

success. In epilepsy, when the attacks occur at long intervals, and then appear in rapid succession, one fit as it were producing and being continuous with the next, the inhalation of chloroform, in my experience, at once interrupts the convulsions, causing, first, intermissions, and then, if the administration of the remedy be continued, entire cessation of all irregular muscular action. In the convulsive stage of general paralysis, I have obtained the same results. These results are entirely opposed to the experience of other observers. Van der Kolk writes thus:—"Epileptic attacks are usually so much promoted by chloroform, that this agent has been recommended as a means of distinguishing true from feigned epilepsy; and in the few cases in which I have tried chloroform, I found severe epileptic attacks to ensue, which deterred me from its further use."

A Persistent Delusion.

In the Report of the Royal Glasgow Asylum, for 1870, is mentioned a case in which refusal of food has lasted now for nearly three years, and still continues:—

It is remarkable that one of the male patients, who does not hesitate to take certain kinds of medicine readily, refuses all kind of nourishment under the delusion that it is "drugged." In consequence he has been fed thrice daily, by means of the stomach-pump, for nearly three years. He will not leave his bed, although quite able to be out of it; but, notwithstanding such confinement and artificial alimentation, his bodily condition keeps pretty good.

It would be interesting to learn the result of the experiment of obliging this patient to leave his bed, like other mortals, and of allowing him to remain entirely without food for a few days, unless he chose to take it voluntarily. If he could not be prevailed upon to take food, he might at any rate be prevailed upon to leave his bed, and perhaps if he did that he might after a time begin to take food.

A Singular Mania.

The following account of an extraordinary mania is from the *North British Mail*:—

There has just been buried at Fraserburgh a man of over threescore, who, during the last twenty or thirty years of his life, displayed such a proclivity for witnessing coffin-building and funerals as amounted

almost to a mania. Whatever engaged his energies at the moment, he was never known to miss the chance of visiting the shop of an undertaker when he knew a coffin was on hand; and it was no unusual thing for him when not pressed with work, to sit for hours together inspecting the progress of the article. The funerals of individuals of note had especial charms for him; and wherever in the district, for miles round, he learned that one was to take place, he was certain to be present at the churchyard to see the coffin lowered into the grave. To such an extent had his admiration for "covered" coffins worked upon his fancy that, being a poor man, he deprived himself many a day of the ordinary necessaries of life to lay away a shilling to procure a "covered" coffin for himself; and on his death-bed he directed attention to a chest in which he said he had hidden "five gold sovereigns" to pay for "a grand burial." And such he had, for the numbers attending it were so numerous that it would have been, as one in the procession remarked, "as marrow to Joseph's old bones had he been looking up" to behold it.

Joseph was clearly not an unwise man, in so far as he had made for himself a definite aim in life, and pursued it definitely; to have done that was to have reached a considerable height of philosophy, consciously or unconsciously; but he seems to have made the not uncommon mistake of allowing the aim to master him, instead of remaining master of it. To hold the right mean in this respect is the difficulty in the conduct of life, even to a philosopher. With the foregoing paragraph we may contrast another, cut some time ago from one of the newspapers, which shews how entirely life loses its interest to one who has not the philosophy to create for himself some definite aim—it matters not much what—and the energy to work definitely for it.

A grocer's apprentice, a fine young man, of 25, named Arsene, who loved literature neither wisely nor well, lately hung himself in his master's house, in Paris. Upon his table, amid a heap of books, was found the following letter, the orthography of which was not on a par with the style:—"I am but a grocer and shall never be anything else. I always think of that caricature representing a grocer standing on the threshold of his door, and making this reflection, 'Born to be a man and condemned to become a grocer.' He who thus judged our calling was in the right. For many years I have tried to improve my mind; I have read, and even copied out, books which I don't understand. All this muddles my head, and I find that I become more and more stupid every day. The longer I live the worse I shall be. Now, I remember to have read somewhere that a man should apply his intelligence to be useful to humanity, and as I see I shall never be fit for anything but to weigh cheese and dried plums, I have made up my

mind to go to another world which I have heard of, and see whether there may not be a place for me there. I ask pardon of my brethren for speaking in this disparaging way of our common profession; but I defy them to point out a single instance of a grocer having ever made his way to a higher position. There are plenty of manufacturers who have become deputies and are decorated and loaded with all sorts of honours, but the like has never happened to a grocer. For these reasons I have determined to hang myself. I beg my parents to erect a simple tombstone to my memory, and to inscribe upon it these words, 'Born to be a man; died a grocer.'

Murder of an Attendant.

Those who have been lately writing sensational stories of alleged violence used by attendants to insane patients, have not, so far as we observe, made any comments on the occurrence mentioned in this paragraph:—

A shocking murder was committed on Jan. 31st, at Blakehill-house, Eccles-hill, Bradford, the residence of Joshua Armitage, senior partner in the firm of Armitage and Ibbetson, engravers, Bradford. Mr. Armitage has for some time been of unsound mind, and has been placed under the care of a private attendant named Howard, at his own house. Yesterday morning at breakfast he attacked Howard, and after a severe struggle, both being very powerful men, strangled him with a towel which he had brought from his bedroom.

Had a similar struggle taken place in an asylum, and ended by the attendant overpowering the patient, at the cost of some bruise, or of a broken rib, we fear that little indulgence would have been shewn to the attendant. He would, perhaps, have done better to have allowed himself to be strangled by the patient. Since this happened, another attendant has been murdered in an asylum by a patient.