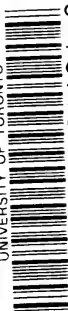


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I

# STRICTURES

ON THE

MODERN SYSTEM

OF

## FEMALE EDUCATION.

WITH

A VIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT PREVALENT  
AMONG WOMEN OF RANK AND FORTUNE.

---

BY HANNAH MORE.

---

May you so raise your character that you may help to make  
the next age a better thing, and leave posterity in your debt,  
for the advantage it shall receive by your example.

LORD HALIFAX.

*THE ELEVENTH EDITION.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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LONDON :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1811.

(1799)

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1421  
M67  
1811  
V.1



Strahan and Preston,  
Printers-Street, London.



## INTRODUCTION.

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**I**T is a singular injustice which is often exercised towards women, first to give them a very defective education, and then to expect from them the most undeviating purity of conduct; — to train them in such a manner as shall lay them open to the most dangerous faults, and then to censure them for not proving faultless, Is it not unreasonable and unjust, to express disappointment if our daughters should, in their subsequent lives, turn out precisely that very kind of character for which it would be evident to an unprejudiced by-stander that the whole scope and tenor of their instruction had been systematically preparing them?

Some reflections on the present erroneous system are here with great deference submitted to public consideration. The

Author is apprehensive that she shall be accused of betraying the interests of her sex by laying open their defects: but surely, an earnest wish to turn their attention to objects calculated to promote their true dignity, is not the office of an enemy. So to expose the weakness of the land as to suggest the necessity of internal improvement, and to point out the means of effectual defence, is not treachery, but patriotism.

Again, it may be objected to this little work, that many errors are here ascribed to women which by no means belong to them *exclusively*, and that it seems to confine to the sex those faults which are common to the species: but this is in some measure unavoidable. In speaking on the qualities of one sex, the Moralist is somewhat in the situation of the Geographer, who is treating on the nature of one country: — the air, soil, and produce of the land which he is describing, cannot fail in many essential points to resemble those

those of other countries under the same parallel; yet it is his business to descant on the one without adverting to the other; and though in drawing his map he may happen to introduce some of the neighbouring coast, yet his principal attention must be confined to that country which he proposes to describe, without taking into account the resembling circumstances of the adjacent shores.

It may be also objected that the opinion here suggested on the state of manners among the higher classes of our countrywomen, may seem to controvert the just encomiums of modern travellers, who generally concur in ascribing a decided superiority to the ladies of this country over those of every other. But such is, in general, the state of foreign manners, that the comparative praise is almost an injury to *English* women. To be flattered for excelling those whose standard of excellence is very low, is but a degrading kind of commendation; for the value of all

praise

praise derived from superiority, depends on the worth of the competitor. The character of British ladies, with all the unparalleled advantages they possess, must never be determined by a comparison with the women of other nations, but by comparing them with what they themselves might be if all their talents and unrivalled opportunities were turned to the best account. *W*

Again, it may be said, that the Author is less disposed to expatiate on excellence than error; but the office of the historian of human manners is delineation rather than panegyric. Were the end in view eulogium and not improvement, eulogium would have been far more gratifying, nor would just objects for praise have been difficult to find. Even in her own limited sphere of observation, the Author is acquainted with much excellence in the class of which she treats; — with women who, possessing learning which would be thought extensive in the other sex, set an example of deep humility to their own; —

women

women who, distinguished for wit and genius, are eminent for domestic qualities; — who, excelling in the fine arts, have carefully enriched their understandings: — who, enjoying great affluence, devote it to the glory of God; — who, possessing elevated rank, think their noblest style and title is that of a Christian.

That there is also much worth which is little known, she is persuaded; for it is the modest nature of goodness to exert itself quietly, while a few characters of the opposite cast seem, by the rumour of their exploits, to fill the world; and by their noise to multiply their numbers. It often happens that a very small party of people, by occupying the fore-ground, by seizing the public attention, and monopolizing the public talk, contrives to appear to be the great body: a few active spirits, provided their activity take the wrong turn and support the wrong cause, seem to fill the scene; and a few disturbers of order, who have the talent of thus exciting

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a false idea of their multitudes by their mischiefs, actually gain strength, and swell their numbers, by this fallacious arithmetic.

But the present work is no more intended for a panegyric on those purer characters who seek not human praise because they act from a higher motive; than for a satire on the avowedly licentious, who, urged by the impulse of the moment, resist no inclination; and, led away by the love of fashion, dislike no censure, so it may serve to rescue them from neglect or oblivion.

There are, however, multitudes of the young and the well-disposed, who have as yet taken no decided part, who are just launching on the ocean of life, just about to lose their own right convictions, virtually preparing to counteract their better propensities, and unreluctantly yielding themselves to be carried down the tide of popular practices: sanguine, thoughtless, and confident of safety. — To these the Author would gently hint, that, when once embarked, it will be no longer easy to say  
to

to their passions, or even to their principles, "Thus far shall ye go, and no further." Their struggles will grow fainter, their resistance will become feebler, till borne down by the confluence of example, temptation, appetite, and habit, resistance and opposition will soon be the only things of which they will learn to be ashamed.

Should any reader revolt at what is conceived to be unwarranted strictness in this little book, let it not be thrown by disgust before the following short consideration be weighed. — If in this Christian country we are actually beginning to regard the solemn office of Baptism as merely furnishing an article to the parish register; — if we are learning from our indefatigable Teachers, to consider this Christian rite as a legal ceremony retained for the sole purpose of recording the *age* of our children; — then, indeed, the prevailing System of Education and Manners on which these volumes presume to animadvert, may be adopted with propriety, and persisted in

with safety, without entailing on our children or on ourselves the peril of broken promises or the guilt of violated vows. — But if the obligation which Christian Baptism imposes be really binding; — if the ordinance have, indeed, a meaning beyond a mere secular transaction, beyond a record of names and dates; — if it be an institution by which the child is solemnly devoted to God as his Father, to Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and to the Holy Spirit as his Sanctifier; — if there be no definite period assigned when the obligation of fulfilling the duties it enjoins shall be superseded; — if, having once dedicated our offspring to their Creator, we no longer dare to mock Him by bringing them up in ignorance of his will and neglect of his laws; — if, after having enlisted them under the banners of Christ, to fight manfully against the three great enemies of mankind, we are no longer at liberty to let them lay down their arms; much less to lead them to act as if they  
were



were in alliance instead of hostility with these enemies ; — if, after having promised that they shall renounce the vanities of the world, we are not allowed to invalidate the engagement ; — if, after such a covenant, we should tremble to make these renounced vanities the supreme object of our own pursuit or of *their* instruction ; — if all this be really so, then the Strictures on Modern Education in the first of these volumes, and on the Habits of polished Life in the second, will not be found so repugnant to truth, and reason, and common sense, as may on a first view be supposed.

But if, on candidly summing up the evidence, the design and scope of the Author be fairly judged, not by the customs or opinions of the worldly, (for every English subject has a right to object to a suspected or prejudiced jury,) but by an appeal to that divine law which is the only infallible rule of judgment ; if on such an appeal her views and principles shall be found censurable

able for their rigour, absurd in their requisitions, or preposterous in their restrictions, she will have no right to complain of such a verdict, because she will then stand condemned by that court to whose decision she implicitly submits.

Let it not be suspected that the Author arrogantly conceives *herself* to be exempt from that natural corruption of the heart which it is one chief object of this slight work to exhibit; that she superciliously erects herself into the impeccable censor of her sex and of the world; as if from the critic's chair she were coldly pointing out the faults and errors of another order of beings, in whose welfare she had not that lively interest which can only flow from the tender and intimate participation of fellow-feeling.

With a deep self-abasement, arising from a strong conviction of being indeed a partaker in the same corrupt nature; together with a full persuasion of the many and great defects of these volumes, and a sincere con-

sciousness of her inability to do justice to a subject which, however a sense of duty impelled her to undertake, she commits herself to the candour of that Public which has so frequently, in her instance, accepted a right intention as a substitute for a powerful performance.

BATH,

*March 14, 1799.*

STRIC.



**STRICTURES**

**ON THE**

**MODERN SYSTEM**

**OF**

***FEMALE EDUCATION.***

Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss  
Of Paradise that has surviv'd the Fall !  
Thou art not known where PLEASURE is ador'd,  
That reeling Goddess with the zoneless waist.  
Forfaking thee, what shipwreck have we made  
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown !

COWPER.

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STRICTURES  
ON THE  
MODERN SYSTEM  
OF  
FEMALE EDUCATION.

---

CHAP. I.

*Address to women of rank and fortune, on the effects of their influence on society. — Suggestions for the exertion of it in various instances.*

**A**MONG the talents for the application of which women of the higher class will be peculiarly accountable, there is one, the importance of which they can scarcely rate too highly. This talent is Influence. We read of the greatest orator of antiquity, that the wisest plans which it had cost him years to frame, a woman would overturn

in a single day; and when we consider the variety of mischiefs which an ill-directed influence has been known to produce, we are led to reflect with the most sanguine hope on the beneficial effects to be expected from the same powerful force when exerted in its true direction.

The general state of civilized society — depends more than those are aware who are not accustomed to scrutinize into the springs of human action, on the prevailing sentiments and habits of women, and on the nature and degree of the estimation in which they are held. Even those who admit the power of female elegance on the manners of men, do not always attend to the influence of female principles on their character. In the former case, indeed, women are apt to be sufficiently conscious of their power, and not backward in turning it to account. But there are nobler objects to be effected by the exertion of their powers, and unfortunately, ladies, who are often unreasonably confident where they ought to be diffident,

are

are sometimes capriciously diffident just when they ought to feel where their true importance lies; and, feeling, to exert it. To use their boasted power over mankind to no higher purpose than the gratification of vanity or the indulgence of pleasure, is the degrading triumph of those fair victims to luxury, caprice, and despotism, whom the laws and the religion of the voluptuous prophet of Arabia exclude from light, and liberty, and knowledge: and it is humbling to reflect, that in those countries in which fondness for the mere persons of women is carried to the highest excess, *they are slaves*; and that their moral and intellectual degradation increases in direct proportion to the adoration which is paid to mere external charms.

But I turn to the bright reverse of this mortifying scene; to a country where our sex enjoys the blessings of liberal instruction, of reasonable laws, of a pure religion, and all the endearing pleasures of an equal, social, virtuous, and delightful intercourse: I turn with an earnest hope,

that women, thus richly endowed with the bounties of Providence, will not content themselves with polishing, when they are able to reform; with entertaining, when they may awaken; and with captivating for a day, when they may bring into action powers of which the effects may be commensurate with eternity.

In this moment of alarm and peril, I would call on them with a "warning voice," which should stir up every latent principle in their minds, and kindle every flumbering energy in their hearts: I would call on them to come forward, and contribute their full and fair proportion towards the saving of their country. But I would call on them to come forward, without departing from the refinement of their character, without derogating from the dignity of their rank, without blemishing the delicacy of their sex: I would call them to the best and most appropriate exertion of their power, to raise the depressed tone of public morals, and to awaken the drowsy spirit of religious principle.

ciple. They know too well how arbitrarily they give the law to manners, and with how despotic a sway they fix the standard of fashion. But this is not enough; this is a low mark, a prize not worthy of their high and holy calling. For, on the use which women of the superior class may now be disposed to make of that power delegated to them by the courtesy of custom, by the honest gallantry of the heart, by the imperious controul of virtuous affections, by the habits of civilized states ~~by the~~ society; on the use, I say, which they shall hereafter make of this influence, will depend, in no low degree, the well-being of those states, and the virtue and happiness, nay, perhaps the very existence, of that society.

At this period, when our country can only hope to stand by opposing a bold and noble *unanimity* to the most tremendous confederacies against religion, and order, and governments, which the world ever

law; what an accession would it bring to the public strength, could we prevail on beauty, and rank, and talents, and virtue, confederating their several powers, to exert themselves with a patriotism at once firm and feminine, for the general good! I am not founding an alarm to female warriors, or exciting female politicians: I hardly know which of the two is the most disgusting and unnatural character. Propriety is to a woman what the great Roman critic says action is to an orator; it is the first, the second, the third requisite. A woman may be knowing, active, witty, and amusing; but without propriety she cannot be amiable. Propriety is the centre in which all the lines of duty and of agreeableness meet. It is to character what proportion is to figure, and grace to attitude. It does not depend on any one perfection, but it is the result of general excellence. It shews itself by a regular, orderly, undeviating course; and never starts from its sober orbit, into any splendid eccentricities; for  
it



it would be ashamed of such praise as it might extort by any deviations from its proper path. It renounces all commendation but what is characteristic; and I would make it the criterion of true taste, right principle, and genuine feeling, in a woman, whether she would be less touched with all the flattery of romantic and exaggerated panegyric than with that beautiful picture of correct and elegant propriety which Milton draws of our first mother, when he delineates

“ Those thousand *decencies* which daily flow

“ From all her words and actions.”

Even the influence of religion is to be exercised with discretion. A female Polemic wanders nearly as far from the limits prescribed to her sex, as a female Machiavel or warlike Thalestris. Fierceness has made almost as few converts as the sword, and both are peculiarly ungraceful in a female. Even *religious* violence has human tempers of its own to indulge,

and is gratifying itself when it would be thought to be serving God. Let not the bigot place her natural passions to the account of Christianity, or imagine she is pious when she is only passionate. Let her bear in mind that a Christian doctrine is always to be defended with a Christian spirit, and not make herself amends by the stoutness of her orthodoxy for the badness of her temper. Many, because they defend a religious opinion with pertinacity, seem to fancy that they thereby acquire a kind of right to withhold the meekness and obedience which should be necessarily involved in the principle.

But the character of a consistent Christian is as carefully to be maintained, as that of a fiery disputant is to be avoided; and she who is afraid to avow her principles, or ashamed to defend them, has little claim to that honourable title. A profligate, who laughs at the most sacred institutions, and keeps out of the way of every thing which comes under the appearance of formal instruction, may be disconcerted

concerted by the modest, but spirited rebuke of a delicate woman, whose life adorns the doctrines which her conversation defends: but she who administers reproof with ill-breeding, defeats the effect of her remedy. On the other hand, there is a dishonest way of labouring to conciliate the favour of the whole company, though of characters and principles irreconcilably opposite. The words may be so guarded as not to shock the believer, while the eye and voice may be so accommodated as not to discourage the infidel. She who, with a half-earnestness, trims between the truth and the fashion; who, while she thinks it creditable to defend the cause of religion, yet does it in a faint tone, a studied ambiguity of phrase, and a certain expression in her countenance, which proves that she is not displeased with what she affects to censure, or that she is afraid to lose her reputation for wit, in proportion as she advances her credit for piety, injures the cause more than

than he who attacked it; for she proves, either that she does not believe what she professes, or that she does not reverence what fear compels her to believe. But this is not all: she is called on, not barely to repress impiety, but to excite, to encourage, and to cherish every tendency to serious religion.

Some of the occasions of contributing to the general good which are daily presenting themselves to ladies, are almost too minute to be pointed out: yet of the good which right-minded women, anxiously watching these minute occasions, and adroitly seizing them, might accomplish, we may form some idea by the ill-effects which we actually see produced, through the mere levity, carelessness, and inattention, (to say no worse,) of some of those ladies, who are looked up to as standards in the fashionable world.

I am persuaded, if many a woman of fashion, who is now disseminating unintended mischief, under the dangerous notion  
that

that there is no harm in any thing short of positive vice, and under the false colours of that indolent humility, "What good can *I* do?" could be brought to see in its collected force the annual aggregate of the random evil she is daily doing, by constantly throwing a *little* casual weight into the wrong scale, by mere inconsiderate and unguarded chat, she would start from her self-complacent dream. If she could conceive how much she may be diminishing the good impressions of *young men*; and if she could imagine how little amiable levity or irreligion makes her appear in the eyes of those who are older and abler, (however loose their own principles may be,) she would correct herself in the first instance, from pure good nature; and in the second, from worldly prudence and mere self-love. But on how much higher principles would she restrain herself, if she habitually took into account the important doctrine of consequences; and if she reflected that the

leffer but more habitual corruptions make up by their number, what they may seem to come short of by their weight: then perhaps she would find that, among the higher class of women, *inconsideration* is adding more to the daily quantity of evil than almost all other causes put together.

There is an instrument of inconceivable force, when it is employed against the interests of Christianity: it is not reasoning, for that may be answered; it is not learning, for luckily the infidel is not seldom ignorant; it is not invective, for we leave so coarse an engine to the hands of the vulgar; it is not evidence, for happily we have that all on our side: it is RIDICULE, the most deadly weapon in the whole arsenal of impiety, and which becomes an almost unerring shaft when directed by a fair and fashionable hand. No maxim has been more readily adopted, or is more intrinsically false, than that which the fascinating eloquence of a noble sceptic of the last age contrived to render so popular,

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that

that “ridicule is the test of truth\*.” It is no test of truth itself; but of their firmness who assert the cause of truth, it is indeed a severe test. This light, keen, missile weapon, the irresolute, unconfirmed Christian will find it harder to withstand, than the whole heavy artillery of infidelity united.

A young man of the better sort has, perhaps, just entered upon the world, with a certain share of good dispositions and right feelings; neither ignorant of the evidences, nor destitute of the principles of Christianity: without parting with his respect for religion, he sets out with the too natural wish of making himself a reputation, and of standing well with the fashionable part of the female world. He preserves for a time a horror of vice, which makes it not difficult for him to resist the grosser corruptions of society; he can as yet repel profaneness; nay, he can withstand the banter of a club. He has sense enough to

\* Lord Shaftesbury.

see through the miserable fallacies of the new philosophy, and spirit enough to expose its malignity. So far he does well, and you are ready to congratulate him on his security. You are mistaken: the principles of the ardent and hitherto promising adventurer are shaken, just in that very society where, while he was looking for pleasure, he doubted not of safety. In the company of certain women of good fashion and no ill fame, he makes shipwreck of his religion. He sees them treat with levity or derision subjects which he has been used to hear named with respect. He could confute an argument, he could unravel a sophistry; but cannot stand a laugh. A sneer, not at the truth of religion, for that perhaps is by none of the party disbelieved, but at its gravity, its unseasonableness, its dulness; puts all his resolution to flight. He feels his mistake, and struggles to recover his credit; in order to which, he adopts the gay affectation of trying to seem worse than he really is;



is; he goes on to say things which he does not believe, and to deny things which he does believe; and all to efface the first impresson, and to recover a reputation which he has committed to *their* hands on whose report he knows he shall stand or fall, in those circles in which he is ambitious to shine.

That cold compound of irony, irreligion, selfishness, and sneer, which make up what the French (from whom we borrow the thing as well as the word) so well express by the term *perflage*, has of late years made an incredible progress in blasting the opening buds of piety in young persons of fashion. A cold pleafantry, a temporary cant-word, the jargon of the day (for the "great vulgar" have their jargon) blights the first promise of seriousness. The ladies of *ton* have certain watch-words, which may be detected as indications of this spirit. The clergy are spoken of under the contemptuous appellation of *The Parsons*. Some ludicrous

association

association is infallibly combined with every idea of religion. If a warm-hearted youth has ventured to name with enthusiasm some eminently pious character, his glowing ardour is extinguished with a laugh: and a drawling declaration, that the person in question is really a mighty *harmless* good creature, is uttered in a tone which leads the youth secretly to vow, that whatever else he may be, he will never be a good harmless creature.

Nor is ridicule more dangerous to true piety than to true taste. An age which values itself on parody, burlesque, irony, and caricature, produces little that is sublime, either in genius or in virtue; but they *amuse*, and we live in an age which *must* be amused, though genius, feeling, truth, and principle, be the sacrifice. Nothing chills the ardours of devotion like a frigid sarcasm; and, in the season of youth, the mind should be kept particularly clear of all light associations. This is of so much importance that I  
have

have known persons who, having been early accustomed to certain ludicrous combinations, were never able to get their minds cleansed from the impurities contracted by this habitual levity, even after a thorough reformation in their hearts and lives had taken place: their principles became reformed, but their imaginations were indelibly soiled. They could desist from sins which the strictness of Christianity would not allow them to commit, but they could not dismiss from their minds images which her purity forbade them to entertain.

There was a time when a variety of epithets was thought necessary to express various kinds of excellence, and when the different qualities of the mind were distinguished by appropriate and discriminating terms; when the words venerable, learned, sagacious, profound, acute, pious, worthy, ingenious, valuable, elegant, agreeable, wise, or witty, were used as specific marks of distinct characters. But the legislators

gislators of fashion have of late years thought proper to comprise all merit in one established epithet; an epithet which, it must be confessed, is a very desirable one as far it goes. This term is exclusively and indiscriminately applied wherever commendation is intended. The word *pleasant* now serves to combine and express all moral and intellectual excellence. Every individual, from the gravest professors of the gravest profession, down to the trifler who is of no profession at all, must earn the epithet of *pleasant*, or must be contented to be nothing; and must be consigned over to ridicule, under the vulgar and inexpressive cant-word of a *bore*. This is the mortifying designation of many a respectable man, who, though of much worth and much ability, cannot perhaps clearly make out his letters patent to the title of *pleasant*: for, according to this modern classification, there is no intermediate state, but all are comprised within the ample bounds  
of

of one or other of these two comprehensive terms.

We ought to be more on our guard against this spirit of ridicule, because, whatever may be the character of the present day, its faults do not spring from the redundancies of great qualities, or the overflowings of extravagant virtues. It is well if more correct views of life, a more regular administration of laws, and a more settled state of society, have helped to restrain the excesses of the heroic ages, when love and war were considered as the great and sole businesses of human life. Yet, if that period was marked by a romantic extravagance, and the present is distinguished by an indolent selfishness, our superiority is not so triumphantly decisive, as, in the vanity of our hearts, we may be ready to imagine.

I do not wish to bring back the frantic reign of chivalry, nor to reinstate women in that fantastic empire in which they then sat enthroned in the hearts, or rather  
in

in the imaginations of men. Common sense is an excellent material of universal application, which the sagacity of latter ages has seized upon, and rationally applied to the business of common life. But let us not forget, in the insolence of acknowledged superiority, that it was *religion* and *chastity*, operating on the romantic spirit of those times, which established the despotic sway of woman: and though, in this altered scene of things, she now no longer looks down on her adoring votaries from the pedestal to which an absurd idolatry had lifted her; yet let her remember that it is the same religion and the same chastity which once raised her to such an elevation, that must still furnish the noblest energies of her character; must still attract the admiration, still retain the respect of the other sex.

While we lawfully ridicule the absurdities which we have abandoned, let us not plume ourselves on that spirit of novelty which glories in the opposite extreme.

treme. If the manners of the period in question were affected, and if the gallantry was unnatural, yet the tone of virtue was high; and let us remember that constancy, purity, and honour, are not ridiculous in themselves, though they may unluckily be associated with qualities which are so: and women of delicacy would do well to reflect, when descanting on those exploded manners, how far it be decorous to deride with too broad a laugh, attachments which could subsist on remote gratifications; or grossly to ridicule the taste which led the admirer to sacrifice pleasure to respect, and inclination to honour: how far it be delicate to sneer at that purity which made self-denial a proof of affection; to call in question the sound understanding of him who preferred the fame of his mistress to his own indulgence; to burlesque that antiquated refinement which considered dignity and reserve as additional titles to affection and reverence.

We

We cannot but be struck with the wonderful contrast exhibited to our view, when we contemplate the opposite manners of the two periods in question. In the former, all the flower of Europe smit with a delirious gallantry; all that was young, and noble, and brave, and great, with a fanatic frenzy, and preposterous contempt of danger, traversed seas, and scaled mountains, and compassed a large portion of the globe, at the expence of ease, and fortune, and life, for the unprofitable project of rescuing, by force of arms, from the hands of infidels, the sepulchre of that Saviour, whom, *in the other period*, their posterity would think it the height of fanaticism so much as to name in good company; that Saviour, whose altars they desert, whose temples they neglect; and though in more than one country at least they still call themselves by his name, yet too many, it is to be feared, contemn his precepts, still more are ashamed of his doctrines,



doctrines, and not a few reject his sacrifice. Too many consider Christianity rather as a political than a religious distinction; too many claim the appellation of Christians, in mere opposition to that Democracy with which they conceive infidelity to be associated, rather than from an abhorrence of impiety for its own sake; too many deprecate the charge of irreligion, as the supposed badge of a reprobated party, more than on account of that moral corruption which is its inseparable concomitant.

On the other hand, in an age when inversion is the character of the day, the modern idea of improvement does not consist in altering, but extirpating. We do not reform, but subvert: we do not correct old systems, but demolish them; fancying that when every thing shall be new it will be perfect. Not to have been wrong, but to have been at all, is the crime. Existence is sin. Excellence is no longer considered as an experimental thing which is to grow gradually

dually out of observation and practice, and to be improved by the accumulating additions brought by the wisdom of successive ages. Our *wisdom* is not a creature slowly brought, by ripening time and gradual growth, to perfection; but is an instantaneously created goddess, which starts at once, full grown, mature, armed cap-à-pee, from the heads of our modern thunderers. Or rather, if I may change the allusion, a perfect system is *now* expected inevitably to spring spontaneously at once, like the fabled bird of Arabia, from the ashes of its parent; and like that, can receive its birth no other way but by the destruction of its predecessor.

Instead of clearing away what is redundant, pruning what is cumbersome, supplying what is defective, and amending what is wrong, we adopt the indefinite rage for radical reform of Jack, who, in altering Lord Peter's\* coat, shewed his

\* Swift's "Tale of a Tub."

zeal by crying out, “ Tear away, brother  
“ Martin, for the love of heaven ; never  
“ mind, so you do but tear away.”

This tearing system has unquestionably rent away some valuable parts of that strong, rich, native stuff, which formed the ancient texture of British manners. That we have gained much I am persuaded ; that we have lost nothing I dare not therefore affirm. But though it fairly exhibits a mark of our improved judgment to ridicule the fantastic notions of love and honour in the heroic ages ; let us not rejoice that the spirit of generosity in sentiment, and of ardour in piety, the exuberancies of which were then so inconvenient, are now sunk as unreasonably low. That revolution of taste and manners which the unparalleled wit and genius of Don Quixote so happily effected throughout all the polished countries of Europe, by abolishing extravagancies the most absurd and pernicious, was so far imperfect, that some virtues which he never meant to

expose, unjustly fell into disrepute with the absurdities which he did: and it is become the turn of the present taste inseparably to attach in no small degree that which is ridiculous to that which is serious and heroic. Some modern works of wit have assisted in bringing piety and some of the noblest virtues into contempt, by studiously associating them with oddity, childish simplicity, and ignorance of the world: and unnecessary pains have been taken to extinguish that zeal and ardour, which, however liable to excess and error, are yet the spring of whatever is great and excellent in the human character. The novel of Cervantes is incomparable; the Tartuffe of Moliere is unequalled; but true generosity and true religion will never lose any thing of their intrinsic value, because knight-errantry and hypocrisy are legitimate objects for satire.

But to return from this too long digression to the subject of female influence. Those who have not watched the united operation

operation of vanity and feeling on a youthful mind, will not conceive how much less formidable the ridicule of all his own sex will be to a very young man, than that of those women to whom he has been taught to look up as the arbiters of elegance. Such a youth, I doubt not, might be able to work himself up, by the force of genuine Christian principle, to such a pitch of true heroism, as to refuse a challenge, (and it requires more real courage to refuse a challenge than to accept one,) who would yet be in danger of relapsing into the dreadful pusillanimity of the world, when he is told that no woman of fashion will hereafter look on him but with contempt. While we have cleared away the rubbish of the Gothic ages, it were to be wished we had not retained the most criminal of all their institutions. Why chivalry should indicate a madman, while its leading object, the *single combat*, should designate a gentleman, has not yet been explained. Nay, the plausible ori-

ginal motive is lost, while the sinful practice is continued ; for the fighter of the duel no longer *pretends* to be a glorious redresser of the wrongs of strangers ; no longer considers himself as piously appealing to heaven for the justice of his cause ; but, from the slavish fear of unmerited reproach, often selfishly hazards the happiness of his nearest connections, and always comes forth in direct defiance of an acknowledged command of the Almighty. Perhaps there are few occasions on which female influence might be exerted to a higher purpose than on this, in which laws and conscience have hitherto effected so little. But while the duellist (who perhaps becomes a dueilist only because he was first a seducer) is welcomed with smiles ; the more hardy dignified youth, who, not because he fears man but God, declines a challenge ; who is resolved to brave disgrace rather than commit sin, would be treated with cool contempt by those very persons to whose esteem he  
might

might reasonably have looked, as one of the rewards of his true and substantial fortitude.

How then is it to be reconciled with the decisions of principle, that delicate women should receive with complacency the successful libertine, who has been detected by the wretched father or the injured husband in a criminal commerce, the discovery of which has too justly banished the unhappy partner of his crime from virtuous society? Nay, if he happens to be very handsome, or very brave, or very fashionable, is there not sometimes a kind of dishonourable competition for his favour? Is there not a sort of bad popularity attached to his attentions? But, whether his flattering reception be derived from birth, or parts, or person, or (what is often a substitute for all) from his having made his way into *good company*, women of distinction sully the sanctity of virtue by the too visible pleasure they sometimes express at the attentions of such a popular libertine, whose voluble small-talk they admire, whose

sprightly nothings they quote, whose vices they justify or extenuate, and whom perhaps their very favour tends to prevent from becoming a better character, because he finds himself more acceptable as he is.

May I be allowed to introduce a new part of my subject, by remarking that it is a matter of inconceivable importance, though not perhaps sufficiently considered, when any popular work, not on a religious topic, but on any common subject, such as politics, history, or science, has happened to be written by an author of sound Christian principles? It may not have been necessary, nor prudently practicable, to have a single page in the whole work professedly religious: but still, when the living principle informs the mind of the writer, it is almost impossible but that something of its spirit will diffuse itself even into subjects with which it should seem but remotely connected. It is at least a comfort to the reader, to feel that honest confidence which results from knowing that he has put himself into  
safe



safe hands; that he has committed himself to an author, whose known principles are a pledge that his reader need not be driven to watch himself at every step with anxious circumspection; that he need not be looking on the right hand and on the left, as if he knew there were pitfalls under the flowers which are delighting him. And it is no small point gained, that on subjects in which you do not look to *improve* your religion, it is at least secured from deterioration. If the Athenian Laws were so delicate that they disgraced any one who shewed an inquiring traveller the wrong road, what disgrace, among Christians, should attach to that author, who, when a youth is inquiring the road to history or philosophy, directs him to blasphemy and unbelief\*?

