"You are the bringer of ill news, Mr. Marsh," he said. "Nothing that you could have done, no assertion of your authority, could so well have served to put a barrier between your ward and myself as this revelation. I love your ward very dearly, sir, but it is with unselfish love. Miss Violet is dearer to me than my life; but unless I were myself rich and famous, I should not venture to claim as my wife a great heiress."

"Don, my darling, what matters miserable money, between us two? Poor or rich, I shall always care for you alone, and for no one else; and it is cruel—cruel," sobbed Violet.

"The truest kindness is to be cruel, when it is right," said Mr. Marsh austerely, but somewhat in error as to the application of his ward's last words.

But Don stood erect, and pale, and calm, looking so noble and patient under suffering that even the prejudiced drysalter's heart smote him as he marked the gallant bearing of the young man.

"My Violet," said Don, with a strange, sorrowful tenderness in his voice, "I must bow my head to this stroke which has been dealt us, and bid you adieu, for a time at least. It seems as if my dearest hopes were rudely snatched from me. I have lately received promotion, and have the prospect of more. I am no longer the mere jet-hunter. In two years' time—in three perhaps—I might—but that is over now. Not even for the sake of you, dear, darling Violet, can I endure such an imputation as this. Honour must be obeyed, even before love. No, Mr. Marsh, I am no fortune-hunter; I will not wait for you to banish me from the side of her I love; but, if this property be really hers, I must go."

"Don—my own, I will refuse this odious money; I will give it up, and, whether you leave me or not, I will never, never care for—never marry—any one but you," protested Violet, almost oblivious of Mr. Marsh's presence.

"My darling!" cried the young man passionately, "I shall never forget you, never cease to love you, until my dying day. But I must leave you now."

By this time the white ponies had grown fretful, and fidgeted so much against the bit that Violet could hardly hold them. This of itself would have mattered little, but at this instant unconscious James, the youthful groom, came running, breathless, in his boots, along the Deeping road.

"Very sorry, miss, to have been so long," said James the breathless, "but all the family were out, seeing the hay got in, and I had to wait. And, please, Miss Grace Warburton is away at York for a few days, the old gentleman told me. And I left the note. Quiet, Lily! quiet, nags!" And he grasped the bridles of the white ponies.

There was an end, for the time, of private talk. Don took Violet's hand in his, and pressed it, and in a low voice murmured, not good-bye, but "farewell," which to our English ears has conventionally a sadder sound. Then he turned, and, springing over a stile that stood near, was lost to sight amidst the hazel boughs. Mr. Marsh wheeled abruptly round, and, grumbling to himself, trudged away; while Violet Mowbray, relinquishing the afternoon drive she no longer cared to take, turned the ponies' heads homewards, and slowly and sadly drove back to Woodburn Parsonage.

END OF CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

ON LETTING OFF THE STEAM.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D., ETC. ETC.

MONTAIGNE has an interesting essay on "How the Soul Discharges its Passions on False Objects when the True are Wanting." In point of fact, he mixes up two tendencies of the soul which are really separate. The one is the deliberate habit of giving the best affections of the heart to objects that are not worthy of them; and here he quotes the saying of Plutarch—"apropos of those who are fond of lap-dogs and monkeys, that the amorous part which is in us, for want of a right object, rather than lie idle, does in a manner forge in the fancy one that is false and frivolous." In other words, the instinct of love is eager to embrace something, and not caring for the higher and more suitable objects of affection, it embraces the lower. This is one branch of a great subject—the idolatrous tendency of the human heart. God is the only adequate object of human affection, the only Being who is worthy of all of it, who is capable of satisfying it, and who can expand, purify, and elevate the soul that thus attaches itself to Him. The history of the world shows the many different objects to which men give their hearts, rather than to the Supreme Good: some comparatively high and noble, others most mean and despicable. True religion shows us that if God has His true place, everything else will come in its proper order; even monkeys and lap-dogs will have a place in the heart of him who loves God first, and all God's creatures, as they are loved of Him.

