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THE
BEAUTIES
OF
HERVEY.

57866 James Hervey

THE
BEAUTIES
OF
HERVEY,

CONSISTING OF

SELECTIONS FROM HIS THEOLOGICAL AND
MORAL WORKS.

BY ALFRED HOWARD, ESQ.

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H E R V E Y.

AFFLICTIONS.

AFFLICTIONS, when sanctified, are real blessings: they work humility, and wean from the world; they teach us to pour out, not our words only, but our very souls, before God in prayer; and create an ardent desire after that inheritance in heaven, which is incorruptible and immortal; after those mansions of peace, where sorrow and sighing flee away.

* * * * *

Should you inquire, what benefits accrue from afflictions? Many and precious. They tend to wean us from the world. When our paths are strewed with roses, when nothing but music and odours float around, how apt are we to be enamoured with our present condition, and forget the crown of glory, forget Jesus and everlasting ages! But affliction, with a faithful though harsh voice, rouses us from the sweet delusion. Affliction warns our hearts to rise and depart from these inferior delights, because here is not our rest. True and lasting joys are not here to

be found. The sweeping tempest, and the beating surge, teach the mariner to prize the haven, where undisturbed repose waits his arrival. In like manner, disappointments, vexations, anxieties, crosses, teach us to long for those happy mansions, where all tears will be wiped away from the eyes, Rev. xxi. 4. ; all anguish banished from the mind; and nothing, nothing subsist, but the fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

Afflictions tend to bring us to Christ. Christ has unspeakable and everlasting blessings to bestow: such as the world can neither give nor take away; such as are sufficient to pour that oil of gladness into our souls, which will swim above the waves of any earthly tribulation. But are we not, dear sir, are we not most unhappily indolent and inattentive to these blessings, in the gay hours of an uninterrupted prosperity? It is very observable, that scarce any made application to our divine Redeemer, in the days of his abode with us, but the children of affliction. The same spirit of supineness, still possesses mankind. We undervalue, we disregard the Lord Jesus, and the unspeakable privileges of his gospel, while all proceeds smoothly, and nothing occurs to discompose the tenor of our tranquillity. But when misfortunes harass our circumstances, or sorrows oppress our minds, then we are willing, we are glad, we are earnest, to find rest in Christ.

ALMS TO BE GIVEN PRUDENTLY.

Dear Sir,—I think one guinea is full enough for giving away to a person whose character we are ignorant of. There are too many (*dolet dictum!*) to whom an alms in the way of money is only an admi-

nistration of fuel to their lusts. Not that I presume to fix such a charge upon the present petitioner; yet this conviction makes me cautious, where I have no assurance of the person's sobriety. Had it not been for his father's worth, I should have almost thought it my duty to have shut my hand, till I received some more satisfactory recommendation. We are stewards of our Master's goods; and discretion is requisite in the discharge of such an office, as well as fidelity.

ATTRACTION.

How admirable, how extensive, how diversified, is the force of this single principle, *attraction* *! This penetrates the very essence of all bodies, and diffuses itself to the remotest limits of the mundane system. By this the worlds, impressed with motion, hang self-balanced on their centres, and, though orbs of immense magnitude, require nothing but this amazing property for their support. To this we ascribe a phenomenon of a very different kind—the pressure of the atmosphere, which, though a yielding and expansive fluid, yet, constipated by an attractive energy, surrounds the whole globe, and encloses every creature, as it were, with a tight bandage. An expedient this, absolutely necessary to preserve the texture of our bodies, and indeed to maintain every species of animal existence. Attraction! Urged by this wonderful impetus, the rivers circulate, copious and unintermitted, among all the nations of the earth; sweeping with rapidity down the steeps, or softly ebbing through the plains. Impelled by the same mys-

* I mean the attraction both of gravitation and cohesion.

terious force, the nutritious juices are detached from the soil, and ascending the trees, find their way through millions of the finest meanders, in order to transfuse vegetative life into all the branches. This confines the ocean within proper bounds : though the waves thereof roar, though they toss themselves with all the madness of indignant rage ; yet, checked by this potent, this inevitable curb, they are unable to pass even the slight barrier of sand. To this the mountains owe that unshaken firmness, which laughs at the shock of careering winds, and bids the tempest with all its mingled horrors impotently rave. By virtue of this invisible mechanism, without the aid of crane or pulley, or any instrument of human device, many thousand tuns of water are raised every moment into the regions of the firmament : By this they continue suspended in thin air, without any capacious cistern to contain their substance, or any massy pillars to sustain their weight. By this same variously acting power, they return to the place of their native residence, distilled in gentle falls of dew, or precipitated in impetuous showers of rain ; they slide into the fields in fleecy flights of snow, or are darted upon the houses in clattering storms of hail. This occasions the strong cohesion of solid bodies ; without which our large machines could exert themselves with no vigour, and the nicer utensils of life would elude our expectations of service. This affords a foundation for all those delicate or noble mechanic arts, which furnish mankind with numberless conveniencies, both of ornament and delight. In short, this is the prodigious ballast, which composes the equilibrium, and constitutes the stability of things ; this is the great chain, which forms the connexions of universal na-

ture ; and the mighty engine, which prompts, facilitates, and in good measure accomplishes all her operations. What complicated effects from a single cause ! What profusion amidst frugality ! an unknown profusion of benefits, with the utmost frugality of expense !

THE FALL OF BABYLON.

Is this Babylon ? the glory of kingdoms ! the beauty of the Chaldean excellency !

Where once the gorgeous east, with richest hand,
Shower'd on her kings barbaric pearl and gold !

How is she fallen ! fallen from the height of magnificence into the abyss of confusion ! What was once the object of universal admiration, is now a spectacle of astonishment and horror.

The palace, where majesty sat enthroned like some terrestrial deity, is a heap of rubbish ; no longer distinguished by an air of superior elegance, but by stronger and more melancholy marks of departed dignity *. Where the nobles of that sumptuous court trailed along the marble pavement their robes of purple and embroidery, there the crested snake hisses, or the fierce envenomed adder glides.

How changed is the hospitable hall, and how dis-

* Benjamin, a Jew of Tudela, in his Itinerary, written about the year of our Lord 1170, tells us, " That he was upon the place where this city formerly stood, and found it wholly desolated and destroyed. Only some ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace were still remaining ; but men were afraid to go near them, by reason of the many serpents and scorpions that were then in the place."

graced the room of state! The first afforded a constant and cordial reception to the welcome guests; in the last, the great king gave audience to his cringing, his adoring vassals. Now, thorns overrun the circumference, and “desolation sits in the threshold of them both.” Where are the roofs of ivory, painted with vermilion and adorned with sculpture? the radiant roofs, whose lamps of burnished silver, pendent in many a blazing row, yielded light as from another sky? Swept from their foundations, they lie clotted with defiling dirt, or clasped with tangling briars. Music no longer pours her harmony through the spacious and extended apartment; but the night-owl, nestling in some cleft of the ruins, screams her harsh and portentous dissonance. Joy no longer leads up the sprightly dance amidst the lustre of that artificial day; but the solitary bat flits in silent circles, or flaps her sooty wings. All those gay delights,—let the sons of sensuality hear the tale, and take warning from the catastrophe!—all those gay delights are extinguished, like one of their feeblest tapers, which, having illuminated for a while the festive assembly, shone itself to the edges of the exhausted socket, and in a moment flashed into stench and darkness!

The walls, though cemented with bitumen*, and consolidated into the firmness of a flint, are become like the broken bubble. There was a time when the inhabitants, confiding in the strength of their bulwarks and the multitude of their towers, looked down with

* The walls were built of brick, and cemented with a glutinous kind of slime, which binds more firmly than any mortar, and soon grows harder than the bricks or stones themselves.

fearless disdain on the army of besiegers. But now the prophet's threatening is most terribly fulfilled: "The fortress of the high fort of thy walls hath he brought down, laid low, and brought to the ground, even to the dust," Isa. xxv. 12.—Where are the gates, the grand and glittering gates*, which admitted the triumphant hosts, or poured forth their numerous legions against the day of battle? Not one trace remains to tell the inquisitive stranger, "Here the spacious avenues opened; here the massy portals rose." Commodious walks, in which the clustering merchants raised the busy hum, and planned the schemes of commerce; ample streets, in which industry drove the toiling car, or smote the sounding anvil, are shrouded with matted grass, or buried beneath the rankest weeds. Silence, in both places, a sullen silence reigns; and inactivity, a death-like inactivity slumbers.

What is become of those hanging gardens, which, for curious contrivance and stupendous workmanship, were never equalled in any nation under heaven? Terraces that overlooked the tallest houses! Parterres exalted to the clouds, and opening their flowery beauties in that strange region! Groves, whose very roots were higher than the tops of the loftiest trees! They are now smitten by a dreadful blast. Their beauty is decayed like a withered leaf. Their very being is gone, "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, which the wind carrieth away, and its place is no where found," Dan. ii. 35. What was once the favourite retreat of a queen, and the admi-

* There were no less than a hundred gates, all of solid brass.

ration of the whole world, is now a nest for poisonous reptiles, and a kennel for ravenous beasts. The traveller, instead of expatiating with delight where this pensile paradise flourished, is struck with horror, keeps at a trembling distance, and, surveying the rueful spot, cries out, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true are thy judgments!"

Here stands an obelisk, maimed by the stroke of revolving years, like a mountain oak shattered by the flaming bolt. Another, all unhinged and quite disjointed, seems to tremble before every blast that blows. There the pyramid*, firm as the solid rock, and stable, one would have thought, as the everlasting hills, wrenched from its mighty base, is tumbled headlong in enormous ruin, and has crushed many a structure by its fall.—See yonder the triumphal arch, which exhibited through its extensive and beautiful bend an advantageous view of the firmament. It was once the graceful memorial of some celebrated victory; it is now converted into a trophy of a very different kind. Just retaining two uneven, battered, ragged stumps, it serves to recognize the destructive ravages of time. Spires that pierced the clouds, and shot into the skies, are levelled with the trodden soil. On pinnacles, to which the strong-winged bird could hardly soar, the grovelling worm crawls, and the sordid snail leaves her slimy track. Baths that contained the translucent wave, and were so often perfumed with odoriferous unguents, are choked with filth: the grand colonnade that surrounded them is shivered to pieces, and the elevated dome that covered them is dashed to the ground. The public aqueducts,

* Strabo calls the temple of Belus a pyramid, lib. xv.

which conveyed cleanliness and health along their crystal currents, are degenerated into a stagnating lake, while croaking vermin swarm among the weeds, and noisome exhalations steam from the mire.

August and stately temples, that seemed to affect the neighbourhood of heaven *, are sunk to the very dust. Who can point the spot where the consecrated victim bled, or the sacred fire glowed? where the sceptred image lifted its majestic head, or the venerating crowds bowed the suppliant knee †? Degraded are those splendid vanities, and cast (according to the denunciation of the sacred oracles) “to the bats and to the moles,” Isa. ii. 20. All is low; low as the spurious dignity of the idols they complimented; low “as the straw that is trodden down for the dunghill,” Isa. xxv. 10.

Sepulchres, the once venerable repositories of the dead, awful mansions destined to everlasting concealment, are cleft and rent asunder. They disclose the horrid secrets of the pit, and frightfully yawn upon the blasted day. Possibly some ravenous creature lurks within, that has already rifled the tomb of its hero, given the putrid bones a new grave, and waits only for the approach of night to repeat his funeral

* A tower in the temple of Belus, and dedicated to his worship, was very high. It consisted of eight piles of building erected one above another, and rose to the elevation of six hundred feet perpendicular.

† Alluding to that prodigious instance of profuseness, ostentation, and idolatrous madness, “The golden image set up in the plain of Dura, whose height (that is, the height of the statue and pedestal taken together) was threescore cubits,” Dan. iii. 1.

dirge in yells. Inscriptions, designed to perpetuate some illustrious character, or eternize some heroic deed, are blended in the promiscuous mass. In vain would the prying antiquary search for a legible or consistent sentence; in vain attempt to find the memorable names of a Nebuchadnezzar or a Nimrod. These, though engraven on plates of brass, or cut in blocks of marble, are lost amidst the stupendous lumber, as prints on the unsteady sand are effaced when returning tides smooth the furrowed beach.

Here and there a straggling cypress rises, as it were, with funereal solemnity amidst the waste*. Somewhat like the black plumes nodding over the mournful hearse, they augment the sadness of the scene, and throw a deeper horror on all below. No human voice is heard, nor human face seen, amidst these desolated heaps; too dreary even for the roam of hoary hermit, or the cell of gloomy monk. Abandoned they are, totally abandoned, to the dominion of solitude, or else to the unmolested resort of shaggy monsters, and feathered hags, which stun the midnight hours; these with their importunate shrieks, those with their execrable howls.

See to what a despicable, what an abhorred state, the proudest monuments of earthly grandeur, and the most costly apparatus for earthly felicity, may be

* Rauwolf, a German traveller, who passed that way in the year of our Lord 1574, says, "This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and so bare, that I should have doubted whether the potent Babylon did stand there, if I had not known it by several ancient and delicate antiquities that are still standing hereabout in great desolation."

reduced! A pregnant and alarming proof, that, for lasting honour, or real happiness,

“ They build too low, who build beneath the skies.”

THE BIBLE.

Theron. I admire, I must confess, the very language of the Bible. In this, methinks, I discern a conformity between the book of nature and the book of Scripture.

In the book of nature the divine Teacher speaks, not barely to our ears, but to all our senses. And it is very remarkable how he varies his address. Observe his grand and august works. In these he uses the style of majesty. We may call it the true sublime. It strikes with awe, and transports the mind.—View his ordinary operations. Here he descends to a plainer dialect. This may be termed the familiar style. We comprehend it with ease, and attend to it with pleasure.—In the more ornamented parts of the creation, he clothes his meaning with elegance. All is rich and brilliant. We are delighted; we are charmed. And what is this but the florid style?

A variety, somewhat similar, runs through the Scriptures. Would you see history in all her simplicity and all her force; most beautifully easy, yet irresistibly striking? See her, or rather feel her energy, touching the nicest movements of the soul, and triumphing over our passions, in the inimitable narrative of Joseph's life. The representation of Esau's bitter distress, Gen. xxvii. 30, &c.; the conversation pieces of Jonathan and his gallant friend, 1 Sam. xviii. xix. xx.; the memorable journal of the disciples

going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 13, &c. ; are finished models of the impassioned and affecting. Here is nothing studied ; no flights of fancy ; no embellishments of oratory. Yet how inferior is the episode of Nisus and Euryalus, though worked up by the most masterly hand in the world, to the undissembled artless fervency of these scriptural sketches *!

Are we pleased with the elevation and dignity of an heroic poem, or the tenderness and perplexity of a dramatic performance ? In the book of Job they are both united, and both unequalled. Conformably to the exactest rules of art, as the action advances the incidents are more alarming, and the images more magnificent. The language glows, and the pathos swells, till at last the Deity himself makes his entrance. He speaks from the whirlwind, and summons the creation—summons heaven and all its shining host, the elements and their most wonderful productions—to vouch for the wisdom of his providential dispensations. His word strikes terror, and flashes conviction ; decides the momentous controversy, and closes the august drama, with all possible solemnity and grandeur.

If we sometimes choose a plaintive strain, such as softens the mind and soothes an agreeable melancholy ; are any of the ancient tragedies superior, in the eloquence of mourning, to David's pathetic elegy on his beloved Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 19, &c. ; to his most

* Let a person of true taste peruse, in a critical view, the two first chapters of St. Luke. He will there find a series of surprising incidents, related with the greatest simplicity, yet with the utmost majesty.

passionate and inconsolable moan * over the lovely but unhappy Absalom ; or to that melodious woe, which warbles and bleeds in every line of Jeremiah's Lamentations.

Would we be entertained with the daring sublimity of Homer, or the correct majesty of Virgil ? with the expressive delicacy of Horace, or the rapid excursions of Pindar ? Behold them joined, behold them excelled, in the odes of Moses, and the eucharistic hymn of Deborah ; in the exalted devotion of the Psalms, and the glorious enthusiasm of the Prophets.

Aspasio. Only with this difference, that the former are tuneful triflers, and amuse the fancy with empty fiction ; the latter are teachers sent from God, and make the soul wise unto salvation. The Bible is not only the brightest ornament, but the most invaluable depositum. On a right, a practical knowledge of these lively oracles, depends the present comfort and the

* " The king went up to the chamber and wept ; and as he went, he said, O my son Absalom ! my son, my son Absalom ! would to God I had died for thee ! O Absalom, my son, my son ! " 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

What says Mezentius, when his son is slain ? when, to sharpen his sorrow, the pale corpse, the miserable spectacle, is before his eyes, and within his arms ! The most pathetic word he utters is,

———" Heu ! nunc misero mihi demum
Exilium infelix, nunc alte vulnus adactum."

How languid is Virgil, how inexpressive the prince of Latin poetry, compared with the royal mourner in Israel !

endless felicity of mankind. Whatever, therefore, in study or conversation, has no connexion with their divine contents, may be reckoned among the toys of literature, or the ciphers of discourse.

Ther. Here again the book of Scripture is somewhat like the magazine of nature. What can we desire for our accommodation and delight, which this storehouse of conveniencies does not afford? What can we wish for our edification and improvement, which that fund of knowledge does not supply? Of these we may truly affirm, each in its respective kind is “profitable unto all things.”

Are we admirers of antiquity?—Here we are led back beyond the universal deluge, and far beyond the date of any other annals. We are introduced among the earliest inhabitants of the earth. We take a view of mankind in their undisguised primitive plainness, when the days of their life were but little short of a thousand years. We are brought acquainted with the original of nations; with the creation of the world; and with the birth of time itself.

Are we delighted with vast achievements? Where is any thing comparable to the miracles in Egypt, and the wonders in the field of Zoan? to the memoirs of the Israelites, passing through the depths of the sea, sojourning amidst the inhospitable deserts, and conquering the kingdoms of Canaan? Where shall we meet with instances of martial bravery equal to the prodigious exploits of the Judges; or the adventurous deeds of Jesse’s valiant son, and his matchless band of worthies? 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. &c. 1 Chron. xi. 10. &c. Here we behold the fundamental laws of the universe, sometimes suspended, sometimes reversed; and not only the current of Jordan, but the course of nature controlled. In short, when we enter the

field of Scripture, we tread—on enchanted, shall I say? rather, on consecrated ground; where astonishment and awe are awakened at every turn; where is all, more than all, the marvellous of romance, connected with all the precision and sanctity of truth.

If we want maxims of wisdom, or have a taste for the laconic style, how copiously may our wants be supplied, and how delicately our taste gratified! especially in the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and some of the minor prophets. Here are the most sage lessons of instruction, adapted to every circumstance of life, formed upon the experience of all preceding ages, and perfected by the unerring spirit of inspiration. These delivered with such remarkable conciseness, that one might venture to say, every word is a sentence; at least, every sentence may be called an apophthegm, sparkling with brightness of thought, or weighty with solidity of sense. The whole, like a profusion of pearls, each containing, in a very small compass, a value almost immense, all heaped up (as an ingenious critic speaks) with a confused magnificence, above the little niceties of order.

If we look for the strength of reasoning, and the warmth of exhortation; the insinuating arts of genteel address, or the manly boldness of impartial reproof; all the thunder of the orator, without any of his ostentation; all the politeness of the courtier, without any of his flattery—let us have recourse to the Acts of the Apostles, and to the Epistles of St. Paul*.

* Another very remarkable instance of propriety in St. Paul's writings is, that though diffuse in the doctrinal, they are concise in the preceptive parts. On the former, it was absolutely necessary to enlarge: on

These are a specimen, or rather these are the standard, of them all.

I do not wonder, therefore, that a taste so refined, and a judgment so correct as Milton's, should discern higher attractives in the volume of inspiration, than in the most celebrated authors of Greece and Rome.

———“ Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the muses haunt,
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song ; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery banks beneath,
That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit.”———

Asp. Another recommendation of the Scriptures is, that they afford the most awful and most amiable manifestations of the Godhead. His glory shines, and his goodness smiles, in those divine pages, with unparalleled lustre. Here we have a satisfactory explanation of our own state. The origin of evil is traced ; the cause of all our misery discovered ; and the remedy, the infallible remedy, both clearly shown, and freely offered. The merits of the bleeding Jesus lay a firm foundation for all our hopes ; while gratitude for his dying love suggests the most winning incitements to every duty. Morality, Theron, your (and let me add, my) admired morality, is delineated in all its branches, is placed upon its proper basis, and raised to its highest elevation. The Spirit of

the latter, it is always judicious to be short. The celebrated rule of Horace, “ Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis,” was never more exactly observed, nor more finely exemplified, than by our apostolic author.

God is promised to enlighten the darkness of our understandings, and strengthen the imbecility of our wills. What an ample—Can you indulge me on this favourite topic?

Ther. It is, I assure you, equally pleasing to myself. Your enlargements, therefore, need no apology.

Asp. What ample provision is made, by these blessed books, for all our spiritual wants! And, in this respect, how indisputable is their superiority to all other compositions!

Is any one convinced of guilt, as provoking Heaven and ruining the soul? Let him ask reason to point out a means of reconciliation, and a refuge of safety. Reason hesitates as she replies, “The Deity may, perhaps, accept our supplications, and grant forgiveness.” But the Scriptures leave us not to the sad uncertainty of conjecture: They speak the language of clear assurance: “God has set forth a propitiation,” Rom. iii. 25.: “He does forgive our iniquities,” Psal. ciii. 3: “He will remember our sins no more,” Heb. viii. 12.

Are we assaulted by temptation, or averse to duty? Philosophy may attempt to parry the thrust, or to stir up the reluctant mind, by disclosing the deformity of vice, and urging the fitness of things. Feeble expedients! Just as well calculated to accomplish the ends proposed, as the flimsy fortification of a cobweb to defend us from the ball of a cannon; or as the gentle vibrations of a lady’s fan to make a wind-bound navy sail. The Bible recommends no such incompetent succours. “My grace,” says its Almighty Author, “is sufficient for thee,” 2 Cor. xii. 9. “Sin shall not have dominion over you,” Rom. vi. 14. The great Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength,

“ he worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure,” Phil. ii. 13.

Should we be visited with sickness, or overtaken by any calamity, the consolation which Plato offers is, That such dispensations coincide with the universal plan of divine government. Virgil will tell us, for our relief, That afflictive visitations are, more or less, the unavoidable lot of all men. Another moralist whispers in the dejected sufferer’s ear, “ Impatience adds to the load ; whereas a calm submission renders it more supportable.” Does the word of revelation dispense such spiritless and fugitive cordials ? No : Those sacred pages inform us, that tribulations are fatherly chastisements, tokens of our Maker’s love and fruits of his care ; that they are intended to work in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and to work out for us an eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Should we, under the summons of death, have recourse to the most celebrated comforters of the heathen world, they would increase our apprehensions rather than mitigate our dread. Death is represented by the great master of their schools, as “ the most formidable of all evils.” They were not able positively to determine whether the soul survived ; and never so much as dreamed of the resurrection of the body. Whereas, the book of God strips the monster of his horrors, or turns him into a messenger of peace ; gives him an angel’s face, and a deliverer’s hand ; ascertaining to the souls of the righteous an immediate translation into the regions of bliss, and ensuring to their bodies a most advantageous revival at the restoration of all things.

Inestimable book ! It heals the maladies of life,

and subdues the fear of death. It strikes a lightsome vista through the gloom of the grave, and opens a charming, a glorious prospect of immortality in the heavens.

These, with many other excellencies peculiar to the Scriptures, one would imagine more than sufficient to engage every sensible heart in their favour, and introduce them with the highest esteem into every improved conversation. They had such an effect upon the finest genius, and most accomplished person, that former or latter ages can boast; insomuch that he made, while living, this public declaration, and left it when he died upon everlasting record: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth;" Psal. cxix. 103. "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day;" Psal. cxix. 97. "Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I may be occupied in thy precepts; and I will speak of thy testimonies even before kings;" Psal. cxix. 46. If David tasted so much sweetness in a small, and that the least valuable part of the divine word; how much richer is the feast to us, since the gospel is added to the law, and the canon of Scripture completed! since (to borrow the words of a prophet) the Lord God "has sealed up the sum;" has put the last hand to his work; and rendered it "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty," Ezek. xxviii. 12.

Ther. Another very distinguishing peculiarity of the sacred writings just occurs to my mind. The method of communicating advice, or administering reproof, by parables. A method which levels itself to the lowest apprehension, without giving offence to the most supercilious temper; yet it is as much supe-

rior to plain unornamented precept, as the enlivened scenes of a well-wrought tragedy are more impressive and affecting than a simple narration of the plot.

THE WRITERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The penmen of the Old Testament carry all the marks of the most disinterested and undesigning sincerity. They record the failings of their favourite and most illustrious heroes, without concealing the punishment inflicted on such miscarriages. The uniform tendency of their narratives and observations is to promote a religion the most pure, the most benevolent, the most elevated imaginable; as remote from all selfish aims, and every low art of collusion, as the heavens are higher than the earth. They were men singularly qualified for their work; being either eye-witnesses of the facts they relate, or else contemporaries with the persons they describe, or still more remarkably distinguished by their ability to work miracles, and their insight into futurity. As to the facts related, some of them had anniversary solemnities on which they were commemorated; some of them had significant ceremonies by which they were represented. They were publicly read in the synagogues, and universally known through the nation. It was a duty of religion to talk of them by day, to meditate on them by night, and diligently to instruct the children in them. And were not these circumstances a security, an inviolable security, against any attempt to corrupt, to innovate, or alter? So that their writings appear with every character, both internal and external, of genuine truth, and with the most unquestionable credentials from the God of power, and

God of wisdom*. Consequently they have a credibility of their own, sufficient both to claim and to support the faith of an ancient Jew; such as must command the assent of every rational and honest inquirer, even before the Christian dispensation took place.

THE RUINED CASTLE.

Behold, on yonder eminence, the rueful memorials of a magnificent castle. All dismantled, and quite demolished, it gives a shading of solemnity to the more lively parts of nature's picture; and attempers the rural delight with some touches of alarming dread. — War, destructive war, has snatched the scythe from the hand of Time, and hurried on the steps of Destiny. Those broken columns, and battered walls; those prostrate towers, and battlements dashed to the ground, carry evident marks of an immature downfall. They were built for ages; and for ages might have stood, a defence and accommodation to generations yet unborn, if haply they had escaped the dire assaults of

* Another very extraordinary peculiarity in these writings, and, to me at least, an undoubted proof that their authors were divinely inspired, is their perfect agreement and entire consistency throughout. Though they were composed by different men, placed in very different stations of life, and flourishing in very distant ages of the world, yet they are as consonant and harmonious as if they had all been penned by the same hand. Any thing equal to this I never saw, never heard of, and I believe the most inveterate or most sagacious adversaries of the Old Testament will not attempt to produce a parallel.

hostile rage. But what vigilance of man can prevent the miner's dark approach ; or what solidity of bulwark can withstand the bellowing engine's impetuous shock ?

Those, perhaps, were the rooms in which licentious Mirth crowned with roses the sparkling bowl, and tuned to the silver-sounding lute the syren's enchanting song. Those, the scenes of voluptuous indulgence, where Luxury poured her delicacies ; where Beauty, insidious Beauty, practised her wiles, and spread, with bewitching art, her wanton snares. Now, instead of the riotous banquet, and intrigues of lawless love, the owl utters her hated screams by night, and the raven flaps her ominous wing by day. Where are the violet couches, and the woodbine bowers, which fanned with their breathing sweets the polluted flame ? The soil seems to suffer for the abuses of the owner. Blasted and dishonoured, it produces nothing but ragged briars and noisome nettles, under whose odious covert the hissing snake glides, or the croaking toad crawls : Fearful intimation of that ignominious and doleful catastrophe which awaits the sons of riot ! when their momentary gratifications will drop like the faded leaf, and leave nothing behind but pangs of remorse, keener far than the pointed thorn, and more envenomed than the viper's tooth.

Perhaps they were the beauteous and honoured abodes where grandeur and politeness walked their daily round, attended with a train of guiltless delights ; where amiable and refined friendship was wont to sit and smile, looking love, and talking the very soul ; where hospitality, with economy always at her side, stood beckoning to the distressed, but industrious poor, and showered blessings from her liberal hand.

But war, detested war, has stretched over the social and inviting seat "the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness," Isa. xxxiv. 11. Now, alas! nothing but desolation and horror haunt the savage retreat. The ample arches of the bridge, which so often transmitted the wondering passenger along their pensile way, lie buried in the dreary moat.—Those relics of the massy portals, naked and abandoned, seem to bemoan their melancholy condition. No splendid chariots, with their gay retinue, frequent the solitary avenues. No needy steps, with cheerful expectation, besiege the once bountiful gate. But all is a miserable, forlorn, hideous pile of rubbish.

CHRIST'S STYLE.

Celebrated writers, as Demosthenes and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, are observed to have a style peculiar to themselves. Now, whoever considers the discourses of Christ, will find him distinguishing himself by a style which may properly be called his own: Majestic, yet familiar; happily uniting dignity with condescension, it consists in teaching his followers the sublimest truths, by spiritualizing on the most common occurrences; which, besides its being level to the lowest apprehensions, and admirably adapted to steal into the most inattentive heart, is accompanied with this very singular advantage, that it turns even the sphere of business into a school of instruction, and renders the most ordinary objects a set of monitors, ever soliciting our regard, because ever present to our senses. So that, I believe, it may be said of this amiable method in which our Lord conveyed, as well as of that powerful energy which attended, his doctrines, "That never man spake like

this man." The harvest approaching, he reminds his disciples of a far more important harvest, (John iv. 35. ; Matth. xiii. 39.), when immortal beings shall be reaped from the grave, and gathered in from all the quarters of the earth ; when every human creature shall sustain the character of valuable wheat or despicable tares ; and accordingly be lodged in mansions of everlasting security, or consigned over to the rage of unquenchable fire. In his charge to fishermen, when they are commencing preachers, (Matth. iv. 19.), he exhorts them, conformably to the nature of their late occupation, to use the same assiduity and address in winning souls, as they were wont to exercise in catching the finny prey. For the farther illustration of this no less useful than curious subject, I would refer my reader to a valuable note in Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on the Prophecies, p. 148. 4to edition.

THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY.

Controversy is as much my aversion as it can be yours ; for where that begins, religion too often ends ; and I shall not enter the lists, I promise you, with any one, unless I am absolutely necessitated to it. But if I am compelled to appear in print on such an occasion, I shall endeavour to pay due regard to Solomon's excellent advice, viz. " A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger," Prov. xv. 1. Instead of exasperating my adversary by cutting reprehensions, I will, if possible, constrain him, by a candid and respectful treatment, to moderate his temper ; and, by a coercive propriety of arguments, persuade him to relinquish such tenets as I think erroneous.

God grant that I may never behave with an indecent resentment, how great soever may be the provocation of my gainsayers ; but that, in all my writings and conversations, I may avoid the hasty spirit, lest I injure my own peace of mind, and disgrace my profession as a Christian and a minister.

It is a rule with me always to speak well of the good qualities even of bad men, especially when others are censuring them with an unmerciful severity ; and I could wish that every controversialist would learn so much candour, as to put the best construction on his opponent's book, and to embrace what was in general good in it, however he might doubt or censure some particular opinions of the contending author.

To live peaceably with all men, is my earnest desire and my daily prayer ; and in order to do this, I am more and more convinced of the necessity of candour, humility, and a conscientious regard to the example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CONVERSATION ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS RECOMMENDED.

Aspasio was on a visit at Theron's seat. One evening, when some neighbouring gentlemen were just gone, and had left them alone, the conversation took the following turn.

Asp. I would always be ready, both to acknowledge and applaud whatever is amiable in the conduct of others. The gentlemen who gave us their company at dinner, seem to be all of a different character ; yet each, in his own way, is extremely agreeable.

Lysander has lively parts, and is quick at repartee ; but he never abuses his wit to create uneasiness in the

honest heart, and flush the modest cheek with confusion. What solidity of judgment, and depth of penetration, appear in Crito! yet how free are his discourses from the magisterial tone, or the dictatorial solemnity. Philenor's taste in the polite arts is remarkably correct; yet without the least tincture of vanity, or any weak fondness for applause. He never interrupts the progress, or wrests the topic of conversation, in order to shine in his particular province. Trebonius, I find, has signalized his valour in several campaigns. Though a warrior and a traveller, he gives himself no overbearing or ostentatious airs. In Trebonius you see the brave officer, regulated by all the decency of the academic, and sweetened with all the affability of the courtier.

No one affects a morose silence, or assumes an immoderate loquacity. To engross the talk, is tyrannical; to seal the lips, is monkish. Every one, therefore, from a fund of good sense, contributes his quota; and each speaks, not with an ambition to set off himself, but from a desire to please the company.

Ther. Indeed, Aspasio, I think myself happy in this accomplished set of acquaintance; who add all the complaisance and politeness of the gentleman, to the benevolence and fidelity of the friend.

Their conversation is as innocent as their taste is refined. They have a noble abhorrence of slander, and detest the low, ungenerous artifices of detraction. No loose jest has either the service of their tongue, or the sanction of their smile. Was you to be with them, even in their freest moments, you would hear nothing that so much as borders upon profaneness, or is in the least injurious to purity of morals.

Asp. There is but one qualification wanting to

render your friends completely valuable, and their social interviews a continual blessing.

Ther. Pray, what is that?

Asp. A turn for more serious conferences. Their literary debates are beautiful sketches of whatever is most curious in the sciences, or most delicate in the arts. From their remarks on our national affairs, and on foreign occurrences, a person may almost form a system of politics. But they never touch upon any topic of morality; never celebrate the sublime perfections of the Deity; never illustrate the beauties, nor enforce the truths——

Ther. Fie upon you, Aspasio, for your unpolite hint! Who can forbear interrupting the harangue which pleads for such an outrageous violation of the mode? would you introduce edifying talk into our fashionable assemblies? How is it that you, who, in other instances, are a gentleman of refinement, can be so strangely inelegant in this particular?

Asp. For such a practice, Theron, we have no inconsiderable precedents. Thus Socrates*, the wisest of the Athenian sages; thus Scipio†, the most accomplished of the Roman generals, conversed. Thus Cicero‡, the prince of orators, improved his elegant retirement at the Tusculan villa. And Horace§,

* Vid. Socratis Memorabilia, per Xenoph.