In

\* The Author has often heard it mentioned as matter of regret, that Mr. Gibbon should have blemished his elegant history with the two notoriously offensive chapters against Christianity. But does

In animadverting farther on the reigning evils which the times more particularly demand that women of rank and influence should repress, Christianity calls upon them to bear their decided testimony against every thing which is notoriously contributing to the public corruption. It calls upon them to banish from their dressing-rooms, (and oh, that their influence could banish from the libraries of their sons and

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not this regret seem to imply that the work would, by this omission, have been left safe and unexceptionable? May we not rather consider these chapters as a fatal rock indeed; but as a rock enlightened by a beacon, fairly and unequivocally warning us of the surrounding perils?—To change the metaphor—Had not the mischiefs of these chapters been rendered thus conspicuous, the incautious reader would have been still left exposed to the fatal effects of the more disguised poison which is infused through almost every part of the volumes. Is it not obvious that a spirit so virulent against revealed religion as these two chapters indicate, would be incessantly pouring out some of its infectious matter on every occasion; and would even industriously make the opportunities which it did not find?

husbands!)

husbands!) that sober and unsuspected mass of mischief, which, by assuming the plausible names of Science, of Philosophy, of Arts, of Belles Lettres, is gradually administering death to the principles of those who would be on their guard, had the poison been labelled with its own pernicious title. Avowed attacks upon revelation are more easily resisted, because the malignity is advertised: but who suspects the destruction which lurks under the harmless or instructive names of *General History*, *Natural History*, *Travels*, *Voyages*, *Lives*, *Encyclopedias*, *Criticism*, and *Romance*? Who will deny that many of these works contain much admirable matter; brilliant passages, important facts, just descriptions, faithful pictures of nature, and valuable illustrations of science? But while "the dead fly lies at the bottom," the whole will exhale a corrupt and pestilential stench.

Novels, which chiefly used to be dangerous in one respect, are now become

mischievous in a thousand. They are continually shifting their ground, and enlarging their sphere, and are daily becoming vehicles of wider mischief. Sometimes they concentrate their force, and are at once employed to diffuse destructive politics, deplorable profligacy, and impudent infidelity. Rousseau was the first popular dispenser of this complicated drug, in which the deleterious infusion was strong, and the effect proportionably fatal. For he does not attempt to seduce the affections but through the medium of the principles. He does not paint an innocent woman ruined, repenting, and restored; but, with a far more mischievous refinement, he annihilates the value of chastity, and with pernicious subtlety attempts to make his heroine appear almost more amiable without it. He exhibits a virtuous woman, the victim not of temptation, but of reason — not of vice, but of sentiment — not of passion, but of conviction; and  
strikes

strikes at the very root of honour, by elevating a crime into a principle. With a metaphysical sophistry, the most plausible, he debauches the heart of woman, by cherishing her vanity in the erection of a system of male virtues, to which, with a lofty dereliction of those that are her more peculiar and characteristic praise, he tempts her to aspire; powerfully insinuating, that to this splendid system chastity does not necessarily belong; thus corrupting the judgment, and bewildering the understanding, as the most effectual way to inflame the imagination and deprave the heart.

The rare mischief of this author consists in his power of seducing by falsehood those who love truth, but whose minds are still wavering, and whose principles are not yet formed. He allures the warm-hearted to embrace vice, not because they prefer vice, but because he gives to vice so natural an air of virtue: and ardent and

enthusiastic youth, too confidently trusting in their integrity and in their teacher, will be undone, while they fancy they are indulging in the noblest feelings of their nature. Many authors will more infallibly complete the ruin of the loose and ill-disposed; but perhaps there never was a net of such exquisite art, and inextricable workmanship, spread to entangle innocence and ensnare inexperience, as the writings of Rousseau: and, unhappily, the victim does not even struggle in the toils, because part of the delusion consists in his imagining that he is set at liberty.

Some of our recent popular publications have adopted and enlarged all the mischiefs of this school; and the principal evil arising from them is, that the virtues they exhibit are almost more dangerous than the vices. The chief materials out of which these delusive systems are framed, are characters who practise superfluous acts of generosity, while

while they are trampling on obvious and commanded duties; who combine inflated sentiments of honour with actions the most flagitious; a high tone of self confidence, with a perpetual neglect of self-denial: pathetic apostrophes to the passions, but no attempt to resist them. They teach, that chastity is only individual attachment; that no duty exists which is not prompted by feeling; that impulse is the main spring of virtuous actions, while laws and religion are only unjust restraints; the former imposed by arbitrary men, the latter by the absurd prejudices of timorous and unenlightened conscience. Alas! they do not know that the best creature of impulse that ever lived, is but a wayward, unfixed, unprincipled being! that the best *natural* man requires a curb; and needs that balance to the affections which Christianity alone can furnish, and without which benevolent propensities are no security to virtue. And perhaps it is not too much to say, in spite

spite of the monopoly of benevolence to which the new philosophy lays claim, that the *human* duties of the second table have never once been well performed by any of the rejectors of that previous portion of the Decalogue which enjoins duty to *God*.

In some of the most splendid of these characters compassion is erected into the throne of justice, and justice degraded into the rank of plebeian virtues. It is considered as a noble exemplification of sentiment that creditors should be defrauded, while the money due to them is lavished in dazzling acts of charity to some object that affects the senses; which paroxysms of charity are made the sponge of every sin, and the substitute of every virtue: the whole indirectly tending to intimate how very *benevolent people are who are not Christians*. From many of these compositions, indeed, Christianity is systematically, and always virtually excluded; for the law, and the prophets, and the gospel,

*can*



*can* make no part of a scheme in which this world is looked upon as all in all; in which want and misery are considered as evils arising solely from the defects of human governments, and not as making part of the dispensations of God; in which poverty is represented as merely a political evil, and the restraints which tend to keep the poor honest, are painted as the most flagrant injustice. The gospel *can* make no part of a system in which the absurd idea of perfectibility is considered as applicable to fallen creatures; in which the chimerical project of consummate earthly happiness (founded on the mad pretence of loving the poor better than God loves them) would defeat the divine plan, which meant this world for a scene of discipline, not of remuneration. The gospel *can* have nothing to do with a system in which sin is reduced to a little human imperfection, and Old Bailey crimes are softened down into a few engaging weaknesses;

nesses; and in which the turpitude of all the vices a man himself commits, is done away by his *candour* in tolerating all the vices committed by others\*.

But the part of the system the most fatal to that class whom I am addressing is, that even in those works which do not go all the length of treating marriage as an unjust infringement on liberty, and a tyrannical deduction from general happiness; it commonly happens that the hero or heroine, who has practically violated the letter of the seventh commandment, and continues to live in the allowed violation of its spirit, is painted as so amiable and so benevolent, so tender, or so brave; and

\* It is to be lamented that some, even of those more virtuous novel writers, who *intend* to espouse the cause of religion, yet exhibit such false views of it. I have lately seen a work of some repute in this way, which was meritoriously designed to expose the impieties of the new philosophy. But the writer betrayed his own imperfect knowledge of the Christianity he was defending, by making his hero, whom he proposed as a pattern, *fight a duel!*

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the temptation is represented as so *irrefragible*, (for all these philosophers are fatalists,) the predominant and cherished sin is so filtered and defecated of its pollutions, and is so sheltered and surrounded, and relieved with shining qualities, that the innocent and impressible young reader is brought to lose all horror of the awful crime in question, in the complacency she feels for the engaging virtues of the criminal.

There is another object to which I would direct the exertion of that power of female influence of which I am speaking. Those ladies who take the lead in society, are loudly called upon to act as the guardians of the public taste, as well as of the public virtue. They are called upon, therefore, to oppose with the whole weight of their influence, the irruption of those swarms of publications now daily issuing from the banks of the Danube, which, like their ravaging predecessors of the darker ages, though with far other and more fatal arms,  
are

are overrunning civilized society. Those readers, whose purer taste has been formed on the correct models of the old classic school, see with indignation and astonishment the Huns and Vandals once more overpowering the Greeks and Romans. They behold our minds, with a retrograde but rapid motion, hurried back to the reign of "chaos and old night," by distorted and unprincipled compositions, which, in spite of strong flashes of genius, unite the taste of the Goths with the morals of Bagshot\* ;

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire !

These compositions terrify the weak, and amaze and enchant the idle ; while they disgust the discerning, by wild and misshapen superstitions, in which, with that

\* The newspapers announce that Schiller's Tragedy of the Robbers, which inflamed the young nobility of Germany to enlist themselves into a band of highwaymen to rob in the forests of Bohemia, is now acting in England by persons of quality !

*consistent*

*consistency* which forms so striking a feature of the new philosophy, those who most earnestly deny the immortality of the soul, are most eager to introduce the machinery of ghosts.

The writings of the French infidels were some years ago circulated in England with uncommon industry, and with some effect: but the plain sense and good principles of the far greater part of our countrymen resisted the attack, and rose superior to the trial. Of the doctrines and principles here alluded to, the dreadful consequences, not only in the unhappy country where they originated, and were almost universally adopted, but in every part of Europe where they have been received, have been such as to serve as a beacon to surrounding nations, if any warning can preserve them from destruction. In this country the subject is now so well understood, that every thing that issues from the *French* press is received with jealousy, and a work,  
on

on the first appearance of its exhibiting the doctrines of Voltaire and his associates, is rejected with indignation.

But let us not on account of this victory repose in confident security. The modern apostles of infidelity and immorality, little less indefatigable in dispersing their pernicious doctrines than the first apostles were in propagating gospel truths, have indeed changed their weapons, but they have by no means desisted from the attack. To destroy the principles of Christianity in this island, appears at the present moment to be their grand aim. Deprived of the assistance of the French press, they are now attempting to attain their object under the close and more artificial veil of German literature. Conscious that religion and morals will stand or fall together, their attacks are sometimes levelled against the one, and sometimes against the other: With strong occasional professions of general attachment to both of these, they  
endeavour

endeavour to interest the feelings of the reader, sometimes in favour of some one particular vice, at other times on the subject of some one objection to revealed religion. Poetry as well as prose, romance as well as history, writings on philosophical as well as on political subjects, have thus been employed to instil the principles of *Illuminism*, while incredible pains have been taken to obtain able translations of every book which was supposed likely to be of use in corrupting the heart or misleading the understanding. In many of these translations, certain bolder passages which, though well received in Germany, would have excited disgust in England, are wholly omitted, in order that the mind may be more certainly, though more slowly, prepared for the full effect of the same poison to be administered in a stronger degree at another period.

Let not those to whom these pages are addressed deceive themselves, by supposing  
this

this to be a fable; and let them inquire most seriously whether I speak truth, in asserting that the attacks of infidelity in Great Britain are at this moment principally directed against the female breast. Conscious of the influence of women in civil society, conscious of the effect which female infidelity produced in France, they attribute the ill success of their attempts in this country to their having been hitherto chiefly addressed to the male sex. They are now sedulously labouring to destroy the religious principles of women, and in too many instances have fatally succeeded. For this purpose, not only novels and romances have been made the vehicles of vice and infidelity, but the same allure-ment has been held out to the women of our country, which was employed by the first philosopher to the first sinner — Knowledge. Listen to the precepts of the new German enlighteners, and you need no longer remain in that situation in which  
Providence



Providence has placed you! Follow their examples, and you shall be permitted to indulge in all those gratifications which custom, not religion, has tolerated in the male sex!

Let us jealously watch every deepening shade in the change of manners; let us mark every step, however inconsiderable, whose tendency is downwards. Corruption is neither stationary nor retrograde; and to have departed from modesty, simplicity, and truth, is already to have made a progress. It is not only awfully true, that since the new principles have been afloat, *women* have been too eagerly inquisitive after these monstrous compositions; but it is true also that, with a new and offensive renunciation of their native delicacy, *many women of character* make little hesitation in avowing their familiarity with works abounding with principles, sentiments, and descriptions, “ which should not be so much as named among them.” By allowing  
lowing

lowing their minds to come in contact with such contagious matter, they are irrecoverably tainting them ; and by acknowledging that they are actually conversant with such corruptions, (with whatever reprobation of the author they may qualify their perusal of the book,) they are exciting in others a most mischievous curiosity for the same unhallowed gratification. Thus they are daily diminishing in the young and the timid those wholesome scruples, by which, when a tender conscience ceases to be entrenched, all the subsequent stages of ruin are gradually facilitated.

We have hitherto spoken only of the German *writings* ; but because there are multitudes who seldom read, equal pains have been taken to promote the same object through the medium of the stage : and this weapon is, of all others, that against which it is, at the present moment, the most important to warn the more inconsiderate of my countrywomen.

As

As a specimen of the German drama, it may not be unseasonable to offer a few remarks on the admired play of the *Stranger*. In this piece the character of an *adulteress*, which, in all periods of the world, ancient as well as modern; in all countries, Heathen as well as Christian, has hitherto been held in detestation, and has never been introduced but to be reprobated, is for the first time presented to our view in the most pleasing and fascinating colours. The heroine is a woman who forsook a husband the most affectionate and the most amiable, and lived for some time in a criminal commerce with her seducer. Repenting at length of her crime, she buries herself in retirement. The talents of the poet during the whole piece are exerted in attempting to render this woman the object not only of the compassion and forgiveness, but of the esteem and affection of the audience. The injured husband, convinced of his wife's repent-

ance, forms a resolution, which every man of true feeling and Christian piety will probably approve: he forgives her offence, and promises her through life his advice, protection, and fortune, together with every thing which can alleviate the misery of her condition, but refuses to replace her in the situation of his wife. But this is not sufficient for the *German* author. His efforts are employed, and it is to be feared but too successfully, in making the audience consider the husband as an unrelenting savage, while they are led by the art of the poet anxiously to wish to see an adulteress restored to that rank of women who have not violated the most solemn covenant that can be made with man, nor disobeyed one of the most positive laws which has been enjoined by God.

About the same time that this first attempt at representing an adulteress in an exemplary light was made by a German dramatist, which forms an æra in manners, a direct

a direct vindication of adultery was, for the first time, attempted by a *woman*, a professed admirer and imitator of the German suicide Werter. *The Female Werter*, as she is styled by her biographer, asserts, in a work intitled, "The Wrongs of Women," that adultery is justifiable, and that the restrictions placed on it by the laws of England, constitute one of the *Wrongs of Women*.

This leads me to dwell a little longer on this most destructive class in the whole wide range of modern corrupters, who effect the most desperate work of the passions without so much as pretending to urge their violence in extenuation of the guilt of indulging them. They solicit this very indulgence with a sort of cold-blooded speculation, and invite the reader to the most unbounded gratifications, with all the saturnine coolness of a geometrical calculation. Theirs is an iniquity rather of phlegm than of spirit: and in the pestilent atmo-

D 2

sphere

sphere they raise about them, as in the infernal climate described by Milton —

The parching air \*

Burns froze, and frost performs th' effects of fire.

This cool, calculating, intellectual wickedness eats out the very heart and core of virtue, and like a deadly mildew blights and shrivels the blooming promise of the human spring. Its benumbing touch communicates a torpid sluggishness which paralyzes the soul. It descants on depravity as gravely, and details its grossest acts as frigidly, as if its object were to *allay* the tumult of the passions, while it is letting them loose on mankind, by “plucking off “the muzzle” of present restraint and future accountableness. The system is a dire infusion, compounded of bold impiety, brutish sensuality, and exquisite folly, which creeping fatally about the heart, checks the moral circulation, and totally

\* “When the north wind bloweth, it devoureth “the mountains, and burneth the wilderness, and “consumeth the grass as fire.” Eccles. xl. 20.

stops

stops the pulse of goodness by the extinction of the vital principle: thus not only checking the stream of actual virtue, but drying up the very fountain of future remorse and remote repentance.

The ravages which some of the old offenders against purity made in the youthful heart, by the exercise of a fervid but licentious imagination on the passions, resembled the mischief effected by floods, cataracts, and volcanos. The desolation indeed was terrible, and the ruin was tremendous: yet it was a ruin which did not *infallibly* preclude the possibility of recovery. The country, though deluged and devastated, was not utterly put beyond the power of restoration. The harvests indeed were destroyed, and all was wide sterility. But though the crops were lost, the *seeds* of vegetation were not absolutely eradicated; so that, after a long and barren blank, fertility *might* finally return.

But the heart once infected with this newly medicated venom, subtil though sluggish in its operation, resembles what travellers relate of that blasted spot the Dead Sea, where those devoted cities once stood, which for their pollutions were burnt with fire from heaven. It continues a stagnant lake of putrifying waters. No wholesome blade evermore shoots up; the air is so tainted, that no living thing subsists within its influence. Near the sulphureous pool the very principle of being is annihilated. — All is death,

Death, unrepealable, eternal death !

But let us take comfort. These projects are not yet generally realised. These atrocious principles are not yet adopted into common practice. Though corruptions seem with a confluent tide to be pouring in upon us from every quarter, yet there is still left among us a discriminating judgment. Clear and strongly marked distinctions



tinctions between right and wrong still subsist. While we continue to cherish this sanity of mind, the case is not desperate. Though that crime, the growth of which always exhibits the most irrefragable proof of the dissoluteness of public manners; though that crime, which cuts up order and virtue by the roots, and violates the sanctity of vows, is awfully increasing,

Till senates seem

For purposes of empire less conven'd

Than to release the adult'refs from her bonds ;

yet, thanks to the surviving efficacy of a holy religion, to the operation of virtuous laws, and to the energy and unshaken integrity with which these laws are now administered; and, most of all, perhaps, to a standard of morals which continues in force, when the principles which sanctioned it are no more; this crime, in the female sex at least, is still held in just abhorrence. If it be practised, it is not honourable; if it be committed, it is not justified; we do

not yet affect to palliate its turpitude ; as yet it hides its abhorred head in lurking privacy ; and reprobation *hitherto* follows its publicity.

But on YOUR exerting your influence, with just application and increasing energy, may, in no small degree, depend whether this corruption shall still continue to be resisted. For the abhorrence of a practice will too probably diminish, of which the theory is perused with enthusiasm. From admiring to adopting, the step is short, and the progress rapid ; and it is in the moral as in the natural world ; the motion, in the case of minds as well as of bodies, is accelerated as they approach the centre to which they are tending.

O ye to whom this address is particularly directed ! an awful charge is, in this instance, committed to your hands ; as you discharge it or shrink from it, you promote or injure the honour of  
your

your daughters and the happiness of your sons, of both which you are the depositaries. And, while you resolutely persevere in making a stand against the encroachments of this crime, suffer not your firmness to be shaken by that affectation of charity which is growing into a general substitute for principle. Abuse not so noble a quality as Christian candour, by misemploying it in instances to which it does not apply. Pity the wretched woman you dare not countenance; and bless HIM who has "made you to differ." If unhappily she be your relation or friend, anxiously watch for the period when she shall be deserted by her betrayer; and see if, by your Christian offices, she can be snatched from a perpetuity of vice. But if, through the Divine blessing on your patient endeavours, she should ever be awakened to remorse, be not anxious to restore the forlorn penitent to that society against whose laws she has so grievously offended; and re-

member, that her soliciting such a restoration, furnishes but too plain a proof that she is not the penitent your partiality would believe ; since penitence is more anxious to make its peace with Heaven than with the world. Joyfully would a truly contrite spirit commute an earthly for an everlasting reprobation ! To restore a criminal to public society, is perhaps to tempt her to repeat her crime, or to deaden her repentance for having committed it, as well as to insult and to injure that society ; while to restore a strayed soul to God will add lustre to your Christian character, and brighten your eternal crown.

In the mean time, there are other evils ultimately perhaps tending to this, into which we are falling, through that sort of fashionable candour which, as was hinted above, is among the mischievous characteristics of the present day ; of which period perhaps it is not the smallest evil, that vices are made to look so like virtues, and are so assimilated to them, that it requires watchfulness

fulness and judgment sufficiently to analyze and discriminate. There are certain women of good fashion who practise irregularities not consistent with the strictness of virtue; while their good sense and knowledge of the world make them at the same time keenly alive to the value of reputation. They want to retain their indulgencies, without quite forfeiting their credit; but finding their fame fast declining, they artfully cling, by flattery and marked attentions, to a few persons of more than ordinary character; and thus, till they are driven to let go their hold, continue to prop a falling fame.

On the other hand, there are not wanting women of distinction of very correct general conduct, and of no ordinary sense and virtue, who, confiding with a high mind on what they too confidently call *the integrity of their own hearts*; anxious to deserve a good fame on the one hand, by a life free from reproach, yet secretly too desirous on the other of

securing a worldly and fashionable reputation; while their general associates are persons of honour, and their general resort places of safety; yet allow themselves to be occasionally present at the midnight orgies of revelry and gaming, in houses of no honourable estimation; and thus help to keep up characters, which, without their sustaining hand, would sink to their just level of contempt and reprobation. While they are holding out this plank to a drowning reputation, rather, it is to be feared, shewing their own strength than assisting another's weakness, they value themselves, perhaps, on not partaking of the worst parts of the amusements which may be carrying on; but they sanction them by their presence; they lend their countenance to corruptions they should abhor, and their example to the young and inexperienced, who are looking about for some such sanction to justify them in that to which they were before inclined,  
but

but were too timid to have ventured upon without the protection of such unfulled names. Thus these respectable characters, without looking to the general consequences of their indiscretion, are thoughtlessly employed in breaking down, as it were, the broad fence which should ever separate two very different sorts of society, and are becoming a kind of unnatural link between vice and virtue.

There is a gross deception which even persons of reputation practise on themselves. They loudly condemn vice and irregularity as an abstract principle; nay, they stigmatise them in persons of an opposite party, or in those from whom they themselves have no prospect of personal advantage or amusement, and in whom therefore they have no particular interest to tolerate evil. But the same disorders are viewed without abhorrence when practised by those who in any way minister to *their* pleasures. Refined entertainments, luxurious decorations, select music, what-  
ever

ever furnishes any delight rare and exquisite to the senses, these soften the severity of criticism; these palliate sins; these varnish over the flaws of a broken character, and extort not pardon merely, but justification, countenance, intimacy! The more respectable will not, perhaps, go all the length of vindicating the disreputable vice, but they affect to disbelieve its existence in the individual instance; or, failing in this, they will bury its acknowledged turpitude in the seducing qualities of the agreeable delinquent. Talents of every kind are considered as a commutation for a few vices; and such talents are made a passport to introduce into honourable society, characters whom their profligacy ought to exclude from it.

But the object to which you, who are or may be mothers, are more especially called, is the education of your children. If we are responsible for the use of influence in the case of those over whom we have no immediate controul, in  
the



the case of our children we are responsible for the exercise of acknowledged *power*: a power wider in its extent, indefinite in its effects, and inestimable in its importance. On you depend in no small degree the principles of the whole rising generation. To your direction the daughters are almost exclusively committed; and until a certain age, to you also is consigned the mighty privilege of forming the hearts and minds of your infant sons. To you is made over the awfully important trust of infusing the first principles of piety into the tender minds of those who may one day be called to instruct, not families merely, but districts; to influence, not individuals, but senates. Your private exertions may at this moment be contributing to the future happiness, your domestic neglect, to the future ruin, of your country. And may you never forget, in this your early instruction of your offspring, nor they, in their future application of it, that religion is the only sure ground of morals; that  
private

private principle is the only solid basis of public virtue. O think that they both may be fixed or forfeited for ever according to the use you are now making of that power which God has delegated to you, and of which he will demand a strict account. By his blessing on your pious labours, may both sons and daughters hereafter “arise and call you blessed.” And in the great day of general account, may every Christian mother be enabled through divine grace to say, with humble confidence, to her Maker and Redeemer, “Behold the children whom thou hast given me.”

Christianity, driven out from the rest of the world, has still, blessed be God! a “strong hold” in this country. And though it be the special duty of the appointed “watchman, *now* that he seeth “the sword come upon the land, to “blow the trumpet and warn the people, “which if he neglect to do, their blood “shall be required of the watchman’s “hand:”

“ hand\* :” yet, in this sacred garrison, *impregnable but by neglect*, you too have an awful post, that of arming the minds of the rising race with the “ shield of faith, whereby they shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked ;” that of girding them with that sword of “ the Spirit which is the word of God.”

Let that very period which is defecrated in a neighbouring country, by a formal renunciation of religion, be solemnly marked by you to purposes diametrically opposite. Let that dishonoured æra in which *they* avowed their resolution to exclude Christianity from the national education, be the precise moment seized upon by you for its more sedulous inculcation. And, while *their* children are systematically trained to “ live without God in the world,” let YOURS, with a more decided emphasis, be consecrated to promote his glory in it !

\* Ezekiel, xxxiii. 6.

If you neglect this your bounden duty, you will have effectually contributed to expel Christianity from her last citadel. And remember, that the dignity of the work to which you are called, is no less than that of "preserving the ark of the Lord."

## CHAP. II.

*On the education of women. — The prevailing system tends to establish the errors which it ought to correct. — Dangers arising from an excessive cultivation of the arts.*

IT is far from being the object of this slight work to offer a regular plan of female education, a task which has been often more properly assumed by far abler writers; but it is intended rather to suggest a few remarks on the reigning mode, which, though it has had many panegyrist, appears to be defective, not only in certain particulars, but as a general system. There are indeed numberless honourable exceptions to an observation which will be thought severe; yet the author would ask, Whether it be not the natural tendency of the prevailing and popular mode to excite and promote those very evils which it ought to be the main end and object of Christian

Christian instruction to remove? Whether the reigning system does not tend to weaken the principles it ought to strengthen, and to dissolve the heart it should fortify? Whether, instead of directing the grand and important engine of education to attack and destroy *vanity, selfishness, and inconsideration*, that triple alliance in strict and constant league against female virtue; the combined powers of instruction are not sedulously confederated in confirming their strength, and establishing their empire?

If indeed the *material* substance; if the body and limbs, with the organs and senses, be really the more valuable objects of attention, then there is little room for animadversion and improvement: but if the immaterial and immortal mind; if the heart, “out of which are the issues of life,” be the main concern; if the great business of education be to implant right ideas, to communicate useful knowledge, to form a correct taste and a sound judgment, to resist evil propensities, and above all to  
seize.

seize the favourable season for infusing principles and confirming habits; if education be a school to fit us for life, and life be a school to fit us for eternity; if such, I repeat it, be the chief work and grand ends of education, it may then be worth inquiring how far these ends are likely to be effected by the prevailing system.

Is it not a fundamental error to consider children as innocent beings, whose little weaknesses may perhaps want some correction, rather than as beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil dispositions, which it should be the great end of education to rectify? This appears to be such a foundation-truth, that if I were asked what quality is most important in an instructor of youth, I should not hesitate to reply, *such a strong impression of the corruption of our nature, as should insure a disposition to counteract it: together with such a deep view and thorough knowledge of the human heart, as should be necessary for developing and controlling its*  
*most*

*most secret and complicated workings.* And let us remember that to *know the world*, as it is called, that is, to know its local manners, temporary usages, and evanescent fashions, is not to *know human nature*: and that where this prime knowledge is wanting, those natural evils which ought to be counteracted will be fostered.

Vanity, for instance, is reckoned among the light and venial errors of youth; nay, so far from being treated as a dangerous enemy, it is often called in as an auxiliary. At worst, it is considered as a harmless weakness, which subtracts little from the value of a character; as a natural effervescence, which will subside of itself, when the first ferment of the youthful passions shall have done working. But those persons know little of the conformation of the human and especially of the female heart, who fancy that vanity is ever exhausted, by the mere operation of time and events. Let those who maintain this opinion look into our places of public resort, and there be-



hold if the ghost of departed beauty is not to its last flitting fond of haunting the scenes of its past pleasures. The soul, unwilling (if I may borrow an allusion from the Platonic mythology) to quit the spot in which the body enjoyed its former delights, still continues to hover about the same place, though the same pleasures are no longer to be found there. Disappointments indeed may divert vanity into a new direction; prudence may prevent it from breaking out into excesses, and age may prove that it is "vexation of spirit;" but neither disappointment, prudence, nor age can *cure* it; for they do not correct the principle. Nay, the very disappointment itself serves as a painful evidence of its protracted existence.

Since then there is a season when the youthful must cease to be young, and the beautiful to excite admiration; to learn how to grow old gracefully is perhaps one of the rarest and most valuable arts which can be taught to woman. And it must be confessed

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it is a most severe trial for those women to be called to lay down beauty, who have nothing else to take up. It is for this sober season of life that education should lay up its rich resources. However disregarded they may hitherto have been, they will be wanted now. When admirers fall away, and flatterers become mute, the mind will be driven to retire into itself, and if it find no entertainment at home it will be driven back again upon the world with increased force. Yet forgetting this, do we not seem to educate our daughters, exclusively, for the transient period of youth, when it is to maturer life we ought to advert? Do we not educate them for a crowd, forgetting that they are to live at home? for the world, and not for themselves? for show, and not for use? for time, and not for eternity?

Vanity (and the same may be said of selfishness) is not to be resisted like any other vice, which is sometimes busy and sometimes quiet; it is not to be attacked as a single fault, which is indulged in  
opposition

opposition to a single virtue; but it is uniformly to be controlled, as an active, a restless, a growing principle, at constant war with all the Christian graces; which not only mixes itself with all our faults, but insinuates itself into all our virtues too; and will, if not checked effectually, rob our best actions of their reward. Vanity, if I may use the analogy, is, with respect to the other vices, what feeling is in regard to the other senses; it is not confined in its operation to the eye, or the ear, or any single organ, but is diffused through the whole being, alive in every part, awakened and communicated by the slightest touch.

Not a few of the evils of the present day arise from a new and perverted application of terms: among these, perhaps, there is not one more abused, misunderstood, or misapplied, than the term *accomplishments*. This word in its original meaning signifies *completeness, perfection*. But I may safely appeal to the observation of mankind,

whether they do not meet with swarms of youthful females, issued from our boarding schools, as well as emerging from the more private scenes of domestic education, who are introduced into the world, under the broad and universal title of *accomplished young ladies*, of *all* of whom it cannot very truly and correctly be pronounced, that they illustrate the definition, by a completeness which leaves nothing to be added, and a perfection which leaves nothing to be desired.

This phrenzy of accomplishments, unhappily, is no longer restricted within the usual limits of rank and fortune; the middle orders have caught the contagion, and it rages downward with increasing and destructive violence, from the elegantly dressed but slenderly portioned curate's daughter, to the equally fashionable daughter of the little tradesman, and of the more opulent but not more judicious farmer. And is it not obvious, that as far as this epidemical mania has spread, this very va-

luable part of society is declining in usefulness, as it rises in its ill-founded pretensions to elegance? till this rapid revolution of the manners of the middle class has so far altered the character of the age, as to be in danger of rendering obsolete the heretofore common saying, “that most worth and  
“virtue are to be found in the middle  
“station.” For I do not scruple to assert, that in general, as far as my little observation has extended, this class of females, in what relates both to religious knowledge and to practical industry, falls short both of the very high and the very low. Their new course of education, and the indolent habits of life and elegance of dress connected with it, peculiarly unfits them for the active duties of their own very important condition; while, with frivolous eagerness, and second-hand opportunities, they run to snatch a few of those showy acquirements which decorate the great. This is done apparently with one or other

of these views; either to make their fortune by marriage, or if that fail, to qualify them to become teachers of others: hence the abundant multiplication of superficial wives, and of incompetent and illiterate governesses. The use of the pencil, the performance of exquisite but unnecessary works, the study of foreign languages and of music, require (with some exceptions which should always be made in favour of great natural genius) a degree of leisure which belongs exclusively to affluence\*. One use of learning languages is, not that we may know what the terms which express the articles of our dress and our table are called in French or Italian; nor that we may think over a few ordinary phrases in English, and then translate them, without one foreign idiom; for he who cannot

\* Those among the class in question, whose own good sense leads them to avoid these mistaken pursuits cannot be offended at a reproof which does not belong to them.

