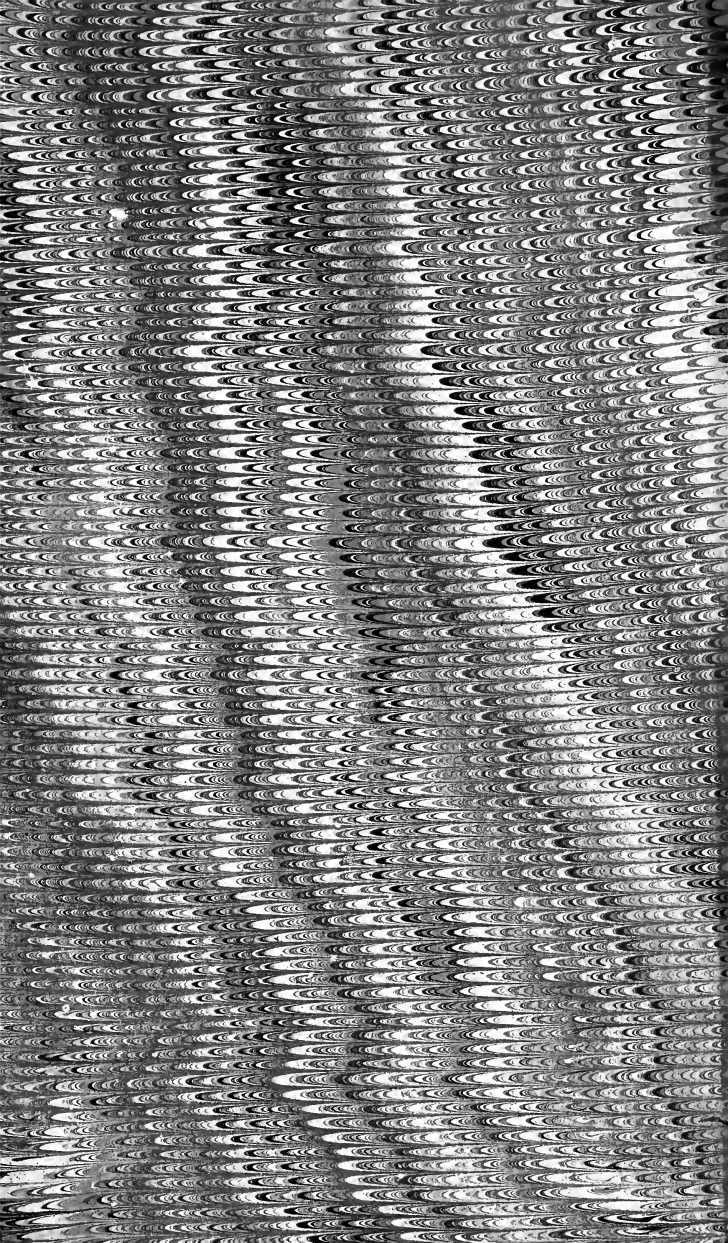


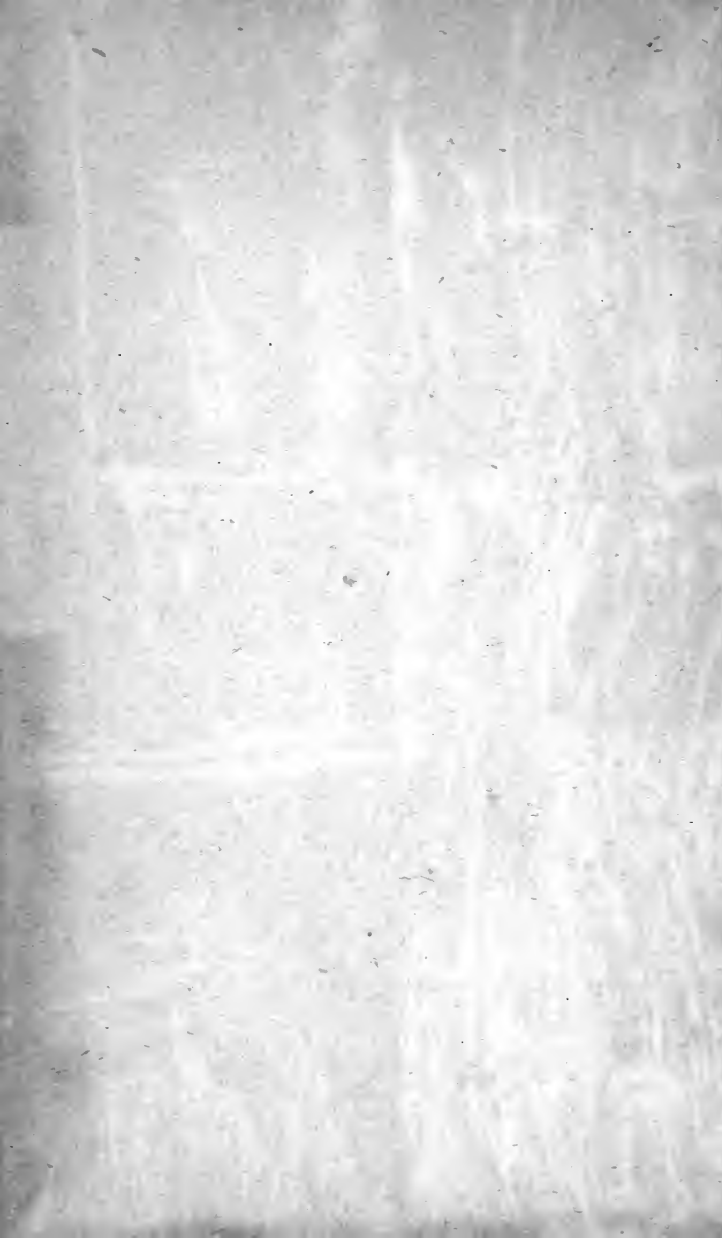
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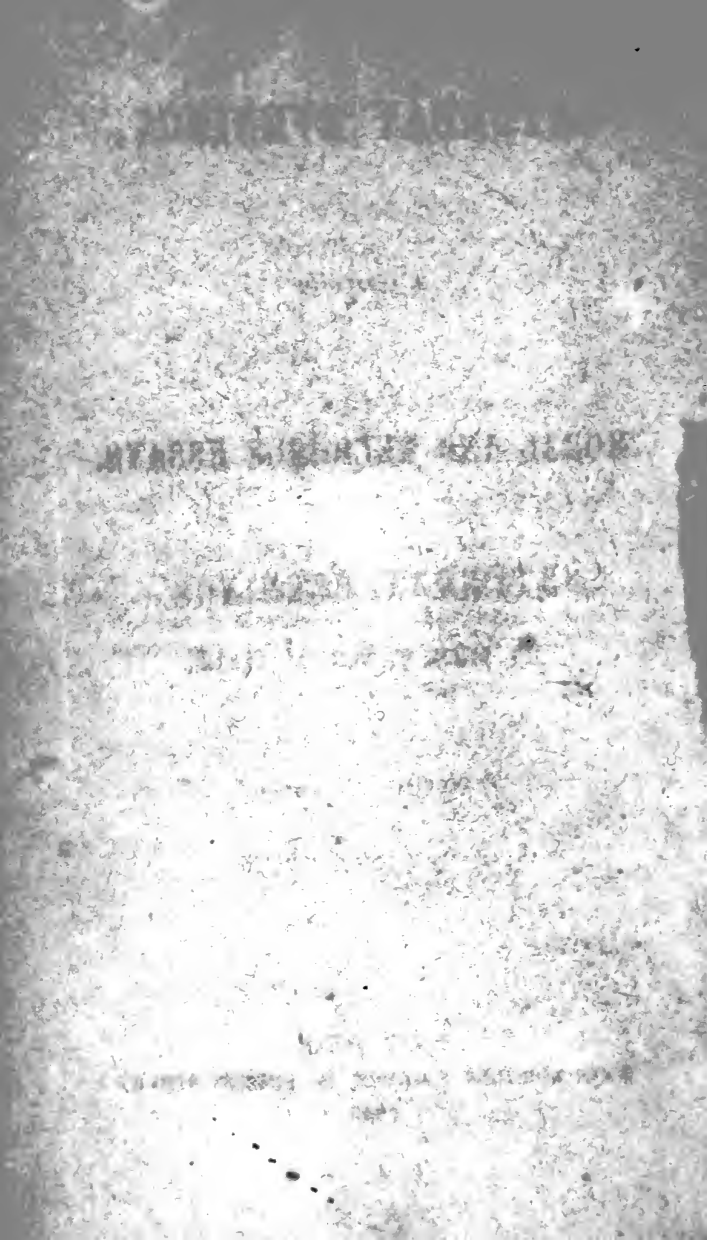




NATURALE PROVINCIAS



SATURDAY EVENINGS.



SATURDAY EVENINGS :

A SERIES OF

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS ESSAYS.

BY MRS. C. V-R. M. HALE.

