever noticed me; and that, I think," and you should have seen the deepening rose upon her cheeks, "surely first made me notice you."

"Nina," he answered, "I have done, I fear, a great wrong, in trying to gain your affections. Nina, I have a fixed impression that I shall not live;—yet, knowing this, I have selfishly made my existence necessary to your happiness."

"How strangely you talk, dear Arnod! Who in the village is stronger and healthier than you? You feared no danger when you were a soldier: what danger do you fear as a villager of Meduegna?"

"It haunts me, Nina."

"But, Arnod, you were sad before you thought of me; Did you then fear to die?"

"Ah, Nina, it is something worse than death." And his vigorous frame shook with agony.

"Arnod, I conjure you, tell me."

"It was in Cossova this fate befell me—here you have hitherto escaped the terrible scourge. But there they died, and the dead visited the living. I experienced the first frightful visitation, and I fled; but not till I had sought his grave, and exacted the dread expiation from the vampire."

Nina's blood ran cold. She stood horror-stricken. But her young heart soon mastered her first despair. With a touching voice she spoke:—

"Fear not, dear Arnod, fear not now. I will be your shield—or I will die with you."

And she encircled his neck with her gentle arms; and returning hope shone, Iris-like, amid her falling tears. Afterwards they found a reasonable ground for banishing or allaying their apprehensions, in the length of time which had elapsed since Arnod left Cossova, during which no fearful visitant had again approached him; and they fondly trusted that gave them security.

It is a strange world. The ills we fear are commonly not those which overwhelm us. The blows that reach us are for the most part unforeseen. One day, about a week after this conversation, Arnod missed his footing when on the top of a loaded hay-waggon, and fell from it to the ground. He was picked up insensible and carried home, where after lingering a short time he died; his interment as usual followed immediately. His fate was sad and premature; but what pencil could paint Nina's grief?

Twenty or thirty days after his decease, says the perfectly authenticated report of these transactions, several of the neighbourhood complained that they were haunted by the deceased Arnod; and what was more to the purpose, four of them died. The evil looked at sceptically was bad enough; but aggravated by the suggestions of superstition, it spread a panic through the whole district. To allay

the popular terror, and if possible to get at the root of the evil, a determination was come to publicly to disinter the body of Arnod, with a view of ascertaining whether he really was a vampire; and in that event of treating him conformably. The day fixed for this proceeding was the fortieth after his burial.

It was on a grey morning in early August that the commission visited the quiet cemetery of Meduegna, which, surrounded with a wall of unhewn stone, lies sheltered by the mountain, that, rising in undulating green slopes irregularly planted with fruit trees, ends in an abrupt craggy ridge feathered with underwood. The graves were for the most part neatly kept, with borders of box or something like it, and flowers between; and at the head of most, a small wooden cross, painted black, bearing the name of the tenant. Here and there a stone had been raised; one of considerable height, a single narrow slab, ornamented with grotesque gothic carvings, dominated over the rest. Near this lay the grave of Arnod Paole, towards which the party moved. The work of throwing out the earth was begun by the grey crooked old sexton, who lived in the Leichenhouse beyond the great crucifix; he seemed unconcerned enough; no vampire would think of extracting a supper out of him. Nearest the grave stood two military surgeons, or feldscheers, from Belgrade, and a drummer-boy, who held their case of instruments. The boy looked on with keen interest; and when the coffin was exposed, and rather roughly drawn out of the grave, his pale face and bright intent eye showed how the scene moved him. The sexton lifted the lid of the coffin; the body had become inclined to one side; when turning it straight, "Ha! ha!" said he, pointing to fresh blood upon the lips, "Ha! ha! what, your mouth not wiped since last night's work?" The spectators shuddered—the drummer-boy sank forward fainting, and upset the instrument-case, scattering its contents; the senior surgeon, infected with the horror of the scene, repressed a hasty exclamation, and simply crossed himself. They threw water on the drummer-boy and he recovered, but would not leave the spot. Then they inspected the body of Arnod. It looked as if it had not been dead a day. On handling it the scarfskin came off, but below were *new skin and new nails!* How could *they* have come there, but from its foul feeding? The case was clear enough; there lay before them the thing they dreaded—the vampire. So without more ado they simply drove a stake through poor Arnod's chest; whereupon a quantity of blood gushed forth, and the corpse uttered an audible groan. "Murder, oh, murder!" shrieked the drummer-boy, as he rushed wildly with convulsed gestures from the cemetery.