*think*

*think* in a language cannot be said to understand it ; but the great use of acquiring any foreign language is, either that it enables us occasionally to converse with foreigners, unacquainted with any other, or that it is a key to the literature of the country to which it belongs. Now those humbler females, the chief part of whose time is required for domestic offices, are little likely to fall in the way of foreigners ; and so far from enjoying opportunities for the acquisition of foreign literature, they have seldom time to possess themselves of much of that valuable knowledge which the books of their own country so abundantly furnish ; and the acquisition of which would be so much more useful and honourable than the paltry accessions they make, by hammering out the meaning of a few passages in a tongue they but imperfectly understand, and of which they are never likely to make any use.

It would be well if the reflection how eagerly this redundancy of accomplishments is seized on by their inferiors, were to operate as in the case of other absurd fashions; the rich and great being seldom brought to renounce any mode or custom, from the mere consideration that it is preposterous, or that it is wrong; while they are frightened into its immediate relinquishment, from the pressing consideration that the *vulgar* are beginning to adopt it.

But, to return to that more elevated, and, on account of their more extended influence only, that more important class of females, to whose use this little work is more immediately dedicated. Some popular authors, on the subject of female instruction, had for a time established a fantastic code of artificial manners. They had refined elegance into insipidity, frittered down delicacy into frivolousness, and reduced manner into *minauderie*. “ But to  
“ lisp,



“ lisp, and to amble, and to nick-name “ God’s creatures,” has nothing to do with true gentleness of mind ; and to be silly makes no necessary part of softness. Another class of cotemporary authors turned all the force of their talents to excite *emotions*, to inspire *sentiment*, and to reduce all mental and moral excellence into *sympathy* and *feeling*. The softer qualities were elevated at the expence of principle ; and young women were incessantly hearing unqualified sensibility extolled at the perfection of their nature ; till those who really possessed this amiable quality, instead of directing, and chastising, and restraining it, were in danger of fostering it to their hurt, and began to consider themselves as deriving their excellence from its excess ; while those less interesting damsels, who happened not to find any of this amiable sensibility in their *hearts*, but thought it creditable to have it somewhere, fancied its seat was in the *nerves* ; and here indeed

it was easily found or feigned ; till a false and excessive display of feeling became so predominant as to bring in question the actual existence of that true tenderness, without which, though a woman may be worthy, she can never be amiable.

Fashion then, by one of her sudden and rapid turns, instantaneously struck out both real sensibility and the affectation of it from the standing list of female perfections ; and, by a quick touch of her magic wand, shifted the scene, and at once produced the bold and independent beauty, the intrepid female,<sup>r</sup> the hoyden, the huntress, and the archer ; the swinging arms, the confident address, the regimental, and the four-in-hand. Such self-complacent heroines made us ready to regret their softer predecessors, who had aimed only at *pleasing* the other sex, while these aspiring fair ones struggled for the bolder renown of *rivalling* them ; the project failed ; for, whereas the former had sued  
for

for admiration, the latter challenged, seized, compelled it; but the men, as was natural, continued to prefer the more modest claimant to the sturdy competitor.

It would be well if we, who have the advantage of contemplating the errors of the two extremes, were to look for truth where she is commonly to be found, in the plain and obvious middle path, equally remote from each excess; and, while we bear in mind that helplessness is not delicacy, let us also remember that masculine manners do not necessarily include strength of character nor vigour of intellect. Should we not reflect also, that we are neither to train up Amazons nor Circassians, but that it is our business to form Christians? that we have to educate not only rational, but accountable beings? and, remembering this, should we not be solicitous to let our daughters learn of the well-taught, and associate with the well-bred? In training them, should we not carefully cultivate  
E 5 intellect,

intellect, implant religion, and cherish modesty. Then, whatever is engaging in manners would be the natural result of whatever is just in sentiment, and correct in principle; softness would grow out of humility, and external delicacy would spring from purity of heart. Then the decorums, the proprieties, the elegancies, and even the graces, as far as they are simple, pure, and honest, would follow as an almost inevitable consequence; for to follow in the train of the Christian virtues, and not to take the lead of them, is the proper place which religion assigns to the graces.

Whether we have made the best use of the errors of our predecessors, and of our own numberless advantages, and whether the prevailing system be really consistent with sound policy, true taste, or Christian principle, it may be worth our while to inquire.

Would not a stranger be led to imagine by a view of the reigning mode of female education,

education, that human life consisted of one universal holiday, and that the grand contest between the several competitors was, who should be most eminently qualified to excel, and carry off the prize, in the various shows and games which were intended to be exhibited in it? And to the exhibitors themselves, would he not be ready to apply Sir Francis Bacon's observation on the Olympian victors, that they were so excellent in these unnecessary things, that their perfection must needs have been acquired by the neglect of whatever was necessary.

What would the polished Addison, who thought that one great end of a lady's learning to dance was, that she might know how to sit still gracefully; what would even the Pagan historian\* of the great Roman conspirator, who could commemorate it among the defects of his hero's *accomplished* mistress, "that she was

\* Sallust.

“ too good a singer and dancer for a virtuous woman ;” — what would these refined critics have said, had they lived as we have done, to see the art of dancing lifted into such importance, that it cannot with any degree of safety be confided to one instructor ; but a whole train of successive masters are considered as absolutely essential to its perfection ? What would these accurate judges of female manners have said to see a modest young lady first delivered into the hands of a military serjeant to instruct her in the *feminine* art of marching ? and when this delicate acquisition is attained, to see her transferred to a professor, who is to teach her the Scotch steps ; which professor, having communicated his indispensable portion of this indispensable art, makes way for the professor of French dances ; and all perhaps, in their turn, either yield to, or have the honour to co-operate with, a finishing master ; each probably receiving a stipend which would  
make

make the pious curate or the learned chaplain rich and happy.

The science of music, which used to be communicated in so competent a degree to a young lady by an able instructor, is now distributed among a whole band. She now requires, not a master, but an orchestra. And my country-readers would accuse me of exaggeration, were I to hazard enumerating the variety of musical teachers who attend at the same time in the same family; the daughters of which are summoned, by at least as many instruments as the subjects of Nebuchadnezzar, to worship the idol which fashion has set up. They would be incredulous were I to produce real instances, in which the delighted mother has been heard to declare, that the visits of masters of every art, and the different masters of various gradations of the same art, followed each other in such close and rapid succession during the whole London residence, that her girls had not a moment's

moment's interval to look into a book; nor could she contrive any method to introduce one, till she happily devised the scheme of reading to them herself for half an hour while they were drawing, by which means no time was lost\*.

Before the evil is past redress, it will be prudent to reflect that in all polished countries an entire devotedness to the fine

\* Since the first edition of this Work appeared, the author has received from a person of great eminence the following statement, ascertaining the *time* employed in the acquisition of music in one instance. As a *general* calculation, it will perhaps be found to be so far from exaggerated, as to be below the truth. The statement concludes with remarking, that the individual who is the subject of it is now married to a man who *dislikes music!*

Suppose your pupil to begin at six years of age, and to continue at the average of four hours a day *only*, Sunday excepted, and thirteen days allowed for travelling annually, till she is eighteen, the statement stands thus; 300 days multiplied by four the number of hours amount to 1200; that number multiplied by twelve, which is the number of years, amounts to 14,400 hours!

arts.



arts has been one grand source of the corruption of the woman ; and so justly were these pernicious consequences appreciated by the Greeks, among whom these arts were carried to the highest possible perfection, that they seldom allowed them to be cultivated to a very exquisite degree by women of great purity of character. And if the ambition of an elegant British lady should be fired by the idea that the accomplished females of those polished states were the admired companions of the philosophers, the poets, the wits, and the artists of Athens ; and their beauty or talents, so much the favourite subjects of the muse, the lyre, the pencil, and the chissel, that their pictures and statues furnished the most consummate models of Grecian art ; if, I say, the accomplished females of our day are panting for similar renown, let their modesty chastise their ambition, by recollecting that these celebrated women are not to be found among  
the

the chaste wives and the virtuous daughters of the Aristides's, the Agis's, and the Phocians ; but that they are to be looked for among the Phrynes, the Lais's, the Aspasia's, and the Glyceras. I am persuaded the truly Christian female, whatever be her taste or her talents, will renounce the desire of any celebrity when attached to impurity of character, with the same noble indignation with which the virtuous biographer of the above named heroes renounced any kind of fame which might be dishonestly attained, by exclaiming, " I had rather it should be said there never was a Plutarch, than that they should say Plutarch was malignant, unjust, or envious\*."

And while this corruption, brought on by an excessive cultivation of the arts, has

\* No censure is levelled at the exertions of real genius, which is as valuable as it is rare ; but at the absurdity of that system which is erecting *the whole sex* into artists.

contributed

contributed its full share to the decline of states, it has always furnished an infallible symptom of their impending fall. The satires of the most penetrating and judicious of the Roman poets, corroborating the testimonies of the most accurate of their historians, abound with invectives against the general depravity of manners introduced by the corrupt habits of female education. The bitterness and gross indelicacy of some of the satirists (too gross to be either quoted or referred to) make little against their authority in these points; for how shocking must those corruptions have been, and how obviously offensive their causes, which could have appeared so highly disgusting to minds so coarse as not likely to be scandalized by slight deviations from decency! The famous ode of Horace, attributing the vices and disasters of his degenerate country to the same cause, might, were it quite free from the above objections, be produced, I will not presume to say as  
an

an exact picture of the existing manners of this country; but may I not venture to say, as a prophecy, the fulfilment of which cannot be very remote? It may however be observed, that the modesty of the Roman matron, and the chaste demeanor of her virgin daughters, which amidst the stern virtues of the state were as immaculate and pure as the honour of the Roman citizen, fell a sacrifice to the luxurious dissipation brought in by their Asiatic conquests; after which the females were soon taught a complete change of character. They were instructed to accommodate their talents of pleasing to the more vitiated tastes of the other sex; and began to study every grace and every art which might captivate the exhausted hearts, and excite the wearied and capricious inclinations of the men; till by a rapid, and at length complete enervation, the Roman character lost its signature, and through a quick succession of slavery, effeminacy, and  
vice,

vice, sunk into that degeneracy of which some of the modern Italian states serve to furnish a too just specimen.

It is of the essence of human things that the same objects which are highly useful in their season, measure, and degree, become mischievous in their excess, at other periods and under other circumstances. In a state of barbarism, the arts are among the best reformers; and they go on to be improved themselves, and improving those who cultivate them, till, having reached a certain point, those very arts which were the instruments of civilization and refinement, become instruments of corruption and decay; enervating and depraving in the second instance, by the excess and universality of their cultivation, as certainly as they refined in the first. They become agents of voluptuousness. They excite the imagination; and the imagination thus excited, and no longer under the government of strict principle, becomes the most dangerous stimulant of the passions; promotes

motes a too keen relish for pleasure, teaching how to multiply its sources, and inventing new and pernicious modes of artificial gratification.

May we not rank among the present corrupt consequences of this unbounded cultivation, the unchaste *costume*, the impure style of dress, and that indelicate statue-like exhibition of the female figure, which by its artfully disposed folds, its seemingly wet and adhesive drapery, so defines the form as to prevent covering itself from becoming a veil? This licentious mode, as the acute Montesquieu observed on the dances of the Spartan virgins, has taught us “to strip chastity itself of “modesty.”

May the author be allowed to address to our own country and our own circumstances, to both of which they seem peculiarly applicable, the spirit of that beautiful apostrophe of the most polished poet of antiquity to the most victorious nation? “Let us leave to the inhabitants of *con-*  
*quered*”

“ *quered countries* the praise of carrying  
 “ to the very highest degree of perfection,  
 “ sculpture and the sister arts; but let *this*  
 “ country direct her own exertions to the  
 “ art of governing mankind in equity and  
 “ peace, of shewing mercy to the sub-  
 “ missive, and of abasing the proud among  
 “ surrounding nations \*.”

\* Let me not be suspected of bringing into any sort of comparison the gentleness of British Government with the rapacity of Roman conquests, or the tyrannical principles of Roman dominion, To spoil, to butcher, and to commit every kind of violence, they call, says one of the ablest of their historians, by the lying name of *government*, and when they have spread a general desolation, they call it *peace* (1).

With such *dictatorial*, or as we might now read *directorial* inquisitors, *we* can have no point of contact; and if I have applied the servile flattery of a delightful poet to the purpose of English happiness, it was only to shew wherein true national grandeur consists, and that every country pays too dear a price for those arts and embellishments of society which endanger the loss of its morals and manners.

(1) Tacitus' Life of Agricola, speech of Galgacus to his soldiers.

## CHAP. III.

*External Improvement.—Children's Balls.—  
French Governesses.*

LET me not however be misunderstood. The customs which fashion has established, when they are not in opposition to what is right, when they are not hostile to virtue, should unquestionably be pursued in the education of ladies. Piety maintains no natural war with elegance, and Christianity would be no gainer by making her disciples unamiable. Religion does not forbid that the exterior be made to a certain degree the object of attention. But the admiration bestowed, the sums expended, and the time lavished on arts, which add little to the intrinsic value of life, should have limitations. While these arts should be admired, let them not be admired above their just value: while they are practised, let it not be to the exclusion  
of



of higher employments: while they are cultivated, let it be to amuse leisure, not to engross life.

But it happens unfortunately that to ordinary observers, the girl who is really receiving the worst instruction often makes the best figure; while in the more correct but less ostensible education, the deep and sure foundations to which the edifice will owe its strength and stability lie out of sight. The outward accomplishments have the dangerous advantage of addressing themselves more immediately to the senses, and of course meet every where with those who can in some measure appreciate as well as admire them; for all can see and hear, but all cannot scrutinize and discriminate. External acquirements too recommend themselves the more because they are more rapidly as well as more visibly progressive; while the mind is led on to improvement by slow motions and imperceptible degrees; while the heart must

must now be admonished by reproof, and now allured by kindness; its liveliest advances being suddenly impeded by obstinacy, and its brightest prospects often obscured by passion; it is slow in its acquisitions of virtue, and reluctant in its approaches to piety; and its progress, when any progress is made, does not obtrude itself to vulgar observation. The unruly and turbulent propensities of the mind are not so obedient to the forming hand as defects of manner, or awkwardness of gait. Often when we fancy that a troublesome passion is completely crushed, we have the mortification to find that we have "scotched the snake, not killed it." One evil temper starts up before another is conquered. The subduing hand cannot cut off the ever-sprouting heads so fast as the prolific Hydra can re-produce them, nor fell the stubborn Antæus so often as he can recruit his strength, and rise in vigorous and repeated opposition.

Hired teachers are also under a disadvantage resembling tenants at rack-rent; it is their interest to bring in an immediate revenue of praise and profit, and, for the sake of a present rich crop, those who are not strictly conscientious, do not care how much the ground is impoverished for future produce. But parents, who are the lords of the soil, must look to permanent value, and to continued fruitfulness. The best effects of a careful education are often very remote; they are to be discovered in future scenes, and exhibited in as yet untried connexions. Every event of life will be putting the heart into fresh situations, and making new demands on its prudence, its firmness, its integrity, or its forbearance. Those whose business it is to form and model it, cannot foresee those contingent situations specifically and distinctly; yet, as far as human wisdom will allow, they must enable it to prepare for them all by general principles, correct habits, and an unremitted sense of depend-

ence on the Great Disposer of events. As the soldier must learn and practise all his evolutions, though he do not know on what service his leader may command him, by what particular foe he shall be most assailed, nor what mode of attack the enemy may employ; so must the young Christian militant be prepared by previous discipline for actual duty.

But the contrary of all this is the case with external acquisitions. The master (it is his interest) will industriously instruct his young pupil to set all her improvements in the most immediate and conspicuous point of view. To attract admiration is the great principle sedulously inculcated into her young heart; and is considered as the fundamental maxim; and, perhaps, if we were required to condense the reigning system of the brilliant education of a lady into an aphorism, it might be comprised in this short sentence, ✓ *To allure and to shine.* This system however is the fruitful germ, from which a thousand

thousand yet unborn vanities, with all their multiplied ramifications, will spring. A tender mother cannot but feel an honest triumph in contemplating those talents in her daughter which will necessarily excite admiration; but she will also shudder at the vanity that admiration may excite, and at the new ideas it will awaken: and, startling as it may sound, the labours of a wise mother, anxious for her daughter's best interests, will seem to be at variance with those of all her teachers. She will indeed rejoice at her progress, but she will rejoice with trembling; for she is fully aware, that if all possible accomplishments could be bought at the price of a single virtue, of a single principle, the purchase would be infinitely dear, and she would reject the dazzling but destructive acquisition. She knows that the superstructure of the accomplishments can be alone safely erected on the broad and solid basis of Christian humility: nay more, that as the materials of which that superstructure is to be composed,

posed, are of themselves of so unstable and tottering a nature, the foundation must be deepened and enlarged with more abundant care, otherwise the fabric will be overloaded with its own ornaments, and what was intended only to embellish the building, will prove the occasion of its fall.

“ To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven,” said the wise man; but he said it before the invention of BABY-BALLS; an invention which has formed a kind of æra, and a most inauspicious one, in the annals of polished education. This modern device is a sort of triple conspiracy against the innocence, the health, and the happiness of children. Thus, by factitious amusements, to rob them of a relish for the simple joys, the unbought delights, which naturally belong to their blooming season, is like blotting out Spring from the year. To sacrifice the true and proper enjoyments of sprightly and happy children, is to make them pay a dear and disproportionate price for their artificial pleasures.

pleasures. They step at once from the nursery to the ball-room ; and, by a change of habits as new as it is preposterous, are thinking of dressing themselves, at an age when they used to be dressing their dolls. Instead of bounding with the unrestrained freedom of little wood-nymphs over hill and dale, their cheeks flushed with health, and their hearts overflowing with happiness, these *gay* little creatures are shut up all the morning, demurely practising the *pas grave*, and transacting the serious business of acquiring a new step for the evening with more cost of time and pains than it would have taken them to acquire twenty new ideas.

Thus they lose the amusements which properly belong to their smiling period, and unnaturally anticipate those pleasures (such as the are) which would come in, too much of course, on their introduction into fashionable life. The true pleasures of childhood are cheap and natural ; for every object teems with delight to eyes and

hearts new to the enjoyment of life: nay, the hearts of healthy children abound with a general disposition to mirth and joyfulness, even without a specific object to excite it; like our first parent, in the world's first Spring, when all was new, and fresh, and gay about him;

they live, and move,  
And feel that they are happier than they know.

Only furnish them with a few simple and harmless materials, and a little, but not too much, leisure, and they will manufacture their own pleasures with more skill, and success, and satisfaction, than they will receive from all that your money can purchase. Their bodily recreations should be such as will promote their health, quicken their activity, enliven their spirits, whet their ingenuity, and qualify them for their mental work. But, if you begin thus early to create wants, to invent gratifications, to multiply desires, to waken dormant sensibilities, to stir up hidden fires, you are studiously laying up for your children



children a store of more premature caprice and irritability, of impatience and discontent.

While childhood preserves its native simplicity, every little change is interesting, every gratification is a luxury. A ride or a walk, a garland of flowers of her own forming, a plant of her own cultivating, will be a delightful amusement to a child in her natural state; but these harmless and interesting recreations will be dull and tasteless to a sophisticated little creature, nursed in such forced, and costly, and vapid pleasures. Alas! that we should throw away this first grand opportunity of working into a practical habit the moral of this important truth, that the chief source of human discontent is to be looked for in our real, but in our factitious wants; not in the demands of nature, but in the insatiable cravings of artificial desire!

When we see the growing zeal to crowd the midnight ball with these pretty fairies, we should be almost tempted to fancy it was a kind of pious emulation

among the mothers to cure their infants of a fondness for vain and foolish pleasures, by tiring them out by this premature familiarity with them. And we should be so desirous to invent an excuse for a practice so inexcusable, that we should be ready to hope that they were actuated by something of the same principle which led the Spartans to introduce their sons to scenes of riot, that they might conceive an early disgust at vice! or possibly that they imitated those Scythian mothers who used to plunge their new-born infants into the flood, thinking none to be worth saving who could not stand this early struggle for their lives: the greater part, indeed, as it might have been expected, perished; but the parents took common, that is, were lost, the few who escaped would be the stronger for having been thus exposed!

To behold Lilliputian coquettes, projecting dresses, studying colours, affording ribbands, mixing flowers, and choosing feathers; their little hearts beating with  
hopes

hopes about partners and fears about rivals; to see their fresh cheeks pale after the mid night supper, their aching heads and unbraced nerves disqualifying the little languid beings for the next day's task; and to hear the grave apology, "that it is owing to the wine, the crowd, the heated room of the last night's ball;" all this, I say, would really be as ridiculous, if the mischief of the thing did not take off from the merriment of it, as any of the ridiculous and preposterous disproportions in the diverting travels of Captain Lemuel Gulliver.

Under a just impression of the evils which we are sustaining from the principles and the practices of *modern* France, we are apt to lose sight of those deep and lasting mischiefs which so long, so regularly, and so systematically we have been importing from the same country, though in another form and under another government. In one respect, indeed, the first were the more formidable, because we

embraced the ruin without suspecting it; while we defeat the malignity of the latter, by detecting the turpitude and defending ourselves against its contagion. This is not the place to descant on that levity of manners, that contempt of the Sabbath, that fatal familiarity with loose principles, and those relaxed notions of conjugal fidelity, which have often been transplanted into this country by women of fashion, as a too common effect of a long residence in a neighbouring nation; but it is peculiarly suitable to my subject to advert to another domestic mischief derived from the same foreign extraction: I mean, the risks that have been run, and the sacrifices which have been made, in order to furnish our young ladies with the means of acquiring the French language in the greatest possible purity. Perfection in this accomplishment has been so long established as the supreme object; so long considered as the predominant excellence to which all other excellences must bow down, that it would  
be

be hopeless to attack a law which fashion has immutably decreed, and which has received the stamp of long prescription. We must, therefore, be contented with expressing a wish, that this indispensable perfection could have been attained at the expence of sacrifices less important. It is with the greater regret I animadvert on this and some other prevailing practices, as they are errors into which the wise and respectable have, through want of consideration, or rather through want of firmness to resist the tyranny of fashion, sometimes fallen. It has not been unusual, when mothers of rank and reputation have been asked how they ventured to entrust their daughters to foreigners, of whose principles they know nothing, except that they were Roman Catholics, to answer, "That they had taken care to be secure  
" on that subject; for that it had been  
" stipulated that *the question of religion*  
" *should never be agitated between the*  
" *teacher and the pupil.*" This, it must

be confessed, is a most desperate remedy ; it is like starving to death, to avoid being poisoned. And who can help trembling for the event of that education, from which religion, as far as the governess is concerned, is thus formally and systematically excluded ? Surely it would not be exacting too much, to suggest at least that an attention no less scrupulous should be exerted to insure the character of our children's instructor for piety and knowledge, than is thought necessary to ascertain that she has nothing *patois* in her dialect.

I would rate a correct pronunciation and an elegant phraseology at their just price, and I would not rate them low ; but I would not offer up piety and principle as victims to sounds and accents. And the matter is now made more easy ; for whatever disgrace it might once have brought on an English lady to have had it suspected from her accent that she had the misfortune not to be born in a neighbouring country, some recent events may serve to recon-

reconcile her to the suspicion of having been bred in her own. A country, to which (with all its sins, which are many!) the whole world is looking up with envy and admiration, as the seat of true glory and of comparative happiness! A country in which the exile, driven out by the crimes of his own, finds a home! A country to obtain the protection of which it was claim enough to be unfortunate; and no impediment to have been the subject of her direst foe! A country, which, in this respect, humbly imitating the Father of compassion, when it offered mercy to a suppliant enemy, never conditioned for merit, nor insisted on the virtues of the miserable as a preliminary to its own bounty!

England! with all thy faults I love thee still!

## CHAP. IV.

*Comparison of the mode of female education in the last age with the present.*

**T**O return, however, to the subject of general education. We admit that a young lady may excel in speaking French and Italian; may repeat a few passages from a volume of extracts; play like a professor, and sing like a syren; have her dressing-room decorated with her own drawings, tables, stands, flower-pots, screens, and cabinets; nay, she may dance like Sempronia \* herself, and yet we shall insist that she may have been very badly educated. I am far from meaning to set no value whatever on any or all of these qualifications; they are all of them elegant, and many of them properly tend to the

\* See Cataline's Conspiracy.

perfecting



perfecting of a polite education. These things in their measure and degree may be done, but there are others which should not be left undone. Many things are becoming, but "one thing is needful." Besides, as the world seems to be fully apprized of the value of whatever tends to embellish life, there is less occasion here to insist on its importance.

But, though a well-bred young lady may lawfully learn most of the fashionable arts; yet, let me ask, does it seem to be the true end of education to make women of fashion *dancers, singers, players, painters, actresses, sculptors, gilders, varnishers, engravers, and embroiderers?* Most men are commonly destined to some profession, and their minds are consequently turned each to its respective object. Would it not be strange if they were called out to exercise their profession, or to set up their trade, with only a little general knowledge of the trades and professions of all other

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men,

men, and without any previous definite application to their own peculiar calling? The profession of ladies, to which the bent of *their* instruction should be turned, is that of daughters, wives, mothers, and mistresses of families. They should be therefore trained with a view to these several conditions, and be furnished with a stock of ideas and principles, and qualifications and habits, ready to be applied and appropriated, as occasion may demand, to each of these respective situations. For though the arts which merely embellish life must claim admiration; yet, when a man of sense comes to marry, it is a companion whom he wants, and not an artist. It is not merely a creature who can paint, and play, and sing, and draw, and dress, and dance; it is a being who can comfort and counsel him; one who can reason, and reflect, and feel, and judge, and discourse, and discriminate; one who can assist him in his affairs, lighten his cares, soothe his sorrows,

forrows, purify his joys, strengthen his principles, and educate his children.

Almost any ornamental acquirement is a good thing, when it is not the best thing a woman has, and talents are admirable when not made to stand proxy for virtues. The writer of these pages is intimately acquainted with several ladies who, excelling most of their sex in the art of music, but excelling them also in prudence and piety, find little leisure or temptation, amidst the delights and duties of a large and lovely family, for the exercise of this charming talent; they regret that so much of their own youth was wasted in acquiring an art which can be turned to so little account in married life, and are now conscientiously restricting their daughters in the portion of time allotted to its acquisition.

Far be it from me to discourage the cultivation of any existing talent; but may it not be questioned of the fond believing mother, whether talents, like the spirits of

Owen

Owen Glendower, though conjured by parental partiality with ever so loud a voice,

Yet will they come when you do call for them ?

That injudicious practice, therefore, cannot be too much discouraged, of endeavouring to create talents which do not exist in nature. *That their daughters shall learn every thing*, is so general a maternal maxim, that even unborn daughters, of whose expected abilities and conjectured faculties, it is presumed, no very accurate judgment can previously be formed, are yet predestined to this universality of accomplishments. This comprehensive maxim, thus almost universally brought into practice, at once weakens the general powers of the mind, by drawing off its strength into too great a variety of directions ; and cuts up time into too many separate portions, by splitting it into such an endless multiplicity of employments. I know that I am treading on tender ground ;  
but

but I cannot help thinking that the restless pains we take to cram up every little vacuity of life, by crowding one new thing upon another, rather creates a thirst for novelty than knowledge; and is but a well-disguised contrivance to anticipate the keeping us in after-life more effectually from conversing with ourselves. The care taken to prevent *ennui* is but a creditable plan for promoting self-ignorance. We run from one occupation to another, (I speak of those arts to which little intellect is applied,) with a view to lighten the pressure of time; above all, we fly to them to save us from our own thoughts; we fly to them to rescue us from ourselves: whereas, were we thrown a little more on our own hands, we might at last be driven, by way of something to do, to try to get acquainted with our own hearts. But it is only one part of the general inconsistency of the human character, that with the person of all others we best love, we least like to converse and to form

form an intimacy ; I mean ourselves. But though our being less absorbed by this busy trifling, which dignifies its inanity with the imposing name of occupation, might render us somewhat more sensible of the tedium of life ; yet might not this very sensation tend to quicken our pursuit of a better ? For an awful thought here suggests itself. If life be so long that we are driven to set at work every engine to pass away the tediousness of time ; how shall we do to get rid of the tediousness of eternity ? an eternity in which not one of the acquisitions which life has been exhausted in acquiring, will be of the least use ? Let not then the soul be starved by feeding it on such unsubstantial aliment, for the mind can be no more nourished by these empty husks than the body can be fed with ideas and principles.

Among the boasted improvements of the present age, none affords more frequent matter of peculiar exultation, than the  
manifest

manifest superiority in the employments of the young ladies of our time over those of the good housewives of the last century. It is matter of general triumph that they are at present employed in learning the polite arts, or in acquiring liberal accomplishments; while it is insisted that their forlorn predecessors wore out their joyless days in adorning the mansion-house with hideous hangings of sorrowful tapestry and disfiguring tent-stitch. Most cheerfully do I allow to the reigning modes their just claim of boasted superiority, for certainly there is no piety in bad taste. Still, granting all the deformity of the exploded ornaments, one advantage attended them: the walls and floors were not vain of their decorations; and it is to be feared, that the little person sometimes is. The flattery bestowed on the obsolete employments, for probably even *they* had their flatterers, furnished less aliment to selfishness, and less gratification to vanity; and the occupation itself was  
less

less likely to impair the delicacy and modesty of the sex, than the exquisite cultivation of personal accomplishments or personal decorations; and every mode which keeps down vanity and keeps back *self*, has at least a moral use. For while we admire the rapid movement of the elegant fingers of a young lady busied in working or painting her ball dress, we cannot help suspecting that her alacrity may be a little stimulated by the animating idea *how very well she shall look in it*. Nor was the industrious matron of Ithaca more soothed at her solitary loom with the sweet reflection that by her labour she was gratifying her filial and conjugal feelings, than the industrious but pleasure-loving damsel of Britain is gratified by the anticipated admiration which her ingenuity is procuring for her beauty.