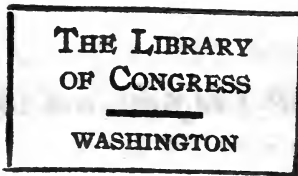


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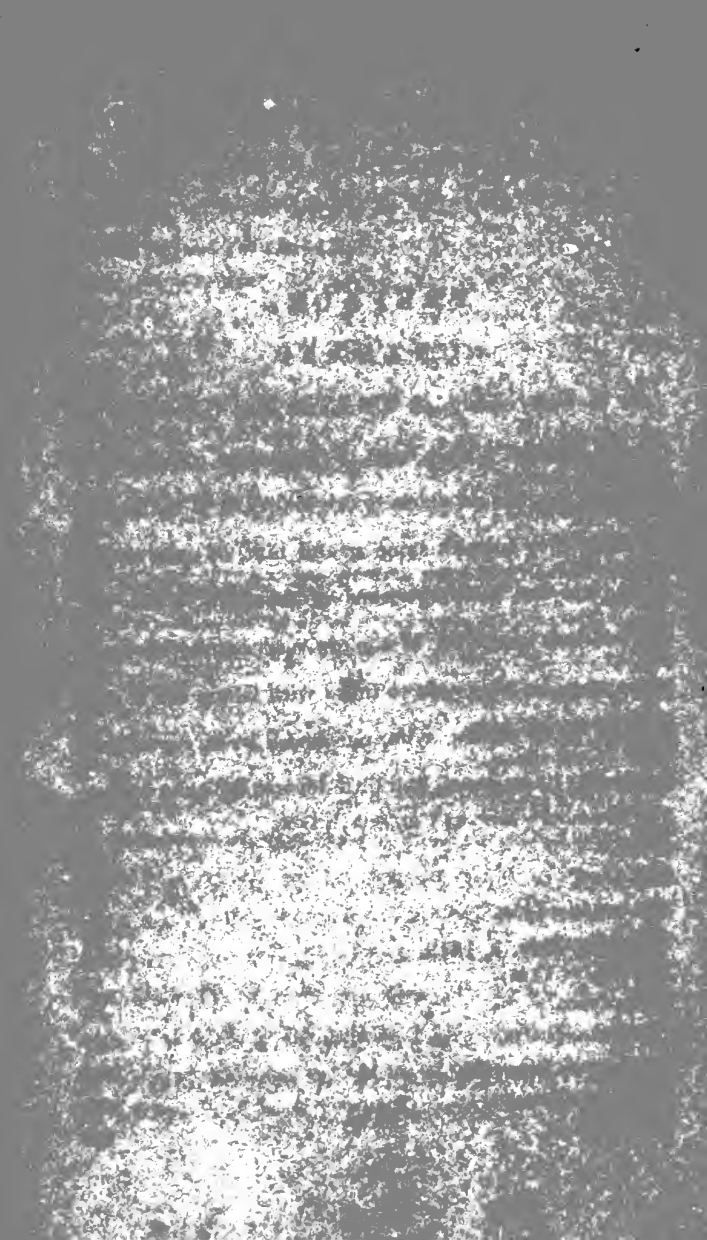


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P R E F A C E .

It is with unfeigned diffidence, that the writer of these "Essays" offers them to the public. Conscious that they possess no claim to originality, it is yet hoped that they may suggest some useful hint, or open to the mind pure and soothing trains of thought; while the observations gathered in the onward course of busy years, may be of benefit to those with whom life is still untried, or to others, who, perplexed by its cares, and hurried by its business, find little leisure for calm reflection.

Mobile, Nov. 7, 1845.



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SATURDAY EVENINGS.



SATURDAY EVENING.

How pleasantly do the subdivisions of time diversify our existence. The birth of the year, the grateful change of day and night, and the revolving week, vary agreeably the monotony of life, and form as it were so many rests, from which we may look back on the way we have come, or throw a wishful glance towards the future—that future through which we so passionately long to pierce,—in whose uncertainty we build so many baseless fabrics. No evening is to me more welcome, than that which closes in the week; the hurry and rush of business seem to pause, the anxious cares that occupy us are hushed or suspended, our six days' work is done, and we gladly prepare to take our rest. To

those who think at all, the reflections which the last evening of the week suggest, must partake of a serious character.

“ Whose day so bright, that its rapid flight
Leaves not a trace of sorrow ?”

Few can review, even a week, whose events have been *unruffled* in their course. An unkind look from a friend, the taunt of an enemy, the regretted folly, the unguarded word,—who so wise as not to commit the one, or so fortunate as always to escape the other? Whose cup is so unmixed as not sometimes to taste of these bitter ingredients? The flight of time, too, the swiftness with which the winged hours (an epithet too true for poetry) pass by, if we would pause to note it, might well sober the most heedless. Inconsistent as we are, we allow and feel the force of this truth, and yet by our passions and follies, “ shake with mad haste the golden sands of life.” The hopes, enterprizes and novelties of a new existence, veil its termination from the eye of youth; but as the stream bears us on, these intervening objects lessen or disappear, and the tomb stands in bolder relief before us. Happy, if by timely reflection, we have grown familiar with the view. Brighter thoughts, however, will enliven our retrospect. Life is not all evil; a liberal benefactor has strewn unnumbered sweets in our path, were we not too care-

less, or too proud, to stoop to gather them. Domestic pleasures, literary enjoyments, the kindness of friends, the esteem of fellow men, and an approving conscience, —with what a soothing influence, do such images steal over the mind. How will the recollection of a generous action, a few kind words, or a virtuous resolution carried into effect, tranquillize and fortify the heart.— An hour spent in this manner, at the close of each week, would be well and pleasantly employed, and would be a good preparation for that final review of our lives, which, sooner or later we must take, when about to bid the world, its cares and its pleasures, a long good night.

In the calm twilight of the Saturday eve, as the past events, and persons with whom we have mingled, pass, like the characters of the drama before our imagination, we might collect useful hints for the future. Look narrowly into the machinery of society, examine the springs which move the mass around us, you will find there is nothing new;—that which hath been, shall be, what happens to-day, will recur again, in a different shape, but the same in principle, to-morrow. The treachery that betrayed, the ingratitude that wounded us last week, will betray and wound us again, unless, grown wise by experience, we guard against them. But best of all, an honest criticism of the past will reveal to us

our own mistakes, "for few are the faults we flatter when alone;" and thus give us an opportunity of amendment. I have somewhere read the story of a tradesman who was observed to give overflowing measure to his customers.—When questioned as to the motive to this unusual liberality, he said, "we pass through life but once,—if I make an error now, I cannot return to rectify it." A homely but a wise saying. How many a dying pillow has been made uneasy by the remembrance of errors now too late to repair, which, had reflection been allowed its proper influence, might have long been obliterated.

I was led into this train of thought, as taking a solitary walk, I observed around the various signs of winding up the business of the week. The houses gave indications that the terrible visitation of mops and brushes had effected their wholesome influence; here and there a lazy house-maid loitered over her work, or leaned on her broom. The whistle of the returning laborer, and his leisurely pace, rejoiced my heart; the very beasts of burden seemed to know and taste the pleasures of Saturday eve,—not alone pleasant to the tired menial and laborer. Thou busy merchant absorbed in never ending schemes, suspend awhile the perplexities which excite, while they harass the mind. Let the furrowed brow of study be smoothed and cleared from ev-

ery shade, dismissing the every-day world, we will close the door against it, while friendship, benevolence, and peace, shall draw a magic circle around our fireside, beyond which sordid cares and meaner passions may not pass. Thus let us consecrate our Saturday evenings to grateful calm enjoyment, attuning our minds for the sacred day that follows, that so our thoughts may,

“like angels, seen of old

“In Israel’s dream, come from and go to heaven.”

WILL AND HABIT.

"How just our pride, when we behold those heights!
 "Not those ambition paints in air, but those
 "Reason points out, and ardent virtue gains,
 "And angels emulate."

A CELEBRATED Heathen represents the mind in her vehicle, by the driver of a winged chariot, which sometimes moults and droops. This chariot is drawn by two horses, one good and of a good race, the other of a different kind, figuratively expressing the tendency of the mind to truth, but retarded by sordid inclinations, and representing the struggles between reason and passions, like horses that draw contrary ways, and move with unequal pace, thus embarrassing the soul in its progress to excellence. This seems an apt symbol of our moral course. Whoever has examined his own character and actions, and reflected on the possibility of a future account to One, in whom every elevated aspiration, every refined sensibility, tells him he has his being, but must perceive, that the instincts which

would lead him to seek the exaltation of his nature, are often opposed by adverse principles.—The purity of virtue, which bestows on it its most attractive beauty, how easily is it sullied by the indulgence of appetite, and its delicacy like the wings of the ideal chariot droop despoiled of their buoyancy and strength. How often do we feel the reins of self-government tremble in our hands through the turbulence of inordinate desires. Of these struggles between contending principles in our hearts all are conscious ; we feel from what we would be, and what we are, that a deterioration has passed over our nature ; that like a mutilated picture from the genius of an unrivalled artist, though the greatness of the design may be traced,—the hand of a master is visible, its primeval beauty is blurred and faded. These considerations joined to a sense of the obstacles which life and its temptations throw in our way, might almost produce dismay in the mind, awakened to a noble ambition, whose regards were fixed upon the attainment of moral excellence, and whose corrected taste, won by the loveliness of virtue, refused its devotion to the grosser idols of the world. But if there is an effort which may be called divine in its nature and objects, it is when man endeavors to rise above such discouragements, to retrace and deepen the nearly effaced lines of goodness in his

mind, by self-command and fervent invocations for divine aid to expunge from his nature what is evil, by virtuous action to recal its brighter colors, until removed and strengthened, his spirit reflects to heaven the impress of its purity. Whosoever complains of the tedium of life, that his days are monotonous and his actions without excitement, here is an object which will banish languor forever, before whose absorbing interests days will dwindle to hours, the vexations of time lose half their power to grieve,—an object which, while it seems to contract existence into a term too brief for its accomplishment, invests it with inconceivable interest and importance. Who does not sometimes lose himself in dreams of perfection, fancying his character adorned by virtues, ennobled by moral dignity,—but here imagination stops, it is for reason to urge us, with energy to embody the vision in our practice, that we may not be virtuous only in fancy, but cherish the instinct which weaves those dreams of excellence, not by its vain indulgence, but by exciting the best powers of the soul ; to be, indeed, what we have only imagined ourselves. In the Grecian games, the crown for which the candidates contended, was elevated to their view, to inspire emulation, and arouse the flagging hope ; thus the improvement of our character, with its high rewards, its sustaining motives, are a prize held out to the mind,

beside whose inestimable worth the wreaths of fame, the diadems of honor, appear paltry as faded leaves and gilded tinsel.