† We are informed by Cicero, that it was a practice with Scipio, with his friend Lælius, and some of the distinguished nobility of Rome, to discourse upon the interests of the republic, and the immortality of the soul.

‡ Vid. Tuscul. Quæst.

§ O noctes, cœnæque deûm!

the brightest genius in the court of Augustus, formed the most agreeable hours of his conversation upon this very plan.

Were I to enumerate all the patrons of this, forgive me if I say, more honourable mode, the most illustrious names of antiquity would appear on the list.

Ther. This practice, however extolled by the philosophic gentry of ancient times, would make a very singular figure in the present age.

Asp. And should not the copy, after which the generality of mankind write, be singularly correct? Persons of exalted fortune are the pattern for general imitation; are the copy, in conformity to which the inferior world adjust their manners and regulate their behaviour. They, therefore, are under the strongest obligations not to give a contemptible stamp to the fashion. Benevolence to their fellow-creatures calls loudly upon them—a concern for the public good challenges it at their hands, that they signalize themselves by a pre-eminence in all that is excellent.

Ther. Away, away with these austere notions! such a strain of conversation would damp the gaiety of our spirits, and flatten the relish of society. It would turn the assembly into a conventicle, and make it Lent all the year round.

Asp. Can it then be an austere practice, to cultivate the understanding and improve the heart? Can it damp the gaiety of our spirits, to refine them upon the plan of the highest perfection? Or will it flatten the relish of society, to secure and anticipate everlasting delights?

Ther. Everlasting delights, Aspasio! To talk of

such a subject would be termed, in every circle of wit and gallantry, a usurpation of the parson's office ; a low method of retailing by scraps, in the parlour, what the man in black vends by wholesale from the pulpit. It would infallibly mark us out for pedants ; and, for aught I know, might expose us to the suspicion of enthusiasm.

Asp. Your men of wit must excuse me, if I cannot persuade myself to admire either the delicacy of their language or the justness of their opinion.

The first, be it ever so humane and graceful, I resign to themselves. As for the other, I would beg leave to inquire, " Are the clergy, then, the only persons who should act the becoming part, and converse like rational beings ? Is solid wisdom and sacred truth the privilege of their order ; while nothing is left for you and me, but the play of fancy, or the luxuries of sense ?"

I would next ask the circles of gallantry, " Where is the impropriety of interweaving the noble doctrines displayed by the preacher with our common discourse ? or what the inconvenience of introducing the amiable graces, recommended by his lectures, into our ordinary practice ?" Will such an exercise of our speech rank us among pedants ? Is this the badge of enthusiasm ? A splendid and honourable badge truly ! such as must add weight to any cause, and worth to any character.

Ther. This would curb the sprightly sallies of wit, and extinguish that engaging glow of good-humour which enlivens our genteel intercourses. Accordingly you may observe, that if any formal creature takes upon him to mention, in polite company, a religious truth or a text of scripture, the pretty chat, though

ever so profusely flowing, stagnates in an instant. Each voluble and facetious tongue seems to be struck with a sudden palsy. Every one wonders at the strange man's face ; and they all conclude him either mad or a methodist.

Asp. Agreeable strokes of wit are by no means incompatible with useful conversation, unless we mistake an insipid vivacity, or fantastic levity, for wit and facetiousness. Neither have I heard, that, among all our acts of parliament, any one has passed to divorce good sense and good-humour. Why may they not both reside on the same lips, and both circulate through the same assembly ? For my own part, I would neither have our discourse soured with austerity, nor evaporate into impertinence ; but unite (as a judicious ancient advises) the benefits of improvement with the blandishments of pleasantry *. And as to your polite people, if they can find more music in the magpie's voice than in the nightingale's note, I must own myself as much surprised at their ears, as they are at the strange man's face.

Ther. With all your grey-headed authorities, I fancy you will find very few proselytes among the professors of modern refinement. Fashion is, with the world, the standard of morals, as well as of clothes ; and he must be of a very peculiar turn indeed, who would choose to be ridiculous in either.

Asp. Rather, Theron, he must be of a very pliant turn, who tamely delivers up his conduct to be moulded by a fashion, which has neither true elegance to dignify it, nor the least usefulness to recommend it. And

* "Cum quadam illecebra ac voluptate utiles."

which, I beseech you, is most ridiculous? He who servilely imitates every idle fashion, and is the very ape of corrupt custom? or he who asserts his native liberty, and resolutely follows where wisdom and truth lead the way?

Ther. Would you then obtrude religious discourse upon every company? Consider, Aspasio, what a motley figure this would make. A wedding, and a sermon! quadrille, and St. Paul! the last new play, and primitive Christianity!

Asp. You know the rule, Theron, which is given by the great Master of our assemblies; "Cast not your pearls before swine," Matt. vii. 6. Some there are so immersed in sensuality, that they can relish nothing but the coarsest husks of conversation. To these, neither offer your pearls nor prostitute your intimacy. But when persons of a liberal education and elevated sentiments—when these meet together, why should not their discourse be suitable to the eminence of their rank, and the superiority of their genius? raised far above the level of that trite and effeminate strain, "Upon my honour, the actress topt her part! Heavens! how charmingly she sung! how gracefully she trod the stage!"

Ther. Indeed, my Aspasio, I am entirely in your way of thinking, however I have hitherto put on the mask. The gift of speech is one great prerogative of our rational nature; and it is a pity that such a superior faculty should be debased to the meanest purposes. Suppose all our stately vessels, that pass and repass the ocean, were to carry out nothing but tinsel and theatrical decorations—were to import nothing but glittering baubles, and nicely fancied toys—would such a method of trading be well-judged in itself, or

beneficial in its consequences? Articulate speech is the instrument of a much nobler commerce, intended to transmit and diffuse the treasures of the mind. And will not the practice be altogether as injudicious, must not the issue be infinitely more detrimental, if this vehicle of intellectual wealth is freighted only with pleasing fopperies?

Asp. Such folly and extravagance would be hissed out of the commercial world. Why then are they admitted and cherished in the social?

Ther. Why indeed? He must be far more acute than your Theron, who can assign a single reason to countenance them. To explode them, ten thousand arguments occur. A continual round of gay and trifling conversation, of visits quite modish, and entertainments not moral, must give an indolent turn to the mind; such as will enervate its powers, indispose it for generous action, and gradually sap the very foundation of virtue. Whereas, a frequent conference on the glories of the Godhead, or the wonders of creation, would invigorate and ennoble the soul; would enlarge her faculties, and elevate her desires.

A DESCANT UPON CREATION.

To know the love of Christ; to have such a deep apprehension of his unspeakable kindness, as may produce in our hearts an adoring gratitude, and an unfeigned faith; this, according to St. Paul's estimate, is the highest and happiest attainment in the sacred science of Christianity, Eph. iii. 19. What follows, is an attempt to assist the attentive mind in learning a line or two of that best and greatest lesson. It introduces the most conspicuous parts of the visible system as so many prompters to our dull affections;

each suggesting a hint adapted to the important occasion, and suited to its respective character.

Can there be a more powerful incentive to devout gratitude, than to consider the magnificent and delicate scenes of the universe with a particular reference to Christ as the Creator? Every object, viewed in this light, will surely administer incessant recruits to the languishing lamp of divine love. Every production in nature will strike a spark into the soul, and the whole creation concur to raise the smoking flax into a flame.

Can any thing impart a stronger joy to the believer, or more effectually confirm his faith in the crucified Jesus, than to behold the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament showing his handywork? Surely, it must be matter of inexpressible consolation to the poor sinner, to observe the honours of his Redeemer written with sunbeams over all the face of the world.

We delight to read an account of our incarnate Jehovah, as he is revealed in the books of Moses and the prophets, as he is displayed in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. Let us also endeavour to see a sketch of his perfections, as they stand delineated in that stately volume, where every leaf is a spacious plain; every line, a flowing brook; every period, a lofty mountain.

Should any of my readers be unexercised in such speculations, I beg leave (in pursuance of my promise) to present them with a specimen; or to offer a clue, which may possibly lead their minds into this most improving and delightful train of thinking.

Should any be inclined to suspect the solidity of the following observations, or to condemn them as the voice of rant, and the lawless flight of fancy; I must

entreat such persons to recollect, that the grand doctrine, the hinge on which they all turn, is warranted and established by the unanimous testimony of the inspired penmen, who frequently celebrate Immanuel, or Christ Jesus, as the great almighty cause of all ; assuring us, that all things were created by him and for him ; and that in him all things consist*.

On such a subject, what is wonderful is far from being extravagant. To be wonderful, is the inseparable characteristic of God and his works ; especially of that most distinguished and glorious even of the divine works, Redemption ! so glorious, that all the miracles in Egypt, and the marvellous acts in the field of Zoan ; all that the Jewish annals have recorded or the human ear has heard ; all dwindle into trivial events, are scarce worthy to be remembered (Isa. xliii. 18.) in comparison of this infinitely grand and infinitely gracious transaction. Kindled, therefore, into pleasing astonishment by such a survey, let me give full scope to my meditations, let me pour out my whole soul on the boundless subject ; not much regarding the limits which cold criticism, or colder unbelief, might prescribe.

O ye angels ! that surround the throne ; ye princes of heaven ! “ that excel in strength,” and are clothed with transcendent brightness : He who placed you in those stations of exalted honour, and dignified your nature with such illustrious endowments ; he whom you all obey, and all adore ; he took not on him the angelic form, but was made flesh, and found in fashion as a man ! like us wretched mortals, he partook of weariness, of pain, and all our infirmities, sin only excepted ; that we might one day be raised to your

* Col. i. 16, 17.

sublime abodes, be adopted into your blissful society, and join with your transported choir, in giving glory to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever, Rev. v. 13.

O ye heavens ! whose azure arches rise immensely high, and stretch immeasurably wide : Stupendous amphitheatre ! amidst whose vast expansive circuit orbs of the most dreadful grandeur are perpetually running their amazing races : Unfathomable depths of ether ! where worlds unnumbered float, and to our limited sight worlds unnumbered are lost : He who adjusted your dimensions with his span, and formed the magnificent structure with his word ; he was once wrapt in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger, that the benefits accruing to his people through his most meritorious humiliation, might have no other measure of their value than immensity—might run parallel in their duration with eternity.

Ye stars ! that beam with inextinguishable brilliancy through the midnight sky ; oceans of flame, and centres of worlds, though seemingly little points of light ! He who shone with essential effulgence, innumerable ages before your twinkling tapers were kindled, and will shine with everlasting majesty and beauty when your places in the firmament shall be known no more ; he was involved, for many years, in the deepest obscurity ; lay concealed in the contemptible city Nazareth ; lay disguised under the mean habit of a carpenter's son ; that he might plant the heavens, (Isa. li. 16.) as it were with new constellations, and array these clods of earth, these houses of clay, with a radiancy far superior to yours—a radiancy which will adorn the very heaven of heavens, when you shall

vanish away like smoke, or expire as momentary sparks from the smitten steel.

Comets! that sometimes shoot into the illimitable tracts of ether, farther than the discernment of our eye is able to follow; sometimes return from the long, long excursion, and sweep our affrighted hemisphere with your enormous fiery train; that sometimes make near approaches to the sun, and burn almost in his immediate beams; sometimes retire to the remotest distance, and freeze for ages in the excessive rigours of winter: He who at his sovereign pleasure withdraws the blazing wonder, or leads forth the portentous stranger, to shake terror over guilty kingdoms; he was overwhelmed with the most shocking amazement, and plunged into the deepest anxiety; was chilled with apprehensions of fear, and scorched by the flames of avenging wrath; that I, and other depraved rebellious creatures, might not be eternally agitated with the extremes of jarring passions—opposite, yet on either side tormenting; far more tormenting to the soul, than the severest degrees of your heat and cold to the human sense.

Ye planets! that, winged with unimaginable speed, traverse the regions of the sky, sometimes climbing millions and millions of miles above, sometimes descending as far below, the great axle of your motions; ye that are so minutely faithful to the vicissitudes of day and night; so exactly punctual in bringing on the changes of your respective seasons: He who launched you at first from his mighty arm; who continually impels you with such wonderful rapidity, and guides you with such perfect regularity; who fixes “the habitation of his holiness and his glory” infinite

heights above your scanty rounds ; he once became a helpless infant, sojourned in our inferior world, fled from the persecutor's sword, and wandered as a vagabond in a foreign land ; that he might lead our feet into the way of peace, that he might bring us aliens near to God, bring us exiles home to heaven.

Thou sun ! inexhaustible source of light, and heat, and comfort ; without whose presence a universal gloom would ensue, and horror insupportable ; who, without the assistance of any other fire, sheddest day through a thousand realms ; and, not confining thy munificence to realms only, extendest thy enlightening influences to surrounding worlds : prime cheerer of the animal, and great enliverer of the vegetable tribes ; so beautiful in thyself, so beneficial in thy effects, that erring heathens addressed thee with adorations, and mistook thee for thy Maker : He who filled thy orb with a profusion of lustre—lustre, in its direct emanations insufferably bright, but, rebated by reflection, delightfully mild ; he before whom thy meridian splendours are but a shade, whose love transfused into the heart is infinitely more exhilarating than even thy sweet and clear shining after the rain ; he divested himself of his all-transcending distinctions, and drew a veil over the effulgence of his divinity, that, by speaking to us face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend, he might dispel our intellectual darkness. “ His visage was marred,” (Isa. lii. 14.) and he became the scorn of men, the outcast of the people ; that by this manifestation of his unutterably tender regard for our welfare, he might diffuse many a gleam of joy through our dejected minds ; that, in another state of things, he might clothe even our fallen nature with

the honours of that magnificent luminary, and give all the righteous to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Thou moon ! that walkest among the host of stars, and in thy lucid appearance art superior to them all : Fair ruler of the night ! sometimes half restoring the day with thy waxing brightness, sometimes waning into dimness, and scarcely scattering the nocturnal gloom ; sometimes covered with sackcloth, and alarming the gazing nations : He who dresses thy opaque globe in beaming, but borrowed silver ; he whose dignity is unchangeable, underived, and all his own ; he vouchsafed to wear a body of clay ; he was content to appear as in a bloody eclipse, shorn of his resplendent beams, and surrounded with a night of horror, which knew not one reviving ray. Thus has he empowered his church, and all believers, to tread the moon under their feet ; Rev. xii. 1. Hence, inspired with the hope of brighter glory, and of more enduring bliss, are they enabled to triumph over all the vain anxieties, and vainer amusements, of this sublunary, precarious, mutable world.

Ye thunders ! that, awfully grumbling in the distant clouds, seem to meditate indignation, and form the first essays of a far more frightful peal ; or suddenly bursting over our heads, rend the vault above, and shake the ground below, with the hideous, horrid crash ! ye that send your tremendous volleys from pole to pole, startling the savage herds, (Psalm xxix. 8.) and astonishing the human race : He who permits terror to sound her trumpet in your deep, prolonged, enlarging, aggravated roar ; he uttered a feeble infantile cry in the stable, and strong expiring groans

on the accursed tree, that he might, in the gentlest accents, whisper peace to our souls, and at length tune our voices to the melody of heaven.

O ye lightnings ! that brood, and lie couchant, in the sulphurous vapours ; that glance with forked fury from the angry gloom, swifter and fiercer than the lion rushes from his den ; or open into vast expansive sheets of flame, sublimely waved over the prostrate world, and fearfully lingering in the frightened skies : ye that formerly laid in ashes the licentious abodes of lust and violence ; that will ere long set on fire the elements, and co-operate in the conflagration of the globe : He who kindles your flash, and directs you when to sally, and where to strike ; he who commissions your whirling bolts whom to kill and whom to spare ; he resigned his sacred person to the most barbarous indignities, submitted his beneficent hands to the ponderous hammer and the piercing nail ; yea, withheld not his heart, his very heart, from the stab of the executioner's spear ; and instead of flashing confusion on his outrageous tormentors, instead of striking them dead to the earth, or plunging them into the depths of hell with his frown ; he cried—in his last moments, and with his agonizing lips, he cried, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do !”—O ! what a pattern of patience for his saints ! What an object of admiration for angels ! What a constellation of every mild, amiable, and benign virtue, shining, in this hour of darkness, with ineffable splendour and beauty ! Hence, hence it is that we are not trembling under the lightnings of mount Sinai ; that we are not blasted by the flames of divine vengeance, or doomed to dwell with everlasting burnings.

Ye frowning wintry clouds ! oceans pendent in the

air, and burdening the winds : He in whose hand you are an overflowing scourge, or by whose appointment an arsenal of warlike stores ; he who opens your sluices, and a flood gushes forth to destroy the fruits of the earth, and drown the husbandman's hopes ; who moulds you into frozen balls, and you are shot, linked with death, on the troops of his enemies : he, instead of discharging the furiousness of his wrath upon this guilty head, poured out his prayers, poured out his sighs, poured out his very soul for me and my fellow transgressors, that by virtue of his inestimable propitiation, the overflowings of divine good-will might be extended to sinful men ; that the skies might pour down righteousness, and peace on her downy wings, peace with her balmy blessings, descend to dwell on earth.

Ye vernal clouds ! furls of finer air, folds of softer moisture : He who draws you, in copious exhalations, from the briny deep ; orders you to leave every distasteful quality behind, and become floating fountains of sweetest waters : he who dissolves you into gentle rain, and dismisses you in fruitful showers ; who kindly commissions you to drop down fatness as you fall, and to scatter flowers over the field : he, in the unutterable bitterness of his spirit, was without any comforting sense of his almighty Father's presence : he, when his bones were burnt up like a fire-brand, had not one drop of that sacred consolation which, on many of his afflicted servants, has been distilled as the evening dews, and has " given songs in the night " of distress ; that from this unallayed and inconsolable anguish of our all-gracious Master, we, as from a well of salvation, might derive large draughts of spiritual refreshment.

Thou grand ethereal bow! whose beauties flush the firmament, and charm every spectator: He who paints thee on the fluid skirts of the sky, who decks thee with all the pride of colours, and bends thee into that graceful and majestic figure; at whose command thy vivid streaks sweetly rise, or swiftly fade: he, through all his life, was arrayed in the humble garb of poverty, and at his exit wore the gorgeous garment of contempt; insomuch, that even his own familiar friends, ashamed or afraid to own him, “hid, as it were, their faces from him;” to teach us a becoming disdain for the unsubstantial and transitory glitter of all worldly vanities; to introduce us, in robes brighter than the tinges of thy resplendent arch, even in the robes of his own immaculate righteousness—to introduce us before that august and venerable throne which the peaceful rainbow surrounds—surrounds as a pledge of inviolable fidelity and infinite mercy.

Ye storms and tempests! which vex the continent, and toss the seas; which dash navies on the rocks, and drive forests from their roots: He whose breath rouses you into such resistless fury, and whose nod controls you in your wildest career; he who holds the rapid and raging hurricane in straitened reins, and walks, dreadfully serene, on the very wings of the wind; he went, all meek and gentle, like a lamb to the slaughter, for us; and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Thus are we instructed to bear with decent magnanimity the various assaults of adversity; and to pass, with a becoming tranquillity of temper, through all the rude blasts of injurious treatment. Thus are we delivered from the unutterably fiercer storms of incensed and inexorable justice—from the fire, the brimstone, and

the horrible tempest, which will be the final portion of the ungodly.

Thou pestilence ! that scatterest ten thousand poisons from thy baleful wings ; tainting the air, and infecting the nations ; under whose malignant influence joy is blasted, and nature sickens, mighty regions are depopulated, and once crowded cities are left without inhabitants : He who arms thee with inevitable destruction, and bids thee march before his angry countenance, to spread desolation among the tents of the wicked, and be the forerunner of far more fearful indignation : he, in his holy humanity, was arraigned as a criminal ; and though innocence itself, yea, the very pattern of perfection, was condemned to die, like the most execrable miscreant ! as a nuisance to society, and the very bane of the public happiness, he was hurried away to execution, and hammered to the gibbet ; that by his blood he might prepare a sovereign medicine to cure us of a more fatal distemper than the pestilence which walketh in darkness, or the sickness which destroyeth at noon-day ; that he might himself say to our last enemy, " O death, I will be thy plague ! O grave, I will be thy destruction ! " Hos. xiii. 14.

Heat ! whose burning influence parches the Libyan wilds, tans into soot the Ethiopian's complexion, and makes every species of life pant, and droop, and languish : Cold ! whose icy breath glazes yearly the Russian seas, often glues the frozen sailor to the cordage, and stiffens the traveller into a statue of rigid flesh : He who sometimes blends you both, and produces the most agreeable temperature ; sometimes suffers you to act separately, and rage with intolerable severity : that King of heaven, and Controller of uni-

versal nature, when dwelling in a tabernacle of clay, was exposed to chilling damps, and smitten by sultry beams; the stars in their midnight watches heard him pray, and the sun in his meridian fervours saw him toil. Hence are our frozen hearts dissolved into a mingled flow of wonder, love, and joy; being conscious of a deliverance from those insufferable flames which, kindled by divine indignation, burn to the lowest hell.

Thou ocean, vast world of waters! He who sunk that capacious bed for thy reception, and poured the liquid element into unfathomable channels; before whom all thy foaming billows and floating mountains are as the small drop of a bucket; who, by the least intimation of his will, swells thy fluid kingdoms in wild confusion to mingle with the clouds, or reduces them in calm composure to slumber on the shores; he who once gave thee a warrant to overwhelm the whole earth, and bury all its degenerate inhabitants in a watery grave, but has now laid an everlasting embargo on thy boisterous waves, and bound thee, all fierce and madding as thou art, in chains stronger than adamant, yet formed of despicable sand:—all the waves of vengeance and wrath, of tribulation and anguish, passed over his crucified body and his agonizing soul; that we might emerge from those depths of misery, from that abyss of guilt, into which we were plunged by Adam's fall, and more irretrievably sunk by our own transgressions; that, at the last, we might be restored to that happy world, which is represented, in the vision of God, as having "no sea," (Rev. xxi. 1.) to denote its perpetual stability, and undisturbed serenity.

Ye mountains! that overlook the clouds, and pro-

ject a shade into distant provinces : everlasting pyramids of nature ! not to be shaken by conflicting elements, not to be shattered by the bolts of thunder, nor impaired even by the ravages of time : He who bade your ridges rise so high, and your foundations stand so fast ; he in whose scale you are lighter than dust, in whose eye you are less than nothing ; he sunk beneath a load of woes—woes insupportable, but not his own, when he took our iniquities upon himself, and heaved the more than mountainous burden from a guilty world.

Ye verdant woods ! that crown our hills, and are crowned yourselves with leafy honours : ye humble shrubs ! adorned in spring with opening blossoms, and fanned in summer by gentle gales : ye that in distant climes, or in cultivated gardens breathe out spicy odours, and embalm the air with delightful perfumes : Your all-glorious and ever-blessed Creator's head was encircled with the thorny wreath ; his face was defiled with contumelious spitting, and his body bathed in a bloody sweat ; that we might wear the crown, the crown of glory which fadeth not away, and live for evermore surrounded with delights, as much surpassing yours, as yours exceed the rugged desolations of winter.

Thou mantling vine ! He who hangs on thy slender shoots the rich, transparent, weighty cluster ; who, under thy unornamented foliage, and amidst the pores of thy otherwise worthless boughs, prepares the liquor, the refined and exalted liquor, which cheers the nations and fills the cup of joy : Trees ! whose branches are elevated and waving in air, or diffused in easy confinement along a sunny wall : He who bends you with a lovely burden of delicious fruits ; whose genial

warmth beautifies their rind, and mellows their taste ; he, when voluntarily subject to our wants, instead of being refreshed with your generous juices, or regaled with your luscious pulp, had a loathsome potion of vinegar, mingled with gall, addressed to his lips ; that we might sit under the shadow of his merits with great tranquillity and the utmost complacency ; that ere long, being admitted into the paradise of God, we might eat of the tree of life, (Rev. ii. 7.) and drink new wine with him in his Father's kingdom.

Ye luxuriant meadows ! He who, without the seed-man's industry, replenishes your irriguous lap with never-failing crops of herbage, and enamels their cheerful green with flowers of every hue : Ye fertile fields ! He who blesses the labours of the husbandman, enriches your well-tilled plains with waving harvests, and calls forth the staff of life from your furrows ; he who causes both meadows and fields to laugh and sing, for the abundance of plenty ; he was no stranger to corroding hunger and parching thirst ; he, alas ! ate the bitter bread of woe, and had "plenteousness of tears to drink ;" that we might partake of richer dainties than those which are produced by the dew of heaven, and proceed from the fatness of the earth ; that we might feed on "the hidden manna," and eat the bread which giveth life, eternal life, unto the world.

Ye mines ! rich in golden ore, or bright with veins of silver ; that distribute your shining treasures as far as winds can waft the vessel of commerce ; that bestow your alms on monarchs, and have princes for your pensioners : Ye beds of gems, toy-shops of nature ! which form, in dark retirement, the glittering stone :

Diamonds ! that sparkle with a brilliant water ! Rubies ! that glow with a crimson flame : Emeralds ! dipped in the freshest verdure of spring : Sapphires ! decked with the fairest drapery of the sky : Topaz ! emblazed with dazzling yellow : Amethyst ! empurpled with the blushes of the morning : He who tinctures the metallic dust, and consolidates the lucid drop ; he, when sojourning on earth, had no riches but the riches of disinterested benevolence, had no ornament but the ornament of unspotted purity. Poor he was in his circumstances, and mean in all his accommodations, that we might be rich in grace, and “ obtain salvation with eternal glory ; that we might inhabit the new Jerusalem, that splendid city whose streets are paved with gold, whose gates are formed of pearl, and the walls garnished with all manner of precious stones ;” Rev. xxi. 19. 21.

Ye gushing fountains ! that trickle potable silver through the matted grass : Ye fine transparent streams ! that glide in crystal waves along your fringed banks : Ye deep and stately rivers ! that wind and wander in your course, to spread your favours wider ; that gladden kingdoms in your progress, and augment the sea with your tribute : He who supplies all your currents from his own ever-flowing and inexhaustible liberality ; he, when his nerves were racked with exquisite pain, and his blood inflamed by a raging fever, cried, *I thirst !* and was denied (unparalleled hardship !) in this his great extremity, was denied the poor refreshment of a single drop of water ! that we, having all sufficiency in all things, might abound to every good work ; might be filled with the fulness of spiritual blessings here, and hereafter be satisfied with

that fulness of joy which is at God's right hand for evermore.

'Ye birds! cheerful tenants of the boughs, gaily dressed in glossy plumage; who wake the morn, and solace the groves, with your artless lays; inimitable architects, who, without rule or line, build your pensile structures with all the nicety of proportion: you have each his commodious nest, roofed with shades, and lined with warmth, to protect and cherish the callow brood: But he who tuned your throats to harmony, and taught you that curious skill; he was a man of sorrows, and had not where to lay his head—had not where to lay his head, till he felt the pangs of dissolution, and was laid in the silent grave; that we, dwelling under the wings of omnipotence, and resting in the bosom of infinite love, might spend an harmonious eternity in “singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb.”

Bees, industrious workmen, that sweep with busy wing the flowery garden, and search the blooming heath, and sip the mellifluous dews! strangers to idleness! that ply with incessant assiduity your pleasing task, and suffer no opening blossom to pass unexplored, no sunny gleam to slip away unimproved: most ingenious artificers! that cling to the fragrant buds, drain them of their treasured sweets, and extract (if I may so speak) even the odoriferous souls of herbs, and plants, and flowers;—you, when you have completed your work, have collected, refined, and securely lodged the ambrosial stores; when you might reasonably expect the peaceful fruition of your acquisitions, you, alas! are barbarously destroyed, and leave your hoarded delicacies to others—leave them to be enjoyed by your very murderers. I cannot but

pity your hard destiny ! How then should my bowels melt with sympathy, and my eyes flow with tears, when I remember that thus, thus it fared with your and our incarnate Maker ! After a life of the most exemplary and exalted piety, a life filled with offices of beneficence and labours of love, he was by wicked hands crucified and slain : he left the honey of his toil, the balm of his blood, and the riches of his obedience, to be shared among others ; to be shared even among those who too often crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame.

Shall I mention the animal which spins her soft, her shining, her exquisitely fine silken thread ? whose matchless manufactures lend an ornament to grandeur, and make royalty itself more magnificent ? Shall I take notice of the cell in which, when the gaiety and business of life are over, the little recluse immures herself, and spends the remainder of her days in retirement ? Shall I rather observe the sepulchre which, when cloyed with pleasure, and weary of the world, she prepares for her own interment ? or how, when a stated period is elapsed, she wakes from a death-like inactivity ; breaks the enclosure of her tomb ; throws off the dusky shroud ; assumes a new form ; puts on a more sumptuous array ; and, from an insect creeping on the ground, becomes a winged inhabitant of the air ? No ; this is a poor reptile, and therefore unworthy to serve as an illustration, when any character of the Son of God comes under consideration. But let me correct myself : was not Christ (to use the language of his own blessed Spirit) a worm and no man ? (Psal. xxii. 6.) in appearance such, and treated as such ? Did not he also bequeath the fine linen of his own most perfect righteousness, to compose the

marriage-garment* for our disarrayed and defiled souls? Did he not, before his flesh saw corruption, emerge triumphant from the grave, and not only mount the lower firmament, but ascend the heaven of heavens, taking possession of those sublime abodes in our name, and as our forerunner?

Ye cattle! that rest in your enclosed pastures: ye beasts! that range the unlimited forest: ye fish! that rove through trackless paths of the sea: sheep! clad in garments which, when left by you, are worn by kings: kine! who feed on verdure which, transmuted in your bodies, and strained from your udders, furnishes a repast for queens: lions! roaring after your prey: leviathan! taking your pastime in the great deep: with all that wing the firmament, or tread the soil, or swim the wave! He who spreads his ever-hospitable board, who admits you all to be his continual guests, and suffers you to want no manner of thing that is good; he was destitute, afflicted, tormented; he endured all that was miserable and reproachful, in order to exalt a degenerate race, who had debased themselves to a level with the beasts that perish, unto seats of distinguished and immortal honour; in order to introduce the slaves of sin, and heirs

* This, and several other hints, interspersed throughout this work, refer to the active and passive righteousness of Christ, imputed to believers for their justification; which, in the opinion of many great expositors, is the mystical and the most sublime meaning of the wedding-garment, so emphatically and forcibly recommended by the teacher sent from God, Matth. xxii. 11.

of hell, into mansions of consummate and everlasting bliss.

Surely the contemplation of such a subject, and the distant anticipation of such a hope, may almost turn earth into heaven, and make even inanimate nature vocal with praise. Let it then break forth from every creature. Let the meanest feel the inspiring impulse ; let the greatest acknowledge themselves unable worthily to express the stupendous goodness.

Praise him, ye insects that crawl on the ground ; who, though high above all height, humbled himself to dwell in dust. Birds of the air, waft on your wings, and warble in your notes, his praise, who, though Lord of the celestial abodes, while sojourning on earth wanted a shelter commodious as your nests. Ye rougher world of brutes, join with the gentle songsters of the shade, and howl to him your hoarse applause, who breaks the jaw-bones of the infernal lion, who softens into mildness the savage disposition, and bids the wolf lie down in amicable agreement with the lamb. Bleat out, ye hills ; let broader lows be responsive from the vales ; ye forests catch, and ye rocks retain, the inarticulate hymn ; because Messiah the Prince feeds his flock like a shepherd : he gathers the lambs with his arm, he carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young ; Isa. xl. 11. Wave, ye stately cedars, in sign of worship, wave your branching heads to him, who meekly bowed his own on the accursed tree. Pleasing prospects, scenes of beauty, where nicest art conspires with lavish nature to form a paradise below ; lay forth all your charms, and in all your charms confess yourselves a mere blank compared with his amiableness,

who is the "fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." Drop down, ye showers, and testify as you fall, testify of his grace, which descends more copiously than the rain, distils more sweetly than the dew. Let sighing gales breathe, and murmuring rivulets flow—breathe and flow, in harmonious consonance to him, whose spirit is far more reviving than the cooling breeze, who is himself the fountain of living waters.

Ye lightnings, blaze to his honour: ye thunders, sound his praise; while reverberating clouds return the roar, and bellowing oceans propagate the tremendous anthem. Mutest of creatures, add your silent oratory, and display the triumphs of his meekness, who, though he maketh the clouds his chariot, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; though the thunder is his voice, and the lightning his sword of justice; yet, amidst the most abusive and cruel injuries, was submissive and lifted not his hand, was "dumb and opened not his mouth." Great source of day, address thy radiant homage to a far sublimer sun: write, in all thy ample round, with every lucid beam, O! write a testimony to him who is the brightness of his Father's glory, who is the Sun of Righteousness to a sinful world, and is risen, never to go down—is risen to be our everlasting light. Shine clear, ye skies; look gay, thou earth; let the floods clap their hands, and let every creature wear a smile; for he cometh—the Creator himself cometh—to be manifested in the flesh; and with him comes pardon, peace, and joy: every virtue and all felicity comes in his train. Angels and archangels, let your songs be of Jesus, and teach the very heavens to echo with his adored and majestic name. Ye beheld him

with greater transports of admiration, when you attended his agony in the garden, and saw him prostrate on the ground, than when you beheld universal nature rising at his call, and saw the wonders of his creating might. Tune to loftiest notes your golden harps, and waken raptures unknown before even in heavenly breasts ; while all that has breath swells the concert of harmony, and all that has being unites in the tribute of praise.