Might not this propensity be a little checked, and an interesting feeling be combined with her industry, were the fair  
 artist



artist habituated to exercise her skill in adorning some one else rather than herself? For it will add no lightness to the lightest head, nor vanity to the vainest heart, to solace her labours in reflecting how exceedingly the gown she is working will become her mother. This suggestion, trifling as it may seem, of habituating young ladies to exercise their taste and devote their leisure, not to the decoration of their own persons, but to the service of those to whom they are bound by every tender tie of love and duty, would not only help to repress vanity, but by thus associating the idea of industry with that of filial tenderness, would promote, while it gratified, some of the best affections of the heart. The Romans (and it is mortifying on the subject of Christian education to be driven so often to refer to the superiority of Pagans) were so well aware of the importance of keeping up a sense of family fondness and attachment by the very same means

means which promoted simple and domestic employment, that no citizen of note ever appeared in public in any garb but what was spun by his wife and daughter : and this virtuous fashion was not confined to the early days of republican severity, but even in all the pomp and luxury of imperial power, Augustus preserved in his own family this simplicity of primitive manners.

Let me be allowed to repeat, that I mean not with preposterous praise to decant on the ignorance or the prejudices of past times, nor absurdly to regret that vulgar system of education which rounded the little circles of female acquirements within the limits of the sampler and the receipt-book. Yet if a preference almost exclusive was then given to what was merely useful, a preference almost equally exclusive also is now assigned to what is merely ornamental. And it must be owned, that if the life of a young lady, formerly too  
 much

much resembled the life of a confectioner, it now too much resembles that of an actress; the morning is all rehearsal, and the evening is all performance. And those who are trained in this regular routine, who are instructed in order to be exhibited, soon learn to feel a sort of impatience in those societies in which *their* kind of talents are not likely to be brought into play; the task of an auditor becomes dull to her who has been used to be a performer. Esteem and kindness become but cold substitutes to one who has been fed on plaudits and pampered with acclamations; and the excessive commendation which the visitor is expected to pay for his entertainment not only keeps alive the flame of vanity to the artist by constant fuel, but is not seldom exacted at a price which a veracity at all strict would grudge. The misfortune is, when a whole circle are obliged to be competitors who shall flatter most, it is not easy to be at once very sincere and very civil. And unfortunately, while the age is be-

come so knowing and so fastidious, that if a young lady does not play like a public performer, no one thinks her worth attending to; yet if she does so excel, some of the soberest of the admiring circle feel a strong alloy to their pleasure on reflecting at what a vast expence of time this perfection must probably have been acquired\*.

The study of the fine arts, indeed, is forced on young persons, with or without genius, (fashion, as was said before, having swallowed up that distinction,) to such excess, as to vex, fatigue, and disgust those who have no talents, and to determine them, as soon as they become free agents, to abandon all such tormenting acquirements;

\* That accurate judge of the human heart, Madame de Maintenon, was so well aware of the danger resulting from some kinds of excellence, that after the young ladies of the Court of Louis Quatorze had distinguished themselves by the performance of some dramatic piece of Racine, when her friends told her how admirably they had played their part; "Yes," answered this wise woman, "so admirably that they shall never play again."

while

while by this incessant compulsion still more pernicious effects are often produced on those who actually possess genius; for the natural constant reference in the mind to that public performance for which they are sedulously cultivating this talent, excites the same passions of envy, vanity, and competition in the dilettanti performers, as might be supposed to stimulate professional candidates for fame and profit at public games and theatrical exhibitions. Is this emulation, is this spirit of rivalry, is this hunger after public praise the temper which prudent parents would wish to excite and foster. Besides, in *any* event the issue is not favourable: if the young performers are timid, they disgrace themselves and distress their friends: if courageous, their boldness offends still more than their bad performance. Shall they then be studiously brought into situations in which failure discredits and success disgusts?

May I venture, without being accused of pedantry, to conclude this chapter with

another reference to Pagan examples? The Hebrews, Egyptians, and Greeks, believed that they could more effectually teach their youth maxims of virtue, by calling in the aid of music and poetry; these maxims, therefore, they put into verses, and these verses were set to the most popular and simple tunes, which the children sang: thus was their love of goodness excited by the very instruments of their pleasure; and the senses, the taste, and the imagination, as it were, pressed into the service of religion and morals. Dare I appeal to Christian parents, if these arts are commonly used by *them*, as subsidiary to religion and to a system of morals much more worthy of every ingenious aid and association, which might tend to recommend them to the youthful mind? Dare I appeal to Christian parents, whether music, which fills up no trifling portion of their daughters' time, does not fill it without any moral end, or even without any specific object? Nay, whether some of the  
the

the favourite songs of polished societies are not amatory, are not Anacreontic, more than quite become the modest lips of innocent youth and delicate beauty?

## CHAP. V.

*On the religious employment of time. — On the manner in which holidays are passed. — Selfishness and inconsideration considered. — Dangers arising from the world.*

THERE are many well-disposed parents, who, while they attend to these fashionable acquirements, do not neglect to infuse religious knowledge into the minds of their children; and having done this, are but too apt to conclude that they have done all, and have fully acquitted themselves of the important duties of education. For having, as they think, sufficiently grounded their daughters in religion, they do not scruple to allow them to spend almost the whole of their time exactly like the daughters of worldly people. Now, though it be one great point gained, to have imbued their young minds with the best knowledge,

ledge,



ledge, the work is not therefore by any means accomplished. "What do ye more than others?" is a question which, in a more extended sense, religious parents must be prepared to answer.

Such parents should go on to teach children the religious use of time, the duty of consecrating to God every talent, every faculty, every possession, and of devoting their whole lives to his glory. People of piety should be more peculiarly on their guard against a spirit of idleness, and a slovenly habitual wasting of time, because this practice, by not assuming a palpable shape of guilt, carries little alarm to the conscience. Even religious characters are in danger on this side; for not allowing themselves to follow the world in its excesses and diversions, they have consequently more time upon their hands; and instead of dedicating the time so rescued to its true purposes, they sometimes make as it were compensation to themselves for their abstinence from dangerous places of

public resort, by an habitual frivolousness at home; by a superabundance of unprofitable small-talk, idle reading, and a quiet and dull frittering away of time. Their day perhaps has been more free from actual evil; but it will often be discovered to have been as unproductive as that of more worldly characters; and they will be found to have traded to as little purpose with their master's talents. But a Christian must take care to keep his conscience peculiarly alive to the unapparent, though formidable perils of unprofitableness.

To these, and to all; the author would earnestly recommend to accustom their children to pass at once from serious business to active and animated recreation; they should carefully preserve them from those long and torpid intervals between both, that languid indolence and spiritless trifling, that merely getting rid of the day without stamping on it any characters of active goodness or of intellectual profit, that inane drowsiness which wears out such  
 large

large portions of life in both young and old. It has, indeed, passed into an aphorism, that activity is necessary to virtue, even among those who are not apprized that it is also indispensable to happiness. So far are many parents from being sensible of this truth, that vacations from school are not merely allowed, but appointed to pass away in wearisome fauntering and indeterminate idleness, and this is done by erring tenderness by way of converting the holidays into pleasure! Nay, the idleness is specifically made over to the child's mind, as the strongest expression of the fondness of the parent! A dislike to learning is thus systematically excited by preposterously erecting indolence into a reward for application! And the promise of doing nothing is held out as the strongest temptation, as well as the best recompence, for having done well!

These and such like errors of conduct arise from the latent, but very operative,

principle of selfishness. This principle is obviously promoted by many habits and practices seemingly of little importance; and indeed selfishness is so commonly interwoven with vanity and inconsideration, that I have not always thought it necessary to mark the distinction. They are alternately cause and effect; and are produced and reproduced by reciprocal operation. They are a joint confederacy who are mutually promoting each other's strength and interest; they are united by almost inseparable ties, and the indulgence of either is the gratification of all. Ill-judging tenderness is in fact only a concealed self-love, which cannot bear to be witness to the uneasiness which a present disappointment, or difficulty, or vexation, would cause to a darling child; but which yet does not scruple by improper gratification to store up for it future miseries, which the child will infallibly suffer, though it may be at a distant period; which the selfish mother does

does not disturb herself by anticipating, because she thinks she may be saved the pain of beholding.

Another principle, something different from this, though it may properly fall under the head of selfishness, seems to actuate some parents in their conduct towards their children; I mean, a certain slothfulness of mind, a love of ease, which imposes a voluntary blindness, and makes them not choose to see what will give them trouble to combat. From the persons in question we frequently hear such expressions as these: "Children will be children." — "My children, I suppose, are much like those of other people," &c. Thus we may observe this dangerous and delusive principle frequently turning off with a smile from the first indications of those tempers, which from their fatal tendency ought to be very seriously taken up. I would be understood now as speaking to conscientious parents, who consider it as a general duty to correct the faults of their  
G 6 children,

children, but who, from this indolence of mind, are extremely backward in *discovering* such faults, and are not very well pleased when they are pointed out by others. Such parents will do well to take notice; that whatever they consider it is a duty to *correct*, must be equally a duty to endeavour to *find out*. And this indolent love of ease is the more to be guarded against; as it not only leads parents into erroneous conduct towards their children, but is peculiarly dangerous to themselves. It is a fault frequently cherished from ignorance of its real character; for, not bearing on it the strong features of deformity which mark many other vices, but, on the contrary, bearing some resemblance to virtue, it is frequently mistaken for the Christian graces of patience, meekness, and forbearance, than which nothing can be more opposite; these proceeding from the Christian principle of self-denial, the other from self-indulgence.

In

In this connection may I be permitted to remark on the practice at the tables of many families when the children are at home for the holidays? Every delicacy is forced upon them, with the tempting remark, "that they cannot have this or that dainty at school." They are indulged in irregular hours for the same motive, "because they cannot have that indulgence at school." Thus the natural seeds of idleness, sensuality, and sloth, are at once cherished, by converting the periodical visit at home into a season of intemperance, late hours, and exemption from learning. So that children are habituated, at an age when lasting associations are formed in the mind, to connect the idea of study with that of hardship, of happiness with gluttony, and of pleasure with loitering, feasting, or sleeping. Would it not be better, would it not be kinder, to make them combine the delightful idea of home, with the gratification of the social affections, the fondness of maternal

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love,

love, the kindness, and warmth, and confidence of the sweet domestic attachments,

— And all the charities  
Of father, son, and brother ?

I will venture to say, that those listless and vacant days, when the thoughts have no precise object ; when the imagination has nothing to shape ; when industry has no definitive pursuit ; when the mind and the body have no exercise, and the ingenuity has no acquisition either to anticipate or to enjoy, are the longest, the dullest, and the least happy, which children of spirit and genius ever pass. Yes ! it is a few short but keen and lively intervals of animated pleasure, snatched from between the successive labours and duties of a well-ordered busy day, looked forward to with hope, enjoyed with taste, and recollected without remorse, which, both to men and to children, yield the truest portions of enjoyment. O snatch your offspring from  
adding



adding to the number of those objects of supreme commiseration, who seek their happiness in doing nothing! The animal may be gratified by it, but the man is degraded. Life is but a short day; but it is a working day. Activity *may* lead to evil; but inactivity *cannot* be led to good.

Young ladies should also be accustomed to set apart a fixed portion of their time, as sacred to the poor\*, whether in relieving, instructing, or working for them; and the performance of this duty must not

\* It would be a noble employment, and well becoming the tenderness of their sex, if ladies were to consider the superintendance of the poor as their immediate office. They are peculiarly fitted for it; for from their own habits of life they are more intimately acquainted with domestic wants than the other sex; and in certain instances of sickness and suffering peculiar to themselves, they should be expected to have more sympathy; and they have obviously more leisure. There is a certain religious society, distinguished by simplicity of dress, manners, and language, whose poor are perhaps better taken care of than any other; and one reason may be, that they are immediately under the inspection of the women.

be left to the event of contingent circumstances, or the operation of accidental impressions; but it must be established into a principle, and wrought into a habit. A specific portion of the day must be allotted to it, on which no common engagement must be allowed to intrench. Those periods of time which are not *stated*, are seldom turned to their proper use; and nothing short of a regular plan (which must, however, be sometimes made to give way to circumstances) insures the conscientious discharge of any duty. This will help to furnish a powerful remedy for that selfishness whose strong holds (the truth cannot be too often repeated) it is the grand business of Christian education perpetually to attack. If we were but aware how much better it makes ourselves to wish to see others better, and to assist in making them so, we should find that the good done would be of as much importance by the habit of doing good, which it would induce

induce in our own minds, as by its beneficial effects on the objects of our kindness\*.

In what relates to pecuniary bounty, it will be requiring of young persons a very small sacrifice, if you teach them merely to give that money to the poor which properly belongs not to the child but to the parent: this sort of charity commonly subtracts little from their own pleasures, especially when what they have bestowed is immediately made up to them as a reward for their little fit of generosity. They will, on this plan, soon learn to give, not only for praise but for profit. The sacrifice of an orange to a little girl, or a feather to a great

\* In addition to the instruction of the individual poor, and the superintendance of charity schools, ladies might be highly useful in assisting the parochial clergy in the adoption of that excellent plan for the instruction of the ignorant, suggested by the Bishop of Durham in his last admirable charge to his clergy. It is with pleasure the author is enabled to add that the scheme has actually been adopted with good effect in that extensive diocese.

one,

one, given at the expence of their own gratification, would be a better lesson of charity on its right ground, than a considerable sum of money to be presently replaced by the parent. And it would be habituating them early to combine two ideas which ought never to be separated, charity and self-denial.

As an antidote to selfishness, as well as to pride and indolence, they should also very early be taught to perform all the little offices in their power for themselves; they should be accustomed not to be insolently exercising their supposed prerogative of rank and wealth, by calling for servants where there is no real occasion; above all, they should be accustomed to consider the domestics' hours of meals and rest as almost sacred, and the golden rule should be practically and uniformly enforced, even on so trifling an occasion as ringing a bell through mere wantonness, or self-love, or pride.

To

To check the growth of inconsiderateness, young ladies should early be taught to discharge their little debts with punctuality. They should be made sensible of the cruelty of obliging trades-people to call often for the money due to them; and of hindering and detaining those whose time is the source of their subsistence, under pretence of some frivolous engagement, which ought to be made to bend to the comfort and advantage of others. They should conscientiously allow sufficient time for the execution of their orders; and with a Christian circumspection, be careful not to drive work-people, by needless hurry, into losing their rest, or breaking the Sabbath. I have known a lady give her gown to a mantua-maker on the Saturday-night, to whom she would not for the world say in so many words, "You must work through the whole of Sunday," while she was virtually compelling her to do so, by an injunction to bring the gown home finished on the  
Monday

Monday morning, on pain of her displeasure. To these hardships numbers are continually driven by good-natured but inconsiderate employers. As these petty exactions of inconsideration furnish also a constant aliment to selfishness, let not a desire to counteract them be considered as leading to too minute details; nothing is too frivolous for animadversion, which tends to fix a bad habit in the superior, or to wound the feelings of the dependant.

Would it not be turning those political doctrines, which are now so warmly agitating, to a truly moral account, and give the best practical answer to the popular declamations on the inequality of human conditions, were the rich carefully to instruct their children to soften that inevitable inequality by the mildness and tenderness of their behaviour to their inferiors? This dispensation of God, which excites so many sinful murmurs, would, were it thus practically improved, tend to establish the glory of that Being who is now so often charged

charged with injustice; for God himself is covertly attacked in many of the invectives against laws, governments, and the supposed arbitrary and unjust disproportion of ranks and riches.

This dispensation, thus properly improved, would at once call into exercise the generosity, kindness, and forbearance of the superior; and the patience, resignation, and gratitude of the inferior: and thus, while we were vindicating the *ways* of Providence, we should be accomplishing his *plan*, by bringing into action those virtues of both classes, which would have had little exercise had there been no inequality in station and fortune. Those more exalted persons who are so zealously contending for the privileges of rank and power, should never lose sight of the religious duties and considerate virtues which the possession of rank and power imposes on themselves; duties and virtues which should ever be inseparable from those privileges. As the inferior classes have  
little

little real right to complain of *laws* in this respect, let the great be watchful to give them as little cause to complain of *manners*. In order to this, let them carefully train up their children to supply by individual kindness those cases of hardship which laws cannot reach; let them obviate, by an active and well-directed compassion, those imperfections of which the best constructed human institutions must unavoidably partake; and, by the exercise of private bounty, early inculcated, soften those distresses which can never come under the cognizance of even the best government. Let them teach their offspring, that the charity of the rich should ever be subsidiary to the public provision in those numberless instances to which the most equal laws cannot apply. By such means every lesson of politics may be converted into a lesson of piety; and a spirit of condescending love might win over some, whom a spirit of invective will only inflame.

Among



Among the instances of negligence into which even religiously disposed parents and teachers are apt to fall, one is, that they are not sufficiently attentive in finding interesting employment for the Sunday. They do not make a scruple of sometimes allowing their children to fill up the intervals of public worship with their ordinary employments and common school exercises. They are not aware that they are training their offspring to an early and a systematic profanation of the Sabbath by this custom : for to children, their tasks are their business ; to them a French or Latin exercise is as serious an occupation as the exercise of a trade or profession is to a man ; and if they are allowed to think the one right *now*, they will not be brought hereafter to think that the other is wrong : for the opinions and practices fixed at this important season are not easily altered ; and an early habit becomes rooted into an inveterate prejudice. By this oversight even the friends of religion may be contributing eventually

eventually to that abolition of the Lord's day, so devoutly wished and so indefatigably laboured after by its enemies, as the desired preliminary to the destruction of whatever is most dear to Christians. What obstruction would it offer to the general progress of youth, if all their Sunday exercises (which, with reading, composing, transcribing, and getting by heart, might be extended to an entertaining variety,) were adapted to the peculiar nature of the day?

Those whose own spirits and vigour of mind are exhausted by the amusements of the world, and who therefore grow faint and languid under the continuance of serious occupation, are not aware how different the case is with lively young people, whose spring of action has not been broken by habitual indulgence. They are not aware that a firm and well-disciplined intellect wants, comparatively, little amusement. The mere change from one book to another, is a relief almost amounting to pleasure. But then the variation must be judiciously

judiciously made, so that to novelty must be superadded comparative amusement; that is, the gradation should be made from the more to the less serious book. If care be thus taken that greater exertion of the mental powers shall not be required, when, through length of application, there is less ability or disposition to exert them; such a well-ordered distinction will produce on the mind nearly the same effect as a new employment.

It is not meant to impose on them such rigorous study as shall convert the day they should be taught to love into a day of burdens and hardships, or to abridge them of such innocent enjoyments as are compatible with a season of holy rest. It is intended merely to suggest that there should be a marked distinction in the nature of their employments and studies; for on the observance or neglect of this, as was before observed, their future notions and principles will in a good degree be formed. The Gospel, in rescuing the Lord's day from

the rigorous bondage of the Jewish Sabbath, never lessened the obligation to keep it holy, nor meant to sanction any secular occupation \*. Christianity, in lightening its austerities, has not defeated the end of its institution; in purifying its spirit, it has not abolished its object.

Though the author, chiefly writing with a view to domestic instruction, has purposely avoided entering on the disputed question, whether a school or home education be best? a question which perhaps must generally be decided by the state of the individual home, and the state of the individual school; yet she begs leave to suggest one remark, which peculiarly belongs to a school education; namely, the general habit of converting the Sunday into a visiting day by way of gaining time; as if the appropriate instructions of the Lord's day were the cheapest sacrifice which

\* The strongest proof of this observation is the *conduct* of the first Christians, who had their instructions immediately from the Apostles.

could

could be made to pleasure. Even in those schools, in which religion is considered as an indispensable part of instruction, this kind of instruction is almost exclusively limited to Sundays: how then are girls ever to make any progress in this most important article, if they are habituated to lose the religious advantages of the school, for the sake of having more dainties for dinner abroad? This remark cannot be supposed to apply to the visits which children make to religious parents, and indeed it only applies to those cases where the school is a conscientious school, and the visit a trifling visit.

Among other subjects which engross a good share of worldly conversation, one of the most attracting is beauty. Many ladies have often a random way of talking rapturously on the general importance and the fascinating power of beauty, who are yet prudent enough to be very unwilling to let their own daughters find out they are handsome. Perhaps the contrary course

might be safer. If the little listener were not constantly hearing that beauty is the best gift, she would not be so vain from fancying herself to be the best gifted. Be less solicitous, therefore, to conceal from her a secret, which, with all your watchfulness, she will be sure to find out, without your telling; but rather seek to lower the general value of beauty in her estimation. Use your daughter in all things to a different standard from that of the world. It is not by vulgar people and servants only that she will be told of her being pretty. She will be hearing it not only from gay ladies, but from grave men; she will be hearing it from the whole world around her. The antidote to the present danger is not now to be searched for; it must be already operating; it must have been provided for in the foundation laid in the general principle she has been imbibing before this particular temptation of beauty came in question. And this general principle is an habitual indifference to flattery.

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She must have learnt not to be intoxicated by the praise of the world. She must have learnt to estimate things by their intrinsic worth, rather than by the world's estimation. Speak to her with particular kindness and commendation of plain but amiable girls; mention with compassion such as are handsome but ill-educated; speak casually of some who were once thought pretty, but have ceased to be good; make use of the arguments arising from the shortness and uncertainty of beauty, as strong additional reasons for making that which is little valuable in itself, still less valuable. As it is a *new* idea which is always dangerous, you may thus break the force of this danger by allowing her an early introduction to this inevitable knowledge, which would become more interesting, and of course more perilous by every additional year; and if you can guard against that fatal and almost universal error of letting her see that she is more loved on account of her beauty, her familiarity

with the idea may be less dangerous than its novelty afterwards would prove.

But the great and constant peril to which young persons in the higher walks of life are exposed, is the prevailing turn and spirit of general conversation. Even the children of better families, who are well instructed when at their studies, are yet at other times continually beholding the WORLD set up in the highest and most advantageous point of view. Seeing the world! knowing the world! standing well with the world! making a figure in the world! is spoken of as including the whole sum and substance of human advantages. They hear their education almost exclusively alluded to with reference to the *figure* it will enable them to make in the world. In almost all companies they hear all that the world admires spoken of with admiration; rank flattered, fame coveted, power fought, beauty idolized, money considered as the one thing needful, and as the atoning substitute for the want of all other



other things; profit held up as the reward of virtue, and worldly estimation as the just and highest prize of laudable ambition; and after the very spirit of the world has been thus habitually infused into them all the week, one cannot expect much effect from their being coldly and customarily told now and then on Sundays, that they must not “love the world, nor the things of the world.” To tell them once in seven days that it is a sin to gratify an appetite which you have been whetting and stimulating the preceding six, is to require from them a power of self-control, which our knowledge of the impetuosity of the passions, especially in early age, should have taught us is impossible.

This is not the place to animadvert on the usual misapplication of the phrase, “knowing the world;” which term is commonly applied, in the way of panegyric, to keen, designing, selfish, ambitious men, who study mankind in order to turn them to their own account. But

in the true sense of the expression, the sense which Christian parents would wish to impress on their children, to know the world is to know its emptiness, its vanity, its futility, and its wickedness. To know it, is to despise it, to be on our guard against it, to labour to live above it; and in this view an obscure Christian in a village may be said to know the world better than a hoary courtier or wily politician. For how can they be said to *know* it, who go on to love it, to value it, to be led captive by its allurements, to give their soul in exchange for its lying promises?

But while so false an estimate is often made in fashionable society of the real value of things; that is, while Christianity does *not* furnish the standard, and human opinion *does*; while the multiplying our desires is considered as a symptom of elegance, though to subdue those desires is the grand criterion of religion; while moderation is beheld as indicating a poorness of spirit, though to that very poverty of  
spirit

spirit the highest promise of the gospel is assigned; while worldly wisdom is sedulously enjoined by worldly friends, in contradiction to that assertion, "that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God;" while the praise of men is to be anxiously sought in opposition to that assurance, that "the fear of man worketh a snare;" while they are taught all the week, that "the friendship of the world" is the wisest pursuit, and on Sundays that "it is enmity with God;" while these things are so (and that they are so in a good degree who will undertake to deny?), may we not venture to affirm that a Christian education, though it be not an impossible, is yet a very difficult work?

## CHAP. VI.

## ON THE EARLY FORMING OF HABITS.

*On the Necessity of forming the Judgment to direct those Habits.*

IT can never be too often repeated, that one of the great objects of education is the forming of habits. I may be suspected of having recurred too often, though hitherto only incidentally, to this topic. It is, however, a topic of such importance, that it will be useful to consider it somewhat more in detail; as the early forming of right habits on sound principles seems to be one of the grand secrets of virtue and happiness.

The forming of any one good habit seems to be effected rather by avoiding the opposite bad habit, and resisting every temptation to the opposite vice, than by the mere occasional practice of the virtue required. *Humility*, for instance, is less

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an act than a disposition of mind. It is not so much a single performance of some detached humble deed, as an incessant watchfulness against every propensity to pride. *Sobriety* is not a prominent ostensible thing; it evidently consists in a series of negations, and not of actions. It is a conscientious habit of resisting every incentive to intemperance. — *Meekness* is best attained and exemplified by guarding against every tendency to anger, impatience, and resentment. — A habit of *attention* and application is formed by early and constant vigilance against a trifling spirit and a wandering mind. — An habit of *industry*, by watching against the blandishments of pleasure, the waste of small portions of time, and the encroachment of small indulgences.

Now, to stimulate us to an earnest desire of working any or all of these habits into the minds of children, it will be of importance to consider what a variety of uses each of them involves.

To take, for example, the case of moderation and temperance. It would seem to a superficial observer, of no very great importance to acquire a habit of self-denial in respect either to the elegances of decoration, or to the delicacies of the table, or to the common routine of pleasure; that there can be no occasion for an indifference to luxuries harmless in themselves, and no need of daily moderation in those persons who are possessed of affluence, and to whom therefore, as the expence is no object, so the forbearance is thought of no importance. Those acts of self-denial, I admit, when contemplated by themselves, appear to be of no great value; yet they assume high importance, if you consider what it is to have, as it were, dried up the spring of only one importunate passion; if you reflect, after any one such conquest is obtained, how easily, comparatively speaking, it is followed up by others.

How much future virtue and self-government, in more important things, may a  
mother

mother therefore be securing to that child, who should always remain in as high a situation as she is in when the first foundations of this quality are laying; but should any reverse of fortune take place in the daughter, how much integrity and independence of mind also may be prepared for her, by the early excision of superfluous desires? She, who has been trained to subdue these propensities, will, in all probability, be preserved from running into worthless company, merely for the sake of the splendor which may be attached to it. She will be rescued from the temptation, to do wrong things, for the sake of enjoyments from which she cannot abstain. She is delivered from the danger of flattering those whom she despises; because her moderate mind and well-ordered desires do not solicit indulgences, which could only be procured by mean compliances. For she will have been habituated to consider the *character* as the leading circumstance of attachment, and the splendor

splendor as an accident, which may or may not belong to it; but which, when it does, as it is not a ground of merit in the possessor, so it is not to be the ground of her attachment. The habit of self-control, in small, as well as in great things, involves in the aggregate less loss of pleasure, than will be experienced by disappointments in the mind ever yielding itself to the love of present indulgences, whenever those indulgences should be abridged or withdrawn.

She who has been accustomed to have an early habit of restraint exercised over all her appetites and temper; she who has been used to set bounds to her desires as a general principle, will have learned to withstand a passion for dress and personal ornaments; and the woman who has conquered this propensity, has surmounted one of the most domineering temptations which assail the sex: while this seemingly little circumstance, if neglected, and the opposite habit formed, may be the first step to  
every



every successive error, and every consequent distress. Those women who are ruined by seduction in the lower classes, and those who are made miserable by ambitious marriages in the higher, will be more frequently found to owe their misery to an ungoverned passion for dress and show, than to motives more apparently bad. An habitual moderation in this article growing out of a pure self-denying principle, and not arising from the affectation of a singularity, which may have more pride in it than others feel in the indulgence of any of the things which this singularity renounces, includes many valuable advantages. Modesty, simplicity, humility, œconomy, prudence, liberality, charity, are almost inseparably, and not very remotely, connected with an habitual victory over personal vanity and a turn to personal expence. The inferior and less striking virtues are the smaller pearls, which serve to string and connect the great ones.

An early and unremitting zeal in forming the mind to a habit of attention, not only produces the outward expression of good breeding, as one of its incidental advantages; but involves, or rather creates, better qualities than itself; while vacancy and inattention not only produce vulgar manners, but are usually the indication, if not of an ordinary, yet of a neglected understanding. To the habitually inattentive, books offer little benefit; company affords little improvement; while a self-imposed attention sharpens observation, and creates a spirit of inspection and inquiry, which often lifts a common understanding to a degree of eminence in knowledge, sagacity, and usefulness, which indolent or negligent genius does not always reach. A habit of attention exercises intellect, quickens discernment, multiplies ideas, enlarges the power of combining images and comparing characters, and gives a faculty of picking up improvement from circumstances the least promising; and gaining

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instruction from those slight, but frequently recurring occasions, which the absent and the negligent turn to no account. Scarcely any thing or person is so unproductive, as not to yield some fruit to the attentive and sedulous collector of ideas. But this is far from being the highest praise of such a person; she, who early imposes on herself a habit of strict attention to whatever she is engaged in, begins to wage early war with wandering thoughts, useless reveries, and that disqualifying train of busy, but unprofitable imaginations, by which the idle are occupied, and the absent are absorbed. She who keeps her intellectual powers in action, studies with advantage herself, her books, and the world. Whereas they, in whose undisciplined minds vagrant thoughts have been suffered to range without restriction on ordinary occasions, will find they cannot easily call them home, when wanted to assist in higher duties. Thoughts, which are indulged in habitual wandering, will not be readily restrained  
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in the solemnities of public worship or of private devotion.

But in speaking of the necessary habits, it must be noticed that the habit of unremitting *industry*, which is indeed closely connected with those of which we have just made mention, cannot be too early or too sedulously formed. Let not the sprightly and the brilliant reject industry as a plebeian quality, as a quality to be exercised only by those who have their bread to earn, or their fortune to make. But let them respect it, and adopt it as an habit to which many elevated characters have, in a good measure, owed their distinction. The masters in science, the leaders in literature, legislators and statesmen, even apostles and reformers, would not, at least in so eminent a degree, have enlightened, converted, and astonished the world, had they not been eminent possessors of this sober and unostentatious quality. It is the quality to which the immortal Newton modestly ascribed his own vast attainments; who, when  
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he was asked by what means he had been enabled to make that successful progress which struck mankind with wonder, replied that it was not so much owing to any superior strength of genius, as to an habit of patient thinking, laborious attention, and close application. We must, it is true, make some deductions for the humility of the speaker. Yet it is not overrating its value, to assert that industry is the sturdy and hard-working pioneer, who by persevering labour removes obstructions, overcomes difficulties, clears intricacies, and thus facilitates the march, and aids the victories of genius.