But at the very first step we meet a serious difficulty ; while we have been reposing in mental sloth, evil habits have been twining around us their strong though tiny cords, and it requires but little reflection to learn how even reason may be bribed when custom pleads. It were needless to speak of the force with which habit acts upon the character, and the vigilance with which we should guard against the formation of such as are prejudicial to the liberty of the soul. Every one knows and feels this, for there are few so blest, as to be able to look upon the past, without deploring the deleterious influence of some wrong habit of thought or action. It is more important to observe, that mighty as this power is, it can be successfully resisted and broken. A vicious bias may be fostered until it becomes as it were, a law of our nature, till we seem to others, and to ourselves, its slave and victim ; but we are only enthralled while we are willing slaves ; the moment a desire to resist the tyrant enters our mind, one link of the fetter that bound us is severed. The faintest throb of the heart for freedom, even when tangled in the most degrading bonds, is a healthful pulse, and indicates returning strength. We should hail it as an angel appearing to unbar our

prison doors, and cherish it until, ripened into resolution, it lent us energy to re-assert our moral independence. No individual, however overpowered by the cruel mastery of pernicious habits, has a right to conclude that for him there is no hope ;—heaven does not pass upon him this sentence, for it permits him to live. None have the hardihood to deny the physical ability of abstaining from evil. When Napoleon was asked if he deemed it possible to cure a long cherished habit, he replied, as easily as you can submit to the amputation of a limb,—a fine remark, which he drew, perhaps, unconsciously from very high authority. But while to save the frame, all are willing to part with one of its most useful members, few act on the same wise principle in mental diseases. Neither may such a person say that he has not the moral power to retrieve himself to virtue ; while there remains one accusing thought, one desire of better things, all is not lost ; unsettled as must be the state of a mind debased and crushed by lawless passions, hardened into habit, yet hope which comes to all, may come to him. If the kindness of Heaven has not been withheld through a course of vicious perseverance, we may hope for its continuance and propitious regards, when with a vigorous effort we break through every difficulty and endeavor to retrace our erring steps. The spectacle of an immortal and once noble spirit,

struggling to free itself from the toils of guilt, and escape the moral death of degradation, must be one which enlists the sympathies not only of benevolent hearts on earth, but awakens the interest of those holy intelligences who, we are taught, receive accessions of joy at the return to happiness of the humblest child of earth.

While it is conceded that our way is environed by many dangers, and that solicitations to evil meet us at every turn of life, clothed in alluring forms, yet the inducements to virtuous practices and religious excellence, are also strong and numerous. They call on him who, wandering from the path of rectitude, casts himself from even the sympathies of his kind, and bid him hope. They urge those who, though preserving exterior propriety, are conscious that all is not peace within, to awake their powers and exert their strength in the noble controversy, and they propose no less a reward than the enjoyment of true pleasure. In the allegory of Socrates, pleasure and pain, though contrary in their nature, and though their faces look different ways, are supposed to be tied by Jupiter, together, so that he who lays hold of the one draws the other along with it. This may well apply to the mixed and fleeting joys of sense; but the happiness which we receive from virtue is pure and lasting as it is precious; she never was allied to suffering, and brings no sorrow in her train. Bosom

peace, sustaining hope, benevolent wishes, regulated desires, placid tempers and pure thoughts—these are at once the motives and the rewards extended to man, by that beneficent Power whose bounty crowns the effort which His goodness excited and sustained.

COMMON-PLACE PEOPLE AND THINGS.

I PURPOSE to write a chapter on common-place things and common-place people—apparently an unpromising subject, but there is something to be said about it. It would be a nice inquiry what are common-places! The gay think all serious discourse so, because they have heard it often and with weariness; those fond of rhetorical display call simplicity common-place; while they who love abstruse disquisitions are apt to confound it with practical matters. Indeed, this is far from being an age of dull monotony: we have become so accustomed to wonderful achievements in arts and science, as to cease to wonder at any prodigy and invention for which our forefathers would have been deified or burned: they are met with cold exclamations on the march of intellect!

That a subject is uninteresting because it is familiar, does not necessarily follow; else, how great a portion of fine writing and speaking would be classed as common-place, for there is nothing which has not been.

Common-place people, as they are the majority, so they are the most useful part of society, forming as it were the balance wheel of the machinery. It is they, who, keeping the even tenor of life, hold on to real things, while bright geniuses are flying off in eccentric wanderings. They are practical persons in business, generally paying their debts. In religious matters, they walk in the good old paths which have been tested and consecrated by past generations; they are content to be no wiser than the Bible, and to believe their Creator's word though they cannot understand the mysteries of His being. They are never transcendentalists—that atmosphere would be too rarefied for them, neither is it likely any of their class would approve of Mesmerism.

You might not think of asking a common-place man to write a critique upon Milton, but you would entrust your property to him, or make him your executor. Addison, in one of his allegories, introduces a worthy matron, in rendering her account of her life's labors, as recording among the rest that she had made forty thousand cheeses, &c. Now this was a common-place woman, and had doubtless a comfortable house and well provided family. Shall we allow the frivolous and fashionable, who live a butterfly life of pleasure, a place here? Not so: they are but froth and foam now,

though they may be brought by circumstances to be worthy of the name.

It was the advice of a shrewd man to a young orator, "Fire low." Why? that he might hit the common-place people, and, affecting them, benefit the greatest number. This is the secret of the popularity of most of our light literature: it entertains, without tasking the mind; and those I speak of, would be amused and instructed, too, with the least possible effort on their part.

To be a common-place man, though the term is often applied in contempt, is rather desirable. He will not astonish or dazzle his neighbors, but they will like him better than if he did; he may never be very rich, but it is not probable that he will be very poor; he may not understand the reveries of philosophy, but he will know his duty to God and man.

His head may never have ached over Hebrew roots and philological doubts, but taking the truth as he finds it in his own tongue, and acting it out in every-day practice, he arrives at sound and safe conclusions, though not able to give a learned reason for them.

Pope has slyly smiled at those who are "content to live in decencies;" but there are so many who do not aspire as high, that we may spare the sneer.

I have heard of a writer who submitted his produc-

tions to the judgment of his cook, thinking that what pleased her would suit the multitude.

All these considerations, then, reconcile me to the thought of being found among this class. If not able to surprise, it is something not to offend; I may not bestow a great benefit upon the world, but in my own sphere I may spread unnumbered blessings, not the less precious that they are common, and thus gild and elevate the dull realities of every-day existence.

I may occupy a small niche in society, may steal out of it at last, unmissed by the crowd, and my resting place may be but a grassy hillock, but if a few remember me with love and none with hatred—if but one visit my grave and recal my memory, I shall not regret, though no sculptured marble speaks of great exploits.

AUTUMN.

BEAUTIFUL is autumn ! How often do we repeat this, and yet, how freshly does the fact present itself, as the revolving months bring around the closing year. Spring is lovely, but amidst all its glare and bloom, a languor spreads over the frame, and so evanescent are its charms, that we sigh while we enjoy them. But the gradually attempered winds of autumn brace the spirits, while its sere leaves suggest serious but not unpleasing reflections. When we walk beneath the trees that had screened us from the summer's sun, and observe at intervals its discolored leaves, like time's first touch upon the clustering locks of ripened manhood, the truth that we all do fade as a leaf, comes home to our bosoms. When "autumn winds rushing" drive before them the withered garlands of summer, how apt an image do they present of our futile resolutions, our wavering plans of faded pleasures—of blighted prospects—of our own vacillating course, driven by conflicting passions to and fro as a leaf.

To the inhabitants of a Southern clime, this season is peculiarly welcome. The strength and energies which have drooped beneath the long-continued influence of an ardent sun suddenly revive, and we hail autumn as an introduction to winter, which here is shorn of all its icy terrors, and which is marked as the season of cheerful meetings and re-unions between separated friends. Who has not felt the renovating influence of a fine October day, when the sky is full of rays, with no cloud to sully their brightness; when the air, pure and elastic, seems to give a spring to active enjoyment, while the eye is never satiated with the brilliant tints of the varying foliage of the forest? Nor is Flora's coronet undecorated, though the delicate blossoms of spring and summer have passed away; their places are supplied by flowers of richer hue, for, fair nature, like fair woman, loves to vary her adornments, and orange, deep pink, and royal purple, are her favorite colors now. Let us admire them to-day, for, in a brief space, even these gems of the dying year will be sought in vain; but while we scatter the petals of the last rose of summer, or bid farewell to the "late, late flower that decks the fallow autumn," hope mingles with our regrets.—We know that they are only hid from our sight for a-while,—that safely deposited in earth, and guarded from the coming tem-

pests, spring will bring them again in renewed loveliness and vigor.

Hence it is, that though the sere season of the year excites serious reflections, they are not deepened into sadness. And why should we dread the autumn of life? What though the hopes of youth, like the buds of spring time, have faded from our hearts,—virtue and religion offer to our acceptance their imperishable beauties. What though many of those beloved ones, whose presence, like the flowers of summer, once enlivened our path, have withered from our side, and are laid in the dust,—shall we not hope for a second spring of life, which shall revive the ashes of the urn? Shall we confidently predict the returning bloom of a transient flower; do we know that life will revive the dying worm,—that the insect will again spread its fragile wing, and can we entertain the thought that man alone shall be forgotten? No, as surely as from the unsightly root which conceals the future plant, new stems shall spring, new flower-buds and blossoms, and delight the sense with returning odours,—so certainly may we cherish the hope that the virtues of those we lament will flourish again, beneath a brighter sun, in a purer atmosphere, and with unfading beauty.

In watching the progress of the seasons, as exhibited in the economy of vegetation, from the tender blade,

the budding germ, to the perfected fruit and the final withering of the plant, how naturally might we apostrophise their fleeting tribes.—“ You have finished your determined hour, laughed in the sunbeam, inhaled the dew of eve, bent beneath the adverse gale, or drooped under the pitiless rain, and now the power which called you into being, remands you, your course accomplished, back to earth.” Why should we repine at the same destiny which awaits us? We, too, enjoy our spring pleasures, our hours of summer ease;—let us not complain, when fading nature admonishes that man must wither as the grass, that, in comparison to the infinite space to which he is hastening, his life has little more continuance than the lowly flower that bends beneath his step. How impressive then the moral this season conveys to all, and peculiarly suitable to the reflections of this evening! To those particularly, who trifle in life’s balmy spring, it urges, “ trifle not all these propitious hours away; leave not for experience to tell how cheerless is the autumn of that life, whose opening years have been misspent.” Cheerless indeed, when the touch of coming age chills the energies of the soul, when our failing spirits convince us that our summer is past, to feel that we have lived in vain;—that, unlike the inanimate works of the Creator, we have not fulfilled our moral course, although its natural term has reached its final period.