Chiefly, let man exalt his voice ; let man, with distinguished hosannas, hail the Redeemer. For man he was stretched on the racking cross ; for man he was consigned to the gloomy sepulchre ; for man he procured grace unmeasurable, and bliss inconceivable. However different, therefore, in your age, or more different in your circumstances, be unanimous, O men ! in magnifying a Saviour who is no respecter of persons, who gave himself a ransom for all. Bend, ye kings, from your thrones of ivory and gold ! in your robes of imperial purple fall prostrate at his feet, who forsook a nobler throne, and laid aside more illustrious ensigns of majesty, that you might reign with God for ever and ever. Children of poverty, meanest of mortals (if any can be called poor who are thus enriched, if any can be accounted mean who are thus ennobled), rejoice, greatly rejoice in God your Saviour, who chose to be indigent, was willing to be contemned, that you might be entitled to the treasures, and be numbered with the princes of heaven. Sons of affliction, though harassed with pain, and inured to anguish, O ! change your groans into songs of gratitude ; let no complaining voice, no jarring string, be heard in the universal symphony ; but glorify the Lamb even in the fires (Isa. xxiv. 15), who

himself bore greater torment than you feel, and has promised you a share in the joy which he inherits ; who has made your sufferings short, and will make your rest eternal. Men of hoary locks, bending beneath a weight of years, and tottering on the brink of the grave, let Christ be your support under all infirmities, and lean upon Christ as the rock of your salvation ; let his name, his precious name, form the last accents which quiver on your pale expiring lips. And let this be the first that lisps on your tongues, ye tender infants : Remember your Redeemer in your earliest moments ; devote the choice of your hours to the learning of his will, and the chief of your strength to the glorifying of his name ; who in the perfection of health, and the very prime of manhood, was content to become a motionless and ghastly corpse, that you might be girt with the vigour, and clothed with the bloom of eternal youth.

Ye spirits of just men made perfect, who are released from the burden of the flesh, and freed from all the vexatious sollicitations of corruption in yourselves ; delivered from all the injurious effects of iniquity in others ; who sojourn no longer in the tents of strife, or the territories of disorder, but are received into that pure, harmonious, holy society, where every one acts up to his amiable and exalted character ; where God himself is pleased graciously and immediately to preside : you find, not without pleasing astonishment, your hopes improved into actual enjoyment, and your faith superseded by the beatific vision ; you feel all your former shyness of behaviour happily lost in the overflowings of unbounded love, and all your little differences of opinion entirely borne down by tides of

invariable truth. Bless, therefore, with all your enlarged powers, bless his infinitely larger goodness, who, when he had overcome the sharpness of death, opened the gates of paradise, opened the kingdom of heaven to all generations, and to every denomination of the faithful.

Ye men of holy conversation, and humble tempers, think of him who loved you, and washed you from your sins in his own blood ; think of him on your silent couch ; talk of him in every social interview ; glory in his excellences ; make your boast of his obedience ; and add, still continue to add, the incense of a dutiful life to all the oblations of a grateful tongue. Weakest of believers, who go mourning under a sense of guilt, and conflicting with the ceaseless assaults of temptation, put off your sackcloth, and be girded with gladness ; because Jesus is as merciful to hear, as he is mighty to help ; because he is touched with the tenderest sympathizing concern for all your distresses, and he lives, ever lives, to be your advocate with the Father. Why then should uneasy doubts sadden your countenances ? why should desponding fears oppress your soul ? Turn, turn those disconsolate sighs into cheerful hymns ; since you have this powerful intercession, and his inestimable merits, to be your anchor in all tribulations, to be your passport into eternal blessedness.

Most of all, ye ministers of the sanctuary, heralds commissioned from above, lift every one his voice like a trumpet, and loudly proclaim the Redeemer. Get ye up, ye ambassadors of peace, get ye up into the high mountains, and spread far and wide the honours of the Lamb “ that was slain, but is alive for ever-

more." Teach every sacred roof to resound with his fame, and every human heart to glow with his love. Declare, as far as the force of words will go, declare the inexhaustible fulness of that great atonement, whose merits are commensurate with the glories of the Divinity. Tell the sinful wretch, what pity yearns in Immanuel's bowels; what blood he has spilt, what agonies he has endured, what wonders he has wrought, for the salvation of his enemies. Invite the indigent to become rich; entreat the guilty to accept of pardon; because with the crucified Jesus is plenteous redemption, and all-sufficiency to save. While you, placed in conspicuous stations, pour the joyful sound, may I, as I steal through the vale of humble life, catch the pleasing accents! For me, the author of all blessings became a curse; for me, his bones were dislocated, and his flesh was torn: he hung, with streaming veins, and agonizing soul, on the cross—for me! O! may I, in my little sphere, and amidst the scanty circle of my acquaintance, at least whisper these glad transporting tidings! whisper them from my own heart, that they may surely reach, and sweetly penetrate theirs.

But when men and angels raise the grand hymn; when all worlds, and all beings, add their collective acclamations; this full, fervent, and universal chorus; will be so inferior to the riches of the Redeemer's grace, so disproportionate to the magnificence of his glory, that it will seem but to debase the unutterable subject it attempts to exalt: the loud hallelujah will die away, in the solemn mental eloquence of prostrate, rapturous, silent adoration.

O goodness infinite ! goodness immense !
 And love that passeth knowledge ! Words are vain,
 Language is lost in wonders so divine.

“ Come then, expressive Silence—muse his praise.”

DEATH.

What is there formidable in death, which our ever-blessed Redeemer has not taken away ? Do the pangs of dissolution alarm us ? Should they be sharp, they cannot be very long ; and our exalted Lord, with whom are the issues of death, knows what dying agonies mean. He has said, in the multitude of his tender mercies, “ Fear thou not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness,” Isa. xli. 10. This promise authorizes us to say boldly, “ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me,” Psalm xxiii. 4.

Are we afraid to enter into a strange, invisible, unknown world ? It is the world into which our divine Master is gone ; where he has prepared everlasting mansions for his people, John, xiv. 2, Luke, xvi. 22, and has appointed his angels to conduct us thither. Having such a convoy, what should we dread ? and, going to our eternal home, where our all-bountiful Redeemer is, why should we be reluctant ?

Are we concerned on account of what we leave ? We leave the worse to possess the better. If we leave our earthly friends, we shall find more loving and lovely companions. We shall be admitted among

the "innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, that are written in heaven," Heb. xii. 22, 23. Do we leave the ordinances of religion, which we have attended with great delight? leave the word of God, which has been sweeter to our souls than honey to our mouths? We shall enter into the temple not made with hands, and join that happy choir, who rest not day nor night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," Rev. iv. 8. And if our Bible is no more, we shall have all that is promised, we shall behold all that is described therein. If we drop the map of our heavenly Canaan, it will be to take possession of its blissful territories. "That city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof," Rev. xxi. 23. O, my friend! blessed, for ever blessed, be the grace of our Lord, and the merits of his Christ! We shall exchange the scanty stream for the boundless ocean; and if we no longer pick the first ripe grapes, we shall gather the copious, the abounding, the never-ending vintage.

Do we fear the guilt of our innumerable sins? Adored be the inexpressible loving-kindness of God our Saviour! our sins have been punished in the blessed Jesus: "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isa. liii. 6. He his own self bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. So that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1. O that we may be enabled, with the apostle, to make our boast of this Saviour, and to triumph in this faith! "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that

justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us."

Is judgment the thing that we fear? To the pardoned sinner it has nothing terrible. The Lord Jesus, who keeps his servants from falling, "presents them also faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," Jude, ver. 24. Observe the sweet expressions, *presents faultless*, and *with exceeding joy*. Justly therefore does the apostle reckon it among the privileges of the Christians, that they are come to God the Judge of all, Heb. xii. 23; for the Judge is our friend, the Judge is our advocate, the Judge is our propitiation, the Judge is our righteousness. And is it not a privilege to come to such a Judge as will not so much as mention our iniquities to us, but condescend to take notice of our poor unworthy services? who sits on the great tribunal, not to pass the sentence of damnation upon us, but to give us a reward, a reward of free grace, and of inconceivable richness?

Let me conclude with those charming words of the evangelical prophet, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for her Redeemer, her all-gracious Redeemer, hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins," Isa. xl. 1, 2. May the God of our life and salvation make these Scriptures be unto us as a staff in the traveller's hand, and as a cordial to the fainting heart, that we may be strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; that we may glorify him in death, and glorify him for

death; because death will introduce us into his immediate presence, where we shall be sorrowful no more, sinful no more, at a distance no more; but be joyful, and be like our Lord; love him with all our souls, praise him to all eternity. Let us then be of good cheer, soon in our heavenly Jerusalem we shall meet again.

* * * * *

Your reflections on seeing the skeleton at Oxford, and on your near view of Death (in the emblematical shape of a skeleton with an hour-glass and a dart) advancing towards you in your late sickness, have such a similarity with those of a worthy friend of mine, as I think will both surprise and please you. "Oh! my dear sir," says he, "to *talk* of death, and to enter in earnest upon dying, are two different things. To view the messenger, who comes from the JUDGE of all, as actually approaching with his open commission in one hand, and his uplifted dart to execute it in another (an expecting grave, and an eternal judgment in his immediate train), is as different as to view a painted lion, who is only terrible on canvass, and actually to see him with his rolling eyes, and really to hear his tremendous roar."

THE SOUL AFTER DEATH.

As the interval between the hour of our dissolution, and the day of resurrection, will, in all probability, be very considerable, much longer than the time of our continuance on earth; it is a very reasonable and important inquiry to examine into the circumstances of this state. The Scripture, our infallible director, which is (so copious upon all the grand articles of religion, and) silent upon nothing that relates to the

true happiness of mankind, has not left us without information in this particular: Whereas all other writers grope in the dark; not one of them has been able to draw back the curtain, or give us (any) the least insight into the invisible world; it is to them, and in all their systems, an absolute *terra incognita*. A few of the scriptural discoveries may be seen in the answer to the following queries.

1st. When the souls, the souls of the righteous, depart from the body, by whom are they received? By holy angels. The angels were ministering spirits to them in the days of their flesh, and will be their guard and their convoy when they relinquish the earthly tabernacle. When Lazarus died, he was carried by angels. What a comfortable privilege is this! not to be left solitary and desolate, like a shipwrecked mariner on some unknown coast; but to be under the guidance and protection of those benevolent beings!

2dly. In what place are they lodged? This is described, not from our ideas of locality, or any properties of space, but from the society and enjoyments. It is not very material whether they are above or below, in the heaven of heavens (which, I think, is most probable) or in some separate mansion. A disembodied spirit, if under the wrath of God, must everywhere be extremely miserable; if surrounded with his favour, will every where be exceedingly happy. To such a spirit, that has no longer any connexion with sensible things, God's smile must be heaven, God's frown must be hell. Wherever this region lies, we are sure it lies under the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; Christ is there, and where he is present, happiness cannot be absent. "Thou shalt be with me," is his

promise to the penitent thief. Abraham is there, the friend of God, and father of the faithful. Lazarus, we are told, was carried into Abraham's bosom; and where he resides, where all the children of God and heirs of glory dwell, there must be pleasures; such pleasures, that the place is called paradise; "Thou shalt be with me in paradise." The delightful garden of Eden, which the Lord himself planted, and which innocent man inhabited, was incomparably the finest, noblest spot in this sublunary world; and this is used to give us some faint representation of those blessed abodes, where the souls and spirits of the righteous remain till the shout of the archangel and the trump of God summon them.

3dly. How soon are they lodged in this desirable situation? Without delay. I find no mention of any intermediate purgation, or of any period for inactivity and forgetfulness: "To-day shalt thou be with me," is our Lord's expression; and it is observable, that the Jewish day was very near closing, when our Saviour gave up the ghost; nearer still when that converted malefactor expired. "I have a desire to be dissolved," says St. Paul, "and to be with Christ;" he speaks of his release from clay, and his introduction into the Redeemer's presence, as instantaneous. No sooner does the former commence, but the latter takes place. What an encouragement is this to fight the good fight of faith, and finish our course with alacrity and diligence, since we are not to wait in wishful but disappointed expectation! No, the very moment our warfare is accomplished, our reward begins! Which reminds me of another inquiry.

4thly. What is the condition of holy souls, in this separate state?

1. They rest from their labours ; from all the disorders that afflicted their bodies, from all the temptations that disquieted their souls. They are no longer ridiculed and persecuted by ungodly men. They have no more conflict with the powers of darkness and their own corruptions ; sin and sorrow cease eternally. They are freed, entirely freed, from every evil.

2. They enter into peace. They have then peace with God, peace in their own thoughts, peace with fellow-saints, which passeth all understanding. Peace implies a positive happiness. Peace, in the scriptural language, denotes all manner of blessing, and such is its import in the preceding passage. In this large extent will it be made good to the righteous. When they relinquish the earthly tabernacle, the scales of ignorance fall from their understandings ; their will is wonderfully conformed to Christ's ; every weight drops off from their affections ; and their holiness is exceedingly confirmed. They are honoured with nearer approaches to God, they are favoured with clearer manifestations of his glory, they feel richer emanations of his love, and are more and more transformed into his image ; every doubt vanishes, and they rejoice in the prospect, the assured and refreshing prospect of receiving all the fulness of their everlasting felicity. I said fulness ; for though the felicity of the soul upon its dismissal from mortality is great, is high, is to us inconceivable ; yet it will not be complete till the body is reunited to it, reanimated by it. Then that will not only be rescued from corruption, but made like unto Christ's glorious body, will be dignified with divine approbation, and that before the largest assembly of men and angels : they will receive a crown of

righteousness ; they will sit on thrones, and judge the apostate angels ; they will then possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

What is said of the righteous may lead us to some proper conceptions with regard to the wicked and their state : the one is the reverse of the other ; as they were quite dissimilar in their life, in their death they are equally different. If the righteous are committed to the care of benevolent angels, the wicked, it is very probable, are abandoned to the insults and rage of malevolent spirits. If the righteous are admitted into mansions of bliss, the wicked are consigned over to the places of horror and torment, where is all the misery which is expressed by weeping and wailing ; all that self-condemnation and anguish, which is expressed by gnashing of teeth. If the righteous enjoy the calm of uninterrupted tranquillity, and the light of perpetual sunshine, the wicked are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day ; wearied by their own ungovernable passions, stung by eager but unsatisfied desires, haunted by a stern upbraiding conscience. In a word, while the righteous are looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and their Saviour Jesus Christ ; they are trembling under the dismal apprehensions of that dreadful day, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed in flaming fire.

THE DEATH OF A GOOD MAN.

Here a small and plain stone is placed upon the ground, purchased, one would imagine, from the little fund, and formed by the hand of frugality itself. Nothing costly ; not one decoration added ; only a very short inscription ; and that so effaced as to be scarcely

intelligible. Was the depository unfaithful to its trust? or were the letters worn by the frequent resort of the surviving family to mourn over the grave, and revive the remembrance of a most valuable and beloved relative? For I perceive, upon a closer inspection, that it covers the remains of a father—a religious father, snatched from his growing offspring before they were settled in the world, or so much as their principles fixed by a thorough education.

This, sure, is the most complicated distress that has hitherto come under our consideration. The solemnities of such a dying chamber are some of the most melting and melancholy scenes imaginable. There lies the affectionate husband, the indulgent parent, the faithful friend, and the generous master. He lies, in the last extremities, and on the very point of dissolution. Art has done its all. The raging disease mocks the power of medicine. It hastens, with resistless impetuosity, to execute its dreadful errand; to rend asunder the silver cord of life, and the more delicate tie of social attachment and conjugal affection.

A servant or two, from a revering distance, cast many a wishful look, and condole their honoured master in the language of sighs. The condescending mildness of his commands was wont to produce an alacrity of obedience, and render their service a pleasure. Now the remembrance of both imbitters their grief, and makes it trickle plentifully down their honest cheeks. His friends, who have so often shared his joys, and gladdened his mind with their enlivening converse, are now miserable comforters. A sympathizing and mourning pity is all the relief they are able to contribute, unless it be augmented by their

silent prayers for the divine succour, and a word of consolation suggested from the Scriptures. Those poor innocents, the children, crowd around the bed: drowned in tears, and almost frantic with grief, they sob out their little souls, and passionately cry, "Will he leave us? leave us in a helpless condition! leave us to an injurious world!"

These separate streams are all united in the distressed spouse, and overwhelm her breast with an impetuous tide of sorrows. In her, the lover weeps, the wife mourns, and all the mother yearns. To her, the loss is beyond measure aggravated, by months and years of delightful society and exalted friendship. Where, alas! can she meet with such unsuspected fidelity, or repose such unreserved confidence? where find so discreet a counsellor, so improving an example, and a guardian so sedulously attentive to the interests of herself and her children? See! how she hangs over the languishing bed; most tenderly solicitous to prolong a life, important and valuable far beyond her own; or, if that be impracticable, no less tenderly officious to soothe the last agonies of her dearer self. Her hands, trembling under direful apprehensions, wipe the cold dews from the livid cheeks; and sometimes stay the sinking head on her gentle arms, sometimes rest it on her compassionate bosom. See! how she gazes, with a speechless ardour, on the pale countenance and meagre features! while all her soft passions beat unutterable fondness, and her very soul bleeds with exquisite anguish.

The sufferer, all patient and adoring, submits to the divine will; and, by submission, becomes superior to his affliction. He is sensibly touched with the disconsolate state of his attendants, and pierced with

an anxious concern for his wife and his children—his wife, who will soon be a destitute widow ; his children, who will soon be helpless orphans. Yet, “though cast down, not in despair.” He is greatly refreshed by his trust in the everlasting covenant, and his hope of approaching glory. Religion gives a dignity to distress. At each interval of ease, he comforts his very comforters ; and suffers with all the majesty of woe.

The soul, just going to abandon the tottering clay, collects all her force, and exerts her lasts efforts. The good man raises himself on his pillow ; extends a kind hand to his servants, who are bathed in tears ; takes an affecting farewell of his friends ; clasps his wife in a feeble embrace ; kisses the dear pledges of their mutual love ; and then pours all that remains of life and strength in the following words : “ I die, my dear children ; but God, the everlasting God, will be with you. Though you lose an earthly parent, you have a Father in heaven, who lives for evermore. Nothing, nothing but an unbelieving heart, and irreligious life, can ever separate you from the regards of his providence, from the endearments of his love.”

He could proceed no farther. His heart was full ; but utterance failed. After a short pause, prompted by affectionate zeal, with difficulty, great difficulty, he added, “ You, the dear partner of my soul, you are now the only protector of our orphans. I leave you under a weight of cares : but God, who defendeth the cause of the widow, God, whose promise is faithfulness and truth, God hath said, ‘ I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee’ (Heb. xiii. 5). This revives my drooping spirits : let this support the wife of my bosom. And now, O Father of compassions, into thy

hands I commend my spirit. Encouraged by thy promised goodness, I leave my fatherless——”

Here he fainted; fell back upon the bed; and lay for some minutes bereft of his senses. As a taper upon the very point of extinction is sometimes suddenly rekindled, and leaps into a quivering flame; so life, before it totally expired, gave a parting struggle, and once more looked abroad from the opening eyelids. He would fain have spoken; fain have uttered the sentence he began. More than once he essayed; but the organs of speech were become like a broken vessel, and nothing but the obstructing phlegm rattled in his throat; his aspect, however, spoke affection inexpressible. With all the father, all the husband, still living in his looks, he takes one more view of those dear children whom he had often beheld with a parental triumph. He turns his dying eyes on that beloved woman, whom he never beheld but with a glow of delight. Fixed in this posture, amidst smiles of love, and under a gleam of heaven, they shine out their last.

ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

Yonder white stone, emblem of the innocence it covers, informs the beholder of one who breathed out its tender soul almost in the instant of receiving it. There the peaceful infant, without so much as knowing what labour and vexation mean, “lies still and is quiet: it sleeps and is at rest,” Job, iii. 13. Staying only to wash away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, it bid a speedy adieu to time and terrestrial things. What did the little hasty sojourner find so forbidding and disgustful in our upper world, to occasion its precipitant exit? It is written, indeed,

of its suffering Saviour, that when he had tasted the vinegar mingled with gall, he would not drink, Matt. xxvii. 34: and did our new-come stranger begin to sip the cup of life, but, perceiving the bitterness, turn away its head, and refuse the draught? Was this the cause why the wary babe only opened its eyes, just looked on the light, and then withdrew into the more inviting regions of undisturbed repose?

Happy voyager! no sooner launched than arrived at the haven. But more eminently happy they, who have passed the waves, and weathered all the storms of a troublesome and dangerous world; who "through many tribulations have entered into the kingdom of heaven;" and thereby brought honour to their divine Convoy, administered comfort to the companions of their toil, and left an instructive example to succeeding pilgrims.

Highly favoured probationer! accepted without being exercised! It was thy peculiar privilege not to feel the slightest of those evils which oppress thy surviving kindred; which frequently fetch groans from the most manly fortitude, or most elevated faith. The arrows of calamity, barbed with anguish, are often fixed deep in our choicest comforts. The fiery darts of temptation, shot from the hand of hell, are always flying in showers around our integrity. To thee, sweet babe, both these distresses and dangers were alike unknown.

Consider this, ye mourning parents, and dry up your tears. Why should you lament that your little ones are crowned with victory, before the sword was drawn, or the conflict begun? Perhaps the Supreme Disposer of events foresaw some inevitable snare of temptation forming, or some dreadful storm of adver-

sity impending. And why should you be so dissatisfied with that kind precaution, which housed your pleasant plant, and removed into shelter a tender flower, before the thunders roared, before the lightnings flew, before the tempest poured its rage? O remember, they are not lost, but taken away from the evil to come; Isa. lvii. 1:

THE BENEFICENCE OF THE DEITY.

Here they seated themselves on the first mossy hillock which offered its couch. The rising sun had visited the spot, to dry up the dews, and exhale the damps that might endanger health; to open the violets, and expand the primroses that decked the green. The whole shade of the wood was collected behind them; and a beautiful, extensive, diversified landscape spread itself before them.

Theron, according to his usual manner, made many improving remarks on the prospect and its furniture. He traced the footsteps of an all-comprehending contrivance, and pointed out the strokes of inimitable skill. He observed the grand exertions of power, and the rich exuberance of goodness, most signally, most charmingly conspicuous through the whole.—Upon one circumstance he enlarged with a particular satisfaction.

Ther. See, Aspasio, how all is calculated to administer the highest delight to mankind. Those trees and hedges, which skirt the extremities of the landscape, stealing away from their real bulk, and lessening by gentle diminutions, appear like elegant pictures in miniature. Those which occupy the nearer situations are a set of noble images, swelling upon the eye, in full proportion, and in a variety of graceful

attitudes ; both of them ornamenting the several apartments of our common abode, with a mixture of delicacy and grandeur.

The blossoms that array the branches, the flowers that embroider the mead, address and entertain our eyes with every charm of beauty* ; whereas, to other creatures, they are destitute of all those attractives which result from a combination of the loveliest colours and most alluring forms. Yonder streams, that glide with smooth serenity along the valleys, glittering to the distant view like sheets of polished crystal, or soothing the attentive ear with the softness of aquatic murmurs, are no less exhilarating to the fancy than to the soil through which they pass. The huge enormous mountain, the steep and dizzy precipice, the pendent horrors of the craggy promontory, wild and tremendous as they are, furnish out an agreeable entertainment to the human mind, and please even while they terrify ; whereas the beasts take no other notice of those majestic deformities, than only to avoid the dangers they threaten.

Asp. How wonderfully do such considerations exalt our idea of the Creator's goodness, his very dis-

* Therefore, when the prophet describes the Christian church, adorned with all the " beauties of holiness," he borrows his imagery from these amiable objects : " Israel shall bud and blossom," Isa. xxvii. 6.—Nay, the very " wilderness," even the Gentile nations, being converted unto Christ, " shall blossom as a rose," Isa. xxxv. 1.—" I will be as the dew unto Israel ; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon," Hos. xiv. 5. What an elegant picture ! and what a comfortable promise !

tinguishing goodness to mankind ! And should they not proportionably endear that eternal Benefactor to our affections ? His ever-bountiful hand has scattered blessings, and with profuse liberality, among all the ranks of animated existence. But to us he exercises a beneficence of a very superior kind. We are treated as his peculiar favourites. We are admitted to scenes of delight, which none but ourselves are capable of relishing.

Ther. Another remark, though very obvious, is equally important : the destination of all those external things is no less advantageous than their formation is beautiful. The bloom, which engages the eye with its delicate hues, is cherishing the embryo fruit, and forming within its silken folds the rudiments of a future dessert. Those streams, which shine from afar like fluid silver, are much more valuable in their productions, and beneficial in their services, than they are amiable in their appearance. They distribute, as they roll along their winding banks, cleanliness to our houses, and fruitfulness to our lands. They nourish and at their own expense a never-failing supply of the finest fish. They visit our cities, and attend our wharfs, as so many public vehicles, ready to set out at all hours.

Those sheep, which give their udders to be drained by the busy frisking lambs, are fattening their flesh for our support ; and while they fill their own fleeces, are providing for our comfortable clothing. Yonder kine—some of which are browsing upon the tender herb, others, satiated with pasturage, ruminant under the shady covert, though conscious of no such design, are concocting, for our use, one of the softest, purest, healthiest liquors in the world. The bees that fly

humming about our seat, and pursue their work on the fragrant blossoms, are collecting balm and sweetness, to compose the richest of syrups ; which, though the produce of their toil, is intended for our good.

Nature, and her whole family, are our obsequious servants, our ever-active labourers. They bring the fruits of their united industry, and pour them into our lap, or deposit them in our store-rooms.

Asp. Who can ever sufficiently admire this immense benignity?—The supreme Disposer of events has commanded delight and profit to walk hand in hand through his ample creation ; making all things so perfectly pleasing, as if beauty was their only end ; yet all things so eminently serviceable, as if usefulness had been their sole design. And, as a most winning invitation to our gratitude, he has rendered man the centre, in which all the emanations of his beneficence, diffused through this terrestrial system, finally terminate.

ALL NATURE SPEAKS OF THE DEITY.

God, the infinitely great God, is in every place. Yet how few advert to his presence !—All nature exhibits him to their senses, yet perhaps he is not in any of their thoughts.

The sun, clothed in transcendent brightness, most illustriously displays his Maker's glory. The moon, though dressed in fainter beams, has lustre enough to show us the adorable Deity, and his marvellous perfections. The stars, fixed as they are at an immeasurable distance, and lessened almost to a point, come in with their evidence, and magnify their Creator to a gazing but unaffected world.

The air whispers his clemency in the gentle, the

refreshing gales of spring. If we take no notice of this soft persuasive address, the tone is elevated, the majesty of Jehovah sounds aloud in roaring winds and rending storms. Yet both expedients fail. Man is like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ears. He refuseth to hear the voice of the charmers, charm they never so sweetly, never so forcibly.

Each flower, arrayed in beauty, and breathing perfume, courts our affections for its infinitely amiable Author.—Not a bird that warbles, nor a brook that murmurs, but invites our praise, or chides our ingratitude. All the classes of fruits deposit their attestation on our palates, yet seldom reach our hearts. They give us a proof of the divine benignity; a proof as undeniable as it is pleasing, and too often as ineffectual also.

In short, the whole creation is a kind of magnificent embassy from its almighty Lord, deputed to proclaim his excellencies, and demand our homage. Yet who has not disregarded the former, and withheld the latter?—How few walk as seeing him that is invisible, or have fellowship with the Father of spirits? though to walk before him is our highest dignity, and to have fellowship with him is our only felicity.

DIALOGUE WRITING.

The dialogue form seems, on many considerations, a very eligible way of writing. Hereby the author gives an air both of dignity and of modesty to his sentiments. Of dignity; by delivering them from the mouths of persons in every respect superior to himself. Of modesty; because we no longer consider him in the raised, but invidious capacity of a teacher. Instead of calling us to his feet, and dictating his pre-

cepts, he gratifies our curiosity. He turns back a curtain, and admits us to some remarkable interviews, or interesting conferences. We overhear, by a kind of innocent or imaginary stealth, the debates which pass in the recesses of privacy, which are carried on with the most unreserved freedom of speech, and openness of heart; a circumstance which will apologize for some peculiarities that might otherwise be inconsistent with humility, or offensive to delicacy. Particularly it may obviate the disgust which generally, and indeed deservedly, attends the frequent intrusion of that ambitious and usurping monosyllable, *I*.

A DIARY OF FAULTS RECOMMENDED.

Compile a secret history of your heart and conduct. Take notice of the manner in which your time is spent, and of the strain which runs through your discourse; how often the former is lost in trifles, how often the latter evaporates in vanity. Attend to the principle from which your actions flow; whether from the steady habitual love of God, or from some rambling impulse, and a customary propensity to please yourself. Minute down your sins of omission; how frequently you neglect to glorify your Creator, to edify your fellow-creatures, and to improve yourself in knowledge and holiness. Observe the frame of your spirit in religious duties—with what reluctance they are undertaken, and with what indevotion performed; with how many wanderings of thought, and how much dulness of desire: how often, in the common affairs of life, you feel the inordinate sallies of passion, the workings of evil concupiscence, or the intrusion of foolish imaginations.

Register those secret faults, to which none but your own conscience is privy, and which none but the all-seeing eye discerns. Often review these interesting memoirs. Frequently contemplate yourself in this faithful mirror. An artist some time ago took a survey of your estate, drew the form, and measured the dimensions of each enclosure, pictured out every hedge, and scarce omitted a single tree that grew upon the premises. Act thus with your will, your understanding, your affections. These are your noble internal demesne, of which none but yourself can be a competent surveyor.

NEEDLESS DISSENT.

I am no advocate for implicit faith in any human determination or opinion. Should I see whole sects, or whole churches, in a glaring error, such as I can prove from Scripture to be palpably wrong, and of pernicious tendency, I would make no scruple to remonstrate, dissent, and enter my protest. But in a case, which Mr. Tomkins himself (page 2, line 19) allows to be of a dubious nature; where I have no positive proof from God's holy word that the practice is unlawful or improper; I cannot but apprehend, that it becomes a modest person, diffident of his own judgment, to acquiesce in the general, the long-continued usage of all the churches. This is urged by an inspired writer as a forcible motive for rejecting a practice; and why should not I admit it as a motive of weight for adhering to a practice? We have no such custom, neither the churches of God, (1 Cor. xi. 16,) was an apostolical argument. And in an instance where we are not precluded by any prohibition of Scripture, I think the reasoning is equally

conclusive if changed to the affirmative. We have such a custom, and the churches of God. Was I to settle my opinion, and adjust my conduct, with regard to such a point, I should be inclined to argue in the following manner: I cannot bring one text from the sacred writings which forbids the usage; and as it is unanimously practised by devout persons of almost every denomination, as it has been the received, the uninterrupted practice of the Christian church for more than a thousand years, who am I, that I should disturb the peace, or separate myself from the communion of the church, for a procedure which such multitudes of excellent persons maintain to be consonant, and which I cannot prove to be contrary to the sense of Scripture? Who am I, that I should fancy myself to have more of the mind of God than the whole united church of true believers, eminent saints, and illustrious martyrs?

SLEEPING AND WAKING DREAMS.

Reason now resigns her sedate office, and fancy, extravagant fancy, leads the mind through a maze of vanity. The head is crowded with false images, and tantalized with the most ridiculous misapprehensions of things. Some are expatiating amidst fairy fields, and gathering garlands of visionary bliss, while their bodies are stretched on a wisp of straw, and sheltered by the cobwebs of a barn. Others, quite insensible of their rooms of state, are mourning in a doleful dungeon, or struggling with the raging billows. Perhaps with hasty steps they climb the craggy cliff, and with real anxiety fly from the imaginary danger; or else, benumbed with sudden fear, and finding themselves unable to escape, they give up at once their hopes and

their efforts ; and, though reclined on a couch of ivory, are sinking all helpless and distressed in the furious whirlpool. So unaccountable are the vagaries of the brain, while sleep maintains its dominion over the limbs !

But is this the only season when absurd and incoherent irregularities play their magic on our minds ? Are there not those who dream even in their waking moments ? Some pride themselves in a notion of superior excellency, because the royal favour has annexed a few splendid titles to their names, or because the dying silk-worm has bequeathed her finest threads to cover their nakedness. Others congratulate their own signal happiness, because loads of golden lumber are amassed together in their coffers ; or promise themselves a most superlative felicity indeed, when some thousands more are added to the useless heap. Nor are there wanting others, who gape after substantial satisfaction from airy applause ; and flatter themselves with I know not what immortality, in the momentary buzz of renown. Are any of these a whit more reasonable in their opinions than the poor ragged wretch in his reveries, who, while snoring under a hedge, exults in the possession of his stately palace and sumptuous furniture ? If persons who are very vassals to their own domineering passions, and led captive by numberless temptations ; if these persons pique themselves with a conceit of their liberty, and fancy themselves the generous and gallant spirits of the age ; where is the difference between theirs and the madman's frenzy, who, though chained to the floor, is throned in thought, and wielding an imaginary sceptre ? In a word, as many as borrow their dignity from a plume of feathers, or the gaudy trap-

pings of fortune ; as many as send their souls to seek for bliss in the blandishments of sense, or in any thing short of the divine favour, and a well-grounded hope of the incorruptible inheritance ; what are they, but dreamers with their eyes open—delirious, though in health ?

Would you see their picture drawn to the very life, and the success of their schemes calculated with the utmost exactness ; cast your eye upon that fine representation exhibited by the prophet : “ It shall be even as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth ; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty : or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh ; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite,” Isa. xxix. 8. Such is the race, and such the prize, of all those candidates for honour and joy, who run wide from the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. They live in vanity, and die in woe. Awaken us, merciful Lord, from these noon-tide trances ! Awaken us, while conviction may turn to our advantage, and not serve only to increase our torment. O ! let our “ eyes be enlightened to discern the things that are excellent,” and no longer be imposed upon by fantastic appearances, which, however pompous they may seem, will prove more empty than the visions of the night, more transient than the dream that is forgotten.

DRESS.

One cannot forbear reflecting on the too prevailing humour of being fond and ostentatious of dress*.