An exact habit of *æconomy* is of the same family with the two foregoing qualities; and, like them, is the prolific parent of a numerous offspring of virtues. For want of the early ingrafting of this practice on its only legitimate stock, — a sound principle of integrity, — may we not, in too many instances in subsequent life, almost apply to the fatal effects of domestic profuseness, what

what Tacitus observes of a lavish profligacy in the expenditure of public money — that an Exchequer which is exhausted by prodigality will, probably, be replenished by crimes.

Those who are early trained to scrupulous punctuality in the division of time, and an exactness to the hours of their childish business, will have learned how much the œconomy of time is promoted by habits of punctuality when they shall enter on the more important business of life. By getting one employment cleared away, exactly as the succeeding employment shall have a claim to be dispatched, they will learn two things; that one business must not trench on the time which belongs to another business, and to set a value on those odd quarters of an hour, and even minutes, which are so often lost between successive duties, for want of calculation, punctuality, and arrangement.

A habit of *punctuality* is perhaps one of the earliest which the youthful mind may  
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be made capable of receiving; and it is so connected with truth, with morals, and with the general good government of the mind, as to render it important that it should be brought into exercise on the smallest occasions. But I refrain from enlarging on this point, as it will be discussed in another part of this work\*.

It requires perhaps still more sedulity to lay early the first foundation of those interior habits, which are grounded on watchfulness against such faults as do not often betray themselves by breaking out into open excesses, and which there would therefore be less discredit in indulging. It should more particularly make a part of the first elements of education, to try to infuse into the mind that particular principle which stands in opposition to those evil tempers, to which the individual pupil is more immediately addicted. As it cannot be followed up too closely, so it can hardly

\* See Chapter on Definitions.

be set about too early. May we not borrow an important illustration of this truth from the fabulous Hero of the Grecian story? He who was one day to perform exploits, which should fill the earth with his renown, began by conquering in his infancy; and it was a preliminary to his delivering the world from monsters in his riper years, that he should set out by strangling the serpents in his cradle.

It must however be observed that diligent care is to be exercised, that, together with the gradual formation of these and other useful *habits*, an adequate attention be employed to the forming of the *judgment*; to the framing such a sound constitution of mind, as shall supply the power of directing all the faculties of the understanding, and all the qualities of the heart, to keep their proper places and due bounds, to observe their just proportions, and maintain their right station, relation, order, and dependence.

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For instance, while the young person's mind is trained to those habits of attention and industry which we have been recommending, great care must be used that her judgment be so enlightened as to enable her to form sound notions with regard to what is really worthy her attentive pursuit, without which discriminating power, application would only be actively misemployed; and ardour and industry would but serve to lead her more widely from the right road of Truth. Without a correct judgment she would be wasting her activity on what was frivolous, or exhausting it on what was mischievous. Without that ardour and activity we have been recommending, she might only be "weaving spiders' webs;" with it, if destitute of judgment, she would be "hatching cockatrices' eggs."

Again, if the judgment be not well informed as to the nature and true ends of temperance, the ill-instructed mind might be led into a superstitious reliance on the merits

merits of self-denial; and resting in the letter of a few outward observances, without any consideration of the spirit of this Christian virtue, might be led to infer that the kingdom of heaven was the *abstinence* from “meat and drink,” and “not peace, and righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

The same well-ordered judgment will also be required in superintending and regulating the habit of œconomy; for extravagance being rather a relative than a positive term, the true art of regulating expence, is not to proportion it to the fashion, or to the opinion or practice of others, but to our own station and our own circumstances. Aristippus being accused of extravagance by one who was not rich, because he had given six crowns for a small fish, said to him, “Why, what would you have given?” — “Twelve pence,” answered the other. “Then,” replied Aristippus, “our œconomy is equal;”  
“for

“ for six crowns are no more to me, than  
“ twelve pence are to you.”

It is the more important to enlighten the judgment in this point, because so predominant is the controul of custom and fashion, that men of unfixed principle are driven to borrow other people's judgment of them before they can venture to determine whether they themselves are rich or happy. These vain slaves to human opinion do not so often say, How ought I to act? or, What ought I to spend? as, What does the world think I ought to do? What do others think I ought to spend?

There is also a perpetual call for the interference of the judgment in settling the true notion of what weakness is, before we can adopt the practice without falling into error. We must apprise those on whose minds we are inculcating this amiable virtue, of the broad line of distinction between Christian meekness and that well-bred tone and gentle manner which passes current for it in the world. We must

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teach them also to distinguish between an humble opinion of our own ability to judge, and a servile dereliction of truth and principle, in order to purchase the poor praise of indiscriminate compliance and yielding softness. We must lead them to distinguish accurately between honesty and obstinacy, between perseverance and perverseness, between firmness and prejudice. We must convince them that it is not meekness, but baseness, when, through a dishonest dread of offending the prosperous, or displeasing the powerful, we forbear to recommend, or refuse to support, those whom it is our duty to recommend or to support. That it is selfishness and not meekness, when through fear of forfeiting any portion of our reputation, or risking our own favour with others, we refuse to bear our testimony to suspected worth or discredited virtue\*.

\* To this criminal timidity, Madam de Maintenon, a woman of parts and piety, sacrificed the ingenious and amiable Racine; whom, while she had  
taste

taste enough to admire, she had not the generosity to defend, when the Royal favour was withdrawn from him. A still darker cloud hangs over her fame, on account of the selfish neutrality she maintained in not interposing her good offices between the resentments of the King and the sufferings of the Hugonots. It is a heavy aggravation of her fault, that she herself had been educated in the faith of these persecuted people.

## CHAP. VII.

*Filial obedience not the character of the age.*

*— A comparison with the preceding age in this respect. — Those who cultivate the mind advised to study the nature of the soil. — Unpromising children often make strong characters. — Teachers too apt to devote their pains almost exclusively to children of parts.*

**A**MONG the real improvements of modern times, and they are not a few, it is to be feared that the growth of filial obedience cannot be included. Who can forbear observing and regretting in a variety of instances, that not only sons but daughters have adopted something of that spirit of independence, and disdain of controul which characterise the times? And is it not too generally obvious that domestic manners are not slightly tinged with the prevailing

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ing hue of public principles? The *rights of man* have been discussed, till we are somewhat wearied with the discussion. To these have been opposed, as the next stage in the progress of illumination, and with more presumption than prudence, *the rights of woman*. It follows, according to the natural progression of human things, that the next influx of that irradiation which our enlighteners are pouring in upon us, will illuminate the world with grave descants on the *rights of youth*, the *rights of children*, the *rights of babies!*

This revolutionary spirit in families suggests the remark, that among the faults with which it has been too much the fashion of recent times to load the memory of the incomparable Milton, one of the charges brought against his private character (for with his political character we have here nothing to do) has been, that he was so severe a father as to have compelled his daughters, after he was blind, to read aloud to him, for his sole pleasure, Greek

and Latin authors of which they did not understand a word. But this is in fact nothing more than an instance of the strict domestic regulations of the age in which Milton lived; and should not be brought forward as a proof of the severity of his individual temper. Nor indeed in any case should it ever be considered as an hardship for an affectionate child to amuse an afflicted parent, even though it should be attended with a heavier sacrifice of her own pleasure than that produced in the present instance\*.

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\* In spite of this too prevailing spirit, and at a time when, by an inverted state of society, sacrifices of ease and pleasure are rather exacted by children from parents, than required of parents from children, numberless instances might be adduced of filial affection truly honourable to the present period. And the Author records with pleasure, that she has seen amiable young ladies of high rank, conducting the steps of a blind but illustrious parent with true filial fondness; and has often contemplated, in another family, the interesting attentions of daughters who were both hands and eyes to an infirm and nearly blind father. It is but



Is the author then inculcating the harsh doctrine of paternal austeritv? By no means. It drives the gentle spirit to artifice, and the rugged to despair. It generates deceit and cunning, the most hopeless and hateful in the whole catalogue of female failings. Ungoverned anger in the teacher, and inability to discriminate between venial errors and premeditated offence, though they may lead a timid creature to hide wrong tempers, or to conceal bad actions, will not help her to subdue the one or to correct the other. The dread of severity will drive terrified children to seek, not for reformation, but for impunity. A readiness to forgive them promotes frankness: and we should, above all things, encourage them to be frank, in order to come at their faults. They

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but justice to repeat that these examples are not taken from that middle rank of life which Milton filled, but from the daughters of the highest officers in the state.

have not more faults for being open, they only *discover* more; and to know the worst of the character we have to regulate will enable us to make it better.

Discipline, however, is not cruelty, and restraint is not severity. A discriminating teacher will appreciate the individual character of each pupil, in order to appropriate her management. We must strengthen the feeble, while we repel the bold. We cannot educate by a *receipt*; for after studying the best rules, and after digesting them into the best system, much must depend on contingent circumstances; for that which is good may yet be inapplicable. The cultivator of the human mind must, like the gardener, study diversities of soil, or he may plant diligently and water faithfully with little fruit. The skilful labourer knows that, even where the surface is not particularly promising, there is often a rough strong ground which will amply repay the trouble of breaking it up; yet we are often most taken with a soft surface,  
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though it conceal a shallow depth, because it promises present reward and little trouble. But strong and pertinacious tempers, of which perhaps obstinacy is the leading vice, under skilful management often turn out steady and sterling characters; while from softer clay a firm and vigorous virtue is but seldom produced. Pertinacity is often principle, which wants nothing but to be led to its true object; while the uniformly yielding, and universally accommodating spirit, is not seldom the result of a feeble tone of morals, of a temper eager for praise and acting for reward.

But these revolutions in character cannot be effected by mere education. Plutarch has observed that the medical science would never be brought to perfection, till poisons should be converted into physic. What our late improvers in natural science have done in the medical world by converting the most deadly ingredients into instruments of life and health, Christianity with a sort of divine alchymy has effected in the moral

world, by that transmutation which makes those passions which have been working for sin become active in the cause of religion. The violent temper of Saul of Tarsus, which was “exceedingly mad” against the saints of God, did God see fit to convert into that burning zeal which enabled Paul the Apostle to labour so unremittingly for the conversion of the Gentile world. Christianity, indeed, does not so much give us new affections or faculties, as give a new direction to those we already have. She changes that sorrow of the world which worketh death into “godly sorrow which worketh repentance.” She changes our anger against the persons we dislike into hatred of their sins. “The fear of man which worketh a snare,” she transmutes into “that fear of God which worketh salvation.” That religion does not extinguish the passions, but only alters their object, the animated expressions of the fervid Apostle confirm—

“Yea,

“ Yea, what *fearfulness* ; yea, what *clear-*  
 “ *ing of yourselves* ; yea, what *indignation* ;  
 “ yea, what *fear* ; yea, what *vehement*  
 “ *desire* ; yea, what *zeal* ; yea, what  
 “ *revenge* \*.”

Thus, by some of the most troublesome passions of our nature being converted by the blessing of God on a religious education to the side of virtue, a double purpose is effected. Because, it is the character of the passions never to observe a neutrality. If they are no longer rebels, they become auxiliaries ; and the accession of strength is doubled, because a foe subdued is an ally obtained. For it is the effect of religion on the passions, that when she seizes the enemy's garrison, she does not content herself with defeating its future mischiefs, she does not destroy the works, she does not burn the arsenal and spike the cannon ; but the artillery she seizes, she turns to her own use ; she at-

\* 2 Corinthians, vii. 11.

tacks in her turn, and plants its whole force against the enemy from whom she has taken it.

✓ But while I would deprecate harshness, I would enforce discipline; and that not merely on the ground of religion, but of happiness also. One reason, not seldom brought forward by tender but mistaken mothers, as an apology for their unbounded indulgence, especially to weakly children, is, that they probably will not live to enjoy the world when grown up, and that therefore they would not abridge the little pleasure they may enjoy at present, lest they should be taken out of the world without having tasted any of its delights. But a slight degree of observation would prove that this is an error in judgment as well as in principle. For, omitting any considerations respecting their future welfare, and entering only into their immediate interests, it is an indisputable fact that children who know no control, whose faults encounter no contradiction, and

and whose humours experience constant indulgence, grow more irritable and capricious, invent wants, create desires, lose all relish for the pleasures which they know they may reckon upon; and become perhaps more miserable than even those unfortunate children who labour under the more obvious and more commiserated misfortune of suffering under the tyranny of unkind parents.

An early habitual restraint is peculiarly important to the future character and happiness of women. A judicious unrelaxing but steady and gentle curb on their tempers and passions can alone ensure their peace and establish their principles. It is a habit which cannot be adopted too soon, nor persisted in too pertinaciously. They should, when very young, be enured to contradiction. Instead of hearing their *bon mots* treasured up and repeated till the guests are tired, and till the children begin to think it dull, when they themselves are not the little heroines of the theme, they  
should

should be accustomed to receive but moderate praise for their vivacity or their wit, though they should receive just commendation for such qualities as have more worth than splendour.

Patience, diligence, quiet, and unfatigued perseverance, industry, regularity, and oeconomy of time, as these are the dispositions I would labour to excite, so these are the qualities I would warmly commend. So far from admiring genius, or extolling its prompt effusions, I would rather intimate that excellence, to a certain degree, is in the power of every competitor : that it is the vanity of over-valuing herself for supposed original powers, and slackening exertion in consequence of that vanity, which often leave the lively ignorant, and the witty superficial. A girl who overhears her mother tell the company that she is a genius, and is so quick, that she never thinks of applying to her task till a few minutes before she is called to repeat it, will acquire such  
a con-



a confidence in her own abilities, that she will be advancing in conceit as she is falling short in knowledge. Whereas, if she were made to suspect that her want of application rather indicated a deficiency than a superiority in her understanding, she would become industrious in proportion as she became modest; and by thus adding the diligence of the humble to the talents of the ingenious, she might really attain a degree of excellence, which mere quickness of parts, too lazy, because too proud to apply, seldom attains.

Girls should be led to distrust their own judgment; they should learn not to murmur at expostulation; they should be accustomed to expect and to endure opposition. It is a lesson with which the world will not fail to furnish them; and they will not practise it the worse for having learnt it the sooner. It is of the last importance to their happiness, even in this life, that they should early acquire a submissive temper  
and

✓ and a forbearing spirit. They must even endure to be thought wrong sometimes, when they cannot but feel they are right. And while they should be anxiously aspiring to do well, they must not expect always to obtain the praise of having done so. But while a gentle demeanour is inculcated, let them not be instructed to practise gentleness merely on the low ground of its being decorous, and feminine, and pleasing, and calculated to attract human favour: but let them be carefully taught to cultivate it on the high principle of obedience to Christ; on the practical ground of labouring after conformity to HIM, who, when he proposed himself as a perfect pattern of imitation, did not say, Learn of me, for I am great, or wise, or mighty, but “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly:” and who graciously promised that the reward should accompany the practice, by encouragingly adding, “and ye shall find rest to your souls.” Do not teach them humility on the ordinary

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nary ground that vanity is *unamiable*, and that no one will *love* them if they are proud; for that will only go to correct the exterior, and make them soft and smiling hypocrites. But inform them, that “ God resisteth the proud,” while “ them that are meek he shall guide in judgment, and such as are gentle, them shall he teach his way.” In these, as in all other cases, an habitual attention to the *motives* should be carefully substituted in their young hearts, in the place of too much anxiety about the *event* of actions. Principles, aims, and intentions should be invariably insisted on, as the only true ground of right practice, and they should be carefully guarded against too much solicitude for that human praise which attaches to appearances as much as to realities, to success more than to desert.

Let me repeat, without incurring the censure of tautology, that it will be of vast importance not to let slip the earliest occasions of working gentle manners into an  
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an habit on their only true foundation, Christian meekness. For this purpose I would again urge your calling in the example of our Redeemer in aid of his precepts. Endeavour to make your pupil feel that all the wonders exhibited in his life do not so overwhelm the awakened heart with rapture, love, and astonishment, as the perpetual instances of his humility and meekness, with which the Gospel abounds. Stupendous miracles, exercises of infinite power prompted by infinite mercy, are actions which we should naturally enough conceive as growing out of omnipotence and divine perfection: but silence under cruel mockings, patience under reproach, gentleness of demeanour under unparalleled injuries; these are perfections of which unassisted nature not only has no conception in a Divine Being, but at which it would revolt, had not the reality been exemplified by our perfect pattern. Healing the sick, feeding the multitude, restoring the blind, raising the  
dead,

dead, are deeds of which we could form some adequate idea, as necessarily flowing from Almighty goodness: but to wash his disciples' feet,—to preach the Gospel to the *poor*,—to renounce not only ease, for that heroes have done on human motives,—but to renounce praise, to forgive his persecutors, to love his enemies, to pray for his murderers with his last breath;—these are things which, while they compel us to cry out with the centurion, “ Truly “ this was the Son of God,” should remind us also, that they are not only *adorable* but *imitable* parts of his character. These are not speculative and barren doctrines which he came to preach to Christians, but living duties which he meant to entail on them; symbols of their profession; tests of their discipleship. These are perfections which we are not barely to contemplate with holy awe and distant admiration, as if they were restricted to the *divine* nature of our Redeemer; but we must consider them as suited to the human nature  
also,

also, which he condescended to participate. In *contemplating*, we must *imitate*; in admiring, we must practise; and in our measure and degree go and do likewise. Elevate your thoughts for one moment to this standard, (and you should never allow yourself to be contented with a lower,) and then go, if you can, and teach your children to be mild, and soft, and gentle on worldly grounds, on human motives, as an external attraction, as a decoration to their sex, as an appendage to their rank, as an expression of their good breeding.

There is a custom among teachers, which is not the more right for being common; they are apt to bestow an undue proportion of pains on children of the best capacity, as if only geniuses were worthy of attention. They should reflect that in moderate talents, carefully cultivated, we are perhaps to look for the chief happiness and virtue of society. If superlative genius had been generally necessary, its existence would not have been  
 been

been so rare ; for Omnipotence could easily have made those talents common which we now consider as extraordinary, had they been necessary to the perfection of his plan. Besides, while we are conscientiously instructing children of moderate capacity, it is a comfort to reflect, that if no labour will raise them to a high degree in the scale of intellectual distinction, yet they may be led on to perfection in that road in which “ a way-faring man, though “ simple, shall not err.” And when a mother feels disposed to repine that her family is not likely to exhibit a groupe of future wits and growing beauties, let her console herself by looking abroad into the world, where she will quickly perceive that the monopoly of happiness is not engrossed by beauty, nor that of virtue by genius.

Perhaps mediocrity of parts was decreed to be the ordinary lot, by way of furnishing a stimulus to industry, and strengthening the motives to virtuous ap-

plication. For is it not obvious that moderate abilities, carefully carried to that measure of perfection of which they are capable, often enable their possessors to outstrip, in the race of knowledge and of usefulness, their more brilliant but less persevering competitors? It is with mental endowments, as with other rich gifts of Providence; the inhabitant of the luxuriant southern clime, where Nature has done every thing in the way of vegetation, indolently lays hold on this very plea of fertility which should animate his exertions, as a reason for doing nothing himself; so that the soil which teems with such encouraging abundance leaves the favoured possessor idle, and comparatively poor: while the native of the less genial region, supplying by his labours the deficiencies of his lot, overtakes his more favoured competitor; by substituting industry for opulence, he improves the riches of his native land beyond that which is blessed with warmer suns, and thus vindicates



Providence from the charge of partial distribution.

A girl who has docility will seldom be found to want understanding sufficient for all the purposes of an useful, a happy, and a pious life. And it is as wrong for parents to set out with too sanguine a dependence on the figure their children are to make in life, as it is unreasonable to be discouraged at every disappointment. Want of success is so far from furnishing a motive for relaxing their energy, that it is a reason for redoubling it. Let them suspect their own plans, and reform them; let them distrust their own principles, and correct them. The generality of parents do too little; some do much and miss their reward, because they look not to any strength beyond their own: after much is done, much will remain undone; for the entire regulation of the heart and affections is not the work of education alone, but is effected by the operation of divine grace. Will it be accounted enthusiasm  
to

to suggest “ that the fervent effectual  
 “ prayer of a righteous *parent* availeth  
 “ much;” and to observe, that perhaps  
 the reason why so many anxious mothers  
 fail of success is, because they repose  
 with confidence in their own skill and  
 labour, neglecting to look to HIM with-  
 out whose blessing they do but labour in  
 vain?

On the other hand, is it not to be feared  
 that some pious parents have fallen into  
 an error of an opposite kind? From a  
 full conviction that human endeavours are  
 vain, and that it is God alone who can  
 change the heart, they are earnest in their  
 prayers, but not so earnest in their  
 endeavours. Such parents should be re-  
 minded, that if they do not add their  
 exertions to their prayers, their children  
 are not likely to be more benefited than  
 the children of those who do not add their  
 prayers to their exertions. What God  
 has joined, let not man presume to sepa-  
 rate. It is the work of God, we readily  
 acknow-

acknowledge, to implant religion in the heart, and to maintain it there as a ruling principle of conduct. And is it not the same God which causes the corn to grow? Are not our natural lives constantly preserved by his power? Who will deny that in him we live, and move, and have our being? But how are these works of God carried on? By *means* which he has appointed. By the labour of the husbandman the corn is made to grow; by food the body is sustained; and by religious instruction God is pleased to work upon the human heart. But unless we diligently plough, and sow, and weed, and manure, have we any right to depend on the refreshing showers and ripening suns of heaven for the blessing of an abundant harvest? As far as *we* see of the ways of God, all his works are carried on by *means*. It becomes therefore our duty to use the means, and trust in God; to remember that God will not work without the means; and that the means can

effect nothing without his blessing. “ Paul  
 “ may plant and Apollos water, but it is  
 “ God must give the increase?” But to  
 what does he give the increase? To the  
*exertions* of Paul and Apollos. It is never  
 said, because God only can give the in-  
 crease, that Paul and Apollos may spare  
 their labour.

It is one grand object to give the young  
 probationer just and sober views of the  
 world on which she is about to enter. In-  
 stead of making her bosom bound at the  
 near prospect of emancipation from her in-  
 structors; instead of teaching her young  
 heart to dance with premature flutterings  
 as the critical Winter draws near in which  
*she is to come out*; instead of raising a tu-  
 mult in her busy imagination at the ap-  
 proach of her first *grown-up ball*, an event  
 held out as forming the first grand epocha  
 of female life, as the period from which a  
 fresh computation, fixing the pleasures and  
 independence of womanhood, is to be dated;  
 instead of this, endeavour to convince her,  
 that

that the world will not turn out to be that scene of unvarying and never-ending delights which she has perhaps been led to expect, not only from the sanguine temper and warm spirits natural to youth, but from the value she has seen put on those showy accomplishments which have too probably been fitting her for her exhibition in life. Teach her that this world is not a stage for the display of superficial or even of shining talents, but for the strict and sober exercise of fortitude, temperance, meekness, faith, diligence, and self-denial; of her due performance of which Christian graces, Angels will be spectators, and God the judge. Teach her that human life is not a splendid romance, spangled over with brilliant adventures, and enriched with extraordinary occurrences, and diversified with wonderful incidents; lead her not to expect that it will abound with scenes which will call extraordinary qualities and wonderful powers into perpetual action; and for which, if she acquit herself well, she

will be rewarded with proportionate fame and certain commendation. But apprize her that human life is a true history, many passages of which will be dull, obscure, and uninteresting; some perhaps tragical; but that whatever gay incidents and pleasing scenes may be interspersed in the progress of the piece, yet finally "one event happeneth to all;" to all there is one awful and infallible catastrophe. Apprize her that the estimation which mankind forms of merit is not always just, nor is its praise very exactly proportioned to desert; tell her that the world weighs actions in far different scales from "the balance of the sanctuary," and estimates worth by a far different standard from that of the gospel. Apprize her that while her purest intentions may be sometimes calumniated, and her best actions misrepresented, she will, on the other hand, be liable to receive commendation on occasions wherein her conscience will tell her she has not deserved it; and that she may be extolled by others  
for

for actions for which, if she be honest, she will condemn herself.

Do not however give her a gloomy and discouraging picture of the world, but rather seek to give her a just and sober view of the part she will have to act in it; and restrain the impetuosity of hope, and cool the ardour of expectation, by explaining to her, that this part, even in her best estate, will probably consist in a succession of petty trials, and a round of quiet duties, which, if well performed, though they will make little or no figure in the book of fame, will prove of vast importance to her in that day when *another* “book is opened, and the judgment is set, “and every one will be judged according “to the deeds done in the body, whether “they be good or bad.”

Say not that these just and sober views will cruelly wither her young hopes, blast her budding prospects, and deaden the innocent satisfactions of life. It is

not true. There is, happily, an active spring in the mind of youth, which bounds with fresh vigour and uninjured elasticity from any such temporary depression. It is not meant that you should darken her prospect, so much as that you should enlighten the eyes of her understanding to contemplate it. And though her feelings, tastes, and passions, will all be against you, if you set before her a faithful delineation of life, yet it will be something to get her judgment on your side. It is no unkind office to assist the short view of youth with the aids of long-sighted experience; to enable them to discover spots in the brightness of that world which dazzles them in prospect, though it is probable they will after all choose to believe their own eyes rather than the offered glass.



## CHAP. VIII.

*On female study, and initiation into knowledge. — Error of cultivating the imagination to the neglect of the judgment. — Books of reasoning recommended.*

AS this little work by no means assumes the character of a general scheme of education, the author has purposely avoided expatiating largely on any kind of instruction, but as it happens to be connected, either immediately or remotely, with objects of a moral or religious nature. Of course she has been so far from thinking it necessary to enter into the enumeration of those popular books which are used in general instruction, that she has purposely forborne to mention any. With such books the rising generation is far more copiously and ably furnished than any that has preceded it; and out of an excellent

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variety

variety the judicious instructor can hardly fail to make such a selection as shall be beneficial to the pupil.

But while due praise ought not to be withheld from the improved methods of communicating the elements of general knowledge; yet is there not some danger that our very advantages may lead us into error, by causing us to repose so confidently on the multiplied helps which facilitate the entrance into learning, as to render our pupils superficial through the very facility of acquirement? Where so much is done for them, may they not be led to do too little for themselves? and besides that exertion may slacken for want of a spur, may there not be a moral disadvantage in possessing young persons with the notion that learning may be acquired without diligence, and knowledge be attained without labour? Sound education never *can* be made a “primrose path of dalliance.” Do what we will we cannot *cheat* children into learning, or *play* them into

into knowledge according to the conciliating smoothness of the modern creed, and the selfish indolence of modern habits. There is no idle way to any acquisitions which really deserve the name. And as Euclid, in order to repress the impetuous vanity of greatness, told his Sovereign that there was no royal way to geometry; so the fond mother may be assured that there is no short cut to any other kind of learning; no privileged bye-path cleared from the thorns and briars of repulse and difficulty, for the accommodation of opulent inactivity or feminine weakness. The tree of knowledge, as a punishment, perhaps, for its having been at first unfairly tasted, cannot now be climbed without difficulty; and this very circumstance serves afterwards to furnish not only literary pleasures, but moral advantages. For the knowledge which is acquired by unwearied assiduity is lasting in the possession and sweet to the possessor; both perhaps in proportion to the cost and labour of the acquisition. And

though an able teacher ought to endeavour, by improving the communicating faculty in himself, (for many know what they cannot teach,) to soften every difficulty ; yet, in spite of the kindness and ability with which he will smooth every obstruction, it is probably among the wise obstructions of Providence that great difficulties should still remain. For education is but an initiation into that life of trial to which we are introduced on our entrance into this world. It is the first breaking-in to that state of toil and labour to which we are born, and to which sin has made us liable ; and in this view of the subject the pains taken in the acquisition of learning may be converted to higher uses than such as are purely literary.

Will it not be ascribed to a captious singularity, if I venture to remark that real knowledge and real piety, though they may have gained in many instances, have suffered in others from that profusion of little, amusing, sentimental books with  
which

which the youthful library overflows? Abundance has its dangers as well as scarcity. In the first place, may not the multiplicity of these alluring little works increase the natural reluctance to those more dry and uninteresting studies, of which, after all, the rudiments of every part of learning *must* consist? And secondly, is there not some danger (though there are many honourable exceptions) that some of those engaging narratives may serve to infuse into the youthful heart a sort of spurious goodness, a confidence of virtue, a parade of charity? And that the benevolent actions with the recital of which they abound, when they are not made to flow from any source but feeling, may tend to inspire a self-complacency, a self-gratulation, a “stand by, for I am holier than thou?” May not the successes with which the good deeds of the little heroes are uniformly crowned; the invariable reward which is made the instant concomitant of well-doing, furnish the

young reader with false views of the condition of life, and the nature of the divine dealings of men? May they not help to suggest a false standard of morals, to infuse a love of popularity and an anxiety for praise, in the place of that simple and unostentatious rule of doing whatever good we do, *because it is the will of God?* The universal substitution of this principle would tend to purify the worldly morality of many a popular little story. And there are few dangers which good parents will more carefully guard against than that of giving their children a mere political piety; that sort of religion which just goes to make people more respectable, and to stand well with the world; a religion which is to save appearances without inculcating realities; a religion which affects to "preach peace and good will to men," but which forgets to give "glory to God in the highest\*."

There

\* An ingenious (and in many respects useful) French Treatise on Education, has too much encouraged.

There is a certain precocity of mind which is much helped on by these superficial modes of instruction; for frivolous reading will produce its correspondent effect in much less time than books of solid instruction; the imagination being liable to be worked upon, and the feelings to be set a-going, much faster than the understanding can be opened and the judgment enlightened. A talent for conversation should be the result of instruction, not its precursor; it is a golden fruit when suffered to ripen gradually on the tree of knowledge; but if forced in the hot-bed of a circulating library, it will turn out worthless and vapid in proportion as it was artificial and premature. Girls who have

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couraged this political piety; by considering religion as a thing of human convention, rather than of divine institution; as a thing creditable, rather than commanded: by erecting the doctrine of expediency in the room of Christian simplicity; and wearing away the spirit of truth, by the substitution of occasional deceit, equivocation, subterfuge, and mental reservation.

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been accustomed to devour a multitude of frivolous books, will converse and write with a far greater appearance of skill as to style and sentiment at twelve or fourteen years old, than those of a more advanced age who are under the discipline of severer studies; but the former having early attained to that low standard which had been held out to them, become stationary; while the latter, quietly progressive, are passing through just gradations to a higher strain of mind; and those who early begin with talking and writing like women, commonly end with thinking and acting like children.