DREAMS.

“DREAMS are strange things: do you believe in them?” said one of a group of friends who were conversing together. Various replies were given to the question, until the conversation was left with two of the company, who differed in their opinions.

“I consider dreams,” said one, “but as the continued actings of the intellect, though being released for a time from the excitement and impressions of external objects. Its powers have freer play; the realities of waking life no longer chaining the wings of the imagination, it soars unchecked; memory, too, is active; no new images arising between the present and the past. Indeed, to the sleeper there is no present: the events of the past day or days, form the materials of the night vision—the groundwork, so to speak, of the scene presented to the mind, though the connecting link may almost elude observation.”

“Allowing this,” said the first speaker, “still facts which would seem authenticated, prove that in nume-

rous instances dreams have afforded intimations of future events. Not to mention those with which we are familiar, some have occurred within my own knowledge which were at least remarkable. One was related to me by a person of strong stern mind, religious, but accustomed to regard that, and every other subject in a dry light, with little sensibility or imagination ;— this was the last person I should have suspected of dreaming a dream.

“I imagined,” was the narrative, “that I was travelling with a throng of persons a wide and beaten way ; after some time a party of us diverged into a narrower path, which turned from the main road. In proceeding along I saw one and another retracing their steps, till but a small and scattered group remained. It was then that I perceived far in advance a commanding figure, who often looked back upon us, and seemed to be our guide. While I felt attracted towards him as my protector, and won by a certain benignity and beauty in his countenance, I was conscious also of a desire to escape from his observation. I often purposely loitered, sometimes I turned into bye-paths, sometimes sat down and slumbered till my conductor would be almost out of sight, then a sudden fear would urge me to hasten until I came near him, when he would stop and wait my approach, and meet me with a mild but

reproving look, for he never spoke. Then I would follow, humbled and watchful. Thus we continued a long distance, until as the day was closing we arrived at what seemed to be a vast morass, entirely impassable, dark, dreary, bridgeless. Beyond it, surrounded by beautiful scenery, stood a mansion, which as the darkness of night came on was brilliantly illuminated, while strains of delicious melody and notes of joy floated over the dark barrier between us, and awoke in my heart intense desire to reach this scene of happiness. For the first time I ventured to address my guide, and entreated him to assist me over this dreary gulf. Looking kindly upon me he repeated twice the word "Wait, wait," and I saw him no more. Long, long did I wait in darkness, my heart only upheld from despair by the bright scene beyond me, till at length, when hope had almost died, I saw a vehicle, self-impelled, approaching me. I ascended; we moved on; sounds and visions of blessedness came near, and in the joy of the moment I awoke.

"This, you say, might all naturally arise in the mind of a young Christian, and would need no prophet's skill to explain its bearings. He himself thus considered it; but when, twenty years after, he found himself in a strange region, the victim of a hopeless yet lingering and excruciating malady, thrown upon the

charity of strangers; alone, with no resource but Heaven, who seemed to say to him wait, and no consolation but such as the hope of future peace affords—he thought he read the fulfilment of his dream, and the word ‘wait’ was often on his patient lips.”

His friend replied, “A prophetic dream implies a miracle, and it is not consistent nor reverential to suppose that the Deity would supernaturally interpose, unless for some highly important object.”

“The assumption that we are immortal,” returned the first speaker, “invests man with such interest, that nothing which affects his destiny can be called trivial. That the Benevolent Power who created him should care for him; that he should appoint severe trials to produce salutary results upon his character, we do not doubt; now why is it fanciful to think, that in view of a life of bitter grief or severe conflict, the all-pervading spirit should condescend to give to the individual some pre-intimation or warning, wherewith to fortify the soul, while passing through its appointed ordeal. Though in His wisdom the All-Wise may see that it is best that the blow should fall upon the heart of His dependent creature, why may He not soften its force by an intimation conveyed either by a dream, or by some of those mysterious impressions which we know do affect our minds, though we cannot trace their origin.

Why start at the sound of mysteries and miracles? Where does the supernatural commence? where are no wonders? Even excluding the interposition of Deity entirely, and assigning all to Fate or Chance, we cannot escape mysteries. Our nature, our mental constitution, the earth we inhabit, is filled with them."

"True," was the reply; "still, nothing but theories can be built upon the baseless fabric of a dream, and the whole matter will probably always be to us a "terra incognita." I must confess, however, that this subject has given me enlarged views of the powers of the soul. I have heard related, and have myself been conscious of, ideas and images occurring to the mind in dreams, much more sublime than I remember imagining when awake. Apart from superstition or fancy, it is doubtless a most interesting subject of contemplation. It is one of those phases of our immaterial being, which to me speaks of immortality. Conceding this, I still judge that dreams are the mirrors of the past, not of the future. Our Creator has provided for our support through His revealed word, and by the ordinary sources of comfort in the sympathy of friends, the aid of prayer; and I see no benefit which would outweigh the evil which would ensue, were it admitted that dreams were sent from heaven. You have related a vision in support of your view: hear one in proof of mine. A friend who

was suffering under the loss of one fondly loved, told me that after a day of anguish he sunk into that deep sleep which sorrow often induces when the mind, wearied with its restless tossings, sinks reluctantly like a wailing infant into slumber. When the first lethargy of his spirit had passed away, he thought that he beheld an innumerable concourse of shadowy forms arranging themselves in circles within circles upon a vast plain. These circles of living beings were continually moving one within another, so as to bring each individual in contact with each. A light far exceeding that of the sun, or of many suns, irradiated the immense area, and made manifest every feature of that silent assemblage, for not a sound broke the silence of the scene. Solemnity, but no sadness, marked every face, while as they passed and repassed eyes were lighted with joy, smiles were beaming, and hands were outstretched and fondly, passionately grasped. 'What,' said the sleeper, 'oh! what does this mean?' 'These,' was the answer, 'were once the inhabitants of earth, and here they meet and thus they recognise the long-wept friend.' Just then a well-known glance met his,—a hand was waved, and with a cry of joy, the sufferer awoke. In this impressive dream we can distinctly trace the transcript of the past naturally recurring, and what, when awake would have been passing thoughts,

becoming to the mind of the sleeper for a season, living realities. The best use then that we can make of dreams, is to take the hints they give us, as to the hue of our cherished thoughts in hours of action. All other things being equal, it is to the pure and heavenly-minded that pure and peaceful images will come, and, like the visits of seraphs, hallow the couch of rest. Passion, excess, or impurity, must leave a stain upon the spirit which will sully its very dreams, and ruffle the downy pinions of that sweet angel whom we call Sleep.

TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE.

Surely if each man saw another's heart,
 There would be no commerce,
 All would disperse
 And live apart.

IF the assertion of this homely poet be correct, it augurs a perverse abuse of capacities alike honorable and productive of pleasure. It was the remark of a wise heathen, that he never quitted the society of men without feeling himself less a man. Strange, too, when we reflect that men instinctively seek to herd together, that the desire of kindly intercourse is in itself laudable, and that the power of speech, the organ of that intercourse, is one of the noblest endowments of humanity. Is it possible that society as a mass, is held in compact by a general system of concealment? It seems the sentence of a harsh judge, to say, that were men sincere in the full extent of the word, they would fly each other's presence with hatred, or only meet to indulge emotions of indignation; yet

who that for a moment looks within, and marks the severity with which he judges, how prone he is to harsh constructions of the actions which come before his cognizance, his hasty conclusions and his prejudices, but must instantly acknowledge that it would not be expedient to introduce the objects of his criticism, into the secret recesses of his mind. Believe me, the fabulous window in the human breast, would be an inconvenience to the most benevolent. A closer examination may perhaps discover to us some alleviating causes, for this unpleasant fact; for though no blind apologist for human frailty, neither should my pen be employed in darkening it with unnecessary shades. We have melancholy evidence, that man has lost the brightness of his Maker's image; be not mine the gloomy task of disguising the faint traces of that glorious impression which remains. We must concede that much of the censure which in our thoughts we pass upon men's character, springs from uncharitableness and prejudice, but much also is unavoidably the result of our perceptions of right and wrong. If we grant (and who so wayward as not to allow it) that imperfection is an ingredient in our nature, then is it impossible to avoid perceiving it; disapproval of others, may therefore be entertained in the mind without unkindness, although the expression of that sentiment might be cruel and offensive; the

most attached friends must be often sensible of the errors of each; were their feelings of disapproval made known, the consequence might be a sudden termination of their intimacy; but lying dormant in the mind, they have not the strength to engender dislike in the one, and are totally unknown to exist in the other. It follows that a veil of reserve around the thoughts is necessary, not only by reason of our nature's perversity, but of the constitution of our moral frame. To survey the subject in another light, were we empowered to read the passing reflections of our friends while in the interchange of civilities, we should doubtless see many opinions connected with our own characters, whose justice we would not impugn, and whose existence in the bosom even of a friend, we could not impute to want of affection; yet, the perusal would be anything but agreeable. Self-love would be alarmed, and pride, the noxious serpent that infests every human heart, would raise its reptile head in anger. It is well, then, on every account, that our thoughts are to the observation of our fellow beings as a sealed volume; and wo to him who should possess the fatal power of breaking the seal and mastering the contents. Let me not be understood to compromise sincerity, that jewel of the mind, in the absence of which all else is useless glitter—sincerity, the conservative of social union, the staff of the mistrust-

ing, the salt of life's feast, at once, its seasoning, and the pledge of confidence. It is indeed a wise sincerity which is the great antidote to the evils which obtain in the intercourse of civilized society. Since "the flowers of Eden felt the blast," the consequence of man's defection, this virtue remains to us, the sure test of excellence, and its conscious possession alone bears us on unmoved amid the jarring and change, the inconsistencies and absurdities we daily witness. Singleness of intention affords its possessor compensation for much injustice, and gives that which outweighs a world's huzzas; he stands firmly even when hunted by open-mouthed slander, who can conscientiously pronounce his own acquittal. Were sincerity and simplicity of speech more prevalent, Seneca had spared his sarcasm; then might conversation be conducted with frankness, guarded by discretion; the swelling words of mere profession would not be heeded, and language accomplishing its proper use would be a divine instrument, from whose various chords, the hand of charity and candour might elicit sounds sweet and invigorating.