* Mr. Addison has a fine remark on a female warrior celebrated by Virgil. He observes, that with all

What an abject and mistaken ambition is this ! How unworthy the dignity of immortal, and the wisdom of rational beings ! Especially, since these little produc-

her other great qualities, this little foible mingled itself ; because, as the poet relates, an intemperate fondness for a rich and splendid suit of armour betrayed her into ruin. In this circumstance our critic discovers a moral concealed ; this he admires as a neat, though oblique satire, on that trifling passion.—Spectator, Vol. I. No. 15. I would refer it to the judicious reader, whether there is not a beauty of the same kind, but touched with a more masterly hand, in the song of Deborah. Speaking of Sisera's mother, the sacred eucharistic ode represents her as anticipating, in her fond fancy, the victory of her son, and indulging the following soliloquy : “ Have they not sped ? have they not divided the prey ? to Sisera a prey of diverse colours ; a prey of diverse colours of needle-work ; of diverse colours of needle-work on both sides ; meet for the necks of them that take the spoil ? ” She takes no notice of the signal service which her hero would do to his country, by quelling so dangerous an insurrection. She never reflects on the present acclamations, the future advancement, and the eternal renown, which are the tribute usually paid to a conqueror's merit. She can conceive, it seems, nothing greater than to be clad in an embroidered vesture, and to trail along the ground a robe of the richest dyes. This is, in her imagination, the most lordly spoil he can win ; the most stately trophy he can erect. It is also observable, how she dwells upon the trivial circumstance, reiterating it again and again. It has so charmed her ignoble heart, so entirely en-

tions of the earth have indisputably the pre-eminence in such outward embellishments. Go, clothe thyself with purple and fine linen; trick thyself up in all the gay attire which the shuttle or the needle can furnish; yet know, to the mortification of thy vanity, that the native elegance of a common daisy eclipses all this elaborate finery. Nay, wert thou decked like some illustrious princess on her coronation day, in all the splendour of royal apparel; couldst thou equal even Solomon, in the height of his magnificence and glory; yet would the meanest among the flowery populace outshine thee; every discerning eye would give the preference to these beauties of the ground. Scorn, then, to borrow thy recommendations from a neat disposition of threads and a curious arrangement of colours. Assume a becoming greatness of temper; let thy endowments be of the immortal kind; study to be all-glorious within; be clothed with humility;

grossed her little views, that she can think of nothing else, speak of nothing else, and can hardly ever desist from the darling topic. Is not this a keen, though delicately couched censure, on that poor, contemptible, grovelling taste, which is enamoured with silken finery, and makes the attributes of a butterfly the idol of its affections?

How conspicuous is the elevated and magnificent spirit of that venerable mother in Israel, when viewed in comparison with the low, the despicable turn of this Canaanitish lady! Such strong and beautiful contrasts are, I think, some of the most striking excellencies of poetic painting; and in no book are they more frequently used, or expressed with greater life, than in the sacred volumes of inspiration.

wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*. To say all in a word, put on the Lord Jesus Christ; Rom. xiii. 14. Let his blood be sprinkled upon thy conscience, and it shall be whiter than the virgin snow; let his righteousness, like a spotless robe, adorn thy inner man, and thou shalt be amiable even in the most distinguishing eye of God. Let his blessed Spirit dwell in thy heart, and, under his sanctifying operations, thou shalt be made partaker of a divine nature.

These are real excellencies; truly noble accomplishments these. In this manner be arrayed, be beautified; and thou wilt not find a rival in the feathers of a peacock, or the foliation of a tulip. These will exalt thee far above the low pretensions of lace and embroidery; these will prepare thee to stand in the beatific presence, and to take thy seat among the angels of light.

DUELLING.

Theron. Our last conversation ended with a challenge. To decline or delay the acceptance of it, would look like cowardice in me, and be a piece of

* How beautifully does the prophet describe the furniture of a renewed and heavenly mind, under the similitude of a rich and complete suit of apparel! "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Isa. lxi. 10.

injustice to you, Aspasio. Therefore I am now ready to give you all the satisfaction which a gentleman can demand. Only, as the weather continues hazy, I believe my study must be the place of action.

Aspasio. A challenge, Theron!

Ther. What, sir! do you boggle? would you eat your words, and play the poltroon?

Asp. Perhaps I may have an inclination to follow the example of a brother hero, who ran away from the field of battle, just as his comrades were advancing to charge the enemy; and when called to an account for his behaviour, right worthily alleged, that his retreat proceeded, not from any timidity of mind, no, but from a concern for the public good; "for," quoth he, "if I had been knocked on the head to-day, how should I have been able to fight for my country to-morrow?"

You smile, Theron, at my doughty warrior, and his sage maxim. But, since you have glanced at a certain modish custom, give me leave very seriously to assure you, that if the affair was to be determined by sword and pistol, I should reckon such a conduct, a resolute refusal at least, not at all unmanly, but the truly wise and gallant behaviour. For surely it can never be an instance of wisdom, to hazard my life at the mere caprice of a turbulent ruffian, who is a stranger to all the principles of humanity and generosity, but a slave, an abandoned slave, to his own ungovernable passions. Surely it can never be an act of real bravery to expose my person, because some fool-hardy practitioner in the fencing-school is desperate enough to risk his! The gentleman, the true gentleman, should exert a becoming dignity of spirit,

and scorn to set his welfare on a level with that of an inconsiderate and barbarous bully*.

Ther. But honour, my *Aspasio*, honour is at stake. Better to lose our life, than forfeit our reputation. Better to be in a grave, than to be the jest of every coffee-house; and perhaps pointed at, as we pass the streets, for mean-spirited, sneaking, or, as the gentlemen of the sword so elegantly speak, white-livered animals.

Asp. Forfeit our reputation! Amongst whom, I beseech you?—A few rash and precipitate creatures; the pupils of *La Mancha's* knight; the sons of chimeras † and cruelty; whose applause is infamy, and their detraction the highest praise they can bestow. From every judicious and worthy person your conduct will be sure to gain approbation, and your character esteem. When *Cæsar* received a challenge

* *Aspasio* calls the person who gives the challenge a bully. And such, notwithstanding all the maxims of fantastical and false honour, he will certainly be found, when tried at the bar of reason or justice. For if the most impetuous, irrational, and brutal barbarity is allowed to constitute a bully, he has an indisputable title to the character, who, on account of a mere punctilio, or some slight affront, would destroy a life that might be of service to society, might be a blessing to various relatives, and is intimately connected with a blissful or miserable immortality.

† This kind of gentry are styled, in a book with which they have little or no acquaintance, but whose maxims will be had in reverence when their names are lost in oblivion, “the sons of bluster,” or “the children of noise,” *Jer.* *xlvi.* 45.

from Antony to engage him in single combat, he very calmly answered the bearer of the message: "If Antony is weary of life, tell him, there are other ways to death besides the point of my sword." Who ever deemed this an instance of cowardice? All ages have admired it as the act of a discreet and gallant man, who was sensible of his own importance, and knew how to treat the petulant and revengeful humour of a discontented adversary with its deserved contempt.

Barely to lose our life, is the smallest of those evils which attend this mischievous practice. It is pregnant with a long, an almost endless train of disastrous consequences, to parents, wives, children, friends, associates, and the community. It is an infallible expedient to be deprived of the favour of the infinite God, and to be excluded from the joys of his eternal kingdom. It is the sure way to become an object of abhorrence to the angels of light, and be made the laughing-stock of devils in their dungeons of darkness*. Shame, everlasting shame, shall be the reward of such gallantry, "the promotion of such fools," Prov. iii. 35.

Ther. With regard to this point, I am entirely of your opinion, Aspasio, however I may differ in other particulars.

* "Let me tell you with confidence" (says an excellent person, addressing himself to one of these unhappy desperadoes), "that all duels, or single combats, are murderous: blanch them over (how you list) with names of honour and honest pretences, their use is sinful, and their nature devilish." See the *Select Works of Bishop Hall*, folio, p. 526.

Asp. Say you so, Theron ! Would you then tamely submit to affronts, insults, and injuries ?

Ther. As to the trifling affronts of a peevish, incontinent tongue, I would treat them with a superior scorn. And when thus treated, they are sure to recoil, with the keenest edge and severest weight, upon the impotent malice which offers them. The wretch should see, that I could pity his misery, and smile at his folly. But as to injuries, the case is otherwise. Should any one assault my person, it is at his peril. He would find, and perhaps to his smart,

Et nos tela manu, ferrumque haud debile dextra
Spargimus, et nostro sequitur de vulnere sanguis.

VIRG.

Here the fundamental and everlasting law of self-preservation calls upon us to play the man. And I am sure, Christianity does not require us to yield our throats to the knife, or open our breasts to the dagger.

But to retire to deliberate, to sit down and indite a formal challenge, seems to me altogether as savage and iniquitous, as to assault on the highway. He that demands my money on the road, or extorts it by an incendiary letter, or decoys me into the snare by a forged and counterfeit note, is stigmatized for a villain, is abhorred by every person of integrity, and when detected is rewarded with a halter. Why should we reckon the headstrong bravo less injurious, who makes his attempt upon my very life, and thirsts with insatiable fury for my blood ?

Asp. He allows you a fair chance, it is said.

Ther. A chance ! Of what ? Either of falling a sacrifice to his rage, or of imbruing my hands in his

blood! which is neither more nor less than reducing me to a necessity of launching into damnation myself, or of transmitting a fellow-creature to eternal vengeance. And is this an extenuation? this a mitigating circumstance? It really proves the practice so inexorably wicked, that nothing can be pleaded in its defence. The very argument used to justify the horrid deed, inflames its guilt and aggravates its malignity.

It is a pity but the legislative authority would interpose for the suppression of such a flagrant wrong to society, and such a notorious violation of our benign religion. Why should not the laws declare it felony to make the first overture for a duel? since it is always more heinous, and frequently more pernicious; —is always murder in the intention, and frequently issues in double destruction; the one inflicted by the stab of violence, the other executed by the sword of justice.

Might it not, at least, be branded with some mark of public infamy, or subjected to a severe pecuniary mulct? so that a gentleman of spirit and temper might have it in his power to return the compliment of a challenging letter with some such answer:—

“ Sir,—However meanly you may think of your life, I set too high a value upon mine, to expose it as a mark for undisciplined and outrageous passions. Neither have I so totally renounced all that is humane, benevolent, or amiable, as to draw my sword for your destruction, because you have first been overcome by precipitate and unreasonable resentment. You have given me an opportunity of acting the gentleman and

the Christian. And this challenge I accept, as a note under your hand for five hundred pounds* ; which will very soon be demanded according to law, by, Sir, yours," &c.

THE EARTH MADE FOR MAN.

O ! the goodness, the exuberant goodness, of our God ? I cannot forbear celebrating it once more, before I pass to another consideration. How much should we think ourselves obliged to a generous friend, who should build a stately edifice † purely for

* Might not the refuser of a challenge be dignified with some honorary distinction, resembling the civic crown amongst the ancient Romans ; since, by his cool and temperate bravery, he saves one life from the sword, another from the halter ?—Was some honorary distinction, on the one hand, united to a pecuniary forfeiture on the other, I cannot but think they would prove an effectual method to check the progress of this destructive evil.

† I cannot persuade myself that the comparison is stretched beyond proper bounds when carried to this pitch. It is my steadfast opinion, that the world, at least this lower world, with its various appurtenances, was intended purely for man ; that it is appropriated to him ; and that he (in subordination to God's glory) is the end of its creation. Other animals, it is true, partake of the Creator's benefits ; but then they partake under the notion of man's domestics, or on the foot of retainers to him ; as creatures which bear some relation to his service, and some way or other contribute to his good. So that still he is the centre of the whole ; or, as our incomparable Milton, equally

our abode; but how greatly would the obligation be increased, if the hand that built should also furnish

master of poetry and divinity, expresses himself, "All things live for man." PAR. LOST, Book xi. ver. 161.

Mr. Pope, in his *Ethic Epistles*, is pleased to explode this tenet as the height of pride and a gross absurdity. For my part, I see no reason for such a charge. With all submission to so superior a genius, it seems very remote from pride, to be duly sensible of favours vouchsafed; to contemplate them in all the extent of their munificence, and acknowledge them accordingly. I should rather imagine, that to contract their size, when they are immensely large; to stint their number, when they are altogether innumerable; that such a procedure savours more of insensibility, than our hypothesis of presumption; and has more in it of ingratitude, than that of arrogance.

And how can it be deemed an absurdity to maintain that God gave us a world for our possession, when it is our duty to believe that he gave us his only Son for our propitiation. Sure it can be neither difficult nor extravagant to suppose that he designed the habitable globe, with its whole furniture, for our present use; since he withheld not his only child Jesus, but freely delivered him up for our final salvation.

Upon the whole I cannot but conclude, that the attempt of our famous poet is neither kind with regard to his fellow-creatures, nor grateful with regard to his Creator; neither is his scheme, in fact, true.—The attempt not kind, with regard to man; because it

it; and not only furnish it with all that is commodious and comfortable, but ornament it also with

robs him of one of the most delightful and ravishing contemplations imaginable. To consider the great Author of existence as having me in his eye when he formed universal nature; as contriving all things with an immediate view to the exigencies of my particular state; and making them all in such a manner as might be most conducive to my particular advantage; this must occasion the strongest satisfactions, whenever I cast a glance on the objects that surround me.—Not grateful with regard to God; because it has the most direct tendency to diminish our sense of his kindness, and by that means to throw a damp upon our gratitude. It teaches us to look upon ourselves as almost lost among a crowd of other beings, or regarded only with an occasional and incidental beneficence; which must certainly weaken the disposition, and indeed slacken the ties, to the most adoring thankfulness.—To which, I apprehend, we may justly add, neither is the scheme, in fact, true; for not to mention what might be urged from the sure word of revelation, this one argument appears sufficiently conclusive. The world began with man, the world must cease with man; consequently, the grand use, the principal end of the world is, to subserve the interests of man. It is on all sides agreed, that the edifice was erected when man was to be furnished with an habitation; and that it will be demolished when man has no further need of its accommodations. When he enters into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, “The earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.” From which it

whatever is splendid and delightful! This has our most indulgent Creator done, in a manner infinitely surpassing all we could wish or imagine.

A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION INDISPENSABLE.

What a living picture is here of the beneficial effects of industry! By industry and cultivation this neat spot is an image of Eden. Here is all that can entertain the eye, or regale the smell. Whereas without cultivation, this sweet garden had been a desolate wilderness; vile thistles had made it loathsome, and tangling briars inaccessible. Without cultivation, it might have been a nest for serpents, and the horrid haunt of venomous creatures. But the spade and pruning knife, in the hand of industry, have improved it into a sort of terrestrial paradise.

How naturally does this lead our contemplation to the advantages which flow from a virtuous education, and the miseries which ensue from the neglect of it.

seems a very obvious and fair deduction, That man is the final cause of this inferior creation.

So that I think my readers and myself privileged (not to say, on the principles of gratitude, obliged) to use those lovely lines of our author, with a propriety and truth equal to their elegance and beauty;

For me kind nature wakes her genial power,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower!
Annual for me, the grape, the rose, renew
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs.

ETH. EP. i. 129.

The mind, without early instruction, will, in all probability, become like the vineyard of the sluggard. If left to the propensities of its own depraved will, what can we expect but the most luxuriant growth of unruly appetites, which in time will break forth in all manner of scandalous irregularities? What, but that anger, like a prickly thorn, arm the temper with an untractable moroseness; peevishness, like a stinging nettle, render the conversation irksome and forbidding; avarice, like some choaking weed, teach the fingers to gripe, and the hands to oppress; revenge, like some poisonous plant replete with baneful juices, rankle in the breast, and meditate mischief to its neighbour; while unbridled lusts, like swarms of noisome insects, taint each rising thought, and render "every imagination of the heart only evil continually?" Such are the usual products of savage nature! such the furniture of the uncultivated soul!

Whereas, let the mind be put under the "nurture and admonition of the Lord;" let holy discipline clear the soil; let sacred instruction sow it with the best seed; let skill and vigilance dress the rising shoots, direct the young ideas how to spread, the wayward passions how to move; then, what a different state of the inner man will quickly take place—Charity will breathe her sweets, and Hope expand her blossoms; the personal virtues display their graces, and the social ones their fruits*; the sentiments be-

* This transformation of the heart, and renewal of the life, are represented in Scripture by similitudes very nearly allied to the images used above: "God, by his sanctifying Spirit, will make the soul as a watered garden." Under the operation of this divine

come generous, the carriage endearing, the life honourable and useful*.

O that governors of families, and masters of schools, would watch with a conscientious solicitude over the morals of their tender charge! What pity it is that the advancing generations should lose these invaluable endowments, through any supineness in their instructors! See with what assiduity the curious florist attends his little nursery: he visits them early and late; furnishes them with the properest mould; supplies them with seasonable moisture; guards them from the ravages of insects; screens them from the injuries of the weather; marks their springing buds; observes them attentively through their whole progress; and never intermits his anxiety till he beholds them blown into full perfection. And shall a range of painted leaves, which flourish to-day and to-morrow fall to the ground, shall these be tended with more zealous application than the exalted faculties of an immortal soul?

* * * * *

principle, "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." Wherever it exerts the refining and ennobling energy, "instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir tree; and, instead of the brier, the myrtle tree," *Jer. xxxi. 12. Isa. xxxv. 1; lv. 13.*

* *A teneris assuescere tanti est!—VIRG.*

The principles we imbibe, and the habits we contract, in our early years, are not matters of small moment, but of the utmost consequence imaginable. They not only give a transient or superficial tincture to our first appearance in life, but most commonly stamp the form of our whole future conduct, and even of our eternal state.

Let parents be convinced how highly it concerns them to cultivate the morals, and secure the immortal interests of their children. If you really love the offspring of your own bodies, if your bowels yearn over those amiable pledges of conjugal endearment, spare no pains, give all diligence, I entreat you, to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Then may you have joy in their life, or consolation in their death. If their span is prolonged, their unblamable and useful conduct will be the staff of your age, and a balm for declining nature. Or, if the number of their years be cut off in the midst, you may commit their remains to the dust, with much the same comfortable expectations, and with infinitely more exalted views, than you send the survivors to places of genteel education. You may commit them to the dust with cheering hopes of receiving them again to your arms, inexpressibly improved in every noble and endearing accomplishment.

It is certainly a severe trial, and much more afflictive than I am able to imagine, to resign a lovely blooming creature, sprung from your own loins, to the gloomy recesses of corruption. Thus to resign him, after having been long dandled upon your knees, united to your affections by a thousand ties of tenderness, and now both become the delight of your eyes and the support of your family; to have such a one torn from your bosom, and thrown into darkness, doubtless it must be like a dagger in your hearts. But, O! how much more cutting to you, and confounding to the child, to have the soul separated from God; and, for shameful ignorance or early impiety, consigned over to places of eternal torment! How

would it aggravate your distress, and add a distracting emphasis on all your sighs, if you should follow the pale corpse with these bitter reflections: "This dear creature, though long ago capable of knowing good from evil, is gone out of the world before it had learned the great design of coming into it. A short-lived momentary existence it received from me; but no good instructions, no holy admonitions, nothing to further its well-being in that everlasting state upon which it is now entered. The poor body is consigned to the coffin, and carried out to consume away in the cold and silent grave: and what reason have I to suppose that the precious soul is in a better condition? May I not justly fear, that, sentenced by the righteous Judge, it is going, or gone away, into the pains of endless punishment! Perhaps, while I am bewailing its untimely departure, it may be cursing, in outer darkness, that ever-to-be-deplored, that most calamitous day, when it was born of such a careless ungodly parent as I have been."

Nothing, I think, but the gnawings of that worm which never dies, can equal the anguish of these self-condemning thoughts. The tortures of a rack must be an easy suffering, compared with the stings and horror of such a remorse. How earnestly do I wish, that as many as are intrusted with the management of children, would take timely care to prevent these intolerable scourges of conscience, by endeavouring to conduct their minds into an early knowledge of Christ, and a cordial love of his truth!

ON THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF
DAUGHTERS.

Prov. xxii. 6.—“ Train up a child in the way *she* should go, and when *she* is old, *she* will not depart from it.”

It has long been a prevailing report, that, among persons of education and distinction, true religion is very rare. This, I would hope, is an invidious rumour, rather than a true representation of the case. May it not be an artifice of the grand enemy, calculated to bring the best and noblest of causes into disrepute, as though politeness and piety were inconsistent, as though grace and good breeding were irreconcilable? Is then the faith of Christ quite fatal to refined manners, as the rod of Moses was to the counterfeit miracles of the magicians? No; it is rather like the influence of the sanctuary on the rod of Aaron; which, while it remained at a distance from the tabernacle, was a dry, sapless, and barren stick; but, when deposited before the ark, was quickened into vegetable life, was adorned with a milk-white bloom, and enriched with full-grown fruit; or, as the sacred historian expresses this surprising fact, “ It brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds,” Numb. xvii. 8.

I find upon the list of saints the most renowned kings and victorious generals, the ablest politicians and the greatest philosophers; men that have bid the sun stand still, and prolong the departing day; have laid an embargo upon darkness, and protracted the shades of night; have commanded the ground to cleave asunder, and transmit their presumptuous foes

to a strange and inevitable destruction ; have divided the impetuous waves, and led their followers to safety and to conquest through the depths of the sea ; men who have walked in the burning fiery furnace as under the shelter of an embowering arbour ; and sat in the lion's den, amidst a herd of hungry monsters, with as much serenity and as much security as amidst a circle of bosom friends.

I myself have known various persons admired for their accomplished behaviour, and revered for their exalted station, who have thought it their highest honour to be servants of Jesus Christ. My excellent friend Camillus, at whose house I now reside, is one of the number. I cannot refrain from giving a portrait of Camillus, or rather, of a few of his most distinguishing features ; for, to paint him in full proportion, as he daily appears in all the mild, the benign majesty of domestic authority, parental government, and Christian zeal ; to do this would require a much abler hand than mine.

Camillus, not long ago, entertained in his house a young clergyman, who was always treated with a respect suitable to the dignity of his office and the piety of his behaviour. Having lately presented the worthy ecclesiastic to a living, and always requiring residence on the benefice, he is now destitute of a chaplain. Remembering, however, that all Christians are spiritual priests, he thinks it no dishonour to have an immediate and personal audience with the King of heaven, nor acting at all out of character to represent the wants of his household with his own mouth at the throne of grace.

Before supper is introduced, the evening incense ascends. This, rather than a later hour, is pitched

upon, that the little congregation may join in the sacred service with a lively devotion. After a plentiful meal, when the limbs are weary, people, even though kneeling, and in the presence of God, are more inclined to nod than to pour out their souls; are very, very apt to mistake the cushion for a pillow. No servant is allowed to be absent, one only excepted, whose presence in the kitchen is absolutely necessary. Acquainted with their master's resolution, they are careful so to manage their affairs, and despatch their business, that no avoidable obstacle may intervene to detain them from the stated worship.

When all are assembled, without either tumultuous disorder in their approach, or a slovenly negligence in their apparel, a chapter is read. Camillus makes the choice. He imagines it is not so useful for his family, whose memories are weak, and their capacities scanty, to read the lesson for the day. He has, therefore, selected some of the most instructive and animating portions of Scripture; and judges it advisable to peruse these again and again, rather than to go regularly through the whole inspired writings. The servants take it by turns to read, which improves them in the practice, and keeps them awake. If any of them discover a disposition to sleep, to him the office is sure to be assigned.

When the chapter is finished, Camillus singles out some one verse, of very weighty and edifying import, which, for the space of five or six minutes, he explains, applies, and affectionately urges upon their consciences. This done, with great seriousness and profound reverence, he offers up evening prayers. His prayers consist of short sentences, and the whole is performed in a little time. Every part is pronounced

with that deliberate slowness, and solemn accent, which command attention and create awe. He makes a very perceivable pause at the close of each petition, that every one may have leisure to add, in silence, a hearty Amen; and to recollect the merits of that blessed Redeemer, which render every thanksgiving acceptable, and every supplication successful.

In the morning, before breakfast, the worship of the living God is renewed. At this juncture, Camillus omits the chapter, but requires one of his domestics to repeat the verse on which he enlarged the preceding night. None knows which shall be called to this task; therefore every one is obliged to be properly prepared. He throws the substance of his exhortation into a few searching and interesting questions, which he addresses to one of his children or servants; for in this respect no difference is made. All are equally enjoined to remember, all are equally accountable for what they hear. Sometimes he encourages those whose answers show that they have given diligent heed to his instructions. Sometimes he puts on an air of severity, mixed with tenderness, and reproves the notoriously negligent. Always he re-inculcates the principal points, charging them to retain the doctrines in their memory, and revolve them in their thoughts, while they are pursuing their respective business. These doctrines are the seed of faith, the root of godliness. Unless these be lodged in the mind, and operate on the heart, he never expects to have his domestics commence true believers or real Christians; no more than the husbandman can reasonably expect a crop in harvest without sowing his field, or the florist promise himself a blow of tulips without planting his parterre.

I have given a glimpse of Camillus at the head of his family : let me now show my favourite in another attitude. Camillus is convinced that no trust is of superior or of equal importance to the tuitionary cultivation of an immortal soul. As Providence has blessed him with two fine daughters, their present and future happiness is the reigning object of his care. He has no interest so much at heart as to give them a truly refined education ;—such as may render them an ornament and a blessing to society, while they pass the time of their sojourning here below ; and may train them up for a state of everlasting bliss, when the world, and its transitory scenes, shall be no more.

Camillus never could persuade himself to admire the maxims of prudence said to be gathered from the extravagant rant of our tragedies ; and less is his esteem for those modest dispositions which people pretend to imbibe from the luscious gallantries of comedy. For which reason, he has no impatient desire to secure for Miss Mitissa and Miss Serena a place in the front-box. However, as we are apt immoderately to covet what is absolutely forbidden, he has himself attended them once or twice to the theatrical entertainments and public diversions ; thinking it much the safest method, that their curiosity should be gratified under his own inspection ; and hoping to make them sensible how much they endanger their virtue, who too often frequent them ; how shamefully they debase their affections, who are passionately fond of them ; and what mere phantoms they follow, who seek for satisfaction in such delusory delights.

They learn to dance, in order to acquire a genteel

air, and a graceful demeanour ; not to shine at a ball, or win the worthless admiration of fops. He is content to have them unacquainted with the wild and romantic fables of heathen poetry ; nor is under any painful apprehensions of damping the sprightliness of their temper, though they have no taste for the chimerical adventures of our romances, and are strangers to the loose intrigues of our novels, being fully persuaded that there is as much sound sense as smartness of thought in that celebrated saying,

Retire and read your Bible, to be gay :

There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace !

YOUNG.

He has introduced them to the knowledge of history, and its instructive facts. They have a tolerable idea of the four universal monarchies, so eminent for their great events, and so circumstantially foretold in Scripture. They have been led through the most remarkable transactions of our own country, and are pretty well acquainted with the present state of Europe. They have, all along, been taught to observe the wonderful revolutions of empires, and the adorable procedure of Providence, that they may discern how “ the fashion of this world passeth away,” 1 Cor. vii. 31 ; and how “ happy are the people,” how happy the persons, “ who have the Lord for their God.” They have been taught to observe the honourable success that has usually attended the practice of integrity, guided by Prudence ; together with the scandal and ruin which have always pursued Folly in her senseless rambles, and dogged Vice to her horrid haunts ; that they may see the rocks on which some

have split, and avoid the destructive track; see the road which has conducted others to the haven of happiness, and steer the same auspicious course.

They have been initiated in geography, and understand the several divisions of the globe, the extent of its principal kingdoms, and the manners of their various inhabitants. They will tell you the peculiar commodities which each climate produces; whence comes the tea that furnishes their breakfast, and whence the sugar that renders it palatable; what mountains supply them with wines, and what islands send them their spices; in what groves the silkworms spin the materials for their clothes; and what mines supply them with the diamonds that sparkle in their ear-rings. A screen, covered with a set of coloured maps, and a custom of referring from the public papers to those beautiful draughts, has rendered the acquisition of this knowledge a diversion rather than a task, has enticed them into a valuable branch of science, under the inviting disguise of amusement. This serves to enlarge their apprehensions of things, gives them magnificent thoughts of the great Creator, and may help to suppress that silly self-admiration, which prompts so many pretty idols to fancy themselves the only considerable creatures under heaven.

They spell to perfection, and have obtained this art by a sort of play, rather than by laborious application. Whenever they asked any little gratification, it has been their papa's custom to make them spell the word; which if they performed aright, they seldom failed to succeed in their request. They are mistresses of the needle; and the youngest, whose genius inclines that way, is expert in using the pencil.

Music is their recreation, not their business. The eldest, to a skilful singer, adds a melodious and well regulated voice. She often entertains me with singing an anthem to her harpsichord. Entertains, did I say? she really edifies me. These truly excellent performances exalt the desires, and compose the affections. They inspire such a serenity of delight as leaves neither a sting in the conscience, nor a stain on the imagination. Methinks they bring us a little antepast of heaven, and tune our souls for its harmonious joys.

Thoroughly versed in the most practical parts of arithmetic, they have each their week wherein to be intrusted with the management of a sum of money. This they disburse as circumstances require, for the smaller necessaries of the family. Of this they keep an exact account, and make a regular entry of each particular in their day-book. Not long ago a tenant of inferior rank came to Camillus with his rent. Instead of receiving it himself, he referred him to Miss Serena. You would have been delighted to observe the behaviour of our little landlady on this occasion, the engaging condescension with which she addressed the honest rustic, the tender good-nature with which she inquired after my dame and the family at home, the ready dexterity with which she wrote and subscribed a proper receipt; and, above all, her amiable generosity in returning half-a-crown, to buy a copy-book for his eldest son, "who," he said, "was just going into joining-hand; but, he feared, would never come to spell or write half so well as her ladyship."

Though Camillus is careful to ground them sometimes in the rules of economy, he is equally careful to cultivate a spirit of discreet beneficence. A few

days ago, when my friend and his lady were abroad, Miss Mitissa was informed of a poor woman in the parish just brought to bed, after a long and hard labour; who, being unhappily married to a sot of a fellow, was, at a time when the choicest comforts are scarcely sufficient, destitute of the meanest conveniences. Upon hearing the calamitous case, she immediately despatched a servant with a crown from her weekly stock; part to buy for the afflicted creature some present accommodations, and part to defray the expenses at such a juncture unavoidable; but gave a strict charge that the whole should be employed for the relief of the distressed mother and her helpless infant, none of it fingered or enjoyed by the worthless drone her husband. When Camillus returned, he was so pleased with this seasonable and well-judged charity, that, besides his commendation and caresses, he farther rewarded our considerate matron-like benefactress, by making her a present of Clarissa. For he always contrives to make what tends to their improvement the matter of their reward. If they have committed a fault, they are forbid the privilege of using their maps. If they have behaved in a becoming manner, their recompense is, not a piece of money, or a paper of sweet-meats, but some new instruction on the globe, some new lesson on the harpsichord, which may at once delight and improve them.

To prevent a haughty carriage, and to worm out all inordinate self-love, he teaches them to consider their neighbours as members of the same universal family, and children of the same almighty Father. However poor in their circumstances, or mean in their aspect, they are the objects of God's infinitely tender

regards ; of that God, who has given his own Son to suffer death for their pardon, and has prepared a heaven of endless bliss for their final reception. For which reason they should despise none, but honour all ; should be as ready to do them good, as the hand is ready to soothe the eye when it smarts, or ease the head when it aches. One afternoon, when he was going to treat them with an orange, he bid each of them bring a fine toy, lately received for a present. It was made in the shape of a knife, the handle of ivory, and inlaid with the gayest colours ; the blade of glass, most dazzlingly bright, but without an edge. Cut the orange in two, said their papa. When they both tried with their pretty knives, and, to their no small mortification, both failed, he furnished them with another of more ordinary appearance, but tolerably sharp. With this they easily pierced the rind, and came at the delicious juice. “ Who now,” said Camillus, “ would not prefer one such serviceable though plain utensil, to a hundred of those glittering but worthless trifles ? And you, my dear children, if you have no other recommendations than a showy person and the trappings of dress, you will be as contemptible in your generation as that insignificant bauble. But if it is the desire of your hearts, and the endeavour of your lives, to be extensively useful, you will gain, and, what is better, you will deserve, respect ; your names will be precious, and your memories blessed.”

With equal watchfulness he discountenances all those acts of petulant barbarity which children are so apt to exercise on the reptile creation. He will allow no court of inquisition to be erected within his house ; no, not upon the most despicable, or even the noxious

animals. The very nuisances that are endued with life, he thinks should be despatched, not with a lingering butchery, but with a merciful expedition. To rend in pieces a poor fly, and feast their eyes with the mangled limbs, shivering and convulsed in the pangs of death; to impale a wretched insect on the needle or the bodkin; and, what is still more shocking, to take pleasure in hearing its passionate moan, and seeing its agonizing struggles; such practices he absolutely forbids, as insufferable violations of nature's law, such as tend to extinguish the soft emotions of pity, and inure the mind to a habit of inhumanity. He often informs his lovely pupils, that every living creature is sensible of pain, that none can be abused in this cruel manner without suffering very exquisite misery. To turn their torments into pastime, and make sport with their anguish, is a rigour more than tyrannical, worse than brutal; is the very reverse of that benign Providence, whose "tender mercies are over all his works."

He proposes to give them a taste of natural philosophy, and to accommodate them with the best microscopes; that the use of these instruments, and a spice of that knowledge, may inspire them with an early admiration of nature's works, and with the deepest veneration of nature's almighty Author. Camillus has no design to finish a couple of female philosophers, or to divert their attention from those domestic arts which are the truest accomplishments of the sex; yet neither would he have his daughters debarred from that rational and exalted delight, which is to be found in contemplating the curiosities of the great Creator's cabinet. Why may they not, without departing from their own, or encroaching on the mas-

culine character, why may they not be acquainted with the accurately nice structure of an animal, or with the process and effects of vegetation? Why may they not learn the admirable operations of the air, or the wonderful properties of the water? have some general notion of the immense magnitudes, the prodigious distances, and the still more amazing revolutions of the heavenly orbs? He apprehends it very practicable to conduct an entertainment with dignity, and order a family with propriety, even while they retain some tolerable idea of those magnificent laws which regulate the system of the universe.

The microscope, whenever they are inclined to amuse themselves, will show them a profusion of splendid ornaments in some of the most common and contemptible objects. It will show them gold and embroidery, diamonds and pearl, azure, green, and vermilion, where unassisted eyes behold nothing but provocatives of their abhorrence. This instrument will show them the brightest varnish, and the most curious carving, even in the minutest scraps of existence. Far more surprising than the magic feats of the most dexterous juggler, it will treat their sight, not with delusive, but with real wonders. A huge elephant shall stalk where a puny mite was wont to crawl. Blood shall bound from the beating heart, and eyes sparkle with a lively lustre—limbs shall play the most sprightly motions, or stand composed in the most graceful attitudes—where nothing ordinarily appeared, but a confused speck of animated matter. A tincture of philosophy will be the cosmetic of nature, will render all her scenes lovely, and all her apartments a theatre of diversion; diversions infinitely superior to those dangerous delights which

are so apt to inveigle the affections, and debauch the minds of young people. When philosophy lends her optics, an unclouded morning, beautiful with the rising sun—a clear night, brilliant with innumerable stars, will be a more pleasing spectacle than the gaudiest illuminations of the assembly-room. The melody of birds, and the murmur of fountains, the humming insect, and the sighing gale, will be a higher gratification than the finest airs of an opera. A field covered with corn, or a meadow besprinkled with daisies, a marsh planted with osiers, or a mountain shaded with oaks, will yield a far more agreeable prospect than the most pompous scenes that decorate the stage. Should clouds overcast the heavens, or winter disrobe the flowers, an inquiry into the causes of these grand vicissitudes will more than compensate the transitory loss. A discovery of the divine wisdom and divine goodness, in these seemingly disastrous changes, will impart gaiety to the most gloomy sky, and make the most unornamented seasons smile.