I would not however prohibit such works of imagination as suit this early period. When moderately used they serve to stretch the faculties and expand the mind; but I should prefer works of vigorous genius and pure unmixed fable to many of those tame and more affected moral stories, which are not grounded on Christian principle. I should suggest the use on  
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the one hand of original and acknowledged fictions; and on the other, of accurate and simple facts; so that truth and fable may ever be kept separate and distinct in the mind. There is something that kindles fancy, awakens genius, and excites new ideas in many of the bold fictions of the East. And there is one peculiar merit in the Arabian and some other oriental tales; which is, that they exhibit striking, and in many respects, faithful views of the manners, habits, customs, and religion of their respective countries; so that some tincture of real local information is acquired by the perusal of the wildest fable, which will not be without its uses in aiding the future associations of the mind in all that relates to Eastern history and literature.

The irregular fancy of women is not sufficiently subdued by early application, nor tamed by labour, and the kind of knowledge they commonly do acquire is easily attained; and being chiefly some slight acquisition of the memory, something  
which

which is given them to get off by themselves, and not grounded in their minds by comment and conversation, it is easily lost. The superficial *question-and-answer-way*, for instance, in which they often learn history, furnishes the mind with little to lean on: the events being detached and separated, the actions having no links to unite them with each other; the characters not being interwoven by mutual relation; the chronology being reduced to disconnected dates, instead of presenting an unbroken series; of course, neither events, actions, characters, nor chronology, fasten themselves on the understanding, but rather float in the memory as so many detached episodes, than contribute to form the mind and to enrich the judgment of the reader, in the important science of men and manners.

The swarms of *Abridgments*, *Beauties*, and *Compendiums*, which form too considerable a part of a young lady's library, may be considered in many instances as an  
infallible

infallible receipt for making a superficial mind. The *names* of the renowned characters in history thus become familiar in the mouths of those who can neither attach to the ideas of the person, the series of his actions, nor the peculiarities of his character. A few fine passages from the poets (passages perhaps which derived their chief beauty from their position and connection) are huddled together by some extract-maker, whose brief and disconnected patches of broken and discordant materials, while they inflame young readers with the vanity of reciting, neither fill the mind nor form the taste: and it is not difficult to trace back to their shallow sources the hackneyed quotations of certain *accomplished* young ladies, who will be frequently found not to have come legitimately by any thing they know. I mean, not to have drawn it from its true spring, the original works of the author, from which some *beauty-monger* has severed it. Human inconsistency in this, as in other cases,

cases, wants to combine two irreconcilable things; it strives to unite the reputation of knowledge with the pleasures of idleness, forgetting that nothing that is valuable can be obtained without sacrifices, and that if we would purchase knowledge, we must pay for it the fair and lawful price of time and industry. For this extract-reading, while it accommodates itself to the convenience, illustrates the character, of the age in which we live. The appetite for pleasure, and that love of ease and indolence which is generated by it, leave little time or taste for sound improvement; while the vanity which is equally a characteristic of the existing period, puts in its claim also for indulgence, and contrives to figure away by these little snatches of ornamental reading, caught in the short intervals of successive amusements.

Besides, the taste, thus pampered with delicious morsels, is early vitiated. The young reader of these *clustered beauties* conceives a disrelish for every thing which  
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is plain, and grows impatient, if obliged to get through those equally necessary though less showy parts of a work, in which perhaps the author gives the best proof of his judgment by keeping under that occasional brilliancy and incidental ornament, of which these superficial students are in constant pursuit. In all well-written books, there is much that is good which is not dazzling; and these shallow critics should be taught, that it is for the embellishment of the more tame and uninteresting parts of his work, that the judicious poet commonly reserves those flowers, whose beauty is defaced when they are plucked from the garland into which he had so skilfully woven them.

The remark, however, as far as it relates to abridgments, is by no means of general application; there are many valuable works which from their bulk would be almost inaccessible to a great number of readers, and a considerable part of which may not be generally useful. Even in the  
best

best written books there is often superfluous matter; authors are apt to get enamoured of their subject, and to dwell too long on it; every person cannot find time to read a longer work on any subject, and yet it may be well for them to know something on almost every subject; those, therefore, who abridge voluminous works judiciously, render service to the community. But there seems, if I may venture the remark, to be a mistake in the *use* of abridgments. They are put systematically into the hands of *youth*, who have, or ought to have, leisure for the works at large; while abridgments seem more immediately calculated for persons in more advanced life, who wish to recall something they had forgotten; who want to restore old ideas rather than acquire new ones; or they are useful for persons immersed in the business of the world, who have little leisure for voluminous reading; they are excellent to refresh the mind, but not competent to form it: they serve to bring back  
back

back what had been formerly known, but do not supply a fund of knowledge.

Perhaps there is some analogy between the mental and bodily conformation of women. The instructor therefore should imitate the physician. If the latter prescribe bracing medicines for a body of which delicacy is the disease, the former would do well to prohibit relaxing reading for a mind which is already of too soft a texture, and should strengthen its feeble tone by invigorating reading.

By softness, I cannot be supposed to mean imbecility of understanding, but natural softness of heart, and pliancy of temper, together with that indolence of spirit which is fostered by indulging in seducing books, and in the general habits of fashionable life.

I mean not here to recommend books which are immediately religious, but such as exercise the reasoning faculties, teach the mind to get acquainted with its own nature, and to stir up its own powers.

Let not a timid young lady start if I should venture to recommend to her, after a proper course of preparatory reading, to swallow and digest such strong meat as Watts's or Duncan's little book of Logic, some parts of Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and Bishop Butler's Analogy. Where there is leisure, and capacity, and an able friend to comment and to counsel, works of this nature might be profitably substituted in the place of so much English Sentiment, French Philosophy, Italian Love-Songs, and fantastic German imagery and magic wonders. While such enervating or absurd books sadly disqualify the reader for solid pursuit of vigorous thinking, the studies here recommended would act upon the constitution of the mind as a kind of alterative, and, if I may be allowed the expression, would help to brace the intellectual stamina.

This suggestion is, however, by no means intended to exclude works of taste  
and



and imagination, which must always make the ornamental part, and of course a very considerable part, of female studies. It is only intimated, that they should not form them entirely and exclusively. For what is called dry tough reading, independent of the knowledge it conveys, is useful as an habit, and wholesome as an exercise. Serious study serves to harden the mind for more trying conflicts; it lifts the reader from sensation to intellect; it abstracts her from the world, and its vanities; it fixes the wandering spirit, and fortifies a weak one; it divorces her from matter; it corrects that spirit of trifling which she naturally contracts from the frivolous turn of female conversation and the petty nature of female employments; it concentrates her attention, assists her in a habit of excluding trivial thoughts, and thus even helps to qualify her for religious pursuits. Yes, I repeat it, there is to woman a Christian use to be made of sober studies; while books of an opposite cast, however

unexceptionable they may be sometimes found in point of expression, however free from evil in its more gross and palpable shapes, yet from their very nature and constitution they excite a spirit of relaxation, by exhibiting scenes and suggesting ideas which soften the mind and set the fancy at work; they take off wholesome restraints, diminish sober mindedness, impair the general powers of resistance, and at best feed habits of improper indulgence, and nourish a vain and visionary indolence, which lays the mind open to error and the heart to seduction.

Women are little accustomed to close reasoning on any subject; still less do they inure their minds to consider particular parts of a subject; they are not habituated to turn a truth round, and view it in all its varied aspects and positions; and this perhaps is one cause (as will be observed in another \* place) of the too great con-

\* Chapter on Conversation.

fidence they are disposed to place in their own opinions. Though their imagination is already too lively, and their judgment naturally incorrect; in educating them we go on to stimulate the imagination, while we neglect the regulation of the judgment. They already want ballast, and we make their education consist in continually crowding more sail than they can carry. Their intellectual powers being so little strengthened by exercise, makes every petty business appear a hardship to them: whereas serious study would be useful, were it only that it leads the mind to the habit of conquering difficulties. But it is peculiarly hard to turn at once from the indolent repose of light reading, from the concerns of mere animal life, the objects of sense, or the frivolousness of female chit chat, it is peculiarly hard, I say, to a mind so softened, to rescue itself from the dominion of self-indulgence, to resume its powers, to call home its scattered strength, to shut out every foreign intrusion,

sion, to force back a spring so unnaturally bent, and to devote itself to religious reading, to active business, to sober reflection, to self-examination. Whereas to an intellect accustomed to think at all, the difficulty of thinking seriously is obviously lessened.

Far be it from me to desire to make scholastic ladies or female dialecticians; but there is little fear that the kind of books here recommended, if thoroughly studied, and not superficially skimmed, will make them pedants or induce conceit; for by showing them the possible powers of the human mind, you will bring them to see the littleness of their own; and surely to get acquainted with the mind, to regulate, to inform it; to shew it its own ignorance and its own nature, does not seem the way to puff it up. But let her who is disposed to be elated with her literary acquisitions, check the rising vanity by calling to mind the just remark of Swift, “ that after all her boasted ac-  
“ quirements,

“quirements, a woman will, generally speaking, be found to possess less of what is called learning than a common school-boy.”

Neither is there any fear that this sort of reading will convert ladies into authors. The direct contrary effect will be likely to be produced by the perusal of writers who throw the generality of readers at such an unapproachable distance as to check presumption, instead of exciting it. Who are those ever multiplying authors, that with unparalleled fecundity, are overstocking the world with their quick-succeeding progeny? They are NOVEL-WRITERS; the easiness of whose productions is at once the cause of their own fruitfulness, and of the almost infinitely numerous race of imitators to whom they give birth. Such is the frightful facility of this species of composition, that every raw girl, while she reads, is tempted to fancy that she can also write. And as Alexander, on perusing the Iliad, found by congenial sympathy

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the image of Achilles stamped on his own ardent soul, and felt himself the hero he was studying; and as Corregio, on first beholding a picture which exhibited the perfection of the graphic art, prophetically felt all his own future greatness, and cried out in rapture, “ And I too am a painter !” so a thorough-paced novel-reading Miss, at the close of every tiffue of hackneyed adventures, feels within herself the stirring impulse of corresponding genius, and triumphantly exclaims, “ And I too am an “ author !” The gluttoned imagination soon overflows with the redundance of cheap sentiment and plentiful incident, and by a sort of arithmetical proportion, is enabled by the perusal of any three novels, to produce a fourth; till every fresh production, like the prolific progeny of Banquo, is followed by

Another, and another, and another !

Is a lady, however destitute of talents, education, or knowledge of the world, whose studies have been completed by a circulating

lating library, in any distress of mind? the writing a novel suggests itself as the best soother of her sorrows! Does she labour under any depression of circumstances? writing a novel occurs as the readiest receipt for mending them! And she solaces her imagination with the conviction that the subscription which has been extorted by her importunity, or given to her necessities, has been offered as an homage to her genius. And this confidence instantly levies a fresh contribution for a succeeding work. Capacity and cultivation are so little taken into the account, that writing a book seems to be now considered as the only sure resource which the idle and the illiterate have always in their power.

May the author be indulged in a short digression while she remarks, though rather out of its place, that the corruption occasioned by these books has spread so wide, and descended so low, as to have become one of the most universal, as well as most

pernicious, sources of corruption among us. Not only among milliners, mantua-makers, and other trades where numbers work together, the labour of one girl is frequently sacrificed that she may be spared to read those mischievous books to the others; but she has been assured by clergymen who have witnessed the fact, that they are procured and greedily read in the wards of our hospitals! an awful hint, that those who teach the poor to read, should not only take care to furnish them with principles which will lead them to abhor corrupt books, but that they should also furnish them with such books as shall strengthen and confirm their principles\*. And let every  
every

\* The above facts furnish no argument on the side of those who would keep the poor in ignorance. Those who cannot *read* can *hear*, and are likely to hear to worse purpose than those who have been better taught. And that ignorance furnishes no security for integrity either in morals or politics, the late revolts in more than one country, remarkable  
for



every Christian remember, that there is no other way of entering truly into the spirit of that divine prayer, which petitions that the name of God may be "hallowed," that "his kingdom (of grace) may come," and

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for the ignorance of the poor, fully illustrate. It is earnestly hoped that the above facts may tend to impress ladies with the importance of superintending the instruction of the poor, and of making it an indispensable part of their charity to give them moral and religious books.

The late celebrated Henry Fielding (a man not likely to be suspected of over-strictness) assured a particular friend of the Author, that during his long administration of justice in Bow-street, only *six* Scotchmen were brought before him. The remark did not proceed from any national partiality in the magistrate, but was produced by him in proof of the effect of a sober and religious education among the lower ranks, on their morals and conduct.

See farther the sentiments of a still more celebrated cotemporary on the duty of instructing the poor. — "We have been taught that the circumstance of the Gospel's being preached to the poor was one of the surest tests of its mission. We think, therefore, that those do not believe it who do not take care it should be preached to the poor."

*Burke on the French Revolution.*

that "his will may be done on earth as it  
"is in heaven," than by each individual  
contributing according to his measure to  
accomplish the work for which he prays ;  
for to pray that these great objects may be  
promoted, without contributing to their  
promotion by our exertions, our money,  
and our influence, is a palpable incon-  
sistency.

## CHAP. IX.

*On the religious and moral use of history and geography.*

WHILE every sort of useful knowledge should be carefully imparted to young persons, it should be imparted not merely for its own sake, but also for the sake of its subserviency to higher things. All human learning should be taught, not as an end, but a means: and in this view, even a lesson of history or geography may be converted into a lesson of religion. In the study of history, the instructor will accustom the pupil not merely to store her memory with facts and anecdotes, and to ascertain dates and epochs; but she will accustom her also to trace effects to their causes, to examine the secret springs of action, and accurately to observe the

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operation of the passions. It is only meant to notice here some few of the moral benefits which may be derived from a judicious perusal of history; and from among other points of instruction, I select the following\* :

The study of history may serve to give a clearer insight into the corruption of human nature :

\* It were to be wished that more historians resembled the excellent Rollin in the religious and moral turn given to his writings of this kind.—But here may I be permitted to observe incidentally, (for it is not immediately analogous to my subject,) that there is one disadvantage which attends the common practice of setting young ladies to read ancient history and geography in French or Italian, who have not been previously well grounded in the pronunciation of classical names of persons and places in our own language. The foreign terminations of Greek and Roman names are often very different from the English, and where they are first acquired are frequently retained and adopted in their stead, so as to give an illiterate appearance to the conversation of some women who are not really ignorant. And this defective pronunciation is the more to be guarded against in the education of ladies who are not taught *quantity* as boys are.

It

It may help to show the *plan* of Providence in the direction of events, and in the use of unworthy instruments :

It may assist in the *vindication* of Providence in the common failure of virtue, and the frequent success of vice :

It may lead to a distrust of our own judgment :

It may contribute to our improvement in self-knowledge.

But to prove to the pupil the important doctrine of human corruption from the study of history, will require a truly Christian commentator in the friend with whom the work is perused. For, from the low standard of light established by the generality of historians, who erect so many persons into good characters who fall short of the true idea of Christian virtue, the unassisted reader will be liable to form very imperfect views of what is real goodness, and will conclude, as his author sometimes does, that the true idea of human nature is to be taken from the

medium between his best and his worst characters; without acquiring a just notion of that prevalence of evil, which, in spite of those few brighter luminaries that here and there just serve to gild the gloom of history, tends abundantly to establish the doctrine. It will indeed be continually establishing itself by those who, in perusing the history of mankind, carefully mark the rise and progress of sin, from the first timid irruption of an evil thought, to the fearless accomplishment of the abhorred crime in which that thought has ended: from the indignant question, “Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing\*?” to the perpetration of that very enormity of which the self-acquitting delinquent could not endure the slightest suggestion.

In this connection may it not be observed that young persons should be put on their guard against a too implicit belief in the flattering accounts which many

\* 2 Kings, viii. 13.

voyage-writers are fond of exhibiting of the virtue, amiableness, and benignity of some of the countries newly discovered by our circumnavigators; that they should learn to suspect the superior goodness ascribed to the Hindoos, and particularly the account of the inhabitants of the Pellew Islands? These last indeed have been represented as having almost escaped the universal taint of our common nature, and would seem by their purity to have sprung from another ancestor than Adam.

We cannot forbear suspecting that these pleasing but somewhat overcharged portraits of man in his natural state, are drawn with the invidious design, by counteracting the doctrine of human corruption, to degrade the value and even destroy the necessity of the Christian sacrifice; by insinuating that uncultivated man is so disposed to rectitude as to supersede the occasion for that redemption which is professedly designed for sinners. That in  
countries

countries professing Christianity, very many are not Christians will be too readily granted. Yet to say nothing of the vast superiority of goodness in the lives of those who are really governed by Christianity, is there not something even in her reflex light which guides to greater purity many of those who do not profess to walk by it? I doubt much, if numbers of the unbelievers of a Christian country, from the founder views and better habits derived incidentally and collaterally, as it were, from the influence of a Gospel, the truth of which, however, they do not acknowledge, would not start at many of the actions which these *heathen perfectionists* daily commit without hesitation.

The religious reader of general history will observe the controlling hand of Providence in the direction of events; in turning the most unworthy actions and instruments to the accomplishment of his own purposes. She will mark infinite Wisdom directing what appears to be casual occurrences,



currences, to the completion of his own plan. She will point out how causes seemingly the most unconnected, events seemingly the most unpromising, circumstances seemingly the most incongruous, are all working together for some final good. She will mark how national as well as individual crimes are often overruled to some hidden purpose far different from the intention of the actors: how Omnipotence can, and often does, bring about the best purposes by the worst instruments: how the bloody and unjust conqueror is but "the rod of his wrath," to punish or to purify his offending children: how "the fury of the oppressor," and the sufferings of the oppressed, will, one day, when the whole scheme shall be unfolded, vindicate his righteous dealings. She will explain to the less enlightened reader, how infinite Wisdom often mocks the insignificance of human greatness, and the shallowness of human ability, by setting aside instruments the most powerful and promising;  
while

while He works by agents comparatively contemptible. But she will carefully guard this doctrine of Divine Providence, thus working out his own purposes through the sins of his creatures, and by the instrumentality of the wicked, by calling to mind, while the offender is but a tool in the hands of the great artificer, “ the woe denounced against him by whom the offence cometh !” She will explain how those mutations and revolutions in states which appear to us so unaccountable, and how those operations of Providence which seem to us so entangled and complicated, all move harmoniously and in perfect order : that there is not an event but has its commission ; not a misfortune which breaks its allotted rank ; not a trial which moves out of its appointed track. While calamities and crimes seem to fly in casual confusion, all is commanded or permitted ; all is under the control of a wisdom which cannot err, of a goodness which cannot do wrong.

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To explain my meaning by a few instances. When the spirit of the youthful reader rises in honest indignation at that hypocritical piety which divorced an unoffending Queen to make way for the lawful crime of our eighth Henry's marriage with Ann Boleyn; and when that indignation is increased by the more open profligacy which brought about the execution of the latter; the instructor will not lose so fair an occasion for unfolding how in the councils of the Most High the crimes of the king were overruled to the happiness of the country; and how, to this inauspicious marriage, from which the heroic Elizabeth sprang, the Protestant religion owed its firm stability. This view of the subject will lead the reader to justify the providence of God without diminishing her abhorrence of the vices of the tyrant.

She will explain to her, how even the conquests of ambition, after having deluged a land with blood, involved the perpetrator

tor in guilt, and the innocent victim in ruin, may yet be made the instrument of opening to future generations the way to commerce, to civilization, to Christianity. She may remind her, as they are following Cæsar in his invasion of Britain, that whereas the conqueror fancied he was only gratifying his own inordinate ambition, extending the flight of the Roman Eagle, immortalizing his own name, and proving that "this world was made for Cæsar;" he was in reality becoming the effectual though unconscious instrument of leading a land of barbarians to civilization and to science; and was in fact preparing an island of Pagans to embrace the religion of Christ. She will inform her, that when afterwards the victorious country of the same Cæsar had made Judea a Roman province, and the Jews had become its tributaries, the Romans did not know, nor did the indignant Jews suspect, that this circumstance was operating to the confirmation

firmation of an event the most important the world ever witnessed.

For when “Augustus sent forth a decree that all the world should be taxed ;” he vainly thought he was only enlarging his own imperial power, whereas he was acting in unconscious subservience to the decree of a higher Sovereign, and was helping to ascertain, by a public act the exact period of Christ’s birth, and furnishing record of his extraction from that family from which it was predicted by a long line of Prophets that he should spring. Herod’s atrocious murder of the innocents has added an additional circumstance for the confirmation of *our* faith ; the incredulity of Thomas has strengthened our belief ; nay, the treachery of Judas, and the injustice of Pilate, were the human instruments employed for the salvation of the world.

The youth that is not thoroughly armed with Christian principles, will be tempted to mutiny not only against the justice, but  
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the very existence of a superintending Providence in contemplating those frequent instances which occur in history of the ill success of the more virtuous cause, and the prosperity of the wicked. He will see with astonishment that it is Rome which triumphs, while Carthage, which had clearly the better cause, falls. Now and then indeed a Cicero prevails, and a Cataline is subdued : but often, it is Cæsar successful against the somewhat juster pretensions of Pompey, and against the still clearer cause of Cato. It is Octavius who triumphs, and it is over Brutus that he triumphs. It is Tiberius who is enthroned, while Germanicus falls !

Thus his faith in a righteous Providence at first view is staggered, and he is ready to say, “ Surely it is not God that governs the earth !” But on a fuller consideration, (and here the suggestions of a Christian instructor are peculiarly wanted,) there will appear great wisdom in this very confusion of vice and virtue ; for it is calculated

to send our thoughts forward to a world of retribution, the principle of retribution being so imperfectly established in this. It is indeed so far common for virtue to have the advantage here in point of happiness at least, though not of glory, that the course of Providence is still calculated to prove that God is on the side of virtue; but still, virtue is so often unsuccessful, that clearly the God of virtue, in order that his work may be perfect, must have in reserve a world of retribution. This confused state of things therefore is just that state which is most of all calculated to confirm the deeply considerate mind in the belief of a future state: for if all here were even or very nearly so, should we not say, "Justice is already satisfied, and there *needs* no other world?" On the other hand, if vice always triumphed, should we not then be ready to argue in favour of vice rather than virtue, and to *wish* for no other world?

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It seems so very important to ground young persons in the belief that they will not inevitably meet in this world with reward and success according to their merit, and to habituate them to expect even the most virtuous attempts to be often, though not always disappointed, that I am in danger of tautology on this point. This fact is precisely what history teaches. The truth should be plainly told to the young reader; and the antidote to that evil, which mistaken and worldly people would expect to arise from divulging this discouraging doctrine, is *faith*. The importance of faith therefore, and the necessity of it to real, unbending, and persevering virtue, is surely made plain by profane history itself. For the same thing which happens to states and kings, happens to private life and to individuals. Thus there is scarcely a page even of Pagan history, which may not be made instrumental to the establishing of the truth of revelation: and it is only by such  
a guarded



a guarded mode of instruction that some of the evils attending on the study of ancient literature can be obviated.

Distrust and diffidence in our own judgment seems to be also an important instruction to be learnt from history. How contrary to all expectation do the events therein recorded commonly turn out ! How continually is the most sagacious conjecture of human penetration baffled ! and yet we proceed to foretel this consequence, and to predict that event from the appearances of things under our own observation, with the same arrogant certainty as if we had never been warned by the monitory annals of successive ages.

There is scarcely one great event in history which does not, in the issue, produce effects upon which human foresight could never have calculated. The success of Augustus against his country produced peace in many distant provinces, who thus ceased to be harassed and tormented by this oppressive republic. Could this effect have  
been

been foreseen, it might have sobered the despair of Cato, and checked the vehemence of Brutus. In politics, in short in every thing except in morals and religion, all is, to a considerable degree, uncertain. This reasoning is not meant to show that Cato ought not to have *fought*, but that he ought not to have *desponded* even after the last battle; and certainly, even upon his own principles, ought not to have killed himself. It would be departing too much from my object to apply this argument, however obvious the application, against those who were driven to unreasonable distrust and despair by the late successes of a neighbouring nation.

But all knowledge will be comparatively of little value, if we neglect self-knowledge, and of self-knowledge history and biography may be made successful vehicles. It will be to little purpose that our pupils become accurate critics on the characters of others, while they remain ignorant of themselves: for while to those who exercise a habit of  
self-

self-application a book of profane history may be made an instrument of improvement in this difficult science; so without such an habit the Bible itself may, in this view, be read with little profit.

It will be to no purpose that the reader weeps over the fortitude of the Christian hero, or the constancy of the martyr, if she do not bear in mind that she herself is called to endure her own common trials with something of the same temper: if she do not bear in mind that, to control irregular humours, and to submit to the daily vexations of life, will require, though in a lower degree, the exertion of the same principle, and supplication for the aid of the same spirit which sustained the Christian hero in the trying conflicts of life, or the martyr in his agony at the stake.

May I be permitted to suggest a few instances, by way of specimen, how both sacred and common history may tend to promote self-knowledge? And let me again remind the warm admirer of suffering

piety under *extraordinary trials*, that if she now fail in the petty occasions to which she is actually called out, she would not be likely to have stood in those more trying occasions which excite her admiration.

While she is applauding the self-denying faint who renounced his ease, or chose to embrace death, rather than violate his duty, let her ask herself if she has never refused to submit to the paltry inconvenience of giving up her company, or even altering her dinner-hour on a Sunday, though by this trifling sacrifice her family might have been enabled to attend the public worship in the afternoon.

While she reads with horror that Belshazzar was rioting with his thousand nobles at the very moment when the Persian army was bursting through the brazen gates of Babylon; is she very sure that she herself, in an almost equally imminent moment of public danger, has not been nightly indulging in every species of dissipation?

When she is deploring the inconsistency  
of

of the human heart, while she contrasts in Mark Anthony his bravery and contempt of ease at one period, with his licentious indulgence at another ; or while she laments over the intrepid soul of Cæsar, whom she had been following in his painful marches, or admiring in his contempt of death, now dissolved in dissolute pleasures with the ensnaring Queen of Egypt ; let her examine whether she herself has never, though in a much lower degree, evinced something of the same inconsistency ? whether she who lives perhaps an orderly, sober, and reasonable life during her Summer residence in the country, does not plunge with little scruple in the Winter into all the most extravagant pleasures of the capital ? whether she never carries about with her an accommodating kind of religion, which can be made to bend to places and seasons, to climates and customs, to times and circumstances ; which takes its tincture from the fashion without, and not its habits from the

principle within; which is decent with the pious, sober with the orderly, and loose with the licentious?

While she is admiring the generosity of Alexander in giving away kingdoms and provinces, let her, in order to ascertain whether she could imitate this magnanimity, take heed if she herself is daily seizing all the little occasions of doing good, which every day presents to the affluent. *Her* call is not to sacrifice a province; but does she sacrifice an opera ticket? She who is not doing all the good she can under her present circumstances, would not do all she foresees she should, in imaginary ones, were her power enlarged to the extent of her wishes.

While she is inveighing with patriotic indignation, that in a neighbouring metropolis thirty theatres were open every night in time of war and public calamity, is she very clear that in a metropolis which contains only three, she was not almost  
constantly

constantly at one of them in time of war and public calamity also? For though in a national view it may make a wide difference whether there be in the capital three theatres or thirty, yet, as the same person can only go to one of them at once, it makes but little difference as to the quantum of dissipation in the individual. She who rejoices at successful virtue in a history, or at the prosperity of a person whose interests do not interfere with her own, may exercise her self-knowledge by examining whether she rejoices equally at the happiness of every one about her; and let her remember she does not rejoice at it in the true sense, if she does not labour to promote it. She who glows with rapture at a virtuous character in history, should ask her own heart, whether she is equally ready to do justice to the fine qualities of her acquaintance, though she may not particularly love them; and whether she takes unfeigned pleasure in the superior talents,

talents, virtues, fame, and fortune of those whom she professes to love, though she is eclipsed by them?

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In like manner, in the study of geography and natural history, the attention should be habitually turned to the goodness of Providence, who commonly adapts the various productions of climates to the peculiar wants of the respective inhabitants. To illustrate my meaning by one or two instances out of a thousand. The reader may be led to admire the considerate goodness of Providence in having caused the spiry fir, whose slender foliage does not obstruct the beams of the sun, to grow in the dreary regions of the North, whose shivering inhabitants could spare none of its scanty rays, while in the torrid zone, the palm-tree, the plantane, and the banana, spread their umbrella leaves to break the almost intolerable fervors of a vertical sun. How the camel, who is the  
sole



sole carrier of all the merchandise of Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Arabia, and Barbary, who is obliged to transport his incredible burthens through countries in which pasture is so rare, can subsist twenty-four hours without food, and can travel, loaded, many days without water, through dry and dusty deserts, which supply none; and all this, not from the habit, but from the conformation of the animal: for Naturalists make this conformity of powers to climates a rule of judgment in ascertaining the native countries of animals, and always determine it to be that to which their powers and properties are most appropriate.

Thus the writers of natural history are perhaps unintentionally magnifying the operations of Providence, when they insist that animals do not modify and give way to the influence of other climates; but here they too commonly stop; neglecting, or perhaps refusing, to ascribe to infinite goodness this wise and merciful accommodation.

dation. And here the pious instructor will come in, in aid of their deficiency: for Philosophers too seldom trace up causes, and wonders, and blessings to their Author. And it is peculiarly to be regretted that a late justly celebrated French Naturalist, who, though not famous for his accuracy, possessed such diversified powers of description that he had the talent of making the driest subjects interesting; together with such a liveliness of delineation, that his characters of animals are drawn with a spirit and variety rather to be looked for in an historian of men than of beasts: it is to be regretted, I say, that this writer, with all his excellencies, is absolutely inadmissible into the library of a young lady, both on account of his immodesty and his impiety; and if in wishing to exclude him, it may be thought wrong to have given him so much commendation, it is only meant to shew that the author is not led to reprobate his principles from insensibility to his talents. The remark is rather made to  
put

put the reader on remembering that no brilliancy of genius, no diversity of attainments, should ever be allowed as a commutation for defective principles and corrupt ideas\*.

\* Goldsmith's History of animated Nature has many references to a Divine Author. It is to be wished that some judicious person would publish a new edition of this work, purified from the indelicate and offensive parts.

## CHAP. X.

*On the use of definitions, and the moral  
benefits of accuracy in language*

“ **P**ERSONS having been accustomed  
 “ from their cradles to learn words be-  
 “ fore they knew the ideas for which they  
 “ stand, usually continue to do so all their  
 “ lives, never taking the pains to settle in  
 “ their minds the determined ideas which  
 “ belong to them. This want of a pre-  
 “ cise signification in their words, when  
 “ they come to reason, *especially in moral*  
 “ *matters*, is the cause of very obscure and  
 “ uncertain notions. They use those un-  
 “ determined words confidently, without  
 “ much troubling their heads about a  
 “ certain fixed meaning, whereby, besides  
 “ the ease of it, they obtain this advantage,  
 “ that as in such discourse they are seldom  
 “ in

“ in the right, so they are as seldom to be  
 “ convinced that they are in the wrong, it  
 “ being just the same to go about to draw  
 “ those persons out of their mistakes, who  
 “ have no settled notions, as to dispossess  
 “ a vagrant of his habitation who has no  
 “ settled abode. — The chief end of lan-  
 “ guage being to be understood, words  
 “ serve not for that end when they do not  
 “ excite in the hearer the same idea which  
 “ they stand for in the mind of the  
 “ speaker\*.”