It cannot be denied that great advantages might flow from beholding ourselves in the faithful mirror of another's impartial judgment; but, it would require some magnanimity to withstand the shock, not only to our vanity but to our better feelings. With what emo-

tions of grief would we read the latent censure or weariness or distaste in the heart of a beloved associate. Who could endure the chrystal walls of the palace of truth. But though we may not, and if wise we would not see the hearts of others, our own may be fully explored; and in searching the errors, noting the deficiencies, or tracing the intricate windings, of that world which lies open to our view alone, we can form a correct estimate of man in general. From a close survey of ourselves, we can learn sufficient to guide our path, and mitigate the severity of our judgment. Where we detected obliquity, the remembrance of dark spots upon our own purity, would stay the ready rebuke; feeling innate weakness, we would not pry unkindly into the infirmities of another. Might I a little alter the sentiment of our motto, I would say, that a conviction of our universal liability to error, from which none, no, not one, can plead exemption, should soften our feelings towards all the vast family among whom we are brethren. Owing ourselves all transgressors, feeling ourselves all sufferers, closer should be our communion of forbearance and kindness, not ours to disperse and live apart, but hand in hand to stem life's torrent often rough, and linked in the sacred bonds of charity here, together strive for a destiny of holy peace, in that region of light, where nothing is hid, but all shall be known as they are.

SELF SCRUTINY.

'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours—
Their answers form what men experience call.

BUT not more wise than difficult. The habit of strictly scrutinising, or analysing our motives, and searching through the windings of the heart, is one that finds no countenance from our love of self-flattery and ease. If conscience is honest, and in an hour of calm reflection, it endeavors at least to be so, there is much to appal the best, in reviewing themselves. When we behold the crowd of passions, the poisoning leaven of selfishness which spreads its taint throughout—when we recollect time misused—wasted opportunities neglected, or duties omitted,—when we contemplate the evil we have done, outweighing so far the scanty measure of good attempted, it is not surprising that we shrink back with dismay, and, shaking off such irksome thoughts, relinquish the task in disgust. Was the moralist too severe when he said,

“ Heaven’s sovereign saves all beings but himself,
That hideous sight—a naked human heart. ”

If, when veiled by partiality, gilded over by the excusings of self-love, we avert our sight so pertinaciously from the survey of our secret character, with what emotions would a full, unbiassed view of every latent fault, each cherished vanity and unsuspected foible, fill our bosoms. But why, it may be enquired, disturb ourselves with this displeasing subject? Effort has always been the price of enjoyment, and in no instance is it more abundantly repaid, than when courageously persevering, we dare to search out, and look our errors in the face,—the great step towards correcting them. A mind in vigilant exertion, thought well disciplined, and a generous zeal for truth, are some of the golden fruits to be reaped from intimate self-acquaintance. Whoever wishes to form a consistent character—whoever wishes for true and lasting pleasure, must cultivate the habit—I had almost said the science—of reflection;—not the passing thoughtfulness of an idle, or a sad moment—not the careless retrospect of the past, in which we lightly skim over by-gone events; but that deep persevering meditation—that impartial spirit of investigation, into motive and character, which never fails to establish the mind, to strengthen virtue, and invigorate every right resolution. An ancient writer

has said that, "a man is seldom or ever unhappy for not knowing the thoughts of others, but he that does not attend to the motions of his own, is certainly miserable."

It is surprising how much the generality of men live at random; destitute of any fixed principle—any purposed end of life, they become the sport of impulse, and are ever seeking to satisfy the natural cravings of the soul with petty excitements, or they wander listless through the world, complaining that all is barrenness. Surprising indeed, that a being, who feels the immortal principle glowing within him, who is conscious of such ardent graspings for some indefinite good, should not pause often amid lesser cares of life,—break through their thralldom, and analyse himself. Strange, that a creature of two worlds, the inheritor of such destinies, should slumber over his prospects;—that, encircled as he is by mysteries, the more solemn secrets of futurity impending over him, he should feel so little curiosity to explore, or desire to contemplate them. When we consider the important truth, that the character we now form, we will take with us into another state of existence, we must be convinced of the necessity of ascertaining well what is that character. Do we desire to know what we shall be through countless ages? Let us know ourselves now. Are we yielding submis-

sion to unworthy appetites or malignant passions,—let us be assured that they will tyrannize over us forever. We are forging chains that eternity will rivet. But if virtue be enthroned in our hearts,—if, reverencing conscience, we obey its dictates,—if the blessed flame of benevolence warm,—the influence of purity hallow our spirits, what an impulse does it give to every spring of action, that our happiness is not the evanescent gift of a capricious world, that these buds of goodness, struggling against the adverse atmosphere of this life, shall bloom and ripen in a more congenial state. Let it be observed, too, that the habit of reflection, while it strengthens the powers of the mind, and brings us acquainted with that mysterious world which lies within us, whose extent is commensurate only with the flight of thought, will give us insight into the workings of the hearts of others, and afford us that knowledge which turns to the best account. We shall the better judge when and where to trust our fellows—have more sympathy with their infirmities, and more forbearance towards their faults.

The benefit of often conversing with our past hours, and listening to the answers they give, of being on terms of intimacy with our own hearts—not strangers where we are most concerned, will be valuable, not only amid the clashings of life, but will assist us in con-

templating its end. It is the uncertainty of the future which helps to render death terrible. Self-acquaintance will dispel that doubt in a great degree.

“Dying is nothing—but ’tis this we fear—

To be—we know not *what*—we know not *where*.”

The unknown world must be a fearful one. It is also an unconsidered scene ; and there will be anxieties enough to weigh upon our spirits, when we “walk thoughtful on the silent solemn shore of that vast ocean, we must sail so soon,” without adding, by wilful self-ignorance, the gloom of doubt and distrust to the solemnities of the hour.

LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

It was a beautiful idea of the ancients to venerate the lightning-scathed tree, blasted not by the common decay of nature, but by the thunderbolt of heaven. Something akin to this sentiment, is the feeling we acknowledge towards those who have endured remarkable calamities, or whose happiness has been interrupted by a sudden stroke of affliction. Aside from the general sensations of pity, and the more delicate one of sympathy, there is that in deep sorrow which awes the beholder, and commands the respect of the most unfeeling. An every-day acquaintance, whose mental or personal qualities have excited no uncommon interest, will, if arrested by sudden misfortune, become an object of thrilling emotion, and be regarded with a tenderness and delicacy which no factitious advantages of rank or wealth could inspire. In truth, so mixed are all our feelings, and so strongly are selfish considerations interwoven in our minds, that we cannot look upon the af-

fiction of another with total unconcern ; the springs which awake to pain in the bosom of a fellow being, are sensitive and trembling in our own. We bear with us through life a fearful consciousness of exposedness to danger, which readily takes alarm when we see it overwhelming others ; frequently too the view of grief, opens afresh wounds perhaps but partially closed, and the heart, while it is touched by the sorrow of a friend, is pierced by the recollection of its own pangs. Thus are we fellow travellers and fellow sufferers, intimately linked together by numerous and delicate bonds, by sympathies which we cannot entirely untwine from our hearts if we would, and by emotions which powerfully declare to us, " ye are all brethren." And thus is a fund of kindness laid up as it were in each man's heart, wherewith to cheer a suffering brother ; a benevolent arrangement, that the least amiable feelings of our nature, should be so directed as, joined to better principles, to be made subservient to mutual comfort, that our very self-love should prompt sympathy and respect for sorrow. For were we dependent for consolatory offices upon principle and the cold sense of duty alone, what miserable comforters would they prove ; who has not writhed beneath well-meant but commonplace condolence, what delicate mind but knows how cautiously even heart-felt sympathy must approach the sacredness of unfeigned grief.

Poetry has availed itself of this sentiment, with great pathos and effect. When Constance, in the tempest of her grief exclaims, as she throws herself upon the earth, "this is my throne, let kings come bow to it," the artificial dignity of sceptres and courts fades before the natural majesty of a mother's anguish. What a solemn and tender image, embodied by the same poet, is the maniac father, weeping over the lifeless Cordelia; we forget that he is a king; it is the breaking human heart that calls forth our intense and reverential compassion. Suffering is always unpleasant to our nature, and an ungrateful spectacle to the eye; we shudder over physical torture in others, and recoil from its touch ourselves, but the sensations which this species of suffering awake, are those of unmingled pity, such as are excited in the crowd who melt into compassion for the malefactor on the scaffold, whom they execrated but a short time before. It is mental anguish which is peculiarly invested with solemnity, it is the "grief which kills the heart," which attracts our deepest and warmest sympathy. Whether it be caused by outward bereavement, by the death, or worse, the treachery of those in whom we had unwisely garnered all our hopes; whether it proceed from the conflict between conscience and passion, a contest which sometimes convulses the intellectual frame from harassing