"He prayeth well who loveth well
All things both great and small,
For the dear Lord who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

But what Montaigne chiefly dwells on is, not a deliberate habit of the soul, but a way it has of expressing itself under sudden excitement and agitation. He recalls the story of Xerxes lashing the sea, and addressing a challenge to Mount Athos; of Augustus Cæsar revenging himself for a voyage where he was wretchedly sick, by throwing down the statue of Neptune; and afterwards, when he lost a battle fought under Quintilius Varus in Germany, raving like a madman, running his head against the wall, and crying, "O Varus, give me back my legions!" There was another Roman Emperor, if we remember rightly, who, when anything went wrong, threw himself on the floor and kicked like a boy in a passion. Montaigne quotes from Livy an anecdote of the Roman army in Spain, when two brothers who were general favourites were killed, *flere omnes repente, et offensare capita*—all suddenly wept and beat their foreheads. He ridicules young ladies for tearing their hair and beating their breasts when they have unwittingly done some great mischief; recalls the frequent instances of gamesters biting and gnawing the cards, and swallowing the dice, in revenge for the loss of their money; and wonders at the folly of Caligula, who demolished a very beautiful palace because his mother had been imprisoned in it. This is evidently quite a different phase of human activity from the other. It belongs, not to the deliberate, but to the involuntary and instinctive class of our actions, and finds its explanation in causes entirely different.

That explanation is connected with a provision there is in our nature for distributing excitement, so as to prevent the evil that would ensue from its concentration at the great centre of nervous feeling. The brain being the great organ through which the spiritual part of our nature acts, any great and sudden mental excitement would naturally spend its whole force on that organ. Owing to the great sensitiveness and delicacy of the brain, this would often be accompanied with great danger. Hence the provision of nature for distributing the excitement, so that hands, feet, eyes, tongue, and other parts of the body, share the impression, and let it off in familiar ways. Impressions received on the brain spread over the whole nervous system, and find an outlet at different parts of the body, and by different forms of activity, often singular and grotesque. Even with this provision, the concentration of sudden excitement on the brain is sometimes so great that insanity ensues. A sudden and awful fright drives some persons mad. An ill-judged practical joke has sometimes had this sad effect, as in the case of a child on board ship, whom a young man, by way of frolic, suddenly caught up and held over the side of the vessel as if to drown her, making her imbecile for life.

We are all familiar with cases in which pent-up emotion threatens the very life of a sufferer:—

"Home they brought her warrior dead.
She nor swooned, nor uttered cry:
All her maidens watching said,
'She must weep, or she will die.'"

"A good greet," as they say in Scotland, is a great comfort; even poor little Miss La Creevy's "nice little weep" is not to be despised. The emotion relaxes its deadly grip upon the brain, and, pouring itself along the nerves that touch the lachrymal glands, gives real relief.

And so in various ways with other emotions. Rage seems to find some relief in gnashing the teeth, clenching the fists, coming down with heavy blows upon the table, or stamping with awful emphasis on the ground. Surprise relieves itself by an emphatic whistle. Pain resorts to howls and groans. Sorrow wrings the hands, or flings the head helplessly on the shoulder of a friend. Pity takes refuge in the tender look, the kindly word, and the gentle clap. Warm affection falls to hugging and kissing. Joy has its ready laugh, its shout of delight, and, in the case of the young, its dancing and its leaping. And these manifestations are not confined to the human animal. In proportion as the nervous structure of the inferior animals resembles man's, the outlets to emotion are similar. In some cases, indeed, they are rather mysterious. We should think it must be under considerable excitement that the bee parts with its sting, and that the cuttle-fish discharges its ink, and the skunk its odorous shower-bath; but whether these operations have in them anything of the nature of relief to vehement emotions of terror, or are simply devices for promoting the escape of the animal from its enemies, are points on which we do not feel ourselves competent to decide.

What we have touched on are general characteristics common to the race of man, or any other race affected by them. But the interest of the subject lies greatly in the strange manifestations of feeling that often occur in the case of individuals. The different ways men have of letting off the steam of emotion constitute some of the rarest manifestations of individuality and originality. Montaigne tells of a countryman of his, who was often tormented with gout, that, being ordered by his physicians to abstain from salt meats, he used to reply merrily that there was a necessity for his having something to quarrel with in the extremity of his pain, and that he fancied that sometimes railing at and cursing the Bologna sausages, and at other times the dried tongues and bacon, was some mitigation of it. Dean Ramsay has a story of a Scotch laird who got into such a state of excitement about something that enraged him, that his servant, afraid of a fit of apoplexy, came to him with the sly suggestion, "Wouldna an aith (oath) relieve you, sir?" Before the days of chloroform, surgeons used to have strange experiences of the exclamations in which their unfortunate patients would indulge amid their agonies; prayers from the pious and curses from the profane—texts of Scripture and lines of Shakespeare—fragments of hymns, psalms, and ballads—roars articulate and groans inarticulate, would make a strange medley in their memories. Those who have had the misfortune to be present at a flogging have, no doubt, similar recollections. In the case of chloroform operations, even amid the unconsciousness of the patient, nature will sometimes assert itself still. We believe that surgeons sometimes get odd revelations of character at such times, for the ruling passion is apt to assert itself—*In vino veritas*, holds of anæsthetics too.