I have chosen to shelter myself under  
 the broad sanction of the great Author here  
 quoted, with a view to apply this rule  
 in philology to a moral purpose; for it  
 applies to the veracity of conversation, as  
 much as to its correctness: and as strongly  
 recommends unequivocal and simple truth,  
 as accurate and just expression. Scarcely  
 any one perhaps has an adequate con-  
 ception how much clear and correct ex-  
 pression favours the elucidation of truth;

\* Locke,

and the side of truth is obviously the side of morals; it is in fact one and the same cause; and it is, of course, the same cause with that of true religion also.

It is therefore no worthless part of education, even in a religious view, to study the precise meaning of words, and the appropriate signification of language. To this end I know no better method than to accustom young persons very early to a habit of *defining* common words and things; for, as definition seems to lie at the root of correctness, to be accustomed to define English words in English, would improve the understanding more than barely to know what those words are called in French, Italian, or Latin. Or rather, one use of learning other languages is, because definition is often involved in etymology; that is, since many English words take their derivation from foreign or ancient languages, they cannot be so accurately understood without some knowledge of those languages: but precision

cision of any kind, either moral or philological, too seldom finds its way into the education of women.

It is perhaps going out of my province to observe, that it might be well if young *men* also, before they entered on the world, were to be furnished with correct definitions of certain words, the use of which is become rather ambiguous; or rather they should be instructed in the *double sense* of modern phraseology. For instance; they should be provided with a good definition of the word *honour* in the fashionable sense, showing what vices it includes, and what virtues it does not include: the term *good company*, which even the courtly Petronius of our days has defined as sometimes including not a few immoral and disreputable characters: *religion*, which, in the various senses assigned it by the world, sometimes means superstition, sometimes fanaticism, and sometimes a mere disposition to attend on any kind of form of worship; the word *goodness*, which is made to mean every thing  
that

that is not notoriously bad; and sometimes even that too, if what is notoriously bad be accompanied by good humour, pleasing manners, and a little alms-giving. By these means they would go forth armed against many of the false opinions which, through the abuse or ambiguous meaning of words, pass so current in the world.

But to return to the youthful part of that sex which is the more immediate object of this little work. With correct definition they should also be taught to study the shades of words, and this not merely with a view to accuracy of expression, though even that involves both sense and elegance, but with a view to moral truth.

It may be thought ridiculous to assert, that morals have any connection with the purity of language, or that the precision of truth may be violated through defect of critical exactness in the three degrees of comparison: yet how frequently do we hear from the dealers in superlatives, of “most admirable, super-excellent, and  
“ quite



“ quite perfect,” people, who, to plain persons, not bred in the school of exaggeration, would appear mere common characters, not rising above the level of mediocrity! By this negligence in the just application of words, we shall be as much misled by these trope and figure ladies, when they degrade as when they panegyryze; for to a plain and sober judgment, a tradesman may not be “ the most good-for-nothing fellow that ever existed,” merely because it was impossible for him to execute in an hour an order which required a week; a lady may not be “ the most hideous fright the world ever saw,” though the make of her gown may have been obsolete for a month! nor may one’s young friend’s father be “ a monster of cruelty,” though he may be a quiet gentleman who does not chuse to live at watering-places, but likes to have his daughter stay at home with him in the country.

Of

Of all the parts of speech the interjection is the most abundantly in use with the hyperbolical fair ones. Would it could be added that these emphatical expletives (if I may make use of a contradictory term) were not sometimes tinctured with profaneness! Though I am persuaded that idle habit is often more at the bottom of this deep offence than intended impiety, yet there is scarcely any error of youthful talk which merits severer castigation. And an habit of exclamation should be rejected by polished people as vulgar, even if it were not abhorred as profane.

The habit of exaggerating trifles, together with the grand female failing of excessive mutual flattery, and elaborate general professions of fondness and attachment, is inconceivably cherished by the voluminous private correspondences in which some girls are indulged. In vindication of this practice it is pleaded that a facility of  
style,

style, and an easy turn of expression, are acquisitions to be derived from an early interchange of sentiments by letter-writing; but even if it were so, these would be dearly purchased by the sacrifice of that truth, and sobriety of sentiment, that correctness of language, and that ingenious simplicity of character and manners so lovely in female youth.

Next to pernicious reading, imprudent and violent friendships are the most dangerous snares to this simplicity. And boundless correspondences with different confidantes, whether they live in a distant province, or as it often happens, in the same street, are the fuel which principally feeds this dangerous flame of youthful sentiment. In those correspondences the young friends often encourage each other in the falsest notions of human life, and the most erroneous views of each other's character. Family affairs are divulged, and family faults are aggravated. Vows of everlasting attachment and exclusive fondness

ness are in a pretty just proportion bestowed on every friend alike. These epistles overflow with quotations from the most passionate of the dramatic poets; and passages wrested from their natural meaning, and pressed into the service of sentiment, are, with all the violence of misapplication, compelled to suit the case of the heroic transcriber.

But antecedent to this *epistolary period* of life, they should have been accustomed to the most scrupulous exactness in whatever they relate. They should maintain the most critical accuracy in *facts*, in *dates*, in *numbering*, in *describing*, in short, in whatever pertains either directly or indirectly, closely or remotely, to the great fundamental principle, *Truth*. It is so very difficult for persons of great liveliness to restrain themselves within the sober limits of strict veracity either in their assertions or narrations, especially when a little undue indulgence of fancy is apt to procure for them the praise of genius and spirit,  
that

that this restraint is one of the earliest principles which should be worked into the youthful mind.

The conversation of young females is also in danger of being overloaded with epithets. As in the warm season of youth hardly any thing is seen in the true point of vision, so hardly any thing is named in naked simplicity; and the very sensibility of the feelings is partly a cause of the extravagance of the expression. But here, as in other points, the sacred writers, particularly of the New Testament, present us with the purest models; and its natural and unlaboured style of expression is perhaps not the meanest evidence of the truth of the gospel. There is throughout the whole narratives, no overcharged character, no elaborate description, nothing studiously emphatical, as if truth of itself were weak, and wanted to be helped out. There is little panegyric, and less invective; none but on great and awful, and justifiable

fiable occasions: The authors record their own faults with the same honesty as if they were the faults of other men, and the faults of other men with as little amplification as if they were their own. There is perhaps no book in which adjectives are so sparingly used. A modest statement of the fact, with no colouring and little comment, with little emphasis and no varnish, is the example held out to us for correcting the exuberances of passion and of language, by that divine volume which furnishes us with the still more important rule of faith and standard of practice. Nor is the truth lowered by any feebleness, nor is the spirit diluted, nor the impression weakened by this soberness and moderation; for with all this plainness there is so much force, with all this simplicity there is so much energy, that a few slight touches and artless strokes of Scripture characters convey a stronger outline of the person delineated, than is sometimes given by the most

most elaborate and finished portrait of more artificial historians.

If it be objected to this remark, that many parts of the sacred writings abound in a lofty, figurative, and even hyperbolical style; this objection applies chiefly to the writings of the Old Testament, and to the prophetic and poetical parts of that. But the metaphorical and florid style of those writings is distinct from the inaccurate and over-strained expression we have been censuring; for that only is inaccuracy which leads to a false and inadequate conception in the reader or hearer. The lofty style of the Eastern, and other heroic poetry does not so mislead; for the metaphor is understood to be a metaphor, and the imagery is understood to be ornamental. The style of the Scriptures of the Old Testament is not, it is true, plain in opposition to figurative; nor simple in opposition to florid; but it is plain and simple in the best sense, as opposed to false principles and false taste; it raises no wrong  
idea;

idea; it gives an exact impression of the thing it means to convey; and its very tropes and figures, though bold, are never unnatural or affected: when it embellishes it does not mislead; even when it exaggerates, it does not misrepresent; if it be hyperbolic, it is so either in compliance with the genius of oriental language, or in compliance with contemporary customs, or because the subject is one which will be most forcibly impressed by a strong figure. The loftiness of the expression deducts nothing from the weight of the circumstance; the imagery animates the reader without misleading him; the boldest illustration, while it dilates his conception of the subject, detracts nothing from its exactness; and the divine spirit, instead of suffering truth to be injured by the opulence of the figures, contrives to make them fresh and varied avenues to the heart and the understanding.



## CHAP. XI.

*On Religion.*— *The necessity and duty of early instruction shewn by analogy with human learning.*

IT has been the fashion of our late innovators in philosophy, who have written some of the most brilliant and popular treatises on education, to decry the practice of early instilling religious knowledge into the minds of children. In vindication of this opinion it has been alleged, that it is of the utmost importance to the cause of truth that the mind of man should be kept free from prepossessions; and in particular, that every one should be left to form such judgment on religious subjects as may seem best to his own reason in maturer years.

This sentiment has received some countenance from those better characters who  
have

have wished, on the fairest principle, to encourage free enquiry in religion; but it has been pushed to the blameable excess here censured, chiefly by the new philosophers; who, while they profess only an ingenuous zeal for truth, are in fact silyly endeavouring to destroy Christianity itself, by discountenancing, under the plausible pretence of free inquiry, all attention whatever to the religious education of our youth.

It is undoubtedly our duty, while we are instilling principles into the tender mind, to take peculiar care that those principles be sound and just; that the religion we teach be the religion of the Bible, and not the inventions of human error or superstition; that the principles we infuse into others, be such as we ourselves have well scrutinized, and not the result of our credulity or bigotry; nor the mere hereditary, unexamined prejudices of our own undiscerning childhood. It may also be granted, that it is the duty of every parent to inform the youth, that when his faculties shall

shall have so unfolded themselves, as to enable him to examine for himself those principles which the parent is now instilling, it will be his duty so to examine them.

But after making these concessions, I would most seriously insist that there are certain leading and fundamental truths; that there are certain sentiments on the side of Christianity, as well as of virtue and benevolence, in favour of which every child *ought* to be prepossessed; and may it not be also added, that to expect to keep the mind void of all prepossession, even upon any subject, appears to be altogether a vain and impracticable attempt? an attempt, the very suggestion of which argues much ignorance of human nature.

Let it be observed here, that we are not combating the infidel; that we are not producing evidences and arguments in favour of the truth of Christianity, or trying to win over the assent of the reader to that which he disputes; but that we are

taking it for granted, not only that Christianity is true, but that we are addressing those who believe it to be true: an assumption which has been made throughout this work. Assuming, therefore, that there are religious principles which are true, and which ought to be communicated in the most effectual manner, the next question which arises seems to be, at what age and in what manner these ought to be inculcated? That it ought to be at an early period we have the command of Christ; who encouragingly said, in answer to those who would have repelled their reproach, "Suffer *little* children to come unto me."

But here conceding, for the sake of argument, what yet cannot be conceded, that some good reasons *may* be brought in favour of delay; allowing that such impressions as are communicated early may not be very deep; allowing them even to become totally effaced by the subsequent corruptions of the heart and of the world;

still

still I would illustrate the importance of early infusing religious knowledge, by an allusion drawn from the power of early habit in human learning. Put the case, for instance, of a person who was betimes initiated in the rudiments of classical studies. Suppose him after quitting school to have fallen, either by a course of idleness or of vulgar pursuits, into a total neglect of study. Should this person at any future period happen to be called to some profession, which should oblige him, as we say, to rub up his Greek and Latin, his memory still retaining the unobliterated though faint traces of his early pursuits, he will be able to recover his neglected learning with less difficulty than he could now begin to learn; for he is not again obliged to set out with studying the simple elements; they come back on being pursued; they are found on being searched for; the decayed images assume shape, and strength, and colour; he has in his mind first principles to which to recur; the rules of gram-

mar which he has allowed himself to violate, he has not however forgotten; he will recal neglected ideas, he will resume flighted habits far more easily than he could now begin to acquire new ones. I appeal to clergymen who are called to attend the dying beds as such as have been bred in gross and stupid ignorance of religion, for the justness of this comparison. Do they not find that these unhappy people have no ideas in common with them? that *they* therefore possess no intelligible medium by which to make themselves understood? that the persons to whom they are addressing themselves have no first principles to which they can be referred? that they are ignorant not only of the science, but the language of Christianity?

But at worst, whatever be the event of a pious education to the child, though in general we are encouraged from the tenor of Scripture and the course of experience to hope that the event will be favourable, and that “when he is old he will not  
“ depart

“depart from it;” is it nothing for the parent to have acquitted himself of this prime duty? Is it nothing to him that he has obeyed the plain command of “training his child in the way he should go?” And will not the parent who so acquits himself, with better reason and more lively hope, supplicate the Father of mercies for the reclaiming of a prodigal, who has wandered out of that right path in which he has set him forward, than for the conversion of a neglected creature, to whose feet the Gospel had never been offered as a light? And how different will be the dying reflections even of that parent whose earnest endeavours have been unhappily defeated by the subsequent and voluntary perversion of his child, from his who will reasonably aggravate his pangs, by transferring the sins of his neglected child to the number of his own transgressions.

And to such well-intentioned but ill-judging parents as really wish their children to be hereafter pious, but erroneously

withhold instruction till the more advanced period prescribed by the great master of splendid paradoxies \* shall arrive; who can assure them, that while they are withholding the good seed, the great and ever vigilant enemy, who assiduously seizes hold on every opportunity which *we* slight, and cultivates every advantage which *we* neglect, may not be stocking the fallow ground with tares? Nay, who in this fluctuating scene of things can be assured, even if this were not certainly to be the case, that to them the promised period ever shall arrive at all? Who shall ascertain to them that their now neglected child shall certainly live to receive the delayed instruction? Who can assure them that they themselves will live to communicate it?

It is almost needless to observe that parents who are indifferent about religion, much more those who treat it with scorn, are not likely to be anxious on this subject; it is therefore the attention of *religious*

\* Rousseau.



parents which is here chiefly called upon ; and the more so, as there seems on this point, an unaccountable negligence in many of these, whether it arise from indolence, false principles, or whatever other motive.

But independent of knowledge, it is something, nay, let philosophers say what they will, it is much, to give youth *prepossession* in favour of religion, to secure their *prejudices* on its side before you turn them adrift into the world ; a world in which, before they can be completely armed with arguments and reasons, they will be assailed by numbers whose *prepossession* and *prejudices*, far more than *their* arguments and reasons, attach them to the other side. Why should not the Christian youth furnish himself in the best cause with the same natural armour which the enemies of religion wear in the worst ? It is certain that to set out in life with sentiments in favour of the religion of our country, is no more an error or a weakness, than to grow up with a fondness for our

country itself. If the love of our country be judged a fair principle, surely a Christian, who is "a citizen of no mean city," may lawfully have *his* attachments too. If patriotism be an honest prejudice, Christianity is not a servile one. Nay, let us teach the youth to hug his prejudices, to glory in his prepossessions, rather than to acquire that versatile and accommodating citizenship of the world, by which he may be an Infidel in Paris, a Papist at Rome, and a Mussulman at Cairo.

Let me not be supposed so to elevate politics, or so to depress religion, as to make any comparison of the value of the one with the other, when I observe, that between the true British patriot and the true Christian, there will be this common resemblance: the more deeply each of them inquires, the more will he be confirmed in his respective attachment, the one to his country, the other to his religion. I speak with reverence of the immeasurable distance; but the more the one  
presses

presses on the firm arch of our constitution, and the other on that of Christianity, the stronger he will find them both. Each challenges scrutiny; each has nothing to dread but from shallow politicians and shallow philosophers; in each intimate knowledge justifies prepossession; in each investigation confirms attachment.

If we divide the human being into three component parts, the bodily, the intellectual, and the spiritual, is it not reasonable that a portion of care and attention be assigned to each in some degree adequate to its importance? Should I venture to say, a *due* portion, a portion adapted to the real comparative value of each, would not that condemn in one word the whole system of modern education? The rational and intellectual part being avowedly more valuable than the bodily, while the spiritual and immortal part exceeds even the intellectual still more than that surpasses what is corporeal; is it acting according to the common rules of proportion;

tion; is it acting on the principles of distributive justice; is it acting with that good sense and right judgment with which the ordinary business of this world is usually transacted, to give the larger proportion of time and care to that which is worth the least? Is it fair that what relates to the body and the organs of the body, I mean those accomplishments which address themselves to the eye and the ear, should occupy almost the whole thoughts; while the intellectual part should be robbed of its due proportion, and the spiritual part should have almost no proportion at all? Is not this preparing your children for an awful disappointment in the tremendous day when they shall be stripped of that body, of those senses and organs, which have been made almost the sole objects of their attention, and shall feel themselves left in possession of nothing but that spiritual part which in education was scarcely taken into the account of their existence?

Surely

Surely it should be thought a reasonable compromise (and I am in fact undervaluing the object for the importance of which I plead) to suggest, that at least two thirds of that time which is now usurped by externals, should be restored to the rightful owners, the understanding and the heart: and that the acquisition of religious knowledge in early youth should at least be *no less* an object of sedulous attention than the cultivation of human learning or of outward embellishments. It is also not unreasonable to suggest, that we should in Christianity, as in arts, sciences, or languages, begin with the beginning, set out with the simple elements, and thus “go on unto perfection.”

Why in teaching to draw do you begin with straight lines and curves, till by gentle steps the knowledge of outline and proportion be obtained, and your picture be completed; never losing sight, however, of the elementary lines and curves? Why in music do you set out with the simple notes, and

purfue the acquisition through all its progreffs, ftill in every ftage recurring to the notes? Why in the fcience of numbers do you invent the fimpleft methods of conveying juft ideas of computation, ftill referring to the tables which involve the fundamental rules? Why in the fcience of quantity do men introduce the pupil at firft to the plaineft diagrams, and clear up one difficulty before they allow another to appear? Why in teaching languages to the youth, do you feduloufly infufe into his mind the rudiments of fyntax? Why in parfing is he led to refer every word to its part of fpeech, to refolve every fentence into its elements, to reduce every term to its original, and from the firft cafe of nouns, and the firft tence of verbs, to explain their formations, changes, and dependencies, till the principles of language become fo grounded, that, by continually recurring to the rules, fpeaking and writing correctly are fixed into a habit? Why all this, but becaufe you uniformly  
wifh

wish him to be grounded in each of his acquirements? why, but because you are persuaded that a slight, and slovenly, and superficial, and irregular way of instruction will never train him to excellence in any thing?

Do young persons then become musicians, and painters, and linguists, and mathematicians by early study and regular labour; and shall they become Christians by accident? or rather is not this acting on that very principle of Dogberry, at which you probably have often laughed? is it not supposing that religion, like “reading and writing, come by Nature?” shall all those accomplishments, “which perish in the using,” be so assiduously, so systematically taught? shall all those habits, which are limited to the things of this world, be so carefully formed, so persisted in, as to be interwoven with our very make, so as to become as it were a part of ourselves; and shall that knowledge which is to make us “wise unto salvation” be  
 picked

picked up at random, cursorily, or perhaps not picked up at all? Shall that difficult divine science which requires “line upon line, and precept upon precept,” here a little and there a little; that knowledge which parents, even under a darker dispensation, were required “to teach their children *diligently*, and to talk of it when they sat in their house, and when they walked by the way, and when they lay down, and when they rose up;” shall this knowledge be by Christian parents omitted or deferred, or taught slightly; or be superseded by things of comparatively little worth?

Shall the lively period of youth, the soft and impressible season when lasting habits are formed, when the seal cuts deep into the yielding wax, and the impression is more likely to be clear, and sharp, and strong, and lasting; shall this warm and favourable season be suffered to slide by without being turned to the great purpose for which not only youth, but  
life,



life, and breath, and being were bestowed? Shall not that "faith without which it is impossible to please God;" shall not that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord;" shall not that knowledge which is the foundation of faith and practice; shall not that charity without which all knowledge is "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal," be impressed, be inculcated, be enforced, as early, as constantly, as fundamentally, with the same earnest pushing on to continual progress, with the same constant reference to first principles, as are used in the case of those arts which merely adorn human life? Shall we not seize the happy period when the memory is strong, the mind and all its powers vigorous and active, the imagination busy and all alive; the heart flexible, the temper ductile, the conscience tender, curiosity awake, fear powerful, hope eager, love ardent; shall we not seize this period for inculcating that knowledge, and impressing those principles which are to form the character,

character, and fix the destination for eternity ?

I would now address myself to another and a still more dilatory class, who are for procrastinating all concern about religion till they are driven to it by actual distress, and who do not think of praying till they are perishing, like the sailor who said " he thought it was always " time enough to begin to pray when the " storm began." Of these I would ask, shall we, with an unaccountable deliberation, defer our anxiety about religion till the busy man and the dissipated woman are become so immersed in the cares of life, or so entangled in its pleasures, that they will have little heart or spirit to embrace a new principle ? a principle whose precise object it will be to condemn that very life in which they have already embarked ; nay, to condemn almost all that they have been doing and thinking ever since they first began to act or think ? Shall we, I say, begin now ? or shall we suffer those  
instruc-

instructions, to receive which requires all the concentrated powers of a strong and healthy mind, to be put off till the day of excruciating pain, till the period of debility and stupefaction? Shall we wait for that season, as if it were the most favourable for religious acquisitions, when the senses shall have been palled by excessive gratification, when the eye shall be tired with seeing, and the ear with hearing? Shall we, when the whole man is breaking up by disease or decay, expect that the dim apprehension will discern a new science, or the obtuse feelings delight themselves with a new pleasure? a pleasure too, not only incompatible with many of the hitherto indulged pleasures, but one which carries with it a strong intimation that those pleasures terminate in the death of the soul.

But, not to lose sight of the important analogy on which we have already dwelt so much; how preposterous would it seem to you to hear any one propose to an illiterate  
dying

dying man, to set about learning even the plainest and easiest rudiments of any new art; to study the musical notes; to conjugate a verb; to learn, not the first problem in Euclid, but even the numeration table; and yet you, do not think it absurd to postpone religious instruction, on principles, which, if admitted at all, must terminate either in ignorance, or in your proposing too late to a dying man to begin to learn the totally unknown scheme of Christianity. You do not think it impossible that he should be brought to listen to the "voice of this charmer," when he can no longer listen to "the voice of singing men and singing women." You do not think it unreasonable that immortal beings should delay to devote their days to Heaven, till they have "no pleasure in them" themselves. You will not bring them to offer up the first fruits of their lips, and hearts, and lives, to their Maker, because you persuade yourselves that he who has called himself

himself a "jealous God," may however be contented hereafter with the wretched sacrifice of decayed appetites, and the worthless leavings of almost extinguished affections.

We can scarcely believe, even with all the melancholy procrastination we see around us, that there is any one, except he be a decided infidel, who does not consider religion as at least a good reverfionary thing ; as an object which ought always to occupy a little remote corner of his map of life ; the ftudy of which, though it is always to be postponed, is however not to be finally rejected ; which, though it cannot conveniently come into his prefent fcheme of life, it is intended fomehow or other to take up before death. This awful deception, this defect in the intellectual vifion, arifes, partly from the bulk which the objects of time and fenfe acquire in our eyes by their nearnefs ; while the invifible realities of eternity are but faintly difcerned by a feeble faith,

faith, through a dim and distant medium. It arises also partly from a totally false idea of the nature of Christianity, from a fatal fancy that we can repent at any future period, and that as amendment is a thing which will always be in our own power, it will be time enough to think of reforming our life, when we should think only of closing it.

But depend upon it, that a heart long hardened, I do not mean by gross vices merely, but by a fondness for the world, by an habitual and excessive indulgence in the pleasures of sense, will by no means be in a favourable state to admit the light of divine truth, or to receive the impression of divine grace. God indeed sometimes shows us by an act of his sovereignty, that this wonderful change, the conversion of a sinner's heart, may be produced without the intervention of human means, to show that the work is HIS. But as this is not the way in which the Almighty usually deals with his creatures, it would be nearly  
as

as preposterous for men to act on this presumption, and sin on in hopes of a miraculous conversion, as it would be to take no means for the preservation of their lives, because Jesus Christ raised Lazarus from the dead.

## CHAP. XII.

*On the manner of instructing young persons in Religion.—General remarks on the genius of Christianity.*

**I** WOULD now with great deference address those respectable characters who are really concerned about the best interests of their children ; those to whom Christianity is indeed an important consideration, but whose habits of life have hitherto hindered them from giving it its due degree in the scale of education.

Begin then with considering that religion is a part, and the most prominent part, in your system of instruction. Do not communicate its principles in a random desultory way ; nor scantily stint this business to only such scraps and remnants  
of



of time as may be casually picked up from the gleanings of other acquirements.

“ Will you bring to God for a sacrifice

“ that which costs you nothing ?” Let

the best part of the day, which with most people is the earliest part, be steadily and invariably dedicated to this work by your children, before they are tired with their other studies, while the intellect is clear, the spirits light, and the attention sharp and unfatigued.

Confine not your instructions to mere verbal rituals and dry systems; but communicate them in a way which shall interest their feelings, by lively images, and by a warm practical application of what they read to their own hearts and circumstances. If you do not study the great but too much slighted art of fixing, of commanding, of chaining the attention, you may throw away much time and labour, with little other effect than that of disgusting your pupil and wearying yourself. There seems to be no good reason that while every  
other

other thing is to be made amusing, religion alone must be dry and uninviting. Do not fancy that a thing is good merely because it is dull. Why should not the most entertaining powers of the human mind be supremely consecrated to that subject which is most worthy of their full exercise? The misfortune is, that religious learning is too often rather considered as an act of the memory than of the heart and affections; as a dry duty, rather than a lively pleasure. The manner in which it is taught differs as much from their other learning as punishment from recreation. Children are turned over to the dull work of getting by rote as a task that which they should get from example, from animated conversation, from lively discussion, in which the pupil should learn to bear a part, instead of being merely a passive hearer. Teach them rather, as their Blessed Saviour taught, by interesting parables, which, while they corrected the heart, left some exercise for the ingenuity in the solution, and for the feelings

in their application. Teach, as HE taught, by seizing on surrounding objects, passing events, local circumstances, peculiar characters, apt allusions, just analogy, appropriate illustration. Call in all creation, animate and inanimate, to your aid, and accustom your young audience to

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

Even when the nature of your subject makes it necessary for you to be more plain and didactic, do not fail frequently to enliven these less engaging parts of your discourse with some incidental imagery which will captivate the fancy; with some affecting story, with which it shall be associated in the memory. Relieve what would otherwise be too dry and preceptive, with some striking exemplification in point, some touching instance to be imitated, some awful warning to be avoided; something which shall illustrate your instruction, which shall realize your position,

which shall embody your idea, and give shape and form, colour and life, to your precept. Endeavour unremittingly to connect the reader with the subject, by making her feel that what you teach is neither an abstract truth, nor a thing of mere general information, but that it is a business in which *she herself* is individually and immediately concerned; in which not only her eternal salvation but her *present* happiness is involved. Do, according to your measure of ability, what the Holy Spirit which indited the Scripture has done, always take the sensibility of the learner into your account of the faculties which are to be worked upon. “For the doctrines of the Bible,” as the profound and enlightened Bacon observes, “are not proposed to us in a naked logical form, but arrayed in the most beautiful and striking colours which creation affords.” By those affecting illustrations used by Him “who knew what was in man,” and therefore best knew how to address him,  
it

it was, that the unlettered audiences of Christ and his apostles were enabled both to comprehend and to relish doctrines, which would not readily have made their way to their understandings, had they not first touched their hearts; and which would have found access to neither the one nor the other, had they been delivered in dry scholastic disquisitions. Now those audiences not being learned, may be supposed to have been nearly in the state of children, as to their respective faculties, and to have required nearly the same sort of instruction; that is, they were more capable of being moved with what was simple, and touching, and lively, than what was elaborate, abstruse, and unaffecting. Heaven and earth were made to furnish their contributions, when man was to be taught that science which was to make him wise unto salvation. Something which might enforce or illustrate was borrowed from every element. The appearances of the sky, the storms of the ocean, the birds of

the air, the beasts of the field, the fruits of the earth, the seed and the harvest, the labours of the husbandman, the traffic of the merchant, the seasons of the year! all were laid hold of in turn. And the most important moral instruction, or religious truth, was deduced from some recent occurrence, some natural appearance, some ordinary fact.

If that be the purest eloquence which most persuades, and which comes home to the heart with the fullest evidence and the most irresistible force, then no eloquence is so powerful as that of Scripture: and an intelligent Christian teacher will be admonished by the mode of Scripture itself, how to communicate its truths with life and spirit; “while he is musing, the fire “burns:” that fire which will preserve him from an insipid and freezing mode of instruction. He will moreover, as was said above, always carefully keep up a quick sense of the personal interest the pupil has in every religious instruction which

which is impressed upon him. He will teach as Paul prayed, “with the spirit;” and with the understanding also;” and imitating this great model, he will necessarily avoid the opposite faults of two different sorts of instructors; for while some of our divines of the higher class have been too apt to preach as if mankind had only intellect, and the lower and more popular sort as if they had only passions, let him borrow what is good from both, and address his pupils as beings compounded of both understanding and affections\*.

\* The zeal and diligence with which the Bishop of London’s weekly lectures have been attended by persons of all ranks and descriptions, but more especially by that class to whom this little work is addressed, is a very promising circumstance for the age. And while we consider with pleasure the advantages peculiarly to be derived by the young from so interesting and animated an exposition of the Gospel, we are further led to rejoice at the countenance given by such high authority to the revival of that excellent, but too much neglected practice of lectures.

Fancy not that the Bible is too difficult and intricate to be presented in its own naked form, and that it puzzles and bewilders the youthful understanding. In all needful and indispensable points of knowledge, the darkness of Scripture, as a great Christian philosopher \* has observed, “ is but a partial darkness, like that of “ Egypt, which benighted only the enemies “ of God, while it left his children in clear “ day.” It is not pretended that the Bible will *find* in the young reader clear views of God and of Christ, of the soul and eternity, but that it will *give* them. And if it be really the appropriate character of Scripture, as it tells us itself that it is, “ to “ enlighten the eyes of the *blind*,” and “ to make wise the *simple*,” then it is as well calculated for the youthful and uninformed as for any other class; and as it was never expected that the greater part of Christians should be learned,

\* Mr. Boyle.



so is learning, though of inestimable value in a *teacher* of theology, no *essential* qualification for a common Christian: for which reason Scripture truths are expressed with that clear and simple evidence adapted to the kind of assent which they require; an assent materially different from that sort of demonstration which a mathematical theorem demands. He who could bring an unprejudiced heart and an unperverted will, would bring to the Scriptures the best qualification for understanding and receiving them. And though they contain things which the pupil cannot comprehend, (as what ancient poet, historian, or orator does not,) the teacher may address to him the words which Christ addressed to Peter, “What I do thou knowest not now, but  
“thou shalt know hereafter.”