It is for want of such truly elegant and satisfactory amusements, that so many ladies of the first distinction and finest genius have no proper employ for their delicate capacities, but lose their happiness in flights of caprice or fits of the vapours; lose their time in the most insipid chat, or the most whimsical vagaries; while thought is a burden, and reflection is a drudgery, solitude fills them with horror, and a serious discourse makes them melancholy.

Above all, Camillus is most earnestly desirous to have his tender charge grounded in the principles, and actuated with the spirit of Christianity. No scheme, he is thoroughly persuaded, was ever so wisely calculated to sweeten their tempers, to exalt their affections,

and form them to felicity either in this world or another. It is therefore his daily endeavour, by the most easy and endearing methods of instruction, to fill their minds with the knowledge of those heavenly doctrines, and win their hearts to the love of that invaluable book in which they are delineated. He longs to have a sense of God Almighty's goodness impressed on their souls. From this source, under the influences of the sanctifying Spirit, he would derive all the graces and all the duties of godliness. With this view he speaks of the divine Majesty not only as supereminently great, but as most transcendently possessed of every delightful, every charming excellence. He represents all the comforts they enjoy, and every blessing they receive, as the gifts of his bountiful hand, and as an earnest of unspeakably richer favours. He often, often reminds them, that whatever their heavenly Father commands, forbids, inflicts, proceeds from his overflowing kindness, and is intended for their eternal good, if, by these expedients, he may awaken in their minds an habitual gratitude to their everlasting Benefactor. The actings of which noble principle are not only fruitful in every good work, but productive of the truest satisfaction; somewhat like the fragrant steams of consecrated incense, which, while they honoured the great object of worship, regaled with their pleasing perfumes the devout worshipper.

Nothing is more displeasing to Camillus than the fond flatteries which their injudicious admirers bestow on their shape and their complexion, the gracefulness of their carriage, and the vivacity of their wit. He would fain make them sensible that these embellishments are of the lowest value and most fading

nature; that, if they render their possessors vain and self-conceited, they are far greater blemishes than a hump on the back, a wen on the neck, or stuttering in the speech. He would have them thoroughly convinced, that notwithstanding all their silks, diamonds, and other marks of their superior circumstances, they are ignorant, guilty, impotent creatures; blind to truths of the last importance, deserving the vengeance of eternal fire, and unable of themselves to think a good thought; that from such convictions they may perceive their absolute need of a Saviour, a Saviour in all his offices; as a prophet to teach them heavenly wisdom; as a priest to atone for all their many, many sins; as a king to subdue their iniquities, write his laws in their hearts, and make them, in all their conversation, holy.

In short, the point he chiefly labours is, to work in their hearts a deep, an abiding sense, that God is their supreme, their only good; that the blessed Jesus is the rock of their hopes, and the fountain of their salvation; that all their dependence for acquiring the beauties of holiness, and tasting the joys of the sublimest virtue, is to be placed on the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Amidst all these efforts of his own, he never forgets, never fails to plead that precious promise of the unchangeable Jehovah, "I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring; and they shall grow up," in knowledge and in grace, "as willows by the water-courses," Isaiah xlv. 3, 4.

A lady of brilliant parts, but no very extraordinary piety, told Camillus that he would spoil the pretty dears, would extinguish that decent pride, and fondness for pleasure, which are shining qualifications in

an accomplished young lady, which give her an elevation of sentiment, and a delicacy of taste, greatly superior to the ignoble vulgar. 'To whom he replied, "Far from extirpating their passions, I only attempt to turn them into a right channel, and direct them to the worthiest objects. Willing I am that they should have a decent ambition, an ambition not to catch the giddy coxcomb's eye, or be the hackneyed toats of rakes, but to please their parents, to make a husband happy, and to promote the glory of God. They may entertain a fondness for pleasure, but such pleasure as will ennoble their souls, afford them substantial satisfaction, and prepare them for the fruition of immortal bliss. Let them be covetous also, if you please, madam, but covetous of redeeming their time, and of gaining intellectual improvement; covetous of those riches which no moth can corrupt, nor thief steal—which neither time nor death destroy."

In all these instances of parental solicitude, his beloved Amelia takes her constant, her willing share; contributes her advice in every plan that is concerted, and her hearty concurrence in every expedient that is executed; every expedient for polishing the human jewel*, and making their manners as faultless as their forms. May the God of infinite goodness, the sacred source of all perfection, prosper their endeavours! that, as the young ladies are adorned in their persons with native beauty, they may be enriched in their understandings with refined knowledge, and dignified in

- * Delightful task ! to rear the tender thought,
 To teach the young idea how to shoot,
 . And pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind.

THOMSON.

their souls with the spirit of the blessed Jesus. Then, surely, more amiable objects the eye of man cannot behold; more desirable partners the heart of man cannot wish.

ETERNITY.

O eternity! eternity! how are our boldest, our strongest thoughts lost and overwhelmed in thee! Who can set land-marks to limit thy dimensions, or find plummets to fathom thy depths! Arithmeticians have figures to compute all the progressions of time; astronomers have instruments to calculate the distances of the planets; but what numbers can state, what lines can gauge, the lengths and depths of eternity! "It is higher than heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, broader than the sea," Job xi. 8, 9.

Mysterious, mighty existence! A sum not to be lessened by the largest deductions; an extent not to be contracted by all possible diminutions. None can truly say, after the most prodigious waste of ages, "So much of eternity is gone." For, when millions of centuries are elapsed, it is but just commencing; and when millions more have run their ample round, it will be no nearer ending. Yea, when ages, numerous as the bloom of spring, increased by the herbage of summer, both augmented by the leaves of autumn, and all multiplied by the drops of rain which drown the winter; when these, and ten thousand times ten thousand more—more than can be represented by any similitude, or imagined by any conception—when all these are revolved and finished, eternity, vast, boundless, amazing eternity, will only be beginning!

What a pleasing, yet awful thought is this ! full of delight, and full of dread. O may it alarm our fears, quicken our hopes, and animate all our endeavours ! Since we are soon to launch into this endless and inconceivable state, let us give all diligence to secure our entrance into bliss. Now let us give all diligence, because there is no alteration in the scenes of futurity. The wheel never turns ; all is steadfast and immoveable beyond the grave. Whether we are then seated on the throne, or stretched on the rack, a seal will be set to our condition, by the hand of everlasting mercy or inflexible justice. The saints always rejoice amid the smiles of heaven : their harps are perpetually tuned ; their triumphs admit of no interruption. The ruin of the wicked is irremediable : the fatal sentence, once passed, is never to be repealed—No hope of exchanging their doleful habitations ; but all things bear the same dismal aspect for ever and ever.

AN EVENING MEDITATION.

At evening he went, like the patriarch of old, “ into the field to meditate,” Gen. xxiv. 63 ; amidst the calm of nature to meditate on the grace of the gospel. The sky was peculiarly beautiful, and perfectly clear ; only where the fine indigo received an agreeable heightening by a few thin and scattered clouds, which imbibed the solar rays, and looked like pensile fleeces of purest wool. All things appeared with so mild, so majestic, so charming an aspect, that, intent as he was upon a different subject, he could not but indulge the following soliloquy.

“ How delightful are the scenes of rural nature ! especially to the philosophic eye, and contemplative

mind. I cannot wonder that persons in high life are so fond of retiring from a conspicuous and exalted station, to the covert of a shady grove, or the margin of a cooling stream ; are so desirous of quitting the smoky town and noisy street, in order to breathe purer air, and survey the wonders of creation, in the silent, the serene, the peaceful villa.

“ It is true, in the country there are none of the modish, I had almost said, meretricious ornaments of that false politeness, which refines people out of their veracity ; but an easy simplicity of manners, with an unaffected sincerity of mind. Here the solemn farce of ceremony is seldom brought into play, and the pleasing delusions of compliment have no place. But the brow is the real index of the temper, and speech the genuine interpreter of the heart.

“ In the country, I acknowledge, we are seldom invited to see the mimic attempts of human art : But we everywhere behold the grand and masterly exertions of divine power. No theatre erects its narrow stage, surrounds it with puny rows of ascending seats, or adorns it with a shifting series of gorgeous scenery : But fields extend their ample area, at first lightly clad with a scarf of springing green, then deeply planted with an arrangement of spindling stalks ; as a few more weeks advance, covered with a profusion of bearded or husky grain ; at last, richly laden with a harvest of yellow plenty.

“ Meadows disclose their beautiful bosom, yield a soft and fertile lap for the luxuriant herbage, and suckle myriads of the fairest, gayest flowers ; which, without any vain ostentation, or expensive finery, outvie each other in all the elegance of dress. Groves of various leaf, arrayed in freshest verdure, and liberal

of their reviving shade, rise in amiable, in noble prospect all around. Drove of sturdy oxen, strong for labour, or fat for the shambles ; herds of sleeky kine, with milk in their udders, and violets in their nostrils ; flocks of well-fleeced sheep, with their snowy lambkins frisking at their side—these compose the living machinery. Boundless tracts of bending azure, varnished with inimitable delicacy, and hung with starry lamps or irradiated with solar lustre, form the stately ceiling ; while the early breezes, and the evening gales, charged with no unwholesome vapours, breeding no pestilential taint, but fanning the humid buds, and waving their odoriferous wings, dispense a thousand sweets, mingled with the most sovereign supports of health. And is not this school of industry, this magazine of plenty, incomparably more delightful, as well as infinitely less dangerous, than those gaudy temples of profuseness and debauchery, where sin and ruin wear the mask of pleasure, where Belial is daily or nightly worshipped with what his votaries call modish recreation, and genteel amusement ?

Here indeed is no tuneful voice to melt in strains of amorous anguish, and transfuse the sickening fondness to the hearer's breast : No skilful artist, to inform the lute with musical enchantment, to strike infectious melody from the viol, and soothe away the resolution and activity of virtue in wanton desires or voluptuous indolence. But the plains bleat, the mountains low, and the hollow circling rocks echo with the universal song. Every valley re-murmurs to the fall of silver fountains, or the liquid lapse of gurgling rills. Birds, musicians ever beauteous, ever gay, perched on a thousand boughs, play a thousand sprightly and harmonious airs.

“ Charmed, therefore, with the finest views, lulled with the softest sounds, and treated with the richest odours, what can be wanting to complete the delight? Here is every entertainment for the eye, the most refined gratifications for the ear, and a perpetual banquet for the smell, without any insidious decoy for the integrity of our conduct, or even for the purity of our fancy.

“ O ye blooming walks and flowery lawns, surrounded with dewy landscapes! how often have patriots and heroes laid aside the burden of power, and stole away from the glare of grandeur, to enjoy themselves in your composed retreats*! Ye mossy couches, and fragrant bowers, skirted with cooling cascades! how many illustrious personages, after all their glorious toil for the public good, have sought an honourable and welcome repose in your downy lap! Ye venerable oaks and solemn groves! woods that whisper to the quivering gale, cliffs that overhang the darkened flood! who can number the sages and saints that have devoted the day to study, or resigned a vacant hour to healthy exercise, beneath your sylvan porticoes and waving arches? that, far from the dull impertinence of man, have listened to the instructive voice of God, and contemplated the works of his adorable hand amidst your moss-grown cells and rocky shades? How inelegant, or how insensible is the mind, which has no awakened lively relish for these sweet recesses, and their exquisite beauties!”

* ———“ *Mihi me reddentes agelli,*”—says Horace of his little country-seat.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE GREAT.

Kings at the head of their subjects; nobles surrounded with their dependants; and (after names of so much grandeur, may I be allowed to add?) ministers labouring among their people, are each in a conspicuous station. Their conduct in its minutest step, especially in any miscarriage, will be narrowly surveyed, and critically scanned. Can there be a louder call to ponder the paths of their feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their ways? Those who move in inferior life may grossly offend, and little alarm be given, perhaps no notice taken. But it is not to be expected that the least slip in their carriage, the least flaw in their character will pass undiscovered. Malice, with her eagle eyes, will be sure to discern them; while Censure, with her shrill trumpet, will be as far from concealing them, as Calumny, with her treacherous whispers, from extenuating them. A planet may sink below the horizon, or a star for several months withdraw its shining; and scarce one in ten thousand perceive the loss; but if the moon suffers a transient eclipse, almost half the world are spectators of her dishonour.

Very different was the case, when, at this late hour, I have taken a solitary walk on the western cliffs. At the foot of the steep mountain, the sea, all clear and smooth, spread itself into an immense plain, and held a watery mirror to the skies. Infinite heights above, the firmament stretched its azure expanse, bespangled with unnumbered stars, and adorned with the moon "walking in brightness," Job, xxxi. 26. She seemed to contemplate herself with a peculiar pleasure, while the transparent surface both received and returned

her silver image. Here, instead of being covered with sackcloth, she shone with double lustre; or rather, with a lustre multiplied, in proportion to the number of beholders, and their various situations.

Such, methinks, is the effect of an exemplary behaviour in persons of exalted rank. Their course, as it is nobly distinguished, so it will be happily influential; others will catch the diffusive ray, and be ambitious to resemble a pattern so attracting, so commanding. Their amiable qualities will not terminate in themselves, but we shall see them reflected from their families, their acquaintance, their retainers. Just as we may now behold another moon, trembling in the stream, glittering in the canal, and displaying its lovely impress on every collection of waters.

THE SUCCESSION OF FLOWERS.

Another remarkable circumstance recommending the flowery creation, is their regular succession. They make not their appearance all at once, but in an ordinary rotation. While a proper number of these obliging retainers are in waiting, the others abscond; but hold themselves in a posture of service, ready to take their turn, and fill each his respective station, the instant it becomes vacant. The snow-drop, foremost of the lovely train, breaks her way through the frozen soil, in order to present her early compliments to her Lord; dressed in the robe of innocency, she steps forth, fearless of danger, long before the trees have ventured to unfold their leaves, even while the icicles are pendent on our houses. Next peeps out the crocus, but cautiously, and with an air of timidity. She hears the howling blasts, and skulks close to her low situation. Afraid she seems to make large

excursions from her root, while so many ruffian winds are abroad, and scouring along the ether. Nor is the violet last in this shining embassy of the year; which, with all the embellishments that would grace a royal garden, condescends to line our hedges, and grow at the feet of briars. Freely and without any solicitation, she distributes the bounty of her emissive sweets; while herself, with an exemplary humility, retires from sight, seeking rather to administer pleasure than to win admiration. Emblem, expressive emblem, of those modest virtues which delight to bloom in obscurity, which extend a cheering influence to multitudes, who are scarce acquainted with the source of their comforts! Motive, engaging motive, to that ever-active beneficence, which stays not for the importunity of the distressed, but anticipates their suit, and prevents them with the blessings of its goodness! The poor polyanthus, that lately adorned the border with her sparkling beauties, and, transplanted into our windows, gave us a fresh entertainment, is now no more. I saw her complexion fade; I perceived her breath decay; till at length she expired, and dropped into her grave. Scarce have we sustained this loss, but in comes the auricula, and more than retrieves it: arrayed she comes in a splendid variety of amiable forms, with an eye of crystal, and garments of the most glossy satin, exhaling perfume, and powdered with silver. A very distinguished procession this! the favourite care of the florist. Scarce one among them but is dignified with a character of renown, or has the honour to represent some celebrated toast. But these also, notwithstanding their illustrious titles, have exhausted their whole stock of fragrance, and are mingled with the meanest dust. Who could for-

bear grieving at their departure, did not the tulips begin to raise themselves on their fine wands or stately stalks? They flush the parterre with one of the gayest dresses that blooming nature wears. Did ever beau or belle make so gaudy an appearance in a birth-night suit? Here one may behold the innocent wantonness of beauty; here she indulges a thousand freaks, and sports herself in the most charming diversity of colours: yet I should wrong her were I to call her a coquette, because she plays her lovely changes, not to enkindle dissolute affections, but to display her Creator's glory. Soon arises the anemone, encircled at the bottom with a spreading robe, and rounded at the top into a beautiful dome. In its loosely flowing mantle, you may observe a noble negligence; in its gently bending tufts, the nicest symmetry. I would term it the fine gentleman of the garden; because it seems to have learned the singular address of uniting simplicity with refinement, of reconciling art with ease. The same month has the merit of producing the ranunculus: all bold and graceful, it expands the riches of its foliage, and acquires by degrees the loveliest enamel in the world. As persons of intrinsic worth disdain the superficial arts of recommendation practised by fops, so this lordly flowing flower scorns to borrow any of its excellence from powders and essences. It needs no such attractives to render it the darling of the curious; being sufficiently engaging from the elegance of its figure, the radiant variety of its tinges, and a certain superior dignity of aspect. Methinks nature improves in her operations; her latest strokes are most masterly: To crown the collection, she introduces the carnation; which captivates every eye with a noble spread of graces, and charms

another sense with a profusion of exquisite odours. This single flower has centered in itself the perfections of all the preceding: the moment it appears, it so commands our attention that we scarce regret the absence of the rest. The gillyflower, like a real friend, attends you through all the vicissitudes and alterations of the season. While others make a transient visit only, this is rather an inhabitant than a guest in our gardens; adds fidelity to complaisance.

It is vain to attempt a catalogue of these amiable gifts: there is an endless multiplicity in their characters, yet an invariable order in their approaches. Every month, almost every week, has its peculiar ornaments; not servilely copying the works of its predecessor, but forming, still forming, and still executing some new design. So lavish is the fancy, yet so exact is the process of nature.

Here let me stand a while, to contemplate this distribution of flowers through the several periods of the year. Were they all to blossom together, there would be at once a promiscuous throng, and at once a total privation; we should scarce have an opportunity of adverting to the dainty qualities of half, and must soon lose the agreeable company of them all. But now, since every species has a separate post to occupy, and a distinct interval for appearing, we can take a leisurely and minute survey of each succeeding set. We can view and review their forms; enter into a more intimate acquaintance with their charming accomplishments, and receive all those pleasing services which they are commissioned to yield. This remarkable piece of economy is productive of another very valuable effect. It not only places in the most advantageous light every particular community; but

is also a sure provisional resource against the frailty of the whole nation; or, to speak more truly, it renders the flowery tribes a sort of immortal corps, whose successory attendance never fails. For, though some are continually dropping, yet, by this expedient, others are as continually rising, to beautify our borders, and prolong the entertainment.

What goodness is this, to provide such a series of gratifications for mankind, both to diversify and perpetuate the fine collation! to take care that our paths should be in a manner incessantly strewed with flowers. And what wisdom, to bid every one of these insensible beings know the precise juncture of their coming forth! insomuch that no actor on a stage can be more exact in performing his part, can make a more regular entry, or a more punctual exit.

Who imbaldens the daffodil to venture abroad in February, and to trust her flowery gold with inclement and treacherous skies? Who informs the various tribes of fruit-bearing blossoms, that vernal suns, and a more genial warmth, are fittest for their delicate texture? Who teaches the clove to stay till hotter beams are prepared, to infuse a spicy richness into her odours, and tincture her complexion with the deepest crimson? Who disposes these beautiful troops into such orderly bodies, retarding some, and accelerating others? Who has instructed them to file off, with such perfect regularity, as soon as the duty of their respective station is over? And when one detachment retires, who gives the signal for another immediately to advance? who but that unerring Providence, which from the highest thrones of angels to the very lowest degrees of existence, orders all things in "number, weight, and measure!"

THE DECAY OF FLOWERS.

Yes, ye flowery nations, ye must all decay ! Winter, like some enraged and irresistible conqueror that carries fire and sword wherever he advances, that demolishes towns, depopulates countries, spreads slaughter and desolation on every side ; so, just so, will Winter, with his savage and unrelenting blasts, invade this beautiful prospect. The storms are gathering, and the tempests mustering their rage, to fall upon the vegetable kingdoms : they will ravage through the dominions of nature, and plunder her riches and lay waste her charms. Then, ye trees, must you stand stript of your verdant apparel ; and, ye fields, be spoiled of your waving treasures. Then the earth, disrobed of all her gay attire, must sit in sables, like a disconsolate widow. The sun, too, who now rides in triumph round the world, and scatters gaiety from his radiant eye, will then look faintly from the windows of the south ; and, casting a short glance on our dejected world, will leave us to the uncomfortable gloom of tedious nights. Then these pretty choristers of the air will chant no more to the gentle gales ; the lark, the linnet, and all the feathered songsters abandon their notes, and indulge their woes. The harmony of the woods is at an end ; and silence (unless it be interrupted by howling winds), sullen silence, sits brooding upon the boughs which are now made vocal by a thousand warbling throats.

But (sweet recollection ! ravishing expectation !) the songs of saints in light never admit a pause for sadness. All heaven will resound with the melody of their gratitude, and all eternity echo to their triumphal acclamations. The hallelujahs of that world, and the

harmonious joy of its inhabitants, will be as lasting as the divine perfections they celebrate. Come, then, holy love, and tune my heart ; descend, celestial fire, and touch my tongue ; that I may stand ready to strike up and bear my part in that great hosanna, that everlasting hymn !

Yes ; yes, ye flowery nations, ye must all decay ! And, indeed, could you add the strength of an oak, or the stability of a pyramid, to all the delicacy of your texture ; yet short, exceeding short even then, would your duration be ; for I see that all things come to an end. The pillars of nature are tottering ; the foundations of the round world are falling away ; the “ heavens themselves wax old like a garment.” But amidst these views of general ruin, here is our refuge—this is our consolation : We know that our Redeemer liveth. Thy years, blessed Jesus, shall not fail. From everlasting to everlasting thou art still the same : the same most excellent and adorable person, the same omnipotent and faithful friend, the same all-sufficient and inestimable portion. O ! may we but partake of thy merits ; be sanctified by thy grace ; and received into thy glory ! Then perish, if ye will, all inferior delights. Let all that is splendid in the skies expire, and all that is amiable in nature be expunged. Let the whole extent of creation be turned again into one indistinguishable void, one universal blank. Yet, if God be ours, we shall have enough ; if God be ours, we shall have all, and abound ; all that our circumstances can want, or our wishes crave, to make us inconceivably blessed and happy—blessed and happy, not only through this little interval of time, but through the unmeasurable revolutions of eternity.

OBSTACLES TO FRIENDSHIP.

I wish Mr. —— would study his Bible more, and the classics less. There is little good to be got by reading the Scripture carelessly; but he who humbly applies to God for direction, and exercises himself therein constantly and conscientiously, will find such an efficacy as is not to be found in any other book whatever; and therefore it is called, by way of pre-eminence, *The Bible* (or the *Book*); importing, that as this, and only this, is a divine work, no other books can be compared, or even so much as named, with it. It is the book of books; the *Book of God*. Mr. —— however neglects this book, I fear; and indeed, if I may speak my sentiments to you freely, I look upon him to be so puffed up with pride, and the conceit of his own abilities, that his passions run away with him, and he fires at every thing which thwarts any of the notions he has imbibed. Is not such a one disqualified for friendship? Can a man of his disposition attend coolly to arguments against his preconceived opinions, how modestly or forcibly soever such arguments may be urged? This surely is not the spirit of the gospel; nor are these the qualities of one who professes himself a disciple of that Master, whose exhortation is, “Learn of me, for I am lowly and meek.” I have no hopes of doing Mr. —— any good; and as we think so very differently, the less we have to do with one another perhaps the better. He really is not now fit even for a companion, much less for a bosom friend. No man can be a proper associate (as a writer of no small penetration has judiciously remarked) in whom these or such like infirmities are predominant; namely,

1. If he be reserved, or be incapable of communicating his mind freely. 2. If he be haughty, and proud of his knowledge, imperious in his disposition, and fond of imposing his own sentiments on us. 3. If he be positive, and will dispute to the end, by resisting the clearest evidence, rather than be overcome. 4. If he be fretful and peevish, ready to take things in a wrong sense. 5. If he affect wit on all occasions, and is full of his conceits, puns, quibbles, jests, and repartees. These may agreeably entertain and animate an hour of mirth, but they have no place in the search after truth. 6. If he carry about him a sort of craft and cunning, and disguise, acting rather like a spy than a friend. Have a care of such a one as will make an ill use of freedom in conversation, and immediately charge you with shocking tenets, when you happen to differ from those sentiments which authority or custom has established. 7. In short, avoid the man who practises any thing that is unbecoming the character of a sincere, free, and open searcher after truth. And, above all things, pray and work against all evil qualities in your own breast.

GRATITUDE.

O! how amiable is gratitude! especially when it has the supreme Benefactor for its object. I have always looked upon gratitude as the most exalted principle that can actuate the heart of man. It has something noble, disinterested, and (if I may be allowed the term) generously devout. Repentance indicates our nature fallen, and prayer turns chiefly upon a regard to one's self. But the exercises of gratitude subsisted in paradise, when there was no fault to de-

plore ; and will be perpetuated in heaven, when “ God shall be all in all.”

GRIEVANCES.

Dear Sir,—The grievance you complain of is, like many other grievances, irremediable ; for, according to the old proverb, What is every one’s business, is no one’s. It is the same in numberless instances. How many turnpikes are erected, where the money taken will scarce defray the expense of the gates ; and where the roads neither are nor ever will be mended, and consequently they are nuisances instead of benefits ! yet our nobility and members of parliament pass frequently through such turnpikes, complain of the grievance, but take no pains to redress it. And even in an affair of the highest consequence, how negligent is the community ! I mean, in the long expected reformation of our Liturgy ; in which, excellent as it is upon the whole, there are some passages so justly exceptionable, that every bishop in the kingdom will tell you he wishes to have them expunged ; and yet, I know not for what political or timid reasons, it continues just as it did. Had our first reformers been thus indolent, we still had been papists. Our laws are daily complained of, and might most certainly be abridged, to the great benefit of the nation ; this is allowed by every individual ; but the parliament, you see, will not exert themselves in bringing this important affair to pass.

I have often wondered, that in this age of humanity, (for such with all its faults it certainly is), while infirmaries are erecting in different parts of the kingdom, public bridges building, and large collections making

for charitable uses, there should be no societies established for redressing grievances. To found such kind of societies would be truly laudable and highly beneficial. May God, of his infinite goodness and unerring wisdom, put it into the hearts of the active, the benevolent, and the powerful, to set in good earnest about the institution of societies for the redressing our grievances! some for public, and others for private grievances. Were such once established, what a world of good might be done! Then the fatherless, the widow, and the injured, would have substantial friends always at hand, who would rescue them from their oppressors, by taking them under their own protection, and defending their cause out of the subscription fund. From these funds, likewise, the expense of procuring useful acts of parliament, or of getting ineffectual ones amended or repealed, might be defrayed.

HERVEY'S FORGIVING SPIRIT.

With respect to Hervey's private capacity, he was never known to be in a passion. He lived as in heaven. No worldly concern (though he sometimes met with very trying ones) ever affected him. His humility rendered him invulnerable. When he was misrepresented and calumniated, he would say, "Our enemies are sometimes our best friends, and tell us truths; and then we should amend our faults, and be thankful for such information; and if what they say be not true, and only spoken through malice, then such persons are to be considered as diseased in their minds, and we should pray for them. They are to be pitied," says he, "and I might be as justly angry with a man who is diseased in his body."

THE BOOK OF JOB.

As to the age in which Job lived, the learned are not agreed, nor I suppose ever will. But that opinion which you and others maintain seems to be most probable. I willingly go over to your side. Nothing is more certain than that this illustrious hero lived after Abraham: for he who gave a name to the country which one of his friends, the Temanite, inhabited, is reckoned among the posterity of Esau. Moreover, that very remarkable encomium with which he is honoured by the Holy Spirit forbids us to imagine that he lived in the days of the patriarchs Isaac or Jacob. It could scarcely be truly said that there was none like him in the earth, unless he had lived after the death of Joseph. The time of Job seems therefore to be truly placed between the decease of Joseph and the manhood of Moses.

As to the writing itself, I have no doubt that it proceeded from no other hand than that of Job: for he being educated among the Arabs, and used to their language, he had scarce so great skill in the Hebrew learning as was necessary for consigning to writing such important matters in so neat and elegant a style. If any choose to ascribe the book to Moses as its author, as our English edition has intimated in the notes on the margin, then I suppose it was wrote before the passage of the Israelites through the wilderness. While that celebrated lawgiver was employed as the guide and ruler of so great a company, he could scarce apply his mind to write a poetical history. Besides, the great number and weight of the matters he had to do every day would, without doubt, divert his mind from so great an undertaking.

And no time could be more favourable to him than that which he enjoyed while he lived as an exile among the Midianites. He dwelt in the country at that time, had much leisure, and had all conveniencies which use to stimulate and fire the genius of a poet. What further strengthens this opinion is, that being banished into those countries, he could have full information of every thing relating to Job, who dwelt in the neighbouring land. The frequent use, too, of a foreign idiom, and a variety of phrases plainly smelling of the Arabian genius, plead strongly in behalf of such a conjecture. Our countryman, Dr. Warburton, labours hard to prove that we are indebted to Ezra, the last of the sacred writers, for this treasure of divinity, philosophy, and all kind of learning. But this hypothesis, however specious, and supported by reasons nowise despicable, does not command my assent. For unless I guess wrong, there are marks and characters scattered every where through the book which denote a much more ancient period. There is nowhere any allusion, so far as I could observe, to the promulgation of the law, or the exploits of the Israelites. In no place is there any mention of the miracles performed in Egypt or through the deserts, which would have given so great a dignity to any poem, and afforded so much comfort to the Jews, that they could never have passed unnoticed by any wise man. Among other very beautiful things that you have wrote, you establish the genuineness of this whole history. Consequently you do not assert it to be, and prove what you have asserted, a certain fictitious amusement of a pious genius, but that, on the contrary, it was a real transaction: that therefore no one, in reading, ought to imagine that he has before

his eyes a fiction of what might have been done, but a genuine narrative of what actually happened. I was formerly of this opinion, and the reasons you have brought forth make me adhere more closely to it. But although it claims the truth of a real history, it displays all the pleasant entertainment of a dramatic performance. If you consider the words, which are most elegant and ornate, they do not so much relate, as exhibit to view, the several transactions. And nothing is more important, more grand, more sublime, more worthy of an inspiring God, or more necessary for mankind to know. Meantime, there is a surprising diversity of characters, and, what is the highest attainment of art, they are every one painted to the life, and every where consistent with one another. Moreover, our history of Job is distinguished by another species of elegance, which is a decoration and ornament to the artificial romances of dramatic writers. He does not bring smoke from a flash, as a critic has observed, but light from smoke. He begins with prose, and then in a trice he proceeds to the higher modes of speaking; and putting on a buskin, rises up to the senses. A greater order of things commences; more vehement conferences, more fierce attacks of the disputants, until nothing more important or more forcible can be said on either side. Then at last a mediator comes in. The perverse sayings of each party he weighs with a deliberate judgment, and chastises with due reprehension. He endeavours with his utmost might, if possible, to calm the warm spirits of the disputants, and decide a controversy that has been long litigated. But in vain. The difficulty is greater, and of far harder solution, than to yield to the remonstrance of a youth. A GOD, behold a God appears!

Can any thing more majestic be contrived ! He who traverses the circuits of the heavens descends (let me speak with the utmost reverence), as it were, to the sand. And he who balances the stars that roll through the empty air, HE HIMSELF weighs the importance and weight of this controversy, as it were, in an impartial balance. While God pleads the cause, how do their fierce spirits subside ! They cease to resist. They give up their weapons. They are mute. Job himself, whom too splendid and swelling conceptions of his own purity had transported beyond due bounds, being convinced of his mistake, and sensible of his iniquity, is covered with shame, throws down his arms, and, in a worshipping posture, falls prostrate at the feet of infinite mercy. He knows himself ; exercises penitence, overcomes by submission ; and as soon as he most humbly falls down before God, he obtains an end of his calamity, which he could not lawfully have expected so long as he too rashly arrogated to himself an unblamable integrity. The propitious Deity, with a most liberal hand, replaces, augments, establishes all his effects, which had been not long ago miserably lost. Like the palm-tree, being pressed down he rises up ; and when all were going to congratulate him upon his felicity, then at last it revived, and flourished much more plentifully than before. How sudden and unlooked-for a catastrophe ! How joyful a period of his distresses ! How beautiful a conclusion brought to the whole work !

LANDSCAPE AND GARDEN SCENERY
DELINEATED.

Before I proceed farther, let me ascend the terrace, and take one survey of the neighbouring country.

What a prospect rushes upon my sight ! How vast, how various ! how full and plenteous with all manner of store ! Nature's whole wealth ! What a rich and inexhaustible magazine is here, furnishing subsistence for every creature ! Methinks I read in these spacious volumes a most lively comment upon that noble celebration of the divine beneficence ; " he openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness."

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good !
Almighty ! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair ! Thyself how wondrous then !

MILTON.

The fields are covered deep, and stand thick with corn. They expand the milky grain to the sun ; while the gales, now inclining, now raising each flexile stem, open all their ranks to the agency of his beams ; which will soon impart a firm consistence to the grain, and a glossy golden hue to the ear, that they may be qualified to fill the barns of the husbandman with plenty, and his heart with gladness.

Yonder lie the meadows, smoothed into a perfect level ; decorated with an embroidery of the gayest flowers, and loaded with spontaneous crops of herbage ; which, converted into hay, will prove a most commodious provision for the barrenness of winter ; will supply with fodder our serviceable animals, when all the verdure of the plain is killed by frosts, or buried in snows. A winding stream glides along the flowery margin, and receives the image of the bending skies, and waters the roots of many a branching willow. It is stocked, no doubt, with variety of fish, which afford a solitary diversion to the angler, and

nourish for his table a delicious treat. Nor is it the only merit of this liquid element to maintain the finny nations; it also carries cleanliness, and dispenses fruitfulness, wherever it rolls the crystal current.