The drummer-boy was not far from the mark. But quitting the romancing vein, which had led me to try and restore the original colours of the picture, let me confine myself, in describing the rest of the scene and what followed, to the words of my authority.

The body of Arnod was then burnt to ashes, which were returned to the grave. The authorities farther had staked and burnt the bodies of the four others, which were supposed to have been infected by Arnod; no mention is made of the state in which they were found. The adoption of these decisive measures failed, however, of entirely extinguishing the evil, which continued still to hang about the village. About five years afterwards it had again become very rife, and many died through it. Whereupon the authorities determined to make another and a complete clearance of the vampires in the cemetery; and with that object they had again all the graves, to which present suspicion attached, opened, and their contents officially anatomised; of which procedure the following is the medical report; here and there *abridged* only:—

1. A woman of the name of Stana, twenty years of age, who had died three months before of a three days' illness following her confinement. She had before her death avowed that she had *anointed* herself with the blood of a vampire, to liberate herself from his persecution. Nevertheless, she, as well as her infant, whose body, through careless interment, had been half eaten by the dogs, both had died. Her body was entirely free from decomposition. On opening it, the chest was found full of recently effused blood, and the bowels had exactly the appearances of sound health. The skin and nails of her hands and feet were loose and came off, but underneath lay new skin and nails.

2. A woman of the name of Miliza, who had died at the end of a three months' illness. The body had been buried ninety and odd days. In the chest was liquid blood. The viscera were as in the former instance. The body was declared by a heyduk, who recognised it, to be in better condition and fatter than it had been in the woman's legitimate life-time,

3. The body of a child eight years old, that had likewise been buried ninety days; it was in the vampire condition.

4. The son of a heyduk named Milloc, sixteen years old. The body had lain in the grave nine weeks. He had died after three days' indisposition, and was in the condition of a vampire.

5. Joachim, likewise son of a heyduk, seventeen years old. He had died after three days' illness; had been buried eight weeks and some days; was found in the vampire state.

6. A woman of the name of Rusha, who had died of an illness of ten days' duration, and had been six weeks buried, in whom likewise fresh blood was found in the chest.

(The reader will understand, that to see blood in the chest, it is first necessary to cut the chest open.)

7. The body of a girl ten years of age, who had died two months before. It was likewise in the vampire state, perfectly undecomposed, with blood in the chest.

8. The body of the wife of one Hadnuck, buried seven weeks before; and that of her infant, eight weeks old, buried only twenty-one days. They were both in a state of decomposition, though buried in the same ground, and closely adjoining the others.

9. A servant, by name Rhade, twenty-three years of age; he had died after an illness of three months' duration, and the body had been buried five weeks. It was in a state of decomposition.

10. The body of the heyduk Stanco, sixty years of age, who had died six weeks previously. There was much blood and other fluid in the chest and abdomen, and the body was in the vampire condition.

11. Millac, a heyduk, twenty-five years old. The body had been in the earth six weeks. It was perfectly in the vampire condition.

12. Stanjoika, the wife of a heyduk, twenty years old; but died after an illness of three days, and had been buried eighteen. The countenance was florid. There was blood in the chest and in the heart. The viscera were perfectly sound: the skin remarkably fresh.

The document which gives the above particulars is signed by three regimental surgeons, and formally countersigned by a lieutenant-colonel and sub-lieutenant. It bears the date of June 7, 1732, Meduegna, near Belgrade. No doubt can be entertained of its authenticity, or of its general fidelity; the less that it does not stand alone, but is supported by a mass of evidence to the same effect. It appears to establish beyond question, that where the fear of vampirism prevails, and there occur several deaths in the popular belief connected with it, the bodies, when disinterred weeks after burial, present the appearance of corpses from which life has only recently departed.