Histories of the Bible, and commentaries on the Bible, for the use of children, though valuable in their way, should never be used as substitutes for the Bible itself. For

historical or geographical information, for calling the attention to events and characters, they are very useful. But Scripture truths are best conveyed in its own sublime and simple phraseology; its doctrines are best understood in its own appropriate language; its precepts are best retained in their own simple form. Paraphrase, in professing to explain, often dilutes; while the terseness and brevity of Scripture composition fills the mind, touches the heart, and fastens on the memory. While I would cause them to "read" the commentary for the improvement of the understanding, they should "mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the Bible for the comfort and edification of the heart.

Young people who have been taught religion in a formal and superficial way, who have had all its drudgeries and none of its pleasures, will probably have acquired so little relish for it, as to consider the continued prosecution of their religious studies as a badge of their tutelage, as a mark  
that

that they are still under subjection; and will look forward with impatience to the hour of their emancipation from the lectures on Christianity, as the æra of their promised liberty; the epocha of independence. They will long for the period when its lessons shall cease to be delivered; will conclude that, having once attained such an age, and arrived at the required proficiency, the object will be accomplished and the labour at an end. But let not *your* children “so learn Christ.” Apprize them that no specific day will ever arrive on which they shall say, I *have* attained; but inform them, that every acquisition must be followed up; knowledge must be increased; prejudices subdued; good habits rooted; evil ones eradicated; amiable dispositions strengthened; right principles confirmed; till going on from light to light, and from strength to strength, they come “to the measure of the stature of “he fulness of Christ.”

But though serious instruction will not only be uninteresting but irksome, if con-

veyed to youth in a cold didactic way, yet if their affections be suitably engaged, while their understandings are kept in exercise, their hearts, so far from necessarily revolting, as some insist, will often receive the most solemn truths with alacrity. It is, as we have repeated, the manner which revolts them, and not the thing. Nor will they, as some assert, necessarily dislike the teacher, because the truths taught are of the most awful and solemn kind. It has happened to the writer to be a frequent witness of the gratitude and affection expressed by young persons to those who had sedulously and seriously instructed them in religious knowledge: an affection as lively, a gratitude as warm, as could have been excited by any indulgence to their persons, or any gratification of a worldly nature.

As it is notorious that men of wit and sprightly fancy have been the most formidable enemies to Christianity; while men, in whom those talents have been consecrated to God, have been some of her most useful champions,

champions, take particular care to press that ardent and ever-active power, the *imagination*, into the service of religion; this bright and busy faculty will be leading its possessor into perpetual peril, and is an enemy of peculiar potency till it come to be employed in the cause of God. It is a lion, which though worldly prudence indeed may *chain* so as to prevent outward mischief, yet the malignity remains within; but when sanctified by Christianity, the imagination is a lion *tamed*; you have all the benefit of its strength and its activity, divested of its mischief. God never bestowed that noble but restless faculty, without intending it to be an instrument of his own glory; though it has been too often set up in rebellion against him; because, in its youthful stirrings, while all alive and full of action, it has not been seized upon to serve its rightful Sovereign, but was early enlisted with little opposition under the banners of the world, the flesh,

and the devil. Religion is the only subject in which, under the guidance of a severe and sober-minded prudence, this discursive faculty can safely stretch its powers and expand its energies. But let it be remembered that it must be a sound and genuine Christianity which can alone so chastise and regulate the imagination, as to restrain it from those errors and excesses into which a false, a mistaken, an irregular religion, has too often led its injudicious and ill-instructed professor. Some of the most fatal extremes into which a wild enthusiasm or a frightful superstition has plunged its unhappy votaries, have been owing to the want of a due direction, to the want of a strict and holy castigation of this ever-working faculty. To secure imagination, therefore, on the safe side, and, if I may change the metaphor, to put it under the direction of its true pilot in the stormy voyage of life, is like engaging those potent elements the wind and tide, in your favour.

In your communications with young people, take care to convince them, that as religion is not a business to be laid aside with the lesson, so neither is it a single branch of duty; some detached thing, which, like the acquisition of an art or a language, is to be practised separately, and to have its distinct periods and modes of operation. But let them understand, that common acts, by the spirit in which they are to be performed, are to be made acts of religion; let them perceive that Christianity may be considered as having something of that influence over the conduct which external grace has over the manners; for as it is not the performance of some particular act which denominates any one to be graceful, grace being a spirit diffused through the whole system, which animates every sentiment, and informs every action: as she who has true personal grace has it uniformly, and is not sometimes awkward and sometimes elegant; does not some-  
times

times lay it down and sometimes take it up; so religion is not an occasional act, but an indwelling principle, an inwrought habit, a pervading and informing spirit, from which indeed every act derives all its life, and energy, and beauty.

Give them clear views of the broad discrimination between practical religion and worldly morality; in short between the virtues of Christians and of Pagans. Show them that no good qualities are genuine but such as flow from the religion of Christ. Let them learn that the virtues which the better sort of people, who yet are destitute of true Christianity, inculcate and practise, resemble those virtues which have the love of God for their motive, just as counterfeit coin resembles sterling gold; they may have, it is true, certain points of resemblance with the others; they may be bright and shining; they have perhaps the image and the superscription, but they never want the true distinguishing properties; they



they want sterling value, purity, and weight. They may indeed pass current in the traffic of this world, but when brought to the touchstone, they will be found full of alloy; when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, "they will be found wanting:" they will not stand that final trial which is to separate "the precious from the vile;" they will not abide the day "of *his* coming who is like a refiner's "fire."

One error into which even some good people are apt to fall, is that of endeavouring to deceive young minds by temporising expedients. In order to allure them to become religious, they exhibit false, or faint, or inadequate views of Christianity; and while they represent it as it really is, as a life of superior happiness and advantage, they conceal its difficulties, and like the Jesuitical Chinese missionaries, extenuate, or sink, or deny, such parts of it as are least alluring to human pride. In attempting to disguise its principle, they  
 destroy

destroy its efficacy. They deny the cross, instead of making it the badge of a Christian. But besides that, the project fails with them as it did with the Jesuits; all fraud is bad in itself; and a pious fraud is a contradiction in terms which ought to be buried in the rubbish of papal desolation.

Instead of representing to the young Christian, that it may be possible by a prudent ingenuity at once to pursue, with equal ardour and success, worldly fame and eternal glory, would it not be more honest to tell him fairly and unambiguously that there are too distinct roads, between which there is a broad boundary line? that there are two contending and irreconcilable interests? that he must forsake the one if he would cleave to the other? that “there are two masters,” both of whom it is impossible to serve? that there are two sorts of characters at eternal variance? that he must renounce the one if he is in earnest for the other? that nothing  
short

short of absolute decision can make a confirmed Christian? Point out the different sorts of promises annexed to these different sorts of characters. Confess in the language of Christ how the man of the world often obtains (and it is the natural course of human things) the recompense he sedulously seeks. "Verily I say unto you they have their reward." Explain the beatitudes on the other hand, and unfold what kind of specific reward is there individually promised to its concomitant virtue. Show your pupil that to that "poverty of spirit" to which "the kingdom of heaven" is promised; it would be inconsistent to expect that the recompense of human commendation should be also attached; that to that "purity of heart" to which the beatific vision is annexed, it would be unreasonable to suppose you can unite the praise of licentious wits, or the admiration of a catch-club. These will be bestowed on their appropriate and corresponding merits. Do not inlist them under false colours; disappointment

pointment will produce desertion. Different sorts of rewards are attached to different sorts of services; and while you truly assert that Religion's ways are "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," take care that you do not lead them to depend too exclusively on worldly happiness and earthly peace, for these make no part of the covenant; they may be, and they often are, superadded, but they were never stipulated in the contract.

But if, in order to attract the young to a religious course, you disingenuously conceal its difficulties, while you are justly enlarging upon its pleasures, you will tempt them to distrust the truth of Scripture itself. For what will they think, not only of a few detached texts, but of the general cast and colour of the Gospel when contrasted with your representation of it? When you are describing to them the inseparable human advantages which will follow a religious course, what notion will they conceive of "the strait gate" and  
"narrow

“ narrow way ?” of the amputation of a  
“ right hand ?” of the excision of “ a right  
“ eye ?” of the other strong metaphors by  
which the Christian warfare is shadowed  
out ? “ of crucifying the flesh ?” of “ mor-  
“ tifying the old man ?” of “ dying unto  
“ sin ;” of “ overcoming the world ?” Do  
you not think their meek and compassion-  
ate Saviour who died for your children  
loved them as well as you love them ? And  
if this were his language, ought it not to  
be yours ? It is the language of true love ;  
of that love **with which** a merciful God  
loved the world, when he spared not his  
own Son. Do not fear to tell your children  
what he told his Disciples, that “ in the  
“ world they shall have tribulation ;” but  
teach them to rise **superior** to it, on *his*  
principle, by “ overcoming the world.”  
Do not then try to conceal from them,  
that the life of a Christian is **necessarily**  
opposite to the life of the world ; **and do**  
not seek, by a vain attempt at accommo-  
dation, to reconcile that difference which  
Christ

Christ himself has pronounced to be irreconcilable.

May it not be partly owing to the want of a due introduction to the knowledge of the real nature and spirit of religion, that so many young Christians, who set out in a fair and flourishing way, decline and wither when they come to perceive the requisitions of experimental Christianity? requisitions which they had not suspected of making any part of the plan; and from which, when they afterwards discover them, they shrink back, as not prepared and hardened for the unexpected contest.

People are no more to be cheated into religion than into learning. The same spirit which influences your oath in a court of justice should influence your discourse in that court of equity — your family. Your children should be told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It is unnecessary to add, that it must be done gradually and discreetly. We know whose example we have for postponing  
that

that which the mind is not yet prepared to receive: "I have many things yet to say to you, but ye cannot bear them *now*." Accustom them to reason by analogy. Explain to them that great *worldly* attainments are never made without great sacrifices; that the merchant cannot become rich without industry; the statesman eminent without labour; the scholar learned without study; the hero renowned without danger: would it not then, on human principles, be unreasonable to think that the Christian alone should obtain a triumph without a warfare? the highest prize with the lowest exertions? an eternal crown without a present cross? and that heaven is the only reward which the idle may reckon upon? No: though salvation "be the *gift* of God," yet it must be "*worked out*." Convince your young friends, however, that in this case the difficulty of the battle bears no proportion to the prize of the victory. In one respect, indeed, the point of resemblance between worldly and  
Christian

Christian pursuits fails, and that most advantageously for the Christian; for while, even by the most probable means, which are the union of talents with diligence, no human prosperity can be *insured* to the worldly candidate; while the most successful adventurer may fail by the fault of another; while the best concerted project of the statesman may be crushed; the bravest hero lose the battle; the brightest genius fail of getting bread; and while, moreover, the pleasure arising even from success in these may be no sooner tasted than it is poisoned by a more prosperous rival; the persevering Christian is safe and certain of obtaining *his* object; no misfortunes can defeat *his* hope; no competition can endanger *his* success; for though another gain, he will not lose; nay, the success of another, so far from diminishing his gain, is an addition to it; the more he diffuses, the richer he grows; his blessings are enlarged by communication; and that mortal hour which cuts off for ever the  
hopes



hopes of worldly men, crowns and consummates his.

Beware at the same time of setting up any act of self-denial or mortification as the *procuring* cause of salvation. This would be a presumptuous project to *purchase* that eternal life which is declared to be the “free gift of God.” This would be to send your children, not to the Gospel to learn their Christianity, but to the Monks and Ascetics of the middle ages; it would be sending them to Peter the Hermit, and the holy fathers of the Desert, and not to Peter the Apostle and his Divine Master. Mortification is not the price; it is nothing more than the discipline of a soul of which sin is the disease, the diet prescribed by the great physician. Without this guard the young devout Christian would be led to fancy that abstinence, pilgrimage, and penance might be adopted as the cheap substitute for the subdued desire, the resisted temptation,

the conquered corruption, and the obedient will; and would be almost in as much danger, on the one hand, of self-righteousness arising from austerities and mortification, as she would be, on the other, from self-gratification in the indulgences of the world. And while you carefully impress on her the necessity of living a life of strict obedience if she would please God, do not neglect to remind her also that a complete renunciation of her own performances as a ground of merit, *purchasing* the favour of God by their own intrinsic worth, is included in that obedience.

It is of the last importance, in stamping on young minds a true impression of the genius of Christianity, to possess them with a conviction that it is the purity of the motive which not only gives worth and beauty, but which, in a Christian sense, gives life and soul to the best action: nay, that while a right intention will be  
acknow-

acknowledged and accepted at the final judgment, even without the act, the act itself will be disowned which wanted the basis of a pure design. "Thou didst well that it was in thy *heart* to build me a temple," said the Almighty to that Monarch whom yet he permitted not to build it. How many splendid actions will be rejected in the great day of retribution, to which statues and monuments have been raised on earth, while their almost deified authors shall be as much confounded at their own unexpected reprobation, as at the divine acceptance of those "whose life the world counted madness." It is worthy of remark, that "Depart from me, I never knew you," is not the malediction denounced on the sceptic or the scoffer, on the profligate and the libertine, but on the high professor, on the unfruitful worker of "miracles," on the un sanctified utterer of "prophecies;" for even acts of piety wanting the purifying principle, however they may dazzle men,

offend God. Cain sacrificed, Balaam prophesied, Rousseau wrote the most sublime panegyric on *the Son of Mary*, VOLTAIRE BUILT A CHURCH! nay, so superior was his affectation of sanctity, that he ostentatiously declared, that while others were raising churches to *Saints*, there was one man at least who would erect *his* church to *God*\*: that God whose altars he was overthrowing, whose name he was vilifying, whose Gospel he was exterminating, and the very name of whose Son he had solemnly pledged himself to blot from the face of the earth!

Though it be impossible here to enumerate all those Christian virtues which should be impressed in the progress of a Christian education, yet in this connection I cannot forbear mentioning one which more immediately grows out of the subject; and to remark that the principle

\* *Deo erexit Voltaire*, is the inscription affixed by himself on his church at Ferney.

which

which should be the invariable concomitant of all instruction, and especially of religious instruction, is *humility*. As this temper is inculcated in every page of the Gospel; as it is deducible from every precept and every action of Christ; that is a sufficient intimation that it should be made to grow out of every study, that it should be grafted on every acquisition. It is the turning point, the leading principle indicative of the very genius, of the very being of Christianity. This chastising quality should therefore be constantly made in education to operate as the only counteraction of that "knowledge which puffeth up." Youth should be taught that as humility is the discriminating characteristic of our religion, therefore a proud Christian, a haughty disciple of a crucified Master, furnishes perhaps a stronger opposition in terms than the whole compass of language can exhibit. They should be taught that humility being the appropriate

grace of Christianity, is precisely the thing which makes Christian and Pagan virtues *essentially* different. The virtues of the Romans, for instance, were obviously founded in pride; as a proof of this, they had not even a word in their copious language to express humility, but what was used in a bad sense, and conveyed the idea of meanness or vileness, of baseness and servility. Christianity so stands on its own single ground, is so far from assimilating itself to the spirit of other religions, that, unlike the Roman Emperor, who, though he would not become a Christian, yet ordered that the image of Christ should be set up in the Pantheon with those of the heathen gods, and be worshipped in common with them; Christianity not only rejects all such partnerships with other religions, but it pulls down their images, defaces their temples, tramples on their honours, founds its own existence on the ruins of spurious religions and spurious virtues,

virtues, and will be every thing when it is admitted to be any thing.

Will it be going too much out of the way to observe, that Christian Britain retaliates upon Pagan Rome? For if the former used humility in a bad sense, has not the latter learnt to use pride in a good one? May we without impertinence venture to remark, that in the deliberations of as honourable and upright political assemblies as ever adorned, or, under Providence, upheld a country; in orations which leave us nothing to envy in Attic or Roman eloquence in their best days: it were to be wished that we did not borrow from Rome an epithet which suited the genius of her religion as much as it militates against that of ours? The panegyrist of the battle of Marathon, of Platea, or of Zama, might with propriety speak of a "proud day," or a "proud event," or a "proud success." But surely the Christian encomiasts of the battle of the Nile might, from their abundance, select

an epithet better appropriated to such a victory — a victory which, by preserving Europe, has perhaps preserved that religion which sets its foot on the very neck of pride, and in which the conqueror himself, even in the first ardors of triumph, forgot not to ascribe the victory to ALMIGHTY GOD. Let us leave to the enemy both the term and the thing; arrogant words being the only weapons in which we must ever avail to their decided superiority. As we must despair of the victory, let us disdain the contest.

Above all things then you should beware that your pupils do not take up with a vague, general, and undefined religion; but look to it that their Christianity be really the religion of Christ. Instead of flurring over the doctrines of the Cross, as disreputable appendages to our religion, which are to be disguised or got over as well as we can, but which are never to be dwelt upon, take care to make these your grand fundamental articles. Do not dilute,



dilute, or explain away these doctrines, and by some elegant periphrasis *hint* at a Saviour, instead of making him the foundation stone of your system. Do not convey primary, and plain, and awful, and indispensable truths elliptically, I mean as something that is to be understood without being expressed; nor study fashionable circumlocutions to avoid names and things on which our salvation hangs, in order to prevent your discourse from being offensive. Persons who are thus instructed in religion with more good breeding than seriousness and simplicity, imbibe a distaste for plain scriptural language; and the Scriptures themselves are so little in use with a certain fashionable class of readers, that when the doctrines and language of the Bible occasionally occur in other authors, or in conversation, they present a sort of novelty and peculiarity which offend; and such readers as disuse the Bible are apt, from a supposed delicacy of taste, to call that precise and puritanical which

is in fact sound and scriptural. Nay, it has several times happened to the author to hear persons of sense and learning ridicule insulated sentiments and expressions that have fallen in their way, which they would have treated with decent respect had they known them to be, as they really were, texts of Scripture. This observation is hazarded with a view to enforce the importance of early communicating religious knowledge, and of infusing an early taste for the venerable phraseology of Scripture.

The persons in question thus possessing a kind of Pagan Christianity, are apt to acquire a sort of Pagan expression also, which just enables them to speak with complacency of the "Deity," of a "first cause," and of "conscience." Nay, some may even go so far as to talk of "the founder of our religion," of the "author of Christianity," in the same general terms as they would talk of the prophet of Arabia, or the lawgiver of China, of Athens, or the Jews. But their

their refined ideas revolt not a little at the unadorned name of Christ ; and especially the naked and unqualified term of our Saviour, or Redeemer, carries with it a queerish, inelegant, not to say a suspicious sound. They will express a serious disapprobation of what is wrong, under the moral term of *vice* or the forensic term of *crime* ; but they are apt to think that the Scripture term of *sin* has something fanatical in it ; and, while they discover a great respect for morality, they do not much relish holiness, which is indeed the specific and only morality of a Christian. They will speak readily of a man's reforming, or leaving off a vicious habit, or growing more correct in some individual practice ; but the idea conveyed under any of the Scripture phrases signifying a total change of heart, they would stigmatize as the very shibboleth of a sect, though it is the language of a Liturgy they affect to admire, and of a Gospel which they profess to receive.

## CHAP. XIII.

*Hints suggested for furnishing young persons  
with a scheme of prayer.*

**T**HOSE who are aware of the inestimable value of prayer themselves, will naturally be anxious not only that this duty should be earnestly inculcated on their children, but that they should be taught it in the best manner; and *such* parents need little persuasion or counsel on the subject. Yet children of decent and orderly (I will not say of strictly religious) families are often so superficially instructed in this important business, that when they are asked what prayers they use, it is not unusual for them to answer, “ the Lord’s Prayer and “ the *Creed*.” And even some who are better taught, are not always made to understand with sufficient clearness the  
specific

Specific distinction between the two ; that the one is the confession of their *faith*, and the other the model for their *supplications*. By this confused and indistinct beginning, they set out with a perplexity in their ideas, which is not always completely disentangled in more advanced life.

An intelligent mother will seize the first occasion which the child's opening understanding shall allow, for making a little course of Lectures on the Lord's Prayer, taking every division or short sentence separately ; for each furnishes valuable materials for a distinct lecture. The child should be led gradually through every part of this divine composition ; she should be taught to break it into all the regular divisions, into which indeed it so naturally resolves itself. She should be made to comprehend one by one each of its short but weighty sentences ; to amplify and spread them out for the purpose of better understanding them, not in their most

extensive and critical sense, but in their more simple and obvious meaning. For in those condensed and substantial expressions every word is an ingot, and will bear beating out ; so that the teacher's difficulty will not so much be what she shall say as what she shall suppress ; so abundant is the expository matter which this succinct pattern suggests.

When the child has a pretty good conception of the meaning of each division, she should then be made to observe the connection, relation, and dependance of the several parts of this prayer one upon another ; for there is great method and connection in it. We pray that the " kingdom of God may come," as the best means " to hallow his name ;" and that by us, the obedient subjects of his kingdom, " his will may be done." A judicious interpreter will observe how logically and consequently one clause grows out of another, though she will use neither the word logical nor consequence ; for all explanations

tions should be made in the most plain and familiar terms, it being words, and not things, which commonly perplex children, if, as it sometimes happens, the teacher, though not wanting sense, want perspicuity and simplicity\*.

The young person, from being made a complete mistress of this short composition, (which as it is to be her guide and model through life, too much pains cannot be bestowed on it,) will have a clearer conception, not only of its individual contents, but of prayer in general, than many even attain, though their memory has been perhaps loaded with long and unexplained forms, which they have been accustomed to swallow in a lump without scrutiny and

\* It might perhaps be a safe rule to establish for prayer in general, to suspect that any petition which cannot in some shape or other be accommodated to the spirit of some part of this prayer may not be right to be adopted. Here, temporal things are kept in their due subordination; they are asked for moderately, as an acknowledgment of our dependance and of God's power; "for our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things."

without

without discrimination. Prayer should not be so swallowed. It is a regular prescription which should stand analysis and examination: it is not a charm, the successful operation of which depends on your blindly taking it, without knowing what is in it, and in which the good you receive is promoted by your ignorance of its contents.

I would have it understood that by these little comments, I do not mean that the child should be put to learn dry, and to her unintelligible expositions; but that the exposition is to be colloquial. And here I must remark in general, that the teacher is sometimes unreasonably apt to relieve herself at the child's expence, by loading the *memory* of a little creature on occasions which far other faculties should be put in exercise. The child herself should be made to furnish a good part of this extemporaneous commentary by her answers; in which answers she will be much assisted by the judgment the teacher uses in her manner of questioning. And the youthful understanding, when its powers are properly



properly fet at work, will soon strengthen by exercife, fo as to furnifh reasonable, if not very correct answers.

Written forms of prayer are not only ufeful and proper, but indifpenfably neceffary to begin with. But I will hazard the remark, that if children are thrown *exclusively* on the beft forms, if they are made to commit them to memory like a copy of verfes, and to repeat them in a dry, customary way, they will produce little effect on their minds. They will not underftand what they repeat, if we do not early open to them the important *fcheme* of prayer. Without fuch an elementary introduction to this duty, they will afterwards be either ignorant or enthufiafts, or both. We fhould give them *knowledge* before we can expect them to make much progrefs in *piety*, and as a due preparative to it: Chriftian inftruction in this refembling the fun, who, in the courfe of his communications, gives light before he gives heat. And to labour to excite a fpirit of devotion without firft  
infufing

infusing that knowledge out of which it is to grow, is practically reviving the popish maxim, that Ignorance is the mother of Devotion, and virtually adopting the popish rule, of praying in an unknown tongue.

Children, let me again observe, will not attend to their prayers if they do not understand them; and they will not understand them, if they are not taught to analyse, to dissect them, to know their component parts, and to methodise them.

It is not enough to teach them to consider prayer under the general idea, that it is an application to God for what they want, and an acknowledgment to Him for what they have. This, however true in the gross, is not sufficiently precise and correct. They should learn to define and to arrange all the different parts of prayer. And as a preparative to prayer itself, they should be impressed with as clear an idea as their capacity and the nature of the subject will admit of "HIM with whom they have to do." His omnipresence is perhaps, of  
all

all his attributes, that of which we may make the first practical use. Every head of prayer is founded on some great scriptural truths, which truths the little analysis here suggested will materially assist to fix in their minds.

On the knowledge that "God is," that he is an infinitely holy Being, and that "he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him," will be grounded the first part of prayer, which is *adoration*. The creature devoting itself to the Creator, or *self-dedication*, next presents itself. And if they are first taught that important truth, that as needy creatures they want help, which may be done by some easy analogy, they will easily be led to understand how naturally *petition* forms a most considerable branch of prayer: and divine grace being among the things for which they are to petition, this naturally suggests to the mind the doctrine of the influences of the Holy Spirit. And when to this is added the conviction which will be readily worked  
into

into an ingenuous mind, that as, offending creatures they want pardon, the necessity of *confession* will easily be made intelligible to them. But they should be brought to understand that it must not be such a general and vague confession as awakens no sense of personal humiliation, as excites no recollection of their own more peculiar and individual faults. But it must be a confession founded on self-knowledge, which is itself to arise out of the practice of self-examination: for want of this sort of discriminating habit, a well-meaning but ill-instructed girl may be caught confessing the sins of some other person and omitting those which are more especially her own. On the gladness of heart natural to youth, it will be less difficult to impress the delightful duty of *thanksgiving*, which forms so considerable a branch of prayer. In this they should be habituated to recapitulate not only their general, but to enumerate their peculiar, daily, and incidental mercies, in the same specific manner

ner as they should have been taught to detail their individual and personal *wants* in the petitionary, and their *faults* in the confessional part. The same warmth of feeling which will more readily dispose them to express their gratitude to God in thanksgiving, will also lead them more gladly to express their love to their parents and friends, by adopting another indispensable, and, to an affectionate heart, pleasing part of prayer, which is *intercession*.

When they have been made, by a plain and perspicuous mode of instruction, fully to understand the different nature of all these; and when they clearly comprehend that *adoration*, *self-dedication*, *confession*, *petition*, *thanksgiving*, and *intercession*, are distinct heads, which must not be involved in each other, you may exemplify the rules by pointing out to them these successive branches in any well-written form. And they will easily discern, that ascription of glory to that God to whom we owe so much, and on whom we so entirely depend,

pend, is the conclusion into which a Christian's prayer will naturally resolve itself. It is hardly needful to remind the teacher that our truly Scriptural Liturgy invariably furnishes the example of presenting *every* request in the name of the great Mediator. For there is no access to the Throne of Grace but by *that new and living way*. In the Liturgy too they will meet with the best exemplifications of prayers, exhibiting separate specimens of each of the distinct heads we have been suggesting.

But in order that the minds of young persons may, without labour or difficulty, be gradually brought into such a state of preparation as to be benefited by such a little course of lectures as we have recommended; they should, from the time when they were first able to read, have been employing themselves at their leisure hours, in laying in a store of provision for their present demands. And here the memory may be employed to good purpose;

pose; for being the first faculty which is ripened, and which is indeed perfected when the others are only beginning to unfold themselves, this is an intimation of Providence that it should be the first seized on for the best uses. It should therefore be devoted to lay in a stock of the more easy and devotional parts of Scripture. The Psalms alone are an inexhaustible store-house of rich materials\*. Children, whose minds have been early well furnished from these, will be competent at nine or ten years old to produce from them, and to select with no contemptible judgment, suitable examples of all the parts of prayer; and will be able to

\* This will be so far from spoiling the cheerfulness, or impeding the pleasures of childhood, that the Author knows a little girl who, before she was seven years old, had learnt the whole Psalter through a second time; and that without any diminution of uncommon gaiety of spirits, or of any interference with the elegant acquirements suited to her station.

extract

extract and appropriate texts under each respective head, so as to exhibit, without help, complete specimens of every part of prayer. By confining them entirely to the sense, and nearly to the words of Scripture, they will be preserved from enthusiasm, from irregularity, and conceit. By being obliged continually to apply for themselves, they will get a habit in all their difficulties of “searching the Scriptures,” which may be hereafter useful to them on other and more trying occasions. But I would at first *confine* them to the Bible; for were they allowed with equal freedom to ransack other books with a view to get helps to embellish their little compositions, or rather compilations, they might be tempted to pass off for their own what they pick up from others, which might tend at once to make them both vain and deceitful. This is a temptation to which they are too much laid open when they find themselves extravagantly commended



commended for any pilfered passage with which they decorate their little themes and letters. But in the present instance there is no danger of any similar deception, for there is such a sacred signature stamped on every Scripture phrase, that the owner's name can never be defaced or torn off from the goods, either by fraud or violence.

It would be well, if in those Psalms which children were first directed to get by heart, an eye were had to this their future application; and that they were employed, but without an intimation of your subsequent design, in learning such as may be best turned to this account. In the hundred and thirty-ninth, the first great truth to be imprinted on the young heart, the divine omnipresence, as was before observed, is unfolded with such a mixture of majestic grandeur, and such an interesting variety of intimate and local circumstances, as is likely to seize on the quick  
and

length called upon to work. Her judgment must be set about selecting one, or two, or more texts which shall contain the substance of every specific head of prayer before noticed: and it will be a farther exercise to her understanding to concatenate the detached parts into one regular whole, occasionally varying the arrangement as she likes; that is, changing the order, sometimes beginning with invocation, sometimes with confession; sometimes dwelling longer on one part, sometimes on another. As the hardships of a religious Sunday are often so pathetically pleaded, as making one of the heavy burdens of religion; and as the friends of religion are so often called upon to mitigate its intolerable rigours, by recommending pleasant employment, might not such an exercise as has been here suggested help, by varying its occupations, to lighten its load?

The habits of the pupil being thus early formed, her memory, attention, and intellect

telleſt being bent in a right direction, and the exerciſe invariably maintained, may we not reaſonably hope that her *affections* alſo, through divine grace, may become intereſted in the work, till ſhe will be enabled to “pray with the ſpirit and with the “underſtanding alſo?” She will now be qualified to uſe a well-compoſed form, if neceſſary, with ſeriouſneſs and advantage; for ſhe will now uſe it not mechanically but rationally. That which before appeared to her a mere maſs of good words, will now appear a ſignificant compoſition, exhibiting variety, and regularity, and beauty; and while ſhe will have the farther advantage of being enabled by her improved judgment to diſtinguiſh and ſelect for her own purpoſe ſuch prayers as are more judicious and more ſcriptural, it will alſo habituate her to look for plan, and deſign, and lucid order, in other works.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Strahan and Preſton,  
Printers-Street, London.

*[Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]*











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