The pastures with their verdant mounds chequer the prospect, and prepare a standing repast for our cattle. There "our oxen are made strong to labour, and our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands." There the horse acquires vigour for the despatch of our business, and speed to expedite our journeys. From thence the kine bring home their udders distended with one of the richest and healthiest liquors in the world.

On several spots a grove of trees, like some grand colonnade, erects its towering head. Every one projects a friendly shade for the beasts, and creates an hospitable lodging for the birds. Every one stands ready, to furnish timber for a palace, masts for a navy, or, with a more condescending courtesy, fuel for our hearths. One of them seems skirted with a wild uncultivated heath, which, like well-disposed shades in painting, throws an additional lustre on the more ornamented parts of the landscape. Nor is its usefulness, like that of a foil, relative only, but real. There several valuable creatures are produced, and accommodated without any expense or care of ours. There likewise spring abundance of those herbs which assuage the smart of our wounds, and allay the fiery tumults of the fever; which impart floridity to our circulating fluids, add a more vigorous tone to our active solids, and thereby repair the decays of our enfeebled constitutions.

Nearer the houses we perceive an ample spread of

branches ; not so stately as the oaks, but more amiable for their annual services. A little while ago I beheld them, and all was one beauteous, boundless waste of blossoms. The eye marvelled at the lovely sight, and the heart rejoiced in the prospect of autumnal plenty. But now the blooming maid is resigned for the useful matron ; the flower is fallen, and the fruit swells out on every twig. Breathe soft, ye winds ! O spare the tender fruitage, ye surly blasts ! Let the pear-tree suckle her juicy progeny, till they drop into our hands and dissolve in our mouths. Let the plum hang unmolested upon her boughs, till she fatten her delicious flesh, and cloud her polished skin with blue. And as for the apples, that staple commodity of our orchards, let no injurious shocks precipitate them immaturely to the ground, till revolving suns have tinged them with a ruddy complexion, and concocted them into an exquisite flavour. Then, what copious hoards, of what burnished rinds and what delightful relishes, will replenish the store room ! Some, to present us with an early entertainment, and refresh our palates amidst the sultry heats ; some, to borrow ripeness from the falling snows, and carry autumn into the depths of winter ; some, to adorn the salver, make a part of the dessert, and give an agreeable close to our feasts ; others, to fill our vats with a foaming flood ; which, mellowed by age, may sparkle in the glass, with a liveliness and delicacy little inferior to the blood of the grape.

I observe several small enclosures, which seem to be apprehensive of some hostile visit from the north, and therefore are defended on that quarter by a thick wood or a lofty wall. At the same time they cultivate an uninterrupted correspondence with the south,

and throw open their whole dimensions to its friendly warmth. One, in particular, lies within the reach of a distinguishing view, and proves to be a kitchen garden. It looks, methinks, like a plain and frugal republic. Whatever may resemble the pomp of courts, or the ensigns of royalty, is banished from this humble community. None of the productions of the olitory affect finery, but all are habited with perfect decency. Here those celebrated qualities are eminently united—the utmost simplicity with the exactest neatness.

A skilful hand has parcelled out the whole ground into narrow beds and intervening alleys. The same discreet management has assigned to each verdant family a peculiar and distinct abode. So that there is no confusion amidst the great multiplicity, because every individual is associated with propriety, and all the tribes are ranged with regularity. If it be pleasing to behold their orderly situation, and their modest beauties, how much more delightful to consider the advantages they yield! What a fund of choice accommodations is here! what a source of wholesome dainties! and all for the enjoyment of man. Why does the parsley, with her frizzled locks, shag the border; or why the celery, with her whitening arms, perforate the mould, but to render his soups savoury? The asparagus shoots its tapering stems to offer him the first fruits of the season; and the artichoke spreads its turgid top, to give him a treat of vegetable marrow. The tendrils of the cucumber creep unto the sun; and, though basking in its hottest rays, they secrete for their master, and barrel up for his use, the most cooling juices of the soil. The beans stand firm, like files of embattled troops; the peas rest upon their

props, like so many companies of invalids; while both replenish their pods with the fatness of the earth, on purpose to pour it on their owner's table. Not one species among all this variety of herbs is a cumberer of the ground. Not a single plant but is good for food, or some way salutary. With so beneficent an economy are the several periods of their ministrations settled, that no portion of the year is left destitute of nourishing esculents. What is still more obliging, every portion of the year affords such esculents as are best suited to the temperature of the air, and the state of our bodies. Why then should the possessor of so valuable a spot envy the condition of kings? since he may daily walk amidst rows of peaceable and obsequious, though mute subjects; every one of which tenders him some agreeable present, and pays him a willing tribute; such as is most happily adapted both to supply his wants and to regale his taste—to furnish him at once with plenty and with pleasure.

At a distance one descries the mighty hills. They heave their huge ridges among the clouds; and look like the barriers of kingdoms, or the boundaries of nature. Bare and deformed as their surface may appear, their bowels are fraught with inward treasures—treasures lodged fast in the quarries, or sunk deep in the mines. From thence industry may draw her implements, to plough the soil, to reap the grain, and procure every necessary convenience. From thence art may fetch her materials, to rear the dome, to swell the organ, and form the noblest ornaments of politer life.

On another side the great deep terminates the view. There go the ships; there is that leviathan; and

there, in that world of waters, an inconceivable number of animals have their habitation. This is the capacious cistern of the universe, which admits as into a receptacle, and distributes as from a reservoir, whatever waters the whole globe. There is not a fountain that gushes in the unfrequented desert, nor a rivulet that flows in the remotest continent, nor a cloud that swims in the highest regions of the firmament, but is fed by this all-replenishing source. The ocean is the grand vehicle of trade, and the uniter of distant nations. To us it is peculiarly kind, not only as it wafts into our ports the harvest of every climate, and renders our island the centre of traffic, but also as it secures us from foreign invasions by a sort of impregnable intrenchment.

Methinks the view of this profuse munificence inspires a secret delight, and kindles a disinterested good will. While the "little hills clap their hands," and the luxuriant "valleys laugh and sing," who can forbear catching the general joy? who is not touched with lively sensations of pleasure? While the everlasting Father is scattering blessings through his whole family, and crowning the year with his goodness; who does not feel his breast overflowing with a diffusive benevolence? My heart, I must confess, beats high with satisfaction, and breathes out congratulatory wishes upon all the tenants of these rural abodes: "Peace be within your walls, as well as plenteousness around your dwellings." Live, ye highly favoured—live sensible of your benefits, and thankful to your Benefactor. Look around upon these prodigiously large incomes of the fruitful soil, and call them (for you have free leave) all your own. Only let me remind you of one very important truth,

let me suggest, and may you never forget, that you are obliged to Christ Jesus for every one of these accommodations which spring from the teeming earth and the smiling skies.

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Conversing on such agreeable subjects, they were carried by the stream through no less agreeable scenes. They pass by hills clothed with hanging woods, and woods arrayed in varying green. Here, excluded from a sight of the outstretched plains, they are entertained with a group of unsubstantial images, and the wonders of a mimic creation. Another sun shines, but stript of his blazing beams, in the watery concave; while clouds sail along the downward skies, and sometimes disclose, sometimes draw a veil over the radiant orb. Trees, with their inverted tops, either flourish in the fair serene below, or else paint with a pleasing delusion the pellucid flood. Even the mountains are there, but in a headlong posture; and, notwithstanding their prodigious bulk, they quiver in this floating mirror like the poplar leaves which adorn their sides.

Soon as the boat advances, and disturbs the placid surface, the waves, pushed hastily to the bank, bear off in broken fragments the liquid landscape. The spreading circles seemed to prophesy as they rolled, and pronounced the pleasures of this present state—the pomp of power, the charm of beauty, and the echo of fame—pronounced them transient, as their speedy passage; empty, as their unreal freight. Seemed to prophesy! It was more. Imagination heard them utter, as they ran,

Thus pass the shadowy scenes of life away!

Emerging from this fluid alley, they dart amidst the level of a spacious meadow. The eye, lately immured, though in pleasurable confinement, now expands her delighted view into a space almost boundless, and amidst objects little short of innumerable. Transported for a while at the numberless variety of beauteous images poured in sweet confusion all around, she hardly knows where to fix, or which to pursue. Recovering at length from the pleasing perplexity, she glances, quick and instantaneous, across all the intermediate plain, and marks the distant mountains; how cliffs climb over cliffs, till the huge ridges gain upon the sky; how their diminished tops are dressed in blue, or wrapped in clouds; while all their leafy structures, and all their fleecy tenants, are lost in air.

Soon she quits these aërial summits, and ranges the russet heath; here shagged with brakes, or tufted with rushes; there interspersed with straggling thickets or solitary trees, which seem, like disaffected partisans, to shun each other's shade. A spire, placed in a remote valley, peeps over the hills. Sense is surprised at the amusive appearance; is ready to suspect that the column rises, like some enchanted edifice, from the rifted earth. But reason looks upon it as the earnest of a hidden vale, and the sure indication of an adjacent town; performing, in this respect, much the same office to the eye as faith executes with regard to the soul, when it is "the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1.

Next she roves, with increasing pleasure, over spacious tracts of fertile glebe and cultured fields, where cattle, of every graceful form, and every valuable qua-

lity, crop the tender herb, or drink the crystal rills. Anon, she dwells with the utmost complacency on towns of opulence and splendour, which spread the sacred dome, and lift the social roof: towns, no longer surrounded with the stern forbidding majesty of unpassable intrenchments, and impregnable ramparts; but encircled with the delicate, the inviting appendages of gardens and orchards; those decked with all the soft graces of art and elegance, these blushing and pregnant with the more substantial treasures of fruitful nature. Wreaths of ascending smoke, intermingled with turrets and lofty pinnacles, seem to contend which shall get farthest from the earth, and nearest to the skies. Happy for the inhabitants, if such was the habitual tendency of their desires! if no other contention was known in their streets!

Villas, elegant and magnificent, seated in the centre of an ample park, or removed to the extremity of a lengthened lawn, not far from a beautiful reservoir of standing waters, or the more salutary lapse of a limpid stream. Villages, clad in homely thatch, and lodged in the bosom of clustering trees. Rustics, singing at their works; shepherds, tuning their pipes as they tend their flocks; travellers, pursuing each his respective way, in easy and joyous security.

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The morning had been wet. At noon, the rain ceased; but the heavens still continued gloomy. Towards evening a gentle eastern gale sprung up, which dissipated the dead calm, and cleared the face of the sky. The sun, which had been muffled in clouds, dropped the veil. Disengaged from the

dusky shroud, he shone forth with peculiar splendour. His beams, endeared by their late suspension, were doubly welcome, and produced unusual gaiety.

At this juncture Theron and Aspasio walked abroad. They walked alternately on the terraces; one of which was opposite to the country, the other contiguous to the parterre; where the gales, impregnated with the freshest exhalations of nature, breathed the smell of meads, and heaths, and groves; or else, shaking the clusters of roses, and sweeping the beds of fragrance, they flung balm and odours through the air.

At a distance were heard the bleatings of the flock, mingled with the lowings of the milky mothers; while more melodious music warbled from the neighbouring boughs, and spoke aloud the joy of their feathered inhabitants;—and not only spoke their joy, but spread an additional charm over all the landscape. For, amidst such strains of native harmony, the breathing perfumes smell more sweet, the streaming rills shine more clear, and the universal prospect looks more gay.

Then was experienced what Milton so delicately describes:

If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet
 Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
 The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
 Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

* * * * *

The time was just arrived, and the scene was fully opened, which furnished our great poet with his fine description:

Now was the sun in western cadence low,
From noon ; and gentle airs, due at their hour,
To fan the earth now waked, and usher in
The evening cool.

At this juncture, Camillus invited me to take the air. We walked several times along a close shady alley, arched with the foliage of filberts. Here, hid from every eye, and the whole world withdrawn from our view, we seemed like monks strolling in their cloisters. Turning short at the end, we enter a parallel range of majestic and uniformly spreading walnut-trees. This transition was somewhat like advancing through a low porch, into the aisles of a magnificent cathedral. The broad leaf and large trunk of those lordly trees, their very diffusive spread, added to their prodigious height, give them an air of uncommon dignity. It swells the imagination with vast ideas, and entertains us with a romantic kind of delight, to expatiate amidst such huge columns, and under such superb elevations of living architecture.

Quitting our cathedral, we turn once again, and pass into a grand colonnade of oaks ; so regular in their situation, so similar in their size, and so remarkably correspondent in every circumstance, that they looked like the twins of nature, not only belonging to the same family, but produced at the same birth. Through these lay a walk, straight, spacious, and gracefully long, far exceeding the last in the extent of its area, though much inferior in the stateliness of its ceiling. It put me in mind of that divine benignity, which has allowed us six days for the prosecution of our own comparatively low affairs, and set

apart but one for the more immediate attendance on the sublime exercises of devotion.

This walk was covered with the neatest gravel, and not a weed to be seen, nor one spire of grass, through the whole extended surface. It stole into a continual ascent, yet so very gradually, that the rise was scarce discernible, either by the searching eye, the toiling feet, or the panting breath. At the extremity, a handsome summer-house showed a flight of steps, and half a Venetian door. The rest of the building was hid by the clustering branches.

As soon as we enter the apartment, Camillus throws open the left-hand sash, and with it a most enlarged and amusive prospect. The structure appeared situate on the brow of a considerable eminence, whose sides were partly confused and wild with broken rocks, partly shagged and perplexed with thorny shrubs. The spectator is agreeably surprised to find himself accommodated with so elegant a mansion, on the summit of so rude and ruinous a spot. But how greatly is his surprise and satisfaction augmented, when he casts his eye forward, and beholds the beautiful meads which, from the foot of this rugged hill, stretch themselves into a space almost unmeasurable!

Through the midst of this extensive vale, which was decked with the finest verdure, and replenished with the richest herbage, a river rolled its copious flood—rolled in a thousand serpentine meanders, as though it had lost its way in the flowery labyrinth, or made repeated efforts of flowing back to its source, till at last, having wandered more than twice the length of the meadows, having held a mirror to the aspiring poplars and bending willows, having paid a welcome salute to several ornamented villas, and

passed through the arches of two or three curiously pendent bridges, it seemed to meet the sky, and mingle with the horizon.

Opposite to the front window, a cascade fell from the adjacent stream. It flashed and foamed along the broad slope, indented with small pits and jagged with protuberant stones. The current, vexed and embarrassed, seemed to rave at the intervening obstacles, and forcing its rapid, indignant, sonorous way, struck the ear with a peal of liquid thunder. These fretful waters—let our angry passions observe the admonition, and follow the example—soon were pacified, soon forgot to chide. Collected into a little rivulet, they ran off in calm and silent lapse, till they lost themselves amongst beds of osier and plantations of alder.

The river, widening as it flowed, was parted here and there by several little islands; some tufted with reeds, and the resort of swans; some adorned with stately porticoes, and splendid alcoves, the graceful retreats of rural pleasure; some furnished with green embowering walks, fitted for studious retirement and sedate contemplation. On either side of the charming valley, towns and villages lay thick, and looked gay, adding ornament and variety to the scene, and receiving innumerable advantages from the passing wave.

* * * * *

Talking in this manner, they arrive at the park; which, the moment you enter, fills the view with its bold, enlarged, and magnificent sweep. It was diversified with level and rising ground. Here scooped into mimic amphitheatres, with the deer pendent on the little summit, or shooting down the easy precipice; there raised into gentle hillocks, some of which

were canopied with a large spreading solitary oak, others were tufted with a cluster of tapering and verdant elms. Two or three cascades, gleaming from afar, as they poured along the slanting rock or the grassy slope, gave a pleasing variation to the prospect; while they startled the timorous inexperienced fawns with their foaming current and watery roar. Grandeur and simplicity seemed to be the genius of the place. Every thing breathed an air of noble negligence, and artless majesty.

In the centre of all rose a curious romantic mount. Its form was exactly round, somewhat like a sugar-loaf, lopt off a little below the point. Not coëval with nature, but the work of human industry. Thrown up, it is supposed, in those perilous times, when Britain was alarmed by foreign invasions, or bled with intestine wounds. It was covered all around with alder shrubs; whose ranks, gradually arising and spreading shade above shade, composed a kind of woody theatre, through which were struck two or three spiral walks, leading, by a gentle ascent, and under embowering verdure, to the summit. At proper intervals, and on every side of the hill, were formed little arborets, with apertures cut through the boughs to admit a prospect of the country. In one or other of these leafy boxes you command, at every hour of the day, either the enlivening sun or the refreshing shade. All along the circling avenues, and all around the beauteous rests, sprung daffodils, primroses, and violets; which, mingling with hyacinths and cowslips, composed many a charming piece of natural mosaic.

How agreeable, as they climb and wind themselves round the hill, to reflect on the happy change which

has now taken place ! Where steely helmets gleamed, or brazen shields clashed, the goldfinches twitter their loves, and display their painted plumes. The dens of rapine, or the horrid haunts of bloodshed, are become the retreats of calm contemplation and friendly converse. In yonder lower spaces, where the armed troops were wont to patrole, from whence they made excursions to ravage the villages or terrify the swains, the fallow-deer trip lightly, or the full-headed stags stand at bay.

From a small eminence, but at a considerable distance, gushed a couple of springs, which, rambling through a grove, lost one another in the shady labyrinth. Emerging at length from the gloom, they approached nearer and nearer, and fell into embraces at the foot of this hill. They rolled in amicable conjunction along the pebbly channel which encircles its basis, and added their sober melody to the sprightly warbling of the birds. Flowing off in one common stream, they formed the fine pieces of water which beautified the park. From thence they stole into the meadow, and widened into a river. There, enamoured as it were with each other, they glide by wealthy towns, and sweep through flowery vales ; regardless of the blooming toys which deck the one, and of the noisy crowds which throng the other.

* * * * *

They enter a spacious lawn, which lay opposite to the house, and stretched itself in the form of an expanded fan. The mounds on either side were dressed in verdure, and ran out in a slanting direction. The whole, to an eye placed at a distance, bore the resemblance of a magnificent vista ; contracting by slow degrees its dimensions, and lessening at last into a

point, which the regular and graceful seat with all imaginable dignity supplied.

Nature had sunk the lawn into a gentle decline, on whose ample sides were oxen browsing and lambs frisking. The lusty droves lowed as they passed, and the thriving flocks bleated welcome music in their master's ear. Along the midst of this verdant slope ran a spacious and extensive walk, which, coated with gravel and fenced with palisadoes, looked like a plain stripe of brown intersecting a carpet of the brightest green. At the bottom, two handsome canals, copiously stocked with fish, floated to the breeze; whose waters, beheld from every front room in the house, had a fine effect upon the sight, not without a refreshing influence on the imagination. At the extremity of one stood a stately colonnade. The roof was elevated on pillars of the Ionic order; and the area slabbed with stones, neatly ranged in the diamond fashion. Several forest chairs accommodated the anglers with a seat, while the bending dome supplied them with a shade.

Corresponding, and on the margin of the other canal, was erected a summer-house, of a very singular kind.—The lower part had an opening towards the north. It was cool; it was gloomy; and had never seen the sun. It carried the romantic air of a grotto, or rather the pensive appearance of a hermit's cell. The outside was coarse and rugged with protuberant stones. Partly overspread with ivy, partly covered with moss, it seemed to be the work of ancient years. You descend, by steps of turf, through a low and narrow door. A scanty iron grate, instead of a large sweeping sash, transmits a glimmering light, just sufficient to discover the inner structure, which ap-

peared like one continued piece of rock-work—a cavern cut, you would imagine, from the surrounding quarry. Above, hung an irregular arch, with an aspect rather threatening than inviting. Below, lay a paving of homely pebbles; in some places a little furrowed, as though it had been worn by the frequent tread of solitary feet. All around were rusticity and solemnity; solemnity never more visibly seen than through a gloom. The furniture of the same grotesque fashion with the apartment. A bench hewed, you would suspect, by nature's chisel, out of the solid stone; a sort of couch, composed of swelling moss, and small fibrous roots. From one corner trickled a pure spring, which crept with a bubbling moan along the channelled floor, till its healthy current was collected into a basin, rudely scooped from the ground. On the edge of this little receptacle lay chained a rusty bowl, and over it stood an antique worm-eaten table. On the least obscure part of the wall you discern, dimly discern, a parchment scroll, inscribed with that sage, but mortifying admonition, "Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!"

Over this recess, so pleasingly horrid, and adapted to solemn musings, arose an open and airy Belvidere. You ascend by winding stairs; and coming from the uncouth abode below, are sweetly surprised with an elegant hexagon. The ceiling lofty, and decorated with the softest, richest, almost flowing fret-work. The wainscot, in pannels of oak, retained its native auburn; so beautifully plain, that, like an amiable countenance, it would have been disfigured, rather than improved, by the most costly paint. On this were disposed, in gilded frames, and to great advantage, a variety of entertaining landscapes. But none

surpassed, none equalled, all were a foil to the noble, lovely views which the windows commanded. The chimney-piece, of white shining marble, streaked with veins of vivid red: over it was carved a fine festoon of artificial, in it was ranged a choice collection of natural flowers. On a table of glossy walnut lay a portable telescope, attended with Thomson's Seasons, and *Vanierii Prædium Rusticum* *.

The whole was fitted up in the highest taste, and furnished with every pleasurable ornament, on purpose to harmonize with that lavish gaiety, which seemed to smile over all the face of nature; on purpose to correspond with that vernal delight, which came breathing on the wings of every fragrant gale: I may add, on purpose to remind the beholder of those immortal mansions, which are decorated with images infinitely more splendid, with objects unspeakably more glorious; where holy beings will spend, not a few vacant hours in refined amusement, but a boundless eternity in the consummation of joy. For, to a well-turned mind, nature is a preceptor; and these are her instructive lessons: to the pure in heart, even sense is edifying; and these are its delicate moralities.

The redundant waters of the canal rolled off in a spreading cascade; which, tumbling from many a

* “*Vanierii Prædium Rusticum*:” a most elegant Latin poem; which treats of every remarkable peculiarity relating to the business of a country life, or the furniture of a country-seat. It entertains us with a description of the most agreeable objects, in an easy flow of the purest language, and most musical numbers.

little precipice, soothed the air with a symphony of soft and gurgling sounds, nor ever intermitted the obliging office,

“ From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve.”

But when the fanning breezes dropt their wings, when the feathered choir were hushed in sleep, when not so much as a chirping grasshopper was heard throughout the meads, this liquid instrument still played its solo, still pursued its busy way, and warbled as it flowed melodious murmurs.

* * * * *

The spot adjoining to the house was appropriated to the cultivation of flowers. In a variety of handsome compartments were assembled the choicest beauties of blooming nature. Here the hyacinth hung her silken bells, or the lilies reared their silver pyramids. There stood the neat narcissus, loosely attired in a mantle of snowy lustre ; or the splendid ranunculus wore a full-trimmed suit of radiant scarlet. Pinks were rising to enamel the borders ; roses were opening to dress the walls ; surrounded on all sides with a profusion of beauteous forms, either latent in the stalk, or bursting the buds, or blown into full expansion.

This was bounded by a slight partition, a sort of verdant parapet, through which they descend by an easy flight of steps, and are presented with the elegant simplicity of the kitchen garden. In one place you might see the marigold flowering, or the beans in blossom. In another, the endive curled her leaves, or the lettuce thickened her tufts : cauliflowers sheltered their fair complexion under a green umbrella ;

while the burrage dishevelled * her locks, and braided them with blooming jewels, of a finer azure than the finest sapphires. On the sunny slopes, the cucumber and melon lay basking in the collected beams. On the raised beds, the artichoke seemed to be erecting a standard, while the asparagus shot † into ranks of spears. The level ground produced all manner of cooling salads and nourishing esculents. Nothing was wanting to furnish out the wholesome luxury of an antediluvian banquet.

Soon, a high wall intervenes, through which a wicket opens, and transmits them into the regular and equidistant rows of an orchard. This plantation is so nicely adjusted, that it looks like an arrangement of rural piazzas, or a collection of diversified vistas. The eye is every where entertained with the exactest uniformity, and darts with unobstructed ease from one end of the branching files to the other. On all the boughs lay a lovely evolution of blossoms, arrayed in milky white, or tinged with the softest red. Crowding into one general cluster, without relinquishing any vacant space for leaves, they formed the fairest, the gayest, the grandest alcove, that fancy itself can imagine. It is really like the court of the Graces. None can approach it without finding his ideas brightened, and feeling his temper exhilarated.

Contiguous to this correct disposition of things,

* Referring to the loose irregular manner of its foliation.

† Alluding, not only to the shape, but also to the growth of this plant, which is so unusually quick, that it may almost be said to start, rather than to rise out of the earth.

nature had thrown a wilderness, hoary, grotesque, and magnificently confused. It stretched itself, with a large circular sweep, to the north; and secured both the olitory and the orchard from incommoding winds. Copses of hazel and flowering shrubs filled the lower spaces, while poplars quivered aloft in air, and pines pierced the clouds with their leafy spears. Here grew clumps of fir, clad in everlasting green: there stood groves of oak, that had weathered for ages the wintry storm. Amidst this woody theatre ran a winding walk, lined with elms of insuperable height, whose branches, uniting at the top, reared a stately arch, and projected a solemn shade. It was impossible to enter this lofty labyrinth without being struck with a pleasing dread. As they proceed every inflection diffuses a deeper gloom, and awakens a mōre pensive attention.

Having strolled in this darksome avenue without a speck of sunshine, without a glimpse of the heavens, on a sudden they step into open day. Surprising! cries Aspasio, what a change is this! What delightful enchantment is here! One instant whelmed in Trophonius's cave, where horror frowns, and darkness lowers, and solitude reigns; transported the next into the romantic plains of Arcadia, where all is populous, all is lightsome, all is gay!

* * * * *

Aspasio having some letters of importance to answer, as soon as the cloth was taken away retired from table. His epistolary engagements being despatched, he inquired for Theron. The servants informed him that their master had walked into the garden. A very little search found him seated on an airy mount, and sheltered by an elegant arbour.

Strong and substantial plants of laburnum formed the shell, while the slender and flexile shoots of syringa filled up the interstices. Was it to compliment, as well as to accommodate their worthy guests, that they interwove the luxuriant foliage? Was it to represent those tender, but close attachments, which had united their affections, and blended their interests? I will not too positively ascribe such a design to the disposition of the branches. They composed, however, by their twining embraces, no inexpressive emblem of the endearments and the advantages of friendship. They composed a canopy of the freshest verdure, and of the thickest texture; so thick, that it entirely excluded the sultry ray, and shed both a cool refreshment and an amusive gloom; while every unsheltered tract glared with light, or fainted with heat.

You enter by an easy ascent of steps, lined with turf, and fenced with a balustrade of sloping bay-trees. The roof was a fine concave, peculiarly elevated and stately. Not embossed with sculpture, not mantled over with fret-work, not incrustated with splendid fresco; but far more delicately adorned with the syringa's silver tufts, and the laburnum's flowering gold, whose large and lovely clusters, gracefully pendent from the leafy dome, disclosing their sweets to the delighted bee, and gently waving to the balmy breath of spring, gave the utmost enrichment to the charming bower.

Facing the entrance lay a spacious grassy walk, terminated by an octangular basin with a curious *jet-d'eau* playing in the centre. The waters, spinning from the lower orifices, were attenuated into innumerable little threads, which dispersed themselves in an

horizontal direction, and returned to the reservoir in a drizzling shower. Those which issued from the higher tubes and larger apertures either sprung perpendicularly, or spouted obliquely, and formed as they fell several lofty arches of liquid crystal, all glittering to the eye, and cooling to the air.

Parallel to the walk ran a parterre, planted with an assemblage of flowers, which advanced one above another in regular gradations of height, of dignity, and of beauty. First, a row of daisies, gay as the smile of youth, and fair as the virgin snows. Next, a range of crocuses, like a long stripe of yellow satin, quilted with threads, or diversified with sprigs of green. A superior order of ranunculuses, each resembling the cap of an earl's coronet, replenished the third story with full blown tufts of glossy scarlet. Beyond this, a more elevated line of tulips raised their flourished heads, and opened their enamelled cups; not bedecked with a single tint only, but glowing with an intermingled variety of almost every radiant hue. Above all arose that noble ornament of a royal escutcheon, the *fleur-de-luce*, bright with ethereal blue, and grand with imperial purple; which formed, by its graceful projections, a cornice or a capital of more than Corinthian richness, and imparted the most consummate beauty to the blooming colonnade.

The whole, viewed from the harbour, looked like a rainbow painted upon the ground, and wanted nothing to rival that resplendent arch, only the boldness of its sweep, and the advantage of its ornamental curve.

* * * * *

Talking in this manner, they come to a curious

grove, formed on that uncommon plan proposed by Mr. Addison in one of his Spectators. It consisted wholly of evergreens. Firs, clad in verdant silver, pointed their resinous leaves, and shot aloft their towering cones. Laurels, arrayed in glossy green, spread their ample foliage, and threw abroad their rambling boughs. Bay-trees were expanded into a fan, that no weather could tarnish; or rounded into a column, that knew not how to moulder. While the laurustinus ran out into a beautiful irregularity of shape, and compacted her reddening gems, in order to unfold her whitening bloom. In one place lay a dale, gently sinking, and coated with the camomile's natural frieze; which never changes its colour, never loses its gloss. Near it, and scooped, you would imagine, from the same hollow, arose a mount, softly swelling, and shagged with furze; gay with perennial verdure, and generally decked with golden blossoms. Here you are led through a serpentine walk, and hedges of box, and find, perhaps, a solitary pyramid or a capacious urn, each composed of unfading yew. There you look through a straight alley, fenced on either side, and arched over head, with mantling philyra; and see, at the extremity, an obelisk sheathed in ivy, and ornamented with its sable clusters as with wreaths of living sculpture. Scattered up and down were several sorts of holly; some striped with white, some spotted with yellow, some preparing to brighten and beautify the scene with berries of glowing scarlet.

The heads of the trees, arising one above another in a gradual slope, from the diminutive mezereon to the lofty cypress; the several shadings of their green attire, greatly diversified and judiciously intermixed, afford, especially in the winter season, a most enli-

vened and lovely prospect. As the sunshine is, by the frequenters of this grove, usually more coveted than the shade, it is so disposed as to admit, in one part or another, every gleam of fine weather which exhilarates the winter.

LIBERTY AND PROPERTY.

Liberty ! that dearest of names ; and property ! that best of charters, give an additional, an inexpressible charm to every delightful object. See how the declining sun has beautified the western clouds ; has arrayed them in crimson, and skirted them with gold. Such a refinement of our domestic bliss is property ; such an improvement of our public privileges is liberty. When the lamp of day shall entirely withdraw his beams, there will still remain the same collection of floating vapours ; but, O ! how changed, how gloomy ! The carnation streaks are faded, the golden edgings are worn away, and all the lovely tinges are lost in a leaden-coloured lowering sadness. Such would be the aspect of all these scenes of beauty, and all these abodes of pleasure, if exposed continually to the caprice of arbitrary sway, or held in a state of abject and cringing dependence.

FRAGILITY OF LIFE.

Legions, legions of disasters, such as no prudence can foresee, and no care prevent, lie in wait to accomplish our doom. A starting horse may throw his rider, may at once dash his body against the stones, and fling his soul into the invisible world. A stack of chimneys may tumble into the street, and crush the unwary passenger under the ruins : even a single tile, dropping from the roof, may be as fatal as the

fall of the whole structure. So frail, so very attenuated is the thread of life, that it not only bursts before the storm, but breaks even at a breeze. The most common occurrences, those from which we suspect not the least harm, may prove the weapons of our destruction. A grape stone, a despicable fly, may be more mortal than Goliath with all his formidable armour. Nay, if God give command, our very comforts become killing; the air we breathe is our bane; and the food we eat, the vehicle of death. That last enemy has unnumbered avenues for his approach; yea, lies intrenched in our very bosom, and holds his fortress in the seat of our life. The crimson fluid which distributes health is impregnated with the seeds of death. Heat may inflame it, or toil oppress it, and make it destroy the parts it was designed to cherish. Some unseen impediment may obstruct its passage, or some unknown violence may divert its course; in either of which cases it acts the part of a poisonous draught, or a deadly stab.

Ah! in what perils is vain life engaged!
 What slight neglects, what trivial faults destroy
 The hardest frame! Of indolence, of toil,
 We die; of want, of superfluity.
 The all-surrounding heaven, the vital air,
 Is big with death.

Since, then, we are so liable to be dispossessed of this earthly tabernacle, let us look upon ourselves only as tenants at will, and hold ourselves in perpetual readiness to depart at a moment's warning. Without such an habitual readiness, we are like wretches that sleep on the top of a mast, while a horrid gulf yawns, or furious waves rage below. And

where can be the peace, what the satisfaction of such a state ! Whereas, a prepared condition will inspire a cheerfulness of temper not to be dismayed by any alarming accident, and create a firmness of mind not to be overthrown by the most threatening dangers. When the city is fortified with walls, furnished with provision, guarded by able and resolute troops, what have the inhabitants to fear ? What may they not enjoy ? So, just so, or rather by a much surer bond, are connected the real taste of life, and the constant thought of death.

CHARACTER OF A GOOD MINISTER.

A minister is a person of the greatest importance imaginable ; his office is of the most universal concernment ; and his demeanour therein of the most beneficial or prejudicial tendency. Beneficial, if he be able, faithful, and watches for his people's souls, as one that must give account. Prejudicial, if he be unskilful, inactive, and unconcerned about the spiritual welfare of his people. The things that pertain to salvation, and the means of obtaining everlasting life, are lodged in his hands. He is the steward of the mysteries of Christ, and so the guardian (under divine grace) of your best and most abiding interests. If through ignorance he mismanage, or through idleness neglect this weighty trust, it may be the ruin of immortal souls ; whereas, if he be both discreet and diligent in his holy vocation, he may be the instrument of the richest benefits to those committed to his charge. His praying to God, and his preaching to them, may be attended with such a blessing from on high, as will fill them with heavenly wisdom, form them to true holiness, and fit them for the future glory. Bc-

nefits these, not inconsiderable or momentary, but such as are great beyond all expression, and lasting to eternity. For these reasons it will be your wisdom and your happiness to procure a pastor whose life is exemplary; whose doctrine is sound; whose heart is warm with zeal for God; and whose bowels yearn with compassion for men. If your bones were broken, or if you were brought to death's door by the force of some violent disease, you would not be content with the prescription of a quack, but seek out for the best advice. If your wives were in hard labour; if the children were come to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth, you would not spare to ride for the most experienced midwife. Oh! be as prudent and careful for the salvation of your souls, which endure for ever, as you are for the life of your bodies, which is but as a vapour. Remember that you are sick of sin, sadly disordered by sundry corruptions, and must necessarily be cured before you go hence and are no more seen. Remember that you must be regenerated and born again, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. And be not willing to trust such matters, which are of infinite and everlasting moment, to the management of any that comes next.