perplexities, the pangs of self-condemnation, or from the forebodings of an undefined but fearful doom, those sharp arrows which He who formed and knows the heart, alone can direct, alone withdraw. In each instance the sufferings of the mind are solemn to witness, appalling to endure. The dignity and interest which characterise the emotions of that sensitive, mysterious intelligence termed the soul, exalts our conceptions of its nature. Beautiful is the formation of the human frame, skilfully arranged are its various adaptations and surprising all the provisions of organic life, but what are they compared to the sublimity of the soul, whether we view its origin, its nature, or its ultimate destiny. Fair, indeed, the temple, and noble its proportions, but more superior the spirit for whose service it was formed. All admirable as it is, but a fabric of perishable materials, indebted to the ethereal essence of immortality which it enshrines for its true dignity and value. Another serious thought suggested by human suffering is human helplessness ; powerless to avert the blow, unable to heal the wound it inflicts. Who has not been awed into humility and silence in the presence of sorrow ? and what is the first emotion of the most insensible in such a situation ? Is it not to wish to draw into the scene a superior power ? perhaps nei-

ther by words or even in a definite petition in the mind, but the idea of one who alone can sustain in the hour of desolation, will force its way even into the heart that loves not to dwell upon that thought. Yes, not more deeply do we feel our weakness, when bending over some beloved being, whose fleeting breath we would give life to arrest, than when we vainly endeavor to soothe the agonies of grief, or calm the tumults of despair. When the waves of sorrow overwhelm the soul, it is not ours, either for our own relief or for that of others, to say with authority, "peace, be still." When experiencing affliction ourselves, or when appointed to the mournful task of walking through dreary shades with sorrowing friends, we own our inefficiency, we cannot but revert to Him whom even the turbulence of human passions obey, and feel that from thence alone effectual aid can be derived. But let us not overlook what is in our power, nor think we may not assuage the pain which we cannot remove. Delicate sympathy, persevering kindness, the preciousness of these to the bereaved and desolate—dropping like balm on burning wounds—twice blessed, sweet to receive, ever grateful to remember. Have we experienced mental suffering, then do we appreciate their value,—has it been our rare destiny thus far to have escaped the grasp

of care, let us be prompt to accord our sympathy to others, so that when clouds gather round us, and the hour of darkness does come, we may not look for its support in vain.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE.

SAID the Macedonian conqueror, "When we have arranged the affairs of Greece, we will subdue Persia, from thence we will pass to conquer all Asia, and then"—"what then," interrupted his friend,—"why then we will live." How often is the heart of man beguiled by dreams of the same nature, though not so extravagant as these. When we have amassed a fortune, completed some important scheme, then we will live; alas, let us *live now*, live in the noblest sense of the word. For we know that life is not to be counted by its months and years, but by its actions and motives; hence we must confess that to live to virtue, to usefulness, in one word, to heaven, is all that is worth the name of life; all adverse to this is guilt and degradation, and moral death; all below it is chagrin and disappointment. Sometimes, when the realities of eternity come close home to our bosoms, when conscience, faithful to her trust, numbers a series of years which

have left no trace behind, years on whose memory is stamped this appalling sentence, given and lost; we endeavor too sooth our monitor with reflections not unlike those of the ambitious monarch. "This is a season of peculiar care and anxiety: when I shall have surmounted these difficulties, my mind will be more composed to think of duty—I feel the sacred claims of heaven upon me: when I shall have subdued this reigning passion, and drawn off my attention from the struggles of the world, then I will live." Vain hope! new difficulties are ever in ambush around us, new passions and fresh desires are ready to supply the place of those we wish to extinguish; if we postpone our return to duty and religion until the cares and perplexities of life shall give a pause, we shall find that interval only in the silence, perhaps the terrors, of a dying hour. Anxiety chases our steps to the very tomb: what folly then to delay to live till the influence of its near approach, begins to chill our spirits. Let us live now. Resolutions to good, virtuous aspirations may be evanescent; they must be ineffectual, unless decision sets its seal upon them, and urge them into corresponding action. There are none without some end which they propose to themselves, yet judging from their course, many are contented with an ignoble aim, which confers no elevation of mind; others there are on whom principle takes so

slight a hold, that like a vessel without a helm, they are driven by every gust of passion, and tossed by the waves of fluctuating impulse ; little hope is there of an honorable or even a safe termination to such an undirected course. When we consider well the object of life, and its solemn importance, we cannot but be urged so to shape our own plans as to secure to ourselves the greatest sum of good. Here, as in the fable of the Trojan prince, we shall find more than one candidate for our favor. Heaven condescends to invite to its friendship and its peace, the creature of its care. In what attractive kindness, what surpassing goodness and grace, its overtures are couched ; with what merciful forbearance and patience they are continued through our careless career ; let our hearts and the history of our past lives testify.

The world too prefers its claims, urges its specious pleas, and displays its dazzling reward. We will do well, however, to examine these boasted rewards of earth ; they are confessedly uncertain, but setting that aside, how often does the world “ keep its promise to the ear but break it to the hope.” Let his ocean-girt grave tell of Napoleon’s reward. “ Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms ? All the kings of the nations, even all of them lie in glo-

ry, every one in his own house, but thou art cast out like an abominable branch."

Charles Fox proposed to his ambition three objects ; to be the most popular man in England, to marry the most beautiful woman, and to be prime Minister. Mark how the world paltered with his hopes. He lived fifty-eight years, and was Premier nineteen months ; took to his bosom one whose beauty was unequalled, but whose name was not unsoiled by the breath of censure ; as to his popularity, look to his history, and read his reward in his struggles and defeats. "Alas," exclaimed the learned Grotius as he approached the verge of life, bending beneath literary honors, "I have been but a laborious trifler." But even when we receive full justice at the hands of earth, when our reward contains all that it can give, it is unsatisfying.—When Newton heard of the death of a promising Mathematician, he said, "if that man had lived we should have known something," accounting his own immense acquisitions, his discoveries and his renown, as nothing. Let us then listen to the offers of ambition with informed judgments ; should wealth propose its golden rewards to allure us, let us be aware of the danger, when having attained the object of our desires, we ask for happiness of the treasures we have spent a life's energies to collect, they may answer to our dismay "it

is not in us." Applying this test to all the plans based upon anything below Heaven, we will have no hesitation where we ought to fix our deliberate choice. Let us not then be prisoners of earth, nor smother immortal fires in sordid and debasing habits, but remember we are

“Winged by Heaven,

• To fly at infinite and reach it there,

Where seraphs gather immortality,

On Life's fair tree, fast by the throne of God.”

BEAR AND FORBEAR.

So undisciplined are our passions, unstable our best desires, and infirm our wisest purposes, that there is no virtue more difficult to attain or to preserve than consistency of character. It is comparatively easy to perform one generous action; but to persevere through every discouragement in a course of magnanimity, alone entitles us to the merit of consistency. To be moved by scenes of affliction, is amiable; but to seek out those scenes, cheerfully to postpone personal convenience, or even comfort, to alleviate the distress of others, this is the true temper of kindness. To forgive a great injury is indeed noble; but to pass through society with that forbearing spirit, which sheds the peace of Heaven over every difficulty, and smooths life's many vexations,—not only to forgive, but to be slow to perceive offence, and ready to anticipate the offender's repentance,—this is the temper which is easy to be entreated, which endureth all things.

The absence of this one virtue tarnishes the lustre of the others, and, indeed, goes far to destroy their value. Deficiency here also brings suspicion of our sincerity. Virtue moves with a firm and even pace: it is her counterfeit that shuffles and turns aside in her course. We meet daily with characters in whom there is much to approve, much that gains our approbation; but upon nearer inspection we discover that consistency, which, like a golden chain, should unite and sustain the several virtues in due proportions, is totally wanting. In such cases, we feel the same sensation of disappointment as on viewing a painting, where the colouring is exquisite, but the design ungraceful; or a statue, where beauty and deformity are unhappily mingled. Some possess energy and firmness, which carry them honorably through duty, and which commands respect, but their characters are not tempered with that gentleness which alone wins affection. In others, again, softness so much predominates, that while we cannot help loving, we forget to respect them. It is the happy adjustment of different virtues, governed by high principle, and upheld by constancy of purpose, that form what we would call consistency. To obtain this rare quality should be the desire of every intelligent mind, who is at all awake to its influence here, or its accountability hereafter; or who, rising above low ambition, would

exert the noblest gift of the Creator, a rational nature, to the noblest purpose—the benefit of others. For splendid isolated actions, have little weight, compared to unpretending but virtuous consistency.

How often do we see men, in whom are to be found numerous virtues, destroying their moral influence by the indulgence of one weakness. Perhaps an unsubdued temper, a censorious spirit, or an inordinate love of gain, mars their usefulness, and, canker-like, blights all their better qualities. How much of christian profession is disgraced by this inattention to consistency! For of all pitiable objects, the most impressive is an inconsistent christian. With Heaven on his lips, but his heart and hands filled with sordid interests; bearing the name of a meek and lowly master, yet striving eagerly for earth's honors and reward; now kneeling at the sacred altar, anon at mammon's shrine,—this is a sight, which, did sorrow enter Heaven, might sadden the spirit of an angel.

We are apt to evince inconsistency, also, in the perversity of our judgment, in most important concerns. Many imagine that they will merit the approbation of Heaven by services rendered in a manner, which they would neither venture to offer to the acceptance of their fellow men, nor accept themselves. Others, while they allow that their lives are not quite as they ought to be,

console themselves that at death they will repent, very consistently expecting, that after, by precept and example, spreading an evil influence through perhaps a lengthened term of years, the feigned or frightened devotion of a closing hour will satisfy violated justice, or quell the upbraidings of an outraged conscience. It is this, too, that gives rise to the complainings against destiny we so often hear. He who has devoted himself to intellectual attainments, repines with an ill grace that fortune has not conferred her gifts upon him, while he was assiduously worshipping at the shrine of another idol. The man who, for the tumult of public life, and the strife of politics, exchanges the enjoyments of domestic peace, may not consistently murmur, if, in the decline of years, or having become useless, he is left like an unregarded wreck upon the shore. How frequently do we hear parents exclaim, in bitterness of spirit, when their children have become their dishonor, and wrung their hearts by their misconduct! They will not fail to enumerate the care and tenderness lavished upon them; but if they have been fatally neglectful of their moral guidance, if they have sent them into the world unfortified by principle, unsheltered from temptation, and unblessed by prayer, why should they complain. That wretched parent may well mourn over his profligate son, but surely he need not wonder at his

ruin, if he himself has been his forerunner in the career of vice. Consistency forbids him even to rebuke his erring child.

