

**THE MEDICAL ASPECTS OF  
DEATH, AND  
THE MEDICAL ASPECTS OF  
THE HUMAN MIND**

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The medical aspects of death, and the medical aspects of the human mind by James Bower  
Harrison

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**JAMES BOWER HARRISON**

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## PREFACE.

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IN youth it is not common to think much about death. A person would be considered to be of a very serious turn of mind who gave attention to such a subject in the earlier periods of his life. There comes a time, however, sooner or later, in which it is perceived that there is a reality in the meaning of the speeches we have so long unthinkingly made or heard others make. We wake up to the conviction that we are ourselves no exception to the rule; in fact, to the conviction that we shall die. Already we find ourselves in the middle period of life; already the scene is shifting, and we begin to perceive that it will shift still more. It wants no great

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exhortation, then, to see that every one is individually interested in all that relates to death. A person must be wanting in reflection if he does not consider, at least when he has made some progress in life, that he will very soon find himself at his journey's end. It is natural then to have a curiosity about death; and it is partly with a view to satisfy this curiosity, and partly with a view to fill up the intervals left by more arduous professional studies, that I have written what follows.

But some will say the subject is a distasteful one, and, like Hotspur's fop, be offended that a slovenly, unhandsome corse should be brought between the wind and their nobility. The true nobility of the mind does not, however, shrink from contemplating human nature in all its phases, untricked out with ornament or disguised by forms. I am sure the reader who has the curiosity to look at these pages will not be wanting in such nobility of mind.

In order to relieve the subject, I have purposely introduced more collateral matter than

might be absolutely necessary for its elucidation.

I have never thought it essential that a book should be dry in order to be useful.

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The second paper in this volume I have been induced to reprint from the *Psychological Journal*, because it has received the approbation of many friends in whose judgment I am pleased to confide. I am aware that it contains remarks to which some may take exception; but I write not to echo the sentiments of others, but to make known my own. I regret that at the time I wrote it I had not had the advantage of reading the very able remarks of Dr. Conolly, in his Croonian lectures delivered before the College of Physicians. The fearless and humane character of these lectures deserves a higher praise than it is in the author's power to bestow.

*Higher Broughton, Manchester,*

1851.





## CONTENTS.

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THE MEDICAL ASPECTS OF DEATH	Page
1	1
THE MEDICAL ASPECTS OF THE HUMAN MIND	113