Now, that you may be the better able to make a right choice in this important particular, I will lay before you two or three of the distinguishing characters of a true minister. First, He has a tolerable stock of knowledge: though not enough to explain all mysteries, or to answer every perplexing question, yet enough to make himself and his hearers wise unto salvation. He may be ignorant of many things, without much disparagement to himself, or prejudice

to his people; but he must be acquainted with, and able to teach others, all that is necessary for them to know. Secondly, He has not only some understanding, but some experience also, in the way of godliness. He has learned to subdue, in some measure, the pride of his nature, and to be humble in his own eyes, and not fond of applause from others. He has broke the impetuosity of his passion, and generally possesses his soul in patience; or if, upon some very ungrateful and provoking usage, he cannot calm his temper, yet he can curb his tongue; and though his spirit be ruffled, yet his words will be gentle. He is most commonly meek, after the manner of his blessed Master, and will always return blessing for cursing, according to his holy command. He has often looked into the shortness of time, and the length of eternity; he has weighed the greatness and richness of heaven, with the insignificant and despicable meanness of earth; and discovers such a mighty difference, as helps him to live above the world, even while he is in it. So that he is no lover of filthy lucre, no hunter of carnal pleasures, but his hopes, his desires, and all his views of happiness, are hid with Christ in God. He is courteous and condescending, and will stoop with the utmost cheerfulness to the lowest person in his parish. He will be affable and kind, and seek to please, not himself, but his neighbours, for their good to edification. But you must not expect to find him trifling or ludicrous; he will not preach to you on the Sunday, and play with you on the week-days, but carry the spirit of his sermons into his ordinary conversation. He will maintain an uniform gravity of behaviour, without suffering it to be frozen into moroseness, or thawed into levity. He will love his

parishioners, not for their agreeable persons or amiable qualities, but because they are redeemed by the blood of Christ. It will be his business and constant endeavour, I had almost said his meat and drink, to set forward their salvation; that, by their being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, his crucified Lord may see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. He will never forget the importunate request of his Saviour, but those winning and commanding words, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs," will be engraven upon the tables of his heart. To fulfil this earnest request, and execute this last charge of his dearest Redeemer, will be the fixed and invariable scope of all his designs. If at any time he hits this desirable mark, by bringing home to the fold any that have gone astray, he will be as glad as one that findeth great spoils. To see the people of his care persisting in profaneness, sensuality, and an unconverted state, will be the greatest grief that he feels: but to see his children walking in the truth, mortifying their evil affections, and growing up in goodness as the calves of the stall, this will be his joy and crown of rejoicing; better to him than thousands of silver and gold. It is his work to win souls; and by the former of these qualifications he is fitted for it, by the latter he is wholly devoted to it. And, in order to prosecute it with the greater success, he will first take heed to himself, that his life be a fair and beautiful transcript of his doctrine, such as may remind men of, and be daily reinforcing his instructions. He will not bind the yoke upon your shoulders, till he has worn it himself; and should the paths of religion prove never so thorny, he will go first, and beat the way. As far as human infirmities permit, he will

strive to be unblamable and irreprovable, that he may renew the apostle's challenge, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ." Secondly, his preaching will be plain; full of such useful sense as may be edifying to the better learned, and yet delivered in so easy a manner as may be intelligible to the ignorant. It will not only be plain, but powerful also: if preceding prayers and tears; if words coming warm from the heart, and accompanied with an ardent desire of being attended to; if to feel himself what he speaks, and to long that it may be felt by others, can make it such, he will declare the whole will of God, without withholding or mincing any. Be the truth never so disagreeable, contrary to your profits, or contrary to your pleasures, you will be sure to hear it. He will indeed show it in as lovely a light, and make it as palatable as he can, but nothing will prevail upon him to conceal or disguise it. Thirdly, he will not confine his teaching to God's day or house, but will exercise his care of you every day, and will bring it home to your own houses, whether you invite him or no. He will frequently visit you, and for the same end as he meets you at church. Now, shall you like this part of his duty, or bid him welcome when he comes on such an errand? Nay, he will think himself bound to proceed farther, and to inquire into the state of your souls, and your proceedings in your families; whether you are competently furnished with saving knowledge, and are careful to increase it daily, by allowing a daily portion of your time for reading the Scriptures? what virtues you are deficient in, what vices you are subject to? what evil tempers, what vile affections, what unruly passions are predominant in you, and want to be suppressed? whether

your children are catechised, and your servants instructed? whether you are constant in family worship, and at your closet devotions? how you spend the Sabbath—whether you squander it away in impertinent visits, idle chat, or foolish jesting; or whether you consecrate it to the better exercises of prayer, praise, holy discourse, reading, and meditation? These, and other points of the like nature, he will examine into; and exhort you to amend what is amiss, no less than encourage you to persevere in that which is good. Nor will he exhort you once or twice only, but again and again, and hardly leave off till he has won your consent. In things that relate to himself, he will be easily said nay; but when the great God insists upon obedience, and a blessed immortality will be lost by disobedience, he will be instant in season, and out of season; he will solicit with unwearied applications the important cause, and press you to perform your duty, as the poor widow importuned the unjust judge to avenge her of her adversary; he will add to his exhortations reproofs. His eye will be open, and his ears attentive to what passes in his parish; and when any one walks disorderly, he will meet him as Elijah did Ahab, (1 Kings, xxi. 20,) with a rebuke in his mouth. This I can promise, that he will not rail at, nor accost you with reproachful words, but he will certainly set before you the things that you have done. He will not defame you behind your backs; but whether you be rich or poor, whether you be pleased with it or not, he will bear in mind the commandment of the Lord, and show his people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins, Isa. lviii. 1. He will tell you with tenderness, but yet with plainness,

that such courses are a sad and too sure a proof, that grace has not had its proper work on your souls ; that ye are carnal, and have not the Spirit of Christ. So that a true minister of the gospel will be a constant inspector of your actions, a faithful monitor of your duty, and an impartial reprovcr of your offences. He will guide you by his counsel, and animate you by his example, and bless you by his prayers. If you be willing and obedient, he will conduct you safely through a troublesome and naughty world, and bring you to the land of everlasting felicity ; but if you be perverse and obstinate, he will be a standing terror to your consciences here, and a swift witness against you hereafter ; he will be the unhappy means of increasing your guilt, and aggravating your future account, and of making it more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for you.

NATURE'S ENTERTAINMENTS.

All the entertainments of nature are calculated to secure our innocence, as well as to gratify our fancy. And what is another very agreeable circumstance, those gratifications which afford the sublimest pleasure are exhibited gratis, while those which enervate the mind and debauch the affections must be dearly purchased. Every one cannot gain admittance into the boxes or the pit, when some celebrated tragedy is brought upon the stage ; but every one may behold the beauteous exhibitions of spring, and the finished productions of autumn. All may contemplate the machinery of nature, and the wonders of creation ; thereby enjoying a far more exquisite amusement, without any of the guilt or any of the danger.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

Sometimes in my evening walk I have heard

The wakeful bird

Sing darkling ; and, in shadiest covert hid,

Tune her nocturnal note. *Paradise Lost.*

How different the airs of this charming songster from those harsh and boding outcries ! The little creature ran through all the variations of music ; and showed herself mistress of every grace which constitutes or embellishes harmony. Sometimes she swells a manly throat, and her song kindles into ardour. The tone is so bold, and strikes with such energy, you would imagine the sprightly serenader in the very next thicket. Anon the strain languishes, and the mournful warbler melts into tenderness. The melancholy notes just steal upon the shades, and faintly touch your ear ; or, in soft and sadly pleasing accents, they seem to die along the distant vale : silence is pleased, and night listens to the trilling tale.

OBSCENE STATUES AND PICTURES.

Ther. Indeed, my Aspasio, I have often been disappointed, sometimes even shocked, in the gardens, the porticoes, and the walks of some modern virtuosi. — Their portraits and statues are little else but an assemblage of elaborate trifles. Ixion stretched upon the wheel, or Phaeton precipitated from the chariot. Apollo stringing his lyre, or Jupiter (I beg his supreme highness's pardon for not giving him the precedence in my catalogue) bestriding his eagle, and balancing his bolts. Pray, where is the advantage of

being introduced to this fabulous tribe of gentry? What noble idea can they awaken, or what valuable impression leave upon the mind? The best we can say of such performances is, that they are limning and sculpture expensively thrown away.

This celebrated trumpery one can bear with, however. But when the painting and sculpture, instead of cultivating virtue, and improving our morals, are calculated to be the very bane of both—will you call this an elegant entertainment? No: it is a nuisance; it is a pest. In the statues, I grant, every dimple sinks, and every muscle swells, with the exactest propriety. The countenance is animated with life, and the limbs are ready to start into motion. The picture, I am sensible, is as highly finished as the effigy: the distributions of light and shade most artfully adjusted; the diminutions of the perspective true to a nicety; nor can any thing exceed the easy flow of the robe, unless it be the graceful attitude, and almost speaking aspect, of the principal figure. But is this masterly execution an equivalent for the most malignant effects? for sullyng the purity of my fancy, and poisoning the powers of my imagination?

Is it an indication of the owner's judicious taste, to prefer regularity of features in the hammered block, before orderly and harmonious affections in his own breast? Does it bespeak a refined disposition, or benevolent temper, to be so extravagantly enamoured with the touches of a lascivious pencil, as to expose them in the most frequented passages, and obtrude them on every unwary guest? Surely, this can create no very advantageous opinion of a gentleman's intellectual discernment; much less can it raise an amiable

idea of his moral character*. On such occasions I am strongly tempted to suspect, that real honour is a stranger where common decency is wanting.

As for the artist, one can hardly forbear execrating his hateful folly, who could prostitute such fine talents to such infamous purposes. Detested be the chisel that teaches, though with inimitable dexterity, the cold obdurate marble to enkindle dissolute affections! Abhorred be the pencil, that makes no other use of the most lovely colours than to pollute the canvas, and ensnare the spectator!

PRAYER.

What cannot prayer, fervent and believing prayer, do? I scarcely know any thing that is above its power, or beyond its reach. Prayer has locked up the clouds, and opened them again, made the earth as iron, and the heavens as brass; prayer has arrested the sun in his race, and made the moon stand still in her march, and reversed the perpetual decree; prayer has fetched down angels from above, and raised up the dead from beneath, and done many wonderful works.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Spacious indeed are these heavens! where do they begin? where do they end? what is their extent?

* It is a pity but the advice of Cicero, that great master of elegant taste and polite manners, was received as a standard of regulation by all our connoisseurs in the fine arts: "In primis provideat, ne ornamenta ædium atque hortorum vitium aliquod indicent inesse moribus."—*De Offic.*

Can angels answer my question? have angels travelled the vast circuit? can angels measure the bounds of space? No; it is boundless, it is unknown, it is amazing all. How charming, then, to reflect, that the mercy of God is "greater than the heavens; is more extensive than the dimensions of the sky." Transporting reflection! Let me indulge thee once more. Let me think over the delightful displays of this lovely attribute; and, while I admire the trophies of forgiving goodness, add one to the number. With what amiable and affecting colours is this represented in the parable of the prodigal! What could induce that foolish youth to forsake his father's house? Had he not been tenderly cherished by the good parent, and loaded with benefits from his indulgent hand? Were not the restraints of parental government an easy yoke; or rather a preservative from ruin? Notwithstanding every endearing obligation, he revolts from his duty; and launches into such scandalous irregularities, as were dishonourable to his family, and destructive to himself. When necessity, not choice but sharp necessity, drove him to a submissive return, does the injured father stand aloof or shut his doors? Quite the reverse. He espies him, while he is yet a great way off; and the moment he beholds the profligate youth, he has compassion on him. His bowels yearn, they "sound like a harp," touched with notes divinely soft. He never once thinks of his ungracious departure, and infamous debaucheries. Pity, parental pity, passes an act of oblivion; and in one instant cancels a series of long-continued provocations. So strong are the workings of fatherly affection, that he is almost impatient to embrace the naked and destitute wretch. The son's pace is slow, *He arose and came:*

The father's is swift ; he sprung forth (aged as he was) and *ran*. And is there a single frown on his brow, an upbraiding word on his tongue ? Instead of loathing the sordid creature, or reproaching him for his odious excesses, he falls on his neck, clasps him in his arms, and hugs him to his bosom. Instead of disowning the riotous spendthrift, or rejecting him for his un-dutiful behaviour, he receives and welcomes him with kisses of delight. He rejoices at his return from extravagance and vice, as he formerly rejoiced on the day of his nativity. When this companion of harlots opens his mouth—before he speaks, the father hears : he interrupts him in the midst of his intended speech. The overflowings of his compassionate heart can brook no delay. He seems to be uneasy himself, till he has made the afflicted penitent glad with the assurance of his acceptance, and the choicest of his favours. While the poor abashed offender seeks nothing more than not to be abhorred, he is thoroughly reconciled, and honoured before the whole family. While he requests no other indulgence than only to be treated as the meanest servant, he is clothed with the best robe ; he is feasted with the fatted calf ; he is caressed as the dearest of children. Was there ever so bright and winning a picture of the tenderest mercy, most freely vouchsafed, even to the most unworthy of creatures ? Yet thus, my soul, and thus, my fellow-sinner, will the Lord God of everlasting compassions receive us, if, sensible of our misery, and thirsting for salvation, we turn to him through Jesus Christ.

PROUD MINDS.

Proud minds suffer the curse imprecated on the mountains of Gilboa ; while humble souls are like the

valleys spread forth by the rivers, or as a field which the Lord hath blessed.

RAIN AFTER DROUGHT.

For some time past we have been visited with the most uncomfortable weather, dewless nights and sultry days. The firmament was more like a glowing furnace than the region of refreshing rain. The earth lay parched with thirst, and chapped with heat. The meadows were drained of their humidity, and all the flowers hung their fading heads. The streams, which used to flow parallel with the verdant margin, abandoned their banks, and sunk diminished and discoloured to the bottom of their oozy channels. Nature in general seemed to be resigning the "robe of beauty for the garment of heaviness." Drought was in all our borders, and famine we feared was not far behind. Though clouds of dust obscured the air, tarnished the hedges, and almost smothered the traveller, yet not one cloud of fleecy white appeared, to variegate the blue expanse, or give us hopes of a reviving shower.

It reminded me of that awful threatening denounced by Moses on a wicked people: "The heaven, that is over thy head, shall be brass, and the earth, that is under thee, shall be iron," Deut. xxviii. 23. It made me apprehensive of that terrible state which the prophet so emphatically describes: "The field is wasted, and the land mourneth. The seed is rotten under the clods, and the harvest perisheth. The garners are laid desolate, and the barns are broken down. The new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth, and all the trees of the field are withered. How do the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed; yea, the flocks of

sheep are made desolate : Because the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness," Joel, i. 10, &c. But, blessed be the divine Providence, our fears are vanished, and a most joyful change has taken place. The Lord hath "sent a gracious rain upon his inheritance, and refreshed it when it was weary," Psalm lxxviii. 9.

Yesterday in the afternoon, the wind, shifting to the south, roused the dormant clouds, and brought some of those agreeable strangers on its wings. At first they came sailing in small, and thin, and scattered parties. Anon, the flying squadrons advanced in larger detachments, more closely wedged, and more deeply laden ; till at last, the great rendezvous completed, they formed into a body of such depth, and extended their wings with such a sweep, as darkened the sun, and overspread the whole hemisphere.

Just at the close of day, the gales which escorted the spongy treasures retired, and consigned their charge to the disposal of a profound calm. Not a breeze shook the most tremulous leaf : not a curl ruffled the smooth expansive lake : all things were still, as in attentive expectation. The earth seemed to gasp after the hovering moisture. Nature, with her suppliant tribes, in expressive pleading silence, solicited the falling fruitfulness, nor pleaded long, nor solicited in vain.

The showers, gentle, soft, and balmy, descend. The vessels of heaven unload their precious freight, and enrich the penurious glebe. Through all the night, the liquid sweetness, incomparably more beneficial than trickling silver, distils ; shedding herbs, and fruits, and flowers.—Now the sun, mild and refu-

gent, issues through the portals of the east. Pleased, as it were, to have emerged from the late aggravated darkness, he looks abroad with peculiar gaiety and the most engaging splendours. He looks through the disburdened air, and finds a gladdened world, that wants nothing but his all-cheering beams to render its satisfaction complete.

The glory comes!—Hail to thy rising ray,
Great lamp of light, and second source of day!
Who robe the world, each nipping gale remove,
Treat every sense, and beam creating love.

KIRKPATRICK.

At his auspicious approach, the freshened mountains lift their heads, and smile. The garden opens its aromatic stores, and breathes, as from a fuming altar, balm to the smell, and incense to the skies. The little hills, crowned with springing plenty, clap their hands on every side. The moistened plains, and irriguous valleys, “ laugh and sing; while their waters, lately exhausted, again ‘ are made deep, and their rivers run like oil,’ ” Ezek. xxxii. 14.

The whole earth, saturated with the bounty of heaven, and flushed with humid life, wears a thousand marks of gratitude and complacency. Washed by the copious rain, how bright and vivid is the universal verdure! The green carpet below may almost vie with the blue canopy above. The forest, and every tree, burnish their colours, and array themselves in their finest apparel; which, as on a day of general festivity, is delicately decked with gems—gems of unsullied lustre, and of genial moisture. From every pasture, and from all the grove, the voice of pleasure

and of melody resounds ; while the officious zephyrs waft the floating harmony, blended with native perfumes—gently waft them to the senses, and touch the very soul with transport.

Could there be a more brilliant appearance, or more exuberant demonstrations of joy, even to celebrate the anniversary of nature's birth ? With what admirable propriety has the Psalmist compared yonder orient sun, in all his sparkling grandeur, to a young exulting "bridegroom," Psal. xix. 5 ; who comes forth, with every heightened ornament, from his chamber, to show himself in the most distinguished period of his life, and to receive the blessing which consummates his happiness !

READING SHOULD BE SELECT.

You will easily perceive, said Theron, that I am somewhat singular in furnishing my study, as well as in ornamenting the avenue. My books are not for show, but use ; and claim a regard, rather on account of their worth than their number. An immense multitude of volumes, I have always thought, is more likely to embarrass the attention than to improve the understanding. A huge library seems to resemble a perplexing labyrinth ; and often bewilders the mind, instead of leading it expeditiously to the acquisition of truth.

When people are eager to peruse a multiplicity of writings, it frequently happens, that in reading all they digest none. They taste some empty and transient amusement, but collect no solid or lasting advantage. Their minds are somewhat like those capacious looking-glasses, which we have seen exposed in

the most frequented and populous streets of London. They receive all manner of shadowy images, but no substantial impression. A thousand figures pass through them, not one abides in them.

Our books, replied Aspasio, as well as our friends, should rather be select than numerous. For my part, I would desire no more than two or three of the most correct and masterly writers in any science. These a person of moderate capacity may be able to comprehend; and not comprehend only, but enrich his memory with the choicest sentiments, and make the substance of their works his own. He will, by repetition and familiar converse, enter into their spirit, and acquire their manner; while a rambler in reading does little more than gratify his fancy, without refining his taste, or amending his heart.

RELIGIOUS FERVOUR.

I am much pleased with your remark on a certain learned —. The heart surely should be engaged in the preacher's office, as well as the head.

Are passions then the Pagans of the soul?
Reason alone baptized, alone ordain'd,
To touch things sacred?

The great apostle was fervent in spirit, as well as cogent in arguing. He beseeches, conjures, and charges his people. He adds prayers to his entreaties, and tears to his prayers. When he reasons, conviction shines; when he exhorts, pathos glows.

SAURIN'S SERMONS.

My dear Friend,—Well might Dr. Doddridge say, “that in Saurin’s sermons, the excellencies of Demosthenes and Cicero were united.” Never did I meet with any thing equal to the passages which the doctor was so obliging as to translate, purposely to give me some ideas of this celebrated writer. He seems to have understood the gospel well, and all the powers of oratory were combined in him. I dare say he preached from his heart, and the grace of God accompanied his words. If I have been so much affected, merely by this desultory translation, how much more should I be transported, was I (like you) sufficiently skilled in the French language to read the original itself! Saurin, it seems, was a Protestant; and I am told, that in Holland, where he exercised his ministry, the streets were so crowded for several hours before the service began, that it was very difficult to gain admission. Is it not astonishing, that the sermons of so popular a preacher, and so eminent a writer, should not as yet have been put into an English dress? But this I presume is owing to the difficulty of doing justice to an author of his extraordinary genius. I am well aware, that few are equal to such an undertaking; but if there was a spirited translation of these animating sermons, published in weekly numbers, they would be well received, and might, through the divine blessing, be the means of doing much good to the community.

JESTING WITH THE SCRIPTURES.

Was it you, dear sir, or I, that, when a certain passage in Scripture happened to be mentioned,

treated it, not indeed with a contemptuous disdain, but with too ludicrous an air? descanted on it in a sportive and frolicsome manner, in order to create a little pleasantry? If I was the person that indulged this improper levity, I beseech you to rebuke me, and severely too. Though my design might be innocent, my conduct was apparently wrong. That infinitely precious and important book should be always held in the highest veneration. Whatever the divine Spirit vouchsafes to dictate should be thought and spoken of by mortals with gratitude, dutifulness, and awe. It is the character of a religious man, that he trembles at God's word; and it is said of the great Jehovah, that he has magnified his name and his word above all things.

WRESTING THE MEANING OF SCRIPTURE.

I have often been disgusted at such strained applications of Scripture. The partisans of a system wrest the sacred book. They deal with divine truth as the tyrant Procrustes served those unhappy creatures who fell into his merciless hands. Is a text too short to suit their design? Our Procrustean expositors can stretch it on the rack, and lengthen its sense. Is it too full to consist with their scheme? They can lop off a limb, secrete a sentence, or contract the meaning. Is this to reverence the great God? Is this to treat respectfully his holy word?

SECTS NOT INJURIOUS.

In a grove of tulips, or a knot of pinks, one perceives a difference in almost every individual. Scarce any two are turned and tintured exactly alike; each

allows himself a little peculiarity in his dress, though all belong to one family; so that they are various, and yet the same. A pretty emblem this of the smaller differences between Protestant Christians. There are modes in religion, which admit of variation, without prejudice to sound faith or real holiness; just as the drapery on these pictures of the spring may be formed after a variety of patterns, without blemishing their beauty or altering their nature. Be it so then, that in some points of inconsiderable consequence several of our brethren dissent; yet let us all live amicably and sociably together, for we harmonize in principles, though we vary in punctilios. Let us join in conversation, and intermingle interests; discover no estrangement of behaviour, and cherish no alienation of affection. If any strife subsists, let it be to follow our divine Master most closely, in humility of heart and unblamableness of life; let it be to serve one another most readily, in all the kind offices of a cordial friendship. Thus shall we be united, though distinguished; united in the same grand fundamentals, though distinguished by some small circumstantials; united in one important bond of brotherly love, though distinguished by some slighter peculiarities of sentiment.

Between Christians, whose judgments disagree only about a form of prayer, or manner of worship, I apprehend there is no more essential difference than between flowers which bloom from the same kind of seed, but happen to be somewhat diversified in the mixture of their colours. Whereas, if one denies the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and degrades the incarnate God to the meanness of a mere creature; if another cries up the worthiness of human works, and

depreciates the alone meritorious righteousness of the glorious Mediator; if a third addresses the incommunicable honours to a finite being, and bows to the image, or prays to the saint; these are errors extremely derogatory to the Redeemer's dignity, and not a little prejudicial to the comfort of his people: against these to remonstrate, against these to urge every argument, and use every dissuasive, bespeaks not the censorious bigot, but the friend of truth and the lover of mankind. Whereas to stand neuter, and silent, while such principles are propagated, would be an instance of criminal remissness, rather than of Christian moderation. For the persons, we will not fail to maintain a tender compassion; we will not cease to put up earnest intercessions; we will also acknowledge and love whatever is excellent and amiable in their character: yet we dare not subscribe their creed; we must not secrete our strong reasons; we cannot remit our assiduous but kind endeavours, if by any means we may reconcile them to a more scriptural belief, and a purer worship.

THE ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE.

After all the ardours of the sultry day, how reviving is this coolness! This gives new verdure to the fading plants, new vivacity to the withering flowers, and a more exquisite fragrance to their mingled scents. By this the air also receives a new force, and is qualified to exert itself with greater activity; qualified to brace our limbs, to heave our lungs, and to cooperate with a brisker impulse in perpetuating the circulation of our blood. This I might call the grand alembic of nature, which distils her most sovereign cordial, the refreshing dews. Incessant heat would

rob us of their beneficial agency, and oblige them to evaporate in imperceptible exhalations. Turbulent winds, or even the gentler motions of Aurora's fan, would dissipate the rising vapours, and not suffer them to form a coalition. But favoured by the stillness, and condensed by the coolness of the night, they unite in pearly drops, and create that finely tempered humidity, which cheers the vegetable world as sleep exhilarates the animal.

Not unlike to these are the advantages of solitude. The world is a troubled ocean; and who can erect stable purposes on its fluctuating waves? The world is a school of wrong; and who does not feel himself warping to its pernicious influences? On this sea of glass (Rev. xv. 2) how insensibly we slide from our own steadfastness! Some sacred truth, which was struck in lively characters on our souls, is obscured, if not obliterated. Some worthy resolution which Heaven had wrought in our breasts, is shaken, if not overthrown. Some enticing vanity which we had solemnly renounced, again practises its wiles, and again captivates our affections. How often has an unwary glance kindled a fever of irregular desire in our hearts? How often has a word of applause dropt luscious poison into our ears? or some disrespectful expression raised a gust of passion in our bosoms? Our innocence is of so tender a constitution, that it suffers in the promiscuous crowd. Our purity is of so delicate a complexion, that it scarce touches on the world without contracting a stain. We see, we hear, with peril.

But here safety dwells. Every meddling and intrusive avocation is secluded. Silence holds the door against the strife of tongues, and all the impertinencies

of idle conversation. The busy swarm of vain images, and cajoling temptations, which beset us with a buzzing importunity amidst the gaieties of life, are chased by these thickening shades. Here I may without disturbance commune with my own heart, and learn that best of sciences—to know myself. Here the soul may rally her dissipated powers, and grace recover its native energy. This is the opportunity to rectify every evil impression; to expel the poison, and guard against the contagion of corrupting examples. This is the place where I may with advantage apply myself to subdue the rebel within, and be master not of a sceptre, but of myself. Throng, then, ye ambitious, the levees of the powerful; I will be punctual in my assignations with solitude. To a mind intent upon its own improvement, solitude has charms incomparably more engaging than the entertainments presented in the theatre, or the honours conferred in the drawing-room.

SPACE INTERMINABLE.

As there is no end of the almighty Maker's greatness, so no imagination can set limits to his creating hand. Could you soar beyond the moon, and pass through all the planetary choir; could you wing your way to the highest apparent star, and take your stand on one of those loftiest pinnacles of heaven—you would there see other skies expanded; another sun distributing his inexhaustible beams by day; other stars that gild the horrors of the alternate night; and other, perhaps nobler, systems established—established in unknown profusion, through the boundless dimensions of space. Nor does the dominion of the universal Sovereign terminate there. Even at the end of this

vast tour, you would find yourself advanced no farther than the suburbs of creation, arrived only at the frontiers of the great Jehovah's kingdom.

SPRING.

What a magnificent and charming scene ! Hills on either side, gently rising, and widely spreading ; their summits crowned with scattered villages, and clustering trees ; their slopes divided into a beauteous chequer-work, consisting partly of tillage with its waving crops, partly of pasturage with its grazing herds. Before us, the trefoil, the clover, and a variety of grassy plants, differently bladed and differently branched, weave themselves into a carpet of living green. Can any of the manufactures formed in the looms, or extended in the palaces of Persia, vie with the covering of this ample area ? vie with it, in grandeur of size, or delicacy of decoration ?

What a profusion of the gayest flowers, fringing the banks, and embroidering the plain !

— Nature here

Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss !

MILTON, B. v.

Nothing can be brighter than the lustre of those silver daisies, nothing deeper than the tinge of those golden crowfoots ; yet both seem to acquire additional beauty, by succeeding to the deformity of winter, and flourishing amidst so much surrounding verdure.

Theron. Nature is truly in her prime. The vegetable tribes are putting on their richest attire. Those

chestnuts, on our right hand, begin to rear their flowering pyramids; those willows, on our left, are tipt with tassels of grey; and yonder poplars, which overlook the river, and seem to command the meadows, are pointed with rolls of silver.

The hawthorn, in every hedge, is partly turgid with silken gems, partly dissolved into a milk-white bloom: not a straggling furze, nor a solitary thicket, but wears a rural nosegay. All is a delightful display of present fertility, and a joyous pledge of future plenty. Now we experience what the royal poet, in very delicate imagery, describes: "The winter is past: the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs; and the vine, with the tender grapes, give a good smell." Cant. ii. 11—13.

A STAG HUNT.

You are a sportsman, Theron, and delight in the manly recreations of the field; you must therefore have read that fine poem which so elegantly describes your favourite diversion.

Theron. *The Chase*, I suppose you mean.

Aspasio. The same. Do you remember the large description of the royal stag-chase?

Ther. Perfectly well. It is not a week since I perused the whole passage, and with as much pleasure as if it had been entirely new.

Asp. Then you can give me a summary of the agreeable narrative.

Ther. I can. But will not this chase lead us away very far from our subject?

Asp. Perhaps not so far as you imagine. I have a reason for my request.

Ther. What reason, I beseech you ?

Asp. You shall soon know. Only favour me with the account.

Ther. I protest, I cannot discern the least connexion between these rural sports and the grand topic of our conversation. However, since you command, I will implicitly obey.

The stag, roused from his lair, shakes his dappled sides ; tosses his beamy head ; and, conscious of superior agility, seems to defy the gathering storm. You see, speaking of poetry, I have caught something of the poetical strain.

Asp. This enlivened manner excites my eagerness, and makes me more desirous to hear the sequel.

Ther. First, he has recourse to stratagem, and evasive shifts. He plunges into the copse, darts across the glade, and wheels about in doubling mazes, as though he would pursue even the foe he avoids. The full-mouthed pack unravel all his windings, and drive him from his wily arts.

Now he betakes himself to flight, and confides in his speed. He bursts through the woods, bounds over the lawns, and leaves the lagging beagles far behind. The beagles, slow but sure, trace his steps through woods, through lawns, through half the extended forest : unwearied, still unwearied, they urge their ardent way, and gain upon the alarmed object of their pursuit.

Again he flies, flies with redoubled swiftness ; shoots down the steep ; strains up the hill ; and takes shelter in the inmost recess of some sequestered grove. The sagacious hounds hang, with greedy nostrils, on

the scent. They recover, by indefatigable assiduity, the ground they had lost. Up they come a third time; and, joining in a general peal of vengeance, hurry the affrighted animal from his short concealment.

Perplexed, and in the utmost distress, he seeks the numerous herd. He would lose himself, and elude his pursuers, amidst the multitude of his fellows. But they, unconcerned for a brother's woe, shun the miserable creature, or expel him from the selfish circle. Abandoned by his associates, and haunted with apprehensions of approaching ruin, he trembles at every leaf that shakes. He starts; he springs; and wild, and swift as the wind, flies he knows not where, yet pours all his soul in flight. Vain, vain are his efforts! The horrid cry, lately lessened, thickens upon the gale, and thunders in his ear. Now the poor breathless victim is full in view: his sprightliness forsakes him; his agility is spent. See how he toils in yonder valley with faltering limbs and a hobbling gait! The sight of their game quickens the pace, and whets the ardour, of the impetuous hounds. With tumultuous violence they rush in, and with clamorous joy demand their prey.

What can he do, surrounded as he is with insulting tongues and ravenous jaws? Despair is capable of inspiriting even the timorous breast. Having nothing to hope, he forgets to fear. He faces about, and makes a resolute stand. The trunk of a sturdy tree covers his rear, and his own branching horns defend him in front. He rushes upon his adversaries, gores some, lays others grovelling on the turf, and makes the whole coward pack give way.

Encouraged by this unexpected success, his hopes

revive. He rallies once again his drooping spirits; exerts the little remainder of his strength, and springs through the midst of the retiring rout. It is his last, last chance. He stretches every nerve; once more loses sight of the rabble from the kennel; and, finding no security on the land, takes to the water! He throws his burning sides into the river, sails down the cooling stream, and slinks away to the verge of some little shelving island. There finding a resting-place for his feet, he sculks close to the shady margin. All immersed in the wave, excepting only his nostrils, he baffles for a while the prying eye of man, and the keener smell of brute.

Discovered at length, and forced to quit this un-availing refuge, he climbs the slippery bank. Unable to fly any longer, he stands at bay against an aged willow; stands, all faint with toil, and sobbing with anguish. The crowds that gather round him with merciless and outrageous transport, triumph in his misery. A multitude of blood-thirsty throats, joined with the sonorous horn, ring his funeral knell. The tears, till this fatal instant unknown, gush from his languishing eyes, and roll down his reeking cheeks. He casts one more look on the woods, the lawns, the pleasing scenes of his former delights; and, determined to die, prepares to sell his life as dear as possible.

At this most critical juncture, the royal sportsman comes up. He sees the distressed creature; and as soon as he sees, he pities! The clemency which attends the throne, accompanies even the diversions of majesty. He issues the high command. The prohibitory signal is given. The pack, though raving for blood, are checked in a moment; and not checked only, but called off from the prey. Disappointed and

grumbling they retire, and leave the intended victim of their fury to enjoy his liberty, his safety, and his ease again.

REFLECTIONS AT SUN-RISE.

It was early in a summer morning, when the air was cool, the earth moist, the whole face of the creation fresh and gay. The noisy world was scarce awake. Business had not quite shook off his sound sleep, and riot had but just reclined his giddy head. All was serene ; all was still ; every thing tended to inspire tranquillity of mind, and invite to serious thought.

Only the wakeful lark had left her nest, and was mounting on high, to salute the opening day. Elevated in air, she seemed to call the laborious husbandman to his toil, and all her fellow songsters to their notes. Earliest of birds, said I, companion of the dawn, may I always rise at thy voice—rise to offer the matin song, and adore that beneficent Being “who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice !”

How charming to rove abroad at this sweet hour of prime ! to enjoy the calm of nature, to tread the dewy lawns, and taste the unrifled freshness of the air !

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds.

PARADISE LOST.

What a pleasure do the sons of sloth lose ! Little, ah ! little is the sluggard sensible how delicious an entertainment he foregoes for the poorest of all animal gratifications.

The greyness of the dawn decays gradually. Abundance of ruddy streaks tinge the fleeces of the firmament, till at length the dappled aspect of the east is lost in one ardent and boundless blush. Is it the surmise of imagination, or do the skies really redden with shame, to see so many supinely stretched on their drowsy pillows? Shall man be lost in luxurious ease? Shall man waste these precious hours in idle slumbers, while the vigorous sun is up, and going on his Maker's errand? while all the feathered choir are hymning their Creator, and paying their homage in harmony? No. Let him heighten the melody of the tuneful tribes, by adding the rational strains of devotion. Let him improve the fragrant oblations of nature, by mingling with the rising odours the more refined breath of praise.

It is natural for man to look upward, to throw his first glance upon the objects that are above him.

Straight toward heaven my wondering eyes I turn'd,
And gazed awhile the ample sky.

PARADISE LOST.

Prodigious theatre! where lightnings dart their fire, and thunders utter their voice; where tempests spend their rage, and worlds unnumbered roll at large! O! the greatness of that mighty hand which meteth out this amazing circumference with a span! O! the immensity of that wonderful Being, before whom this unmeasurable extent is no more than a point! And, O! (thou pleasing thought!) the unsearchable riches of that mercy which is greater than the heavens! Psal. cviii. 4; is more enlarged and extensive, in its gracious exercise, than these illimitable tracts of air, and sea, and firmament! which pardons

crimes of the most enormous size, and the most horrid aggravations—pardons them in consideration of the Redeemer's atonement, with perfect freeness, and the utmost readiness! more readily, if it were possible, than this all-surrounding expanse admits within its circuit a ridge of mountains, or even a grain of sand.

FLY FROM TEMPTATION.

Harbour not, on any consideration, the betrayer of your virtue. Always maintain a holy sensibility of soul. Be deaf, inflexibly deaf, to every beguiling solicitation. If it obtrude into the unguarded heart, give it no entertainment, no, not for a moment. To parley with the enemy is to open a door for destruction. Our safety consists in flight, and in this case suspicion is the truest prudence; fear, the greatest bravery. Play not on the brink of the precipice; flutter not round the edges of the flame; dally not with the stings of death: but reject, with a becoming mixture of solicitude and abhorrence, the very first insinuations of iniquity, as cautiously as the smarting sore shrinks even from the softest hand; as constantly as this jealous plant (the sensitive) recoils at the approaching touch.

THE WASTE OF TIME.

Now, my soul, the day is ended. The hours are all fled. They are fled to the supreme Judge, and have given in their evidence; an evidence registered in heaven, and to be produced at the great audit. Happy they whose improvement has kept pace with the fleeting minutes; who have seized the important fugitives, and engaged them in the pursuit of wisdom, or devoted them to the service of virtue.

Fugitives indeed they are. Our moments slip away silently and insensibly. The thief steals not more unperceived from the pillaged house. And will the runagates never stop? No; wherever we are, however employed, time pursues his incessant course. Though we are listless and dilatory, the great measurer of our days presses on; still presses on in his unwearied career, and whirls our weeks, and months, and years away. Is it not then surprisingly strange, to hear people complain of the tediousness of their time, and how heavy it hangs upon their hands! to see them contrive a variety of amusing artifices to accelerate its flight, and get rid of its burden! Ah, thoughtless mortals! Why need you urge the headlong torrent? Your days are swifter than a post, which, carrying despatches of the last importance, with unremitted speed scours the road. They pass away like the nimble ships, which have the wind in their wings, and skim along the watery plain. They hasten to their destined period with the rapidity of an eagle, which leaves the stormy blast behind her, while she cleaves the air, and darts upon her prey.

* * * * *

Shall I now be industrious to shorten what is no longer than a span, or to quicken the pace of what is ever on the wing? Shall I squander away what is unutterably important while it lasts, and when once departed is altogether irrevocable? O! my soul, forbear the folly; forbear the desperate extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a loiterer the arrow that boundeth from the string; or sweep away diamonds as the refuse of thy house? Throw time away! Astonishing, ruinous, irreparable profuseness! Throw empires away, and be blameless; but, O! be parsimonious of

thy days; husband thy precious hours. They go connected, indissolubly connected, with heaven or hell. Improved, they are a sure pledge of everlasting glory; wasted, they are a sad preface to never-ending confusion and anguish.

TWILIGHT. -

While I am transported by fancy to the shores of the ocean, the great luminary is sunk beneath the horizon, and totally disappears. The whole face of the ground is overspread with shades; or with what one of the finest painters of nature calls a *dun obscurity*. Only a few very superior eminences are tipt with streaming silver. The tops of groves and lofty towers catch the last smiles of day; are still irradiated by the departing beams. But, oh! how transient is the distinction! how momentary the gift! Like all the blessings which mortals enjoy below, it is gone almost as soon as granted. See! how languishingly it trembles on the leafy spire, and glimmers with a dying faintness on the mountain's brow. The little vivacity that remains decays every moment. It can no longer hold its station. While I speak, it expires, and resigns the world to the gradual approaches of night.

——— Now twilight grey
Has in her sober livery all things clad.

PARADISE LOST.

Every object a little while ago glared with light; but now all appears under a more qualified lustre. The animals harmonize with the insensible creation; and what was gay in those, as well as glittering in this, gives place to an universal gravity. In the

meadows all was jocund and sportive ; but now the gamesome lambs are grown weary of their frolics, and the tired shepherd has imposed silence on his pipe. In the branches all was sprightliness and song ; but now the lively green is wrapt in the descending glooms, and no tuneful airs are heard, only the plaintive stockdove cooing mournfully through the grove. Should I now be vain and trifling, the heavens and the earth would rebuke my unseasonable levity. Therefore, be these moments devoted to thoughts sedate as the closing day, solemn as the face of things. And indeed, however my social hours are enlivened with innocent pleasantry, let every evening, in her sable habit, toll the bell to serious consideration. Nothing can be more proper for a person who walks on the borders of eternity, and is hasting continually to his final audit ; nothing more proper, than daily to slip away from the circle of amusements, and frequently to relinquish the hurry of business, in order to consider and adjust “the things that belong to his peace.”

A VISIT TO A BURIAL VAULT.

Yonder entrance leads, I suppose, to the vault. Let me turn aside, and take one view of the habitation and its tenants. The sullen door grates upon its hinges : not used to receive many visitants, it admits me with reluctance and murmurs. What meaneth this sudden trepidation while I descend the steps, and am visiting the pale mansions of the dead ? Be composed, my spirits ; there is nothing to fear in these quiet chambers : here, even “the wicked cease from troubling.”

Good heavens ! what a solemn scene ! how dismal

the gloom ! Here is perpetual darkness, and night even at noon-day. How doleful the solitude ! Not one trace of cheerful society ; but sorrow and terror seem to have made this their dread abode. Hark ! how the hollow dome resounds at every tread. The echoes that long have slept are awakened, and whisper along the walls.

A beam or two finds its way through the grates, and reflects a feeble glimmer from the nails of the coffins. So many of those sad spectacles, half concealed in shades, half seen dimly by the baleful twilight, add a deeper horror to these gloomy mansions. I pore upon the inscriptions, and am just able to pick out that these are the remains of the rich and renowned. No vulgar dead are deposited here. The most illustrious, and right honourable, have claimed this for their last retreat. And indeed they retain somewhat of a shadowy pre-eminence. They lie, ranged in mournful order, and in a sort of silent pomp, under the arches of an ample sepulchre ; while meaner corpses, without much ceremony, “ go down to the stones of the pit.”

My apprehensions recover from their surprise. I find here are no phantoms but such as fear raises. However, it still amazes me to observe the wonders of this nether world. Those who received vast revenues, and called whole lordships their own, are here reduced to half a dozen feet of earth, or confined in a few sheets of lead. Rooms of state and sumptuous furniture are resigned for no other ornament than the shroud, for no other apartment than the darksome niche. Where is the star that blazed upon the breast, or coronet that glittered round the temples ? The only remains of departed dignity are the wea-

ther-beaten hatchment and the tattered escutcheon. I see no splendid retinue surrounding this solitary dwelling. The lordly equipage hovers no longer about the lifeless master. He has no other attendant than a dusty statue; which, while the regardless world is as gay as ever, the sculptor's hand has taught to weep.

Those who gloried in high-born ancestors and noble pedigree here drop their lofty pretensions. They acknowledge kindred with creeping things, and quarter arms with the meanest reptiles. They say to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister. Or should they still assume the style of distinction, alas! how impotent were the claim! how apparent the ostentation! It is said by their monument, "Here lies the great!" How easily is it replied by the spectator,

————— False marble! Where?

Nothing but poor and sordid dust lies here.

Mortifying truth! sufficient, one would think, to wean the most sanguine appetite from this transitory state of things; from its sickly satisfactions, its fading glories, its vanishing treasures.

For now, ye lying vanities of life,
Ye ever tempting, ever cheating train,
Where are ye now? and what is your amount?

THOMSON.

What is all the world to these poor breathless beings? What are their pleasures? A bubble broken. What their honours? A dream that is forgotten. What the sum-total of their enjoyments below? Once, perhaps, it appeared to inexperienced and fond

desire something considerable; but, now death has measured it with his line, and weighed it in his scale, what is the upshot? Alas! it is shorter than a span, lighter than the dancing spark, and driven away like the dissolving smoke.

Indulge, my soul, a serious pause. Recollect all the gay things that were wont to dazzle thine eyes, and inveigle thy affections. Here examine those baits of sense; here form an estimate of their real value. Suppose thyself first among the favourites of fortune, who revel in the lap of pleasure, who shine in the robes of honour, and swim in tides of inexhausted riches; yet how soon would the passing-bell proclaim thy exit! And when once that iron call has summoned thee to thy future reckoning, where would all these gratifications be? At that period, how will all the pageantry of the most affluent, conspicuous, or luxurious circumstances, vanish into empty air! And is this a happiness so passionately to be coveted?

I thank you, ye relics of sounding titles and magnificent names! ye have taught me more of the littleness of the world than all the volumes of my library. Your nobility, arrayed in a winding-sheet; your grandeur, mouldering in an urn; are the most indisputable proofs of the nothingness of created things. Never, surely, did Providence write this important point in such legible characters as in the ashes of my lord, or on the corpse of his grace. Let others, if they please, pay their obsequious court to your wealthy sons, and ignobly fawn, or anxiously sue for preferments; my thoughts shall often resort, in pensive contemplation, to the sepulchres of their sires, and learn from their sleeping dust to moderate my expectations from mortals; to stand disengaged from every

undue attachment to the little interests of time; to get above the delusive amusements of honour, the gaudy tinsels of wealth, and all the empty shadows of a perishing world.

Hark! what sound is that? In such a situation, every noise alarms. Solemn and slow it breaks again upon the silent air! It is the striking of the clock; designed, one would imagine, to ratify all my serious meditations. Methinks it says Amen, and sets a seal to every improving hint. It tells me that another portion of my appointed time is elapsed. One calls it "the knell of my departed hours." It is the watchword to vigilance and activity. It cries, in the ear of reason, "Redeem the time; catch the favourable gales of opportunity: Oh! catch them while they breathe, before they are irrecoverably lost. The span of life shortens continually. Thy minutes are all upon the wing, and hastening to be gone. Thou art a borderer upon eternity, and making incessant advances to the state thou art contemplating." May the admonition sink deep into an attentive and obedient mind! May it teach me that heavenly arithmetic of "numbering my days, and applying my heart unto wisdom!"

I have often walked beneath the impending promontory's craggy cliff; I have sometimes trod the vast spaces of the lonely desert, and penetrated the inmost recesses of the dreary cavern; but never, never beheld nature lowering with so tremendous a form; never felt such impressions of awe striking cold on my heart, as under these black-browed arches, amidst these mouldy walls, and surrounded by such rueful objects; where melancholy, deepest melancholy,

for ever spreads her raven-wings. Let me now emerge from the damp and dreadful obscurity. Farewell, ye seats of desolation, and shades of death ! Gladly I revisit the realms of day.

Having cast a superficial view upon these receptacles of the dead, curiosity prompts my inquiry to a more intimate survey. Could we draw back the covering of the tomb ; could we discern what those are now, who once were mortals ; oh ! how would it surprise and grieve us. Surprise us, to behold the prodigious transformation which has taken place in every individual ; grieve us, to observe the dishonour done to our nature in general, within these subterraneous lodgments !

Here the sweet and winning aspect, that wore perpetually an attractive smile, grins horribly a naked ghastly skull. The eye that outshone the diamond's brilliancy, and glanced its lovely lightnings into the most guarded heart, alas ! where is it ? where shall we find the rolling sparkler ? How are all its sprightly beams eclipsed, totally eclipsed ! The tongue, that once commanded all the sweetness of harmony, and all the powers of eloquence, in this strange land has " forgot its cunning." Where are now those strains of melody which ravished our ears ? where is that flow of persuasion, which carried captive our judgments ? The great master of language, and of song, is become silent as the night that surrounds him. The pampered flesh, so lately clothed in purple and fine linen, how is it covered rudely with clods of clay ! There was a time when the timorously nice creature would scarce (Deut. xxviii. 56.) adventure to set a foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness, but is

now enwrapped in clammy earth, and sleeps on no softer a pillow than the rugged gravel stones. Here "the strong men bow themselves;" the nervous arm is unstrung; the brawny sinews are relaxed; the limbs, not long ago the seats of vigour and activity, lie down motionless; and the bones, which were as bars of iron, are crumbled into dust.

Here the man of business forgets all his favourite schemes, and discontinues the pursuit of gain. Here is a total stand to the circulation of merchandise, and the hurry of trade. In these solitary recesses, as in the building of Solomon's temple, is heard no sound of the hammer and axe. The winding-sheet and the coffin are the utmost bound of all earthly devices; "hitherto may they go, but no farther." Here the sons of pleasure take a final farewell of their dear delights. No more is the sensualist anointed with oil, or crowned with rosebuds; he chants no more to the melody of the viol, nor revels any longer at the banquet of wine. Instead of sumptuous tables, and delicious treats, the poor voluptuary is himself a feast for fattened insects; the reptile riots in his flesh; "the worm feeds sweetly on him," Job, xxiv. 20. Here also beauty fails; bright beauty drops her lustre here. O! how her roses fade, and her lilies languish, in this bleak soil! How does the grand leveller pour contempt upon the charmer of our hearts! how turn to deformity what captivated the world before!

Could the lover have a sight of his once enchanting fair one, what a startling astonishment would seize him! "Is this the object I not long ago so passionately admired? I said, she was divinely fair, and

thought her somewhat more than mortal. Her form was symmetry itself; every elegance breathed in her air; and all the graces waited on her motions. It was music when she spoke; but, when she spoke encouragement, it was little less than rapture. How my heart danced to those charming accents! And can that which some weeks ago was to admiration lovely, be now so unsufferably loathsome? Where are those blushing cheeks; where the coral lips; where that ivory neck on which the curling jet in such glossy ringlets flowed; with a thousand other beauties of person, and ten thousand delicacies of action? Amazing alteration! delusory bliss! Fondly I gazed upon the glittering meteor; it shone brightly, and I mistook it for a star—for a permanent and substantial good. But how is it fallen! fallen from an orb not its own! and all that I can trace on earth is but a putrid mass.”

Lie, poor Florella, lie deep as thou dost in obscure darkness. Let night with her impenetrable shades always conceal thee. May no prying eye be witness to thy disgrace! but let thy surviving sisters think upon thy state, when they contemplate the idol in the glass. When the pleasing image rises gracefully to view, surrounded with a world of charms, and flushed with joy at the consciousness of them all; then, in those minutes of temptation and danger when vanity uses to steal into the thoughts, then let them remember what a veil of horror is drawn over a face which was once beautiful and brilliant as theirs. Such a seasonable reflection might regulate the labours of the toilet, and create a more earnest solicitude to polish the jewel than to varnish the casket. It might then become

their highest ambition to have the mind decked with divine virtues, and dressed after the amiable pattern of their Redeemer's holiness.

And would this prejudice their persons, or depreciate their charms? Quite the reverse: it would spread a sort of heavenly glory over the finest set of features, and heighten the loveliness of every other engaging accomplishment. And what is yet a more inviting consideration, these flowers would not wither with nature, nor be tarnished by time; but would open continually into richer beauties, and flourish even in the winter of age. But the most incomparable recommendation of these noble qualities is, that from their hallowed relics, as from the fragrant ashes of the phoenix, will ere long arise an illustrious form, bright as the wings of angels, lasting as the light of the new Jerusalem.

For my part, the remembrance of this sad revolution shall make me ashamed to pay my devotion to a shrine of perishing flesh, and afraid to expect all my happiness from so brittle a joy. It shall teach me not to think too highly of well proportioned clay, though formed in the most elegant mould, and animated with the sweetest soul. It is Heaven's last, best, and crowning gift, to be received with gratitude, and cherished with love, as a most valuable blessing; not worshipped with the incense of flattery, and strains of fulsome adoration, as a goddess. It will cure, I trust, the dotage of my eyes, and incline me always to prefer the substantial "ornaments of a meek and virtuous spirit," before the transient decorations of white and red on the skin.

VIRTUE A SURE COMFORTER.

As I was the other day traversing the fields in quest of health, I observed the meads to have lost that profusion of fragrant odours which once perfumed the air—to be disrobed of that rich variety of curious dyes which surpassed even Solomon in all his glory. Not a single flower appears to gladden the sight, to bespangle the ground, or enamel the barren landscape. The clouds that ere long distilled in dews of honey, or poured themselves forth in showers of fatness, now combine in torrents to overflow the lifeless earth, to bury or sweep away all the faint footsteps of ancient beauty. The hills that were crowned with corn, the valleys that laughed and sung under loads of golden grain; in a word, the whole face of nature, that so lately rejoiced for the abundance of her plenty, is become bare, naked, and disconsolate. As I was continuing my walk, and musing on this joyless scene, methought the sudden change exhibited a lively picture of our frail and transitory state; methought every object that occurred seemed silently to forewarn me of my own future condition.

I dwelt on these considerations till they fermented in my fancy, and worked themselves out in such like expressions: “What! must we undergo so grievous an alteration? we, whose sprightly blood circulates in briskest tides? we, who are the favourites of time, on whom youth, and health, and strength, shed their selectest influence? we, who are so apt to look upon ourselves as exempt from cares, or pains, or troubles, and privileged to drink in the sweets of life without restraint, without alloy? Must we forego the sunshine of our enjoyments for any thing resembling this

melancholy gloom? Must the sparkling eye set in haggard dimness? the lovely features and glowing cheeks be obscured by pale deformity? Must soft and gay desires be banished from our breasts, or mirth and jollity from our conversation? Must the vigour of our age fall away like water that runneth apace, and the blissful minutes of the prime of our years vanish like a dream? If this be our case, in vain, sure, do we boast of our superior felicity, in vain do we glory in being the darlings of Heaven. The inanimate creation droop indeed, sicken and languish for a time, but quickly revive, rejoice, and again shine forth in their brightest lustre: it is true, they relinquish, at the approach of winter, their verdant honours, but rest fully assured of receiving them with interest from the succeeding spring. But man, when he has passed the autumn of his maturity, when he has once resigned himself into the cold embraces of age, bids a long, an eternal adieu to all that is entertaining, amiable, or endearing: no pleasing expectations refresh his mind; not the least dawnings of hope glimmer in to qualify the darksome looking-for of death."

I had not long indulged these bitter reflections before I espied a remedy for those sore evils which occasioned them. Though I perceived all our passionate delights to be vanity, and the issue of them vexation of spirit, yet I saw likewise that virtue was substantial, and her fruits joy and peace; that though all things came to an end, the ways of wisdom were exceeding broad. The seeds of piety, if implanted in our tender breasts, duly cherished, and constantly cultivated, will bud and blossom even in the winter of our days; and when white and red shall be no

more, when all the outward embellishments of our little fabric shall disappear, this will still flourish in immortal bloom. To walk humbly with our God, dutifully with our parents, and charitably with all, will be an inexhaustible source of never-ceasing comforts. What though we shall sometimes be unable to hear the voice of singing men and singing women; though all the senses prove false to their trust, and refuse to be any longer inlets of pleasure; it is now, dear sister, it is now in our power to make such happy provisions as even then, in those forlorn circumstances, may charm our memories with ravishing recollections, and regale all our faculties with the continual feast of an applauding conscience. What sweet complacency, what unspeakable satisfaction shall we reap from the contemplation of an uninterrupted series of spotless actions! No present uneasiness will prompt us impatiently to wish for dissolution, nor anxious fears for futurity make us immoderately dread the impending stroke; all will be calm, easy, and serene; all will be soothed by this precious, this invaluable thought, that, by reason of the meekness, the innocence, the purity, and other Christian graces which adorned the several stages of our progress through the world, our names and our ashes will be embalmed, the chambers of our tomb consecrated into a paradise of rest, and our souls, white as our locks, by an easy transition, become angels of light.

“WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT,” CONTROVERTED.

“Whatever is, is right.” If Mr. Pope understands the maxim according to the limitation sug-

gested above, he speaks a most undeniable and glorious truth. But if that great poet includes whatever comes to pass through the wild and extravagant passions of men, surely no thinking person, at least no Christian, can accede to his opinion. What God orders is wise, beyond all possibility of correction; and good above all that we can ask or think. His decrees are the result of infinite discernment, and his dispensations the issues of unbounded benevolence. But man, fallen man, is hurried away by his lusts into a thousand irregularities, which are deplorably evil in themselves, and attended with consequences manifestly pernicious to society. Let the sentiment, therefore, be restrained to the disposals of Heaven, and I most readily subscribe it; but if it be extended to the conduct of men, and the effects of their folly, I think myself obliged to enter my protest against it. For whatever kindles the divine indignation is cause of final ruin to the author, is strictly forbidden by God's holy word, is contrary to the whole design of his revealed will, and the very reverse of his essential attributes.—This cannot possibly be right: this is most undoubtedly wrong. Omnipotence, indeed, can overrule it, and deduce good from it; but the very notion of overruling supposes it to be absolutely wrong in itself.

WINTER.

How surprising are the alterations of nature! I left her the preceding evening plain and unadorned; but now a thick rime has shed its hoary honours over all: it has shagged the fleeces of the sheep, and crisped the traveller's locks: the hedges are richly fringed, and

all the ground is profusely powdered : the downward branches are tasselled with silver, and the upright are feathered with the plummy wave.

The fine are not always the valuable. The air, amidst all these gaudy decorations, is charged with chilling and unwholesome damps : the raw hazy influence spreads wide, sits deep, hangs heavy and oppressive on the springs of life : a listless languor clogs the animal functions, and the purple stream glides but faintly through its channels. In vain the ruler of the day exerts his beaming powers ; in vain he attempts to disperse this insurrection of vapours : the sullen malignant cloud refuses to depart : it envelops the world, and intercepts the prospect. I look abroad for the neighbouring village ; I send my eye in quest of the rising turret ; but am scarce able to discern the very next house. Where are the blue arches of heaven ? where is the radiant countenance of the sun ? where the boundless scenes of creation ? Lost, lost are their beauties ; quenched their glories. The thronged theatre of the universe seems an empty void, and all its elegant pictures an undistinguished blank. Thus would it have been with our intellectual views, if the gospel had not come in to our relief. We should have known neither our true good, nor real evil. We had been a riddle to ourselves ; the present state all confusion, and the future impenetrable darkness. But the Sun of Righteousness, arising with potent and triumphant beams, has dissipated the interposing cloud ; has opened a prospect more beautiful than the blossoms of spring, more cheering than the treasures of autumn, and far more enlarged than the extent of the visible system ; which, having led the eye of the mind through fields of grace, over

rivers of righteousness, and hills crowned with knowledge, terminates at length in the heavens, sweetly losing itself in regions of infinite bliss and endless glory.

As I walk along the fog, it seems, at some little distance, to be almost solid gloom, such as would shut out every glimpse of light, and totally imprison me in obscurity : but when I approach and enter it, I find myself agreeably mistaken, and the mist much thinner than it appeared. Such is the case with regard to the sufferings of the present life ; they are not, when experienced, so dreadful as a timorous imagination surmised. Such also is the case with reference to the gratifications of sense ; they prove not, when enjoyed, so substantial as a sanguine expectation represented. In both instances we are graciously disappointed. The keen edge of the calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with incurable anguish ; the exquisite relish of the prosperity is palled, that it may not captivate our affections, and enslave them to inferior delights.

Sometimes the face of things wears a more pleasing form, the very reverse of the foregoing. The sober evening advances to close the short-lived day : the firmament, clear and unsullied, puts on its brightest blue : the stars, in thronging multitudes, and with a peculiar brilliancy, glitter through the fair expanse, while the frost pours its subtile and penetrating influence all around. Sharp and intensely severe, all the long night, the rigid ether continues its operations. When, late and slow, the morning opens her pale eye, in what a curious and amusing disguise is nature dressed ! The icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendent on the houses : a whitish film incrusts the

windows, where mimic landscapes rise, and fancied figures swell : the fruitful fields are hardened to iron ; the moistened meadows are congealed to marble ; and both resound (an effect unknown before) with the peasant's hasty tread. The stream is arrested in its career, and its ever-flowing surface chained to the banks : the fluid paths become a solid road : where the finny shoals were wont to rove, the sportive youth slide, or the rattling chariots roll. And (what would seem, to an inhabitant of the southern world, as unaccountable as the deepest mysteries of our religion) that very same breath of heaven which cements the lakes into a crystal pavement cleaves the oaks as it were with invisible wedges, "breaks in pieces the northern iron and the steel," even while it builds a bridge of icy rock over the seas.

The air is all serenity. Refined by the nitrous particles, it affords the most distinct views and extensive prospects. The seeds of infection are killed, and the pestilence destroyed, even in embryo. So, the cold of affliction tends to mortify our corruptions, and subdue our vicious habits. The crowded atmosphere constringes our bodies, and braces our nerves. The spirits are buoyant, and sally brisk on the execution of their office. In the summer months, such an unclouded sky, and so bright a sun, would have melted us with heat, and softened us into supineness. We should have been ready to throw our limbs under the spreading beech, and to lie at ease by the murmuring brook. But now none loiters in his path ; none is seen with folded arms : all is in motion, all is activity. Choice, prompted by the weather, supplies the spur of necessity. Thus, the rugged school of misfortune often trains up the mind to a vigorous exertion

of its faculties. The bleak climate of adversity often inspires us with a manly resolution ; when a soft and downy affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous springs of the soul, and have left it enervated with pleasure, or dissolved in indolence.

“ Cold cometh out of the north,” Job, xxxvii. 9. The winds, having swept those deserts of snow, arm themselves with millions of frozen particles, and make a fierce descent upon our isle. Under black and scowling clouds they drive, dreadfully whizzing, through the darkened air. They growl around our houses, assault our doors, and, eager for entrance, fasten on our windows : walls can scarce restrain them ; bars are unable to exclude them ; through every cranny they force their way. Ice is on their wings ; they scatter agues through the land ; and winter, all winter, rages as they go. Their breath is as a searing iron to the little verdure left on the plains. Vastly more pernicious to the tender plants than the sharpest knife, they kill their branches, and wound the very root. Let not the corn venture to peep too freely from the intrenchment of the furrow ; let not the fruit-bearing blossoms dare to come abroad from their lodgment in the bark ; lest these murderous blasts intercept and seize the unwary strangers, and destroy the hopes of the advancing year.

O, it is severely cold ! Who is so hardy as not to shrink at this excessively pinching weather ? See ! Every face is pale. Even the blooming cheeks contract a gelid hue, and the teeth hardly forbear chattering. Ye that sit easy and joyous amidst your commodious apartments, solacing yourselves in the diffusive warmth of your fire, be mindful of your brethren in the cheerless tenement of poverty. Their

shattered panes are open to the piercing winds; a tattered garment scarcely covers their shivering flesh; while a few faint and dying embers on the squalid hearth rather mock their wishes than warm their limbs. While the generous juices of Oporto sparkle in your glasses, or the streams, beautifully tinged, and deliciously flavoured with the Chinese leaf, smoke in the elegant porcelain; O remember, that many of your fellow-creatures, amidst all the rigour of these inclement skies, are emaciated with sickness, benumbed with age, and pining with hunger. Let "their loins bless you," for comfortable clothing. Restore them with medicine; regale them with food, and baffle the raging year. So, may you never know any of their distresses, but only by the hearing of the ear, the seeing of the eye, or the feeling of a tender commiseration! Methinks, the bitter blustering winds plead for the poor indigents. May they breathe pity into your breasts, while they blow hardships into their huts! Observe those blue flames and ruddy coals in your chimney: quickened by the cold, they look more lively, and glow more strongly;—silent but seasonable admonition to the gay circle that chat and smile around them! Thus may your hearts, at such a juncture of need, kindle into a peculiar benevolence! Detain not your superfluous piles of wood; let them hasten to the relief of the starving family; bid them expire in many a willing blaze, to mitigate the severity of the season, and cheer the bleak abodes of want. So shall they ascend, mingled with thanksgivings to God, and ardent prayers for your welfare; ascend more grateful to heaven than columns of the most costly incense.

Now the winds cease. Having brought their load,

they are dismissed from service. They have wafted an immense cargo of clouds, which empty themselves in snow. At first, a few scattered shreds come wandering down the saddened sky. This slight skirmish is succeeded by a general onset. The flakes, large and numerous, and thick wavering, descend. They dim the air, and hasten the approach of night. Through all the night, in softest silence, and with a continual flow, this fleecy shower falls. In the morning, when we awake, what a surprising change appears! Is this the same world? Here is no diversity of colour: I can hardly distinguish the trees from the hills on which they grow; which are the meadows, and which the plains; where are the green pastures, and where the fallow lands. All things lie blended in bright confusion,—so bright, that it heightens the splendour of day, and even dazzles the organs of sight.

* * * * *

And worthy, worthy of all observation, are the works of the great Creator. They are prodigiously various, and perfectly amazing. How pliant and ductile is nature under his forming hand! At his command, the self-same substance assumes the most different shapes, and is transformed into an endless multiplicity of figures. If he ordain, the water is moulded into hail, and discharged upon the earth like a volley of shot; or it is consolidated into ice, and defends the rivers “as it were with a breast-plate.” At the bare intimation of his will, the very same element is scattered in hoar-frost, like a sprinkling of the most attenuated ashes, or is spread over the surface of the ground, in these couches of swelling and flaky down.

The snow, however it may carry the appearance of

cold, affords a warm garment for the corn; screens it from nipping frosts, and cherishes its infant growth. It will abide for a while, to exert a protecting care, and exercise a fostering influence. Then, touched by the sun, or thawed by a softening gale, the furry vesture melts into genial moisture; sinks deep in the soil, and saturates its pores with the dissolving nitre; replenishing the globe with those principles of vegetative life, which will open into the bloom of spring, and ripen into the fruits of autumn. Beautiful emblem this, and comfortable representation of the divine word, both in the successful and advantageous issue of its operation! "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it;" Isaiah lv. 10, 11.

Nature at length puts off her lucid veil. She drops it in a trickling thaw. The loosened snow rolls in sheets from the houses. Various openings spot the hills, which, even while we look, become larger and more numerous. The trees rid themselves by degrees of the hoary encumbrance. Shook from the springing boughs, part falls heavy to the ground, part flies abroad in shining atoms. Our fields and gardens, lately buried beneath the drifted heaps, rise plain and distinct to view. Since we see nature once again, has she no verdant traces, no beautiful features left? They are, like real friends, very rare; and therefore the more particularly to be regarded, the

more highly to be valued. Here and there the holly hangs out her glowing berries, the laurustinus spreads her graceful tufts, and both under a covert of unfading foliage. The plain but hardy ivy clothes the decrepit crazy wall, nor shrinks from the friendly office, though the skies frown and the storm roars. The laurel, firm, erect, and bold, expands its leaf of vivid green. In spite of the united, the repeated attacks of wind, and rain, and frost, it preserves an undismayed lively look, and maintains its post, while withering millions fall around. Worthy, by vanquishing the rugged force of winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant conqueror's brow. Nor must I forget the bay-tree, which scorns to be a mean pensioner on a few transient sunny gleams, or, with a servile obsequiousness, to vary its appearance in conformity to the changing seasons: by such indications of sterling worth, and stanch resolution, reading a lecture to the poet's genius, while it weaves the chaplet for his temples. These, and a few other plants, clad with native verdure, retain their comely aspect in the bleakest climes, and in the coldest months.

THE WORLD A GRAVE.

If we consider things impartially, this world is our grave; nor do we really live, till we burst the fleshy prison, and get beyond the visible skies.

In the grave is darkness. It is called the shadow of death. And what else is this wretched world? what but a state of gloominess, a valley of the thickest darkness; where poor mortals grope in spiritual ignorance, and wander up and down, not seeing the things that belong to their peace?

In the grave, and among the tombs, we look for

phantoms and apparitions. And what else do we meet with here below? A thousand sorts of happiness present themselves to our wishes, but are unsubstantial and fantastical all. They are a gay delusion, and mock our expectations, as one of those vanishing forms would balk our embraces.

The grave is the land where all things are forgotten. The ideas of friendship are obliterated, and the dearest relatives are remembered no more. And is not this too true a description of our present state? Do we not unaccountably forget Jesus Christ, our almighty friend, and everlasting glory, our invaluable heritage? Where is the man that remembers his bleeding Saviour on his bed, and thinks upon him when he is waking? No; the Redeemer's inconceivable love, and the precious benefits of his passion, are buried in a deep oblivion. This world then of darkness, apparitions, and forgetfulness, is the grand dormitory; flesh and blood the tomb of our immortal minds;

Nascentes morimur.

THE END.

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