What inference shall we draw from this fact?—that vampirism is true in the popular sense; and that these fresh-looking and well-conditioned corpses had some mysterious source of preternatural nourishment? That would be to adopt, not to solve the superstition. Let us content ourselves with a notion not so monstrous, but still startling enough—That the bodies which were found in the so-called vampire state, instead of being in a new or mystical condition, were simply alive in the common way, or had been for some time subsequently to their interment; that, in short, they were the bodies of persons who had been buried alive, and whose life, where it yet lingered, was finally extinguished through the ignorance and barbarity of those who disinterred them. In the following sketch of a similar scene to that above described, the correctness of this inference comes out with terrific force.

Erasmus Francisci, in his remarks upon the description of the Dukedom of Krain by Valvasor, speaks of a man of the name of Grando, in the district of Kring, who died, was buried, and became a vampire, and as such was exhumed for the purpose of having a stake thrust through him.

"When they opened his grave, after he had been long buried, his face was found with a colour, and his features made natural sorts of movements, as if the dead man smiled. He even opened his mouth as if he would inhale fresh air. They held the crucifix before him, and called in a loud voice, 'See, this is Jesus

Christ, who redeemed your soul from hell, and died for you.' After the sound had acted on his organs of hearing, and he had connected perhaps some ideas with it, tears began to flow from the dead man's eyes. Finally, when after a short prayer for his poor soul they proceeded to hack off his head, the corpse uttered a screech, and turned and rolled just as if it had been alive, and the grave was full of blood."

But this is not all; there still remains the vampire-visit to be explained. The vampire-visit! Well, it is clear the vampire could not have left his grave bodily; or at all events, if he could, he never could have buried himself again. Yet there they always found him. If the body could not have been the visitant, then, in popular language, it was the ghost of the vampire that haunted its victim.

"There are two ways," Dr. Mayo remarks, "of dealing with this knot; one is to cut it, the other to untie it."

It may be cut, by denying the supposed connexion between the vampire-visit and the supervention of death-trance in the second party. Nor is the explanation thus obtained devoid of plausibility. There is no reason why death-trance should not in certain seasons and places be *epidemic*. Then the persons most liable to it would be those of weak and irritable nervous systems. Again, a first effect of the epidemic might be, further, to shake the nerves of weaker subjects. These are exactly the persons who are likely to be infected with imaginary terrors, and to dream, or even to fancy, they have seen Mr. or Mrs. Such a one, the last victims of the epidemic. The dream or impression upon the senses might again recur, and the sickening patient have already talked of it to his neighbours, before he himself was seized with death-trance. On this supposition the vampire-visit would sink into the subordinate rank of a mere premonitory symptom.

To myself, I must confess, this explanation, the best I am yet in a position to offer, appears barren and jejune; and not at all to do justice to the force and frequency, or, as tradition represents the matter, the universality of the vampire visit as a precursor of the victim's fate. Imagine how strong must have been the conviction of the reality of the apparition, how common a feature it must have been, to have led to the laying down of the unnatural and repulsive process customarily followed at the vampire's grave, as the regular and proper and only preventive of ulterior consequences.

I am disposed, therefore, rather to try and untie this knot, and with that object to wait. In the mean time I would beg leave to consider this second half of the problem a compound phenomenon, the solutions of the two parts of which may not emerge simultaneously. The vampire-visit is one thing; its presumed contagious effect, another.

S O N G.

BY CHARLES HERVEY, ESQ.

OH, lady! take this simple flower
 To deck thy raven hair,
 Nor chide me if for one short hour
 I'd see it blooming there.
 Then, should thy hand the gift restore,
 To my fond heart 'twill be
 A priceless treasure evermore
 In memory of thee!

And when, of life's bright hues bereft,
 Its wither'd petals fall,
 When not one ling'ring charm is left
 Its beauty to recall,
 Oh, still, in fancy's vivid dream,
 Unchang'd that flow'r will be,
 And dearer to my heart 'twill seem
 In memory of thee!