We remember to have heard of an old Scotch earl (his race was somewhat insane) who, in sudden gusts of anger, would pull his watch from his pocket and dash it to the ground. Something like this was the revenge of the farmer who, seeing that his barometer was pointing to Fair while the rain was deluging his fields, took his walking-stick and smashed it to pieces. In the early days of Queen Victoria, when there were rumours of a war with China, there was a story that, losing her temper when closeted with Lord Melbourne, the young Queen dragged the cover off the table, to the destruction of the china ornaments on it; and that the attendants entering in alarm to see what had happened, the imperturbable Premier coolly remarked that Her Majesty was only declaring war on China. *Si non e vero e bene trovato.* Montaigne speaks of gamblers gnawing the cards and swallowing the dice; it would be well if they put forth their feelings only on inanimate objects. So at least we should suppose thought the boy of whom it is told that, when tying his shoe-string at the foot of the stair of a gambling-hall, a gentleman coming down who had just been ruined, finding the boy in his way, administered to him an oath and a kick, because he was *always* tying that shoe-string.

There are more interesting cases, by far, in which excitable persons, knowing their own weakness, have provided themselves with some mode of exercise, on purpose to divert their excitement from a hurtful to an innocent channel. An instance of this we find in the life of Oberlin, pastor of the Ban de la Roche, in the High Alps, in the South of France. Oberlin was one of the best of men, and endeared himself to his people almost beyond example. Besides being an earnest pastor, he was a maker of roads, a builder of bridges, a reformer and philanthropist generally, who transformed his parish from a chaos of desolation into a beautiful abode of Christianity, civilisation, and comfort. It was not to be wondered at that a man with so many irons in the fire should be somewhat impatient, and have a little trouble with his temper. At such times Oberlin used to run backwards and forwards in his room, beating his hands together rapidly with a resounding noise, until his temper regained composure.* Those who are familiar with the history of the Brontës will remember what is told of their father, the eccentric and excitable incumbent of Haworth. "Even during his wife's lifetime he formed the habit of taking his meals alone; he constantly carried loaded pistols in his pockets, and, when excited, he would fire these at the doors of the out-houses, so that the villagers were quite accustomed to the sound of pistols at any hour of the day in their pastor's house."† If we are not mistaken, he had another outlet for his emotion, setting up a bolster and boxing it when he was angry; but of this we are not so sure.

We are sliding into a collateral, and in point of practical interest the most important, branch of our subject—the power we have of substituting a harmless excitement for one more serious and perilous. This reminds one of the practice of the doctors, when an internal organ is inflamed, to draw the inflammation outwards to a safer place by clapping a blister on the skin. We do not know if the very disagreeable practice which some persons have, while engaged in vehement debate, of tearing the points of their thumbs and fingers to the quick, making them all ragged and bleeding, has the effect of allaying any impetuous feeling, but surely so unseemly a practice would need a remarkable justification of some sort. We remember to have heard of the intense struggle of a young man of high connections, who had brought himself and his young wife and children to the edge of ruin by his love of drink. Having been induced to turn teetotaller, he once, at his own brother's dining-table, was seized with such a craving for the wine that was going freely and gaily round, that he tore the very nails from his fingers in his struggle with the passion that was so nearly over-mastering him. Happily, he was enabled to surmount what to him would have proved a fatal temptation, and we believe he continues to this day an estimable member of society. At his brother's table he ought never to have been exposed to such a snare.

It is, in fact, a part of religion to furnish wholesome outlets for emotion. The Apostle James says, "Is any afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." He indicates the Christian method of dealing both with emotions of sorrow and of joy. For the stricken, depressed heart, prayer is the true relief —not merely saying prayers, however beautiful, or otherwise mimicking the fellowship of the heart with God; but praying as they do to whom the language of the Psalms is the true expression of their feelings, and who can say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?" So also the Apostle urges that very joyful feelings should seek an outlet in devotional singing. This will ward off the tendency to resort to outlets of a more questionable kind. Nor will those who know the soothing, satisfying impression of true devotional singing, the calm, sweet repose of a heart that has been truly pouring itself out in words of holy love and longing, wonder at the Apostle's counsel. Such song leads to the gate of heaven, and there is not much to distress one there.

To substitute wholesome for unwholesome excitements in the case of the young is surely one of the most important parts of education. In this point of view there is no room for any feeling but satisfaction in the prominence given in our day to the cultivation of music; nor would there be any other in regard to the athletic sports now so common, were it not that these may be accompanied with an excitement of their own, which becomes, in its turn, a new source of danger. We refer to the matches, and the newspaper notices, and the betting, and perhaps, after an intense bodily strain, the drinking to which these sometimes give rise. But surely it is a good thing that suitable outlets should be provided for the animal spirits of boys, so that excitements of another kind that might be engendered by a too sedentary life, may, to say the least, be discouraged. One naturally asks, Would it not be well if there were more of this physical exercise for girls too? The free full exercise of the whole body in youth is surely a good preventative of morbid developments, and a good preparation for a wholesome manhood and womanhood in future years.