We err in this respect, too, in our expectations from the world. Men are never wearied with inventing and exhausting new pleasures : they fly from one occupation to another, and when all, in turn, are tried, pass sentence of insufficiency on all. But let us be consistent. When did the barren thistle yield refreshing fruit ? when did the shallow fountains of earthly pleasure allay the thirst of an eager, a consciously immortal spirit ?

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE.

How much is to be done ? My hopes and fears
Start up alarmed, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what ?

“ COULD I but retrace my steps through life, retaining my present experience, how many serious mistakes might I avoid ; in numerous instances, where passion betrayed me, should reason govern ; where prejudice misled, candor should be my guide ; how many omitted duties should be performed, the effects of how many errors be averted.” “ Were life to live again, how different should the retrospect appear.”

Perhaps there is not a human being to whose heart, reflections like these have not come at some period of existence. There are none so entirely enwrapt in business, or drowned in thoughtless amusement, or besotted by criminal gratifications, as never to have one hour of self-communion :—never to cast a lingering look upon their devious path, or give one anxious thought towards

the uncertain way upon which still rests the shadow of futurity. But naturally as such reflections arise, they are as vain as they are specious. In general, they are deceitful emollients, which serve only slightly to heal the wounds which conscience in faithfulness inflicts. It is easy, when the excited feelings have had time to subside, to review a series of actions, and imagine how much more wisely they might have been conducted; for, according to an old saying, after thoughts are best ones; but, in truth, the same occasion would rouse the same passions; in spite of experience and good resolutions, we would be likely to succumb to the same temptations which had conquered before, and thus furnish fresh materials for new self-reproach.

In support of this assertion, we can cite as evidence, our own practice, and that of men in general. If indeed we be candid in saying that were we to live again the years that are past, they should be applied to nobler purposes, why do we not begin to live to-day. We need not supplicate that the lengthening shadow which points to life's meridian should be miraculously thrown backward; we have yet a life before us,—uncertain, it is true, in its duration, but long enough to live to duty. We may not,—cannot resist the impetuous current which is hurrying us through time; it were vain to sigh for the smooth waters of youth and inno-

cence which we have left behind ; but surely, prudence might teach us to crowd the brief space which remains, with works of such a nature, as shall not embitter our final review of life. Even though far advanced on our voyage, it is not too late to “ put good works on board, and wait the wind that shortly wafts us into worlds unknown.” That such is not the usual result of the reviews which men take from time to time, of life, is obvious. The alarmed bosom is stilled by half-formed resolves of reformation, by ineffectual regrets and cheap acknowledgements ; while warned by conscience, convinced by experience, the individual too often pursues the very course which he has been deprecating, until awake at last too late, he finds “ his brittle bark is burst on Charon’s shore.”

Many, many thus trifle through life, childishly playing with opportunities which may never return, and indulging that maddest of all folly, to reject the claims of duty, even when their force is deeply felt—to say to-morrow, when Heaven and conscience say, to-day. How common is it to hear such persons confessing their past uselessness and errors, with every appearance of sincerity but one—that of beginning to amend. It is then a poor deception we put upon ourselves, when we rest upon the desire of being virtuous without striving actually to be so ; it is a fallacious hope that soothes

us with the expectation that we shall become, at some future period, what we are not willing to be at present. *The future*,—alas! what a frail support to creatures of a day; how many unfulfilled resolutions, disappointed hopes, obliterated promises, are written on its uncertainty! With what presumption does man reckon on the coming hour? It never has been promised him. Of all the minutes which compose the ages of time's duration, the only one over which we have control, is the one that waits upon us now. The use of time, the instant wise employment of its moments, is the only means of making it a blessing. Abused, or wasted, it becomes a source of anguish, painful to revert to, fearful to anticipate.

Should we, then, in an hour of solemn retirement, reflect upon the irretrievable past, when its errors rise painfully upon the memory, casting a gloom over the future, when reason, coinciding with our bosom monitor, bids us pause,—when the dissatisfied spirit recoils as it surveys its responsibilities and omissions, let us beware how we trust to any mere resolve, however sincere we may be in its formation. Whatever may be the cause of our anxiety, whether guilt of external conduct, or the consciousness of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart, let us not lull our thoughts into the dangerous dream of what we would have done, or

what we intend to do. The most solemn resolutions formed in secret, may fade from our minds amid the bustle of life, or melt beneath the solicitations to evil which crowd around us. A good resolve once broken, is seldom renewed with constancy ; the very fact of our unfaithfulness, will make it an unpleasant subject to our thoughts, and its impression will wear away, leaving the heart less susceptible than before, or it may float upon the memory, a displeasing vision, sufficiently terrible to affright, but of no power to benefit. Let us not with self-condemned folly, “ resolve and re-resolve, then die the same.”

THE HEATHEN'S AND THE CHRISTIAN'S GOD.

A ROMAN Emperor condescended to offer to the name of the Messiah, a place among the Gods of his empire. One might infer from the conversation of educated christians, that they had reciprocated the compliment, and erected altars to Fortune, Nature and Fate. There is a species of heathenism prevalent in society, which, whether it arise from unbelief or inaccuracy of speech, sounds very inconsistent, as used by those who compose what is called the Christian world. Men talk, and even write of the course of nature, the laws of nature, the gifts of nature, in such an indefinite manner, as to suggest the doubt, whether their thoughts do not really terminate on the instrumental process, by which the Creator propels the universe, rather than upon his almighty power itself. We reflect so little, or so lightly on this subject, as to forget that all the secondary agents, to which we are so prone to limit our views, are indeed only used for our benefit; natural causes, as

we term them, enabling us to know on what to depend, and how to govern or direct our measures, for the accomplishment of any proposed end. The supreme mind acts by instruments of choice, not of necessity, these assisting not the "governor, but the governed." Hence what is styled the course of nature is but the method, order, and constancy of events, provided and upheld by one great presiding intellect; but it is evident that in contemplating the mechanical arrangement by which the affairs of the world are conducted, we often lose sight of that power which fills immensity. It is nothing uncommon to hear men complain of Fate, and accuse Fortune of injustice, in the same language which the worshippers of those imaginary deities might have employed two thousand years ago. Such expressions either mean nothing, or they mean the highest impiety. Those who are fond of using them would not feel flattered, were they to be assimilated to the rabble who once cried out, "Great is Diana of Ephesus!" and yet they cannot escape the charge of such absurdity, but by incurring the guilt of reflecting upon the appointments of God—an arrogance and ingratitude, at which our nature, wayward as it is, instinctively recoils. How often do we, when emerging from perplexities, the results of misconduct or rashness, wind up our reflections and soothe our mortifications, by the thought, "it was

to be so"—shifting from ourselves the weight of blame, and throwing it, where?—on fate; that is to say, on Heaven. In our presumption, we charge our Maker with the effects of our own folly; in our perverseness, we seem to require of Him a restraining power, in addition to the lights of reason, conscience, and revelation. How insufficient we ourselves could consider such a plea, offered by any under our authority as an excuse for insubordination or unfaithfulness, a moment's thought will convince us.

Some persons have an odd jumble of Christian and Pagan ideas; they converse as you might suppose a newly enlightened heathen would do—employing the term Providence, but evidently thinking about fate or chance—evidently, because was the superintending power of Deity present to their minds, that thought could not fail to teach their lips reverence. It is superficial to urge, that these are mere terms of parlance, springing from recollections of ancient mythologies, whose allusions have become familiar to a proverb in our language. It is to be feared that the cause is deeper, and of a more serious nature. An inspired pen has preferred an accusation against our whole race, that men do not like to retain God in all their thoughts, and I believe there is no thoughtful or candid man but will attest to its justice. The admission of His constant

proximity is an irksome restraint upon our passions ; the thought of his overruling power galls our self-sufficiency ; the truth that the regards of infinite holiness are intently fixed upon us, is adverse to that freedom which we desire ; and we endeavor to escape it by holding up these secondary causes, as a kind of screen to hide us from the scrutiny we know we cannot endure. These assertions do not soothe our self-love ; but their unpleasantness does not detract from their reality. The approbation of men is not the test of truth. Prejudice may blind us, folly lead us to cavil, or pride to sneer, nevertheless, truth remains immutable. The most noisy opposition cannot move its decrees ; the most refined sophistry cannot evade or alter them ; we may exclaim against them—we have the power to rebel, and to persist contumaciously in our resistance, but as easily might our puny efforts shake the arch of heaven, as unloose the sacred strictness of the laws of truth.

The heathen world did not thus deny or dislike the divine cognizance : for every quality of the mind, and every occasion of life, they had an appropriate Deity, to whom they had recourse in the hour of need, and whose interference they acknowledged and invoked. Was then that generation more docile and humble than the present ? No, they invoked gods like themselves,

deities whose impure histories, as sung by their poets, made the most virtuous of their sages tremble, lest they should pollute the minds of their youth. When they hung their votive gifts on Fortune's shrine, or bowed the deprecating knee to the dread trio, on whom, as they believed, depended their good or evil destiny; their thoughts came not in contact with the idea of omniscience, justice and unspotted purity. They indeed invested their deities with power, and some of them with virtue, but a being of perfect holiness was not revealed to their perceptions—or they had shrunk from his supervision as promptly, and denied it as eagerly as do many in the present age. Can we deny, ought we not to give it very serious thought, that it is because the law which should govern us is so strict upon the inward desires, the secret movements of the heart, that we feel disgust for its requisitions, that we reject its claim, that we wish to elude the authority of its august framer.