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* See "Life of Oberlin." By Mrs. Josephine Butler.

† See "Charlotte Brontë: a Monogram." By J. Wemyss Reid.

Many of the more objectionable excitements to which we have referred, and their hurtful effects in early life, might be averted by more attention to that very useful branch of true education—self-control. Probably the most untoward exercise of the habit on which we have been commenting takes place when men let out in the privacy of their families some excitement which they have been obliged to bottle up at the time. A clerk in an office is put out of temper by his employer ; unable to reply to him, he lets out his ill-temper on his wife and children. A merchant has just learned the ill-success of an important venture ; pity the poor clerk who has to attend him next ! Nay, pity the horse he drives, or the dog that follows him ! Yet surely there is something very mean in the habit that thus makes a scapegoat of the innocent, that makes an Iphigenia suffer because of the wind over which she has no control. But who shall say that this form of vicarious suffering is uncommon ? Anything that would screw up the self-control of the average human being a few points — what a wonderful improvement would it not make on the sum of human happiness ! Probably there are few things that are more odious to the generality of the English people than the infliction of unjust suffering. Yet how many are continually inflicting it, and inflicting it because they are not careful to control themselves, and do not guard against the sin of making their own households miserable for things with which they have had nothing to do !

There are too many cases where the want of the needed self-control drives people to the bottle, in order by its help to relieve the pressure upon the brain. Here, however, the effect is not to distribute the pressure, or to divert it into better channels, but to deaden the brain itself, to weaken and destroy its power of feeling. The device is very handy, so to speak, but awfully fatal. You meddle here with God's most exquisite work, the brain, which is the finest structure of the body, the most delicate, the most worthy of our care. You drug this splendid product of the Divine mind, injuring its susceptibility, and diverting it from the purpose for which God designed it. Is it then wonderful that this should commonly be the first step in a sadly downward career, and that the ruin of soul and body should advance apace after a blow has been struck at the bodily organ which is in closest contact with the immortal soul of man ?

There is another practice that shows how much evil comes from the want of self-control—suicide. What is this but a confession that the sense of evil presses so hard on the brain that it cannot be borne? It is said that if the suicide takes to cutting his throat, and does not at first cut into the carotid, the relief of the blood-letting cures his impulse ; or if he tries to drown himself, the same effect is produced by the feeling of cold. Suicide must be held to be the devil's way of relieving an over-strained brain ; that any should accept such a remedy shows the poverty of their resources. In the worst of all troubles, the God of love has surely some better prescription for us, if we would only apply to Him, than the father of lies.

THE REAL COST OF COAL.

BY J. W. STEEL.

THE "Pitman's Pay" is the best-known of the poems descriptive of the life of colliers ; and it declares in homely but true words that few know—

> "Of all the toils and tears it gives
> To warm the shins of London city."

The cost of the coal is rarely dreamt of—in life, in labour, and in money. That cost is increasing in some degree, even with the improved machinery ; but it is gratifying to know that, ton for ton, coal causes, from decade to decade, the loss of fewer lives. Occasionally, the public is startled by some great explosion that engulfs its scores of miners, and in that year the loss of life thus and in the single fatalities is great ; but it does not over a period advance, and as the tonnage of coal raised is enlarged yearly, the loss of life in proportion to the coal gained is less. In the past few years the loss of life in the mines registered under the Coal Mines Act in Great Britain and Ireland has been over one thousand yearly, but these mines include iron-mines in certain instances, and the loss of life in the coal-mines may be put at one thousand yearly. A quarter of these are often caused by explosions ; and nearly one-half more are lives lost by falls in the mines —falls of the "roof," &c. Of the remainder the largest portion are lost in the mines, in ascending or descending the shaft, and on the inclined planes, and by the trams underground, the number lost on the surface being comparatively small. About 156,500,000 tons of coal are raised out of the mines, in addition to fireclay, &c. ; and this is the return that is given for that loss. Roughly speaking, for every 156,500 tons of coal that we raise from our mines, one life is lost by accident, and there is an amount of non-fatal accidents that cannot be tabulated. But that cost of life is the toll that the mines take yearly, and there is an additional cost of lost limbs, and of maiming, and of bodily pain.

It is comparatively easy, too, to state the extent of the labour that is needed to raise the coal that is brought from the mines. Yearly the number of men,