But if it be granted that many who express themselves in this reprehensible manner, are merely influenced by habit or thoughtlessness, if they might say with the Hindoo, who, being rebuked for praying before a statue, replied, "I see God beyond the image," let them be more consistent than the pagan, and cease to invoke what they confess to be a name. For the manner in which we permit ourselves to converse upon

important subjects is not a matter of indifference. Every one knows the force with which the law of association acts upon the mind ; that by it good or evil habits are eventually formed, and as words are the signs of ideas, that which we are accustomed to speak of lightly, will soon cease to command our respect :—it is therefore necessary for those who aim at the exaltation of their character to speak, as well as think definitely. If, then, we believe that the Supreme Being orders our way, protects our lives, and surveys our actions, let us not be ashamed to avow it ; let us cease to degrade or veil his dignity with the trappings of exploded superstitions. But if we disclaim the divine authority, and throwing from us the strongest prop of suffering humanity ; if with the Epicurean, we think the Deity indifferent to the affairs of men,—that having the power, he has not the inclination to superintend the destinies of a world of beings whom he put forth an energy to create ;—if we hold this cold belief to our hearts, and commit ourselves to chance, we may not complain if she be capricious, nor quarrel with our guide, should she lead us in a devious path. Having excluded the light of Heaven from our course, let us not wonder if our way be dark, and the events of life inexplicable ; we have dispossessed the Judge of the earth from his throne, we may not murmur if to our view all is anarchy, oppression and misrule.

I N F A N C Y .

MANY are the springs of affection and pleasure which the hand of the beneficent Creator has opened in our bosoms, but none more pure than that tenderness towards children, which seems spontaneous in our nature. The young of every animal is interesting, but around the infant offspring of man is thrown a nameless, but powerful attraction. "Dear is the helpless creature we defend." It is its trusting helplessness that endears it to us.—Who can behold the smiles of infancy untouched, or listen to its wailings without sympathy? Painters have delighted to pourtray its graceful attitudes; its beauty and innocence have been the favorite themes of poetry; but to the Christian, the considerations of taste are heightened into moral beauty. The simplicity and guilelessness of children convey to him an image of that surpassing purity, which more than all the glories of Heaven has won his affection; that flickering flame of life, so often threatened, surrounded

by such various dangers, yet so wonderfully preserved, what does its contemplation inspire but a deeper trust in Him who careth for a sparrow? Above all, upon the countenance of the frail and helpless babe is traced the stamp of immortality; humble is the garb the spirit wears, when it enters on its earthly sojourn, and many a taint will pass upon it, and storms shake, and sorrows sadden it, yet may not sin, nor care, nor strife, quench that ethereal spark, lighted by the power of the Everlasting. Disguised and feeble as it is, it is a transcript of his eternity. To Him it must return, whether after a long career, renewed, perfected and rejoicing, or debased and trembling, or, whether permitted to remain but a fleeting moment upon the earth. To those whom time and intercourse with men have taught some bitter lessons of distrust, the sight of joyous childhood suggests thoughts at once serious and tender; its exquisite sense of present enjoyment, its recklessness of the future, and unconsciousness of danger, form a strong contrast to the anxieties and caution of riper years. The happiness of youth impresses us more vividly, because experience makes us prophets, and to our informed perception the future casts its shadows before! We know, but a little while, and those golden locks must be bleached by care; the smiles which chase each other over that cheerful countenance

shall fade away ; evil passions will cloud the open brow ; life's struggles will not spare it ; sickness and grief will furrow it ;—who, on the care-worn lineaments or passion-stamped features of age, shall trace the serenity of childhood ? These seem mournful presages, but

“ Where earth's children press,
There must be thoughts of bitterness.”

And it is only by keeping in view the high destiny of man, when sorrow and change shall be over, that the heart learns strength to combat the realities, often stern ones too, which meet us as we pass the threshold of childhood. “ Sweet the voice of children and their earliest words ;” they come to the wearied spirit like emollients to a fevered wound. Who has not felt that the caresses of infancy were indeed “ balm to hurt minds ?” Men may, and do betray us ; the thoughts of childhood are innocent of guile. Men pour upon us the bitter floods of angry and malevolent passions ; the heart of infancy is pure and untroubled as consecrated fountains. With one all is mistrust and calculation ; with the other all is unreserve and confiding love. Let me then live much with children ; and when jaded by care, or embittered by disappointment, seek refreshment in the love, simplicity and tranquil joy, which are the blessed com-

panions of early youth—early youth, for alas! evil example and inherent imperfection, soon part that happy association, perhaps forever.

If the smiles, the innocence, and numberless endearments of childhood are interesting, there is another view which we are often obliged to take, still more tender and sacred,—I allude to the death of infancy. The inanimate remains of an infant is to me an object inexpressibly solemn, awakening emotions grateful, yet humble, and pleasing. When we gaze on the little image of clay, illuminated by life for so brief a space, we dare not suppose that light extinct; that the beautiful fabric was formed and inhabited by a living spirit, only to pass a few months or years in feebleness, then lie down forgotten in the clods of the valley.—Who shall charge his Maker with such improvidence of life? Neither can we behold the unsoiled beauty of the dead, and repine that it was early snatched from earth's defilement. It is with no thought of terror we approach the infant hushed to sleep in the arms of death; the transition from his harmless life here, to his happy existence above, is so natural that our affections leap the intervening grave, and repose on scenes solemnly soothing to the soul. Nor can we indulge grief in its bitterness, even over the grave

which writes us childless ; we may not weep for such
“ scattered blossoms,” if

“ Like buds rent off before the blast,
On the cold ground they lie,
They shall be flowers, in Heaven’s bright bowers,
Where never storm sweeps by.”

In the retrospect of man’s existence there is much to lament, enough to alarm ; fierce, terrible are the conflicts we sometimes experience, when bending over the dead, struck down in the midst of the hurry and guilt of life ; but the course of childhood,—so short, so serene, leaves nothing to inflict a pang. Children die like the rose, blighted it is true in the bud, but wet with the dews of Heaven ; cut off untimely from the parent stem, but spared the slow and sure decay, placed beyond the reach of storm or the grasp of the spoiler, whose rudeness plucks the flower to pieces, and scatters it to the sport of restless winds.

SELF LOVE.

Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see ourselves as others see us.

It was a beautiful remark of Burke, that our friends always think more of us than we do of ourselves. Its beauty consists not in any peculiar grace of expression, but in betraying his own modesty, even while sensible of the approbation which his merit elicited. It may be doubted, however, whether this observation can be applied to men in general. It would approach nearer to the truth to say, that we not only think more of ourselves than our friends do, but than we do of them.

There is a principle of self-love implanted in our nature, which is essential to our well-being, and hence a species of selfishness justifiable, if not even necessary. That course of action or set of opinions which we have reflected upon and adopted as the best in our judgment, becomes identified with ourselves, and is looked on with partial regards; when we bestow pains and labor upon

any effort of taste or science, we view it as the work of our own creation, and it finds great favor in our affections; all this, though evidently proceeding from selfish considerations, is natural and allowable. But, conceding to this provision of our constitution all its reasonable claims, we shall perceive that self-love and self-esteem do engross altogether too much of the affections, which they should justly share in a reasonable degree.

There is, indeed, a wide difference between self-love and self-esteem; our comfort and interest are unavoidably dear to us, and we are often conscious of loving ourselves and preferring eagerly our own happiness, at the same time; when pierced with a sense of unworthiness, or mortified by the recollection of errors, our estimation of our merit is very humble. An acute writer has said, that while we should love our neighbor as ourselves, we should also endeavor to love ourselves as our neighbor—that is, pass upon our own faults and virtues, the same dispassionate and impartial verdict which we would on those of another. This is a difficult attainment, but a height in morals which may be reached, and without which there can be no real dignity of mind. The power of truly appreciating our own good and evil qualities, is the only foundation on which we may hope to rear the fabric of a consistent

and elevated character. Its importance in what is called success in life, is great ; but when we look upon the bearing which it has on those prospects beyond the limit of time, before whose magnitude the gewgaws of life seem like the toys and rattles of children, its value is immeasurably enhanced.

It requires a correct estimate of talent to excite or sustain a great effort—to inspire that self-confidence, without which the finest energies would avail nothing in the hour of test, the trial of sudden emergency, or under the mistaken judgment of others. When Sheridan had made his first speech in parliament, he asked the opinion of the speaker of the house, who told him that he would never be an orator. Sheridan replied, placing his hand upon his heart, “I feel it here!” and the result evinced that he did not indulge a vain boast. Had the hand of Milton trembled when he struck the sacred harp from whence he drew immortal melody, our language had wanted an imperishable triumph. On the other side, it is the exaggeration of self-esteem, and blindness to defect, which has caused such inequalities in the character of men of genius:—we see them alternately astonishing the world by their productions, and disgusting it by their egotism.

But not alone to genius is this petty but annoying exhibition of selfishness confined : would it were—the

compensation might perhaps then make some amends for the evil. It seems the very inheritance of the dull and unthinking. When a man knows not what to talk of, it is a hundred chances to one that he speaks of himself; it is thus so many good sort of people are unconsciously intruding on their acquaintance personal concerns and domestic details, wholly uninteresting save to their own feelings. It is very observable to see two magnates of this class meet, how their peculiarities clash and strive for the mastery; nor are their subsequent criticism on the failings of each other the least pitiable trait of the blinding influence of egotism. It is one effect of this vice to divest the heart of generous sympathy; making every occurrence in the various relations of society to be regarded with interest only as reflecting upon self. Is a friend successful? If his good fortune is remotely connected with my line of business, a selfish regret clouds the pleasure with which I feel I ought to regard it; is another involved in some fatal error or disreputable folly, I feel a laudable sorrow, but was he one whom I introduced to notice, had I compromised my sagacity in predicting his future excellence? How does mortified vanity quicken my regrets into virtuous indignation, and lead to exculpatory expressions of astonishment. How coldly we declaim against the vicious in general, how warm do we be-

come, when they touch us in our interest or happiness. How calmly we bear the sorrows of a friend ; how we recoil and tremble beneath affliction ourselves. Egoism also produces by direct consequence, a censorious habit of mind. The image of beloved self, is so continually before the mental perception, that we cannot discern the good that is in those around us. It would appear, that in proportion as we are ignorant of our own failings, we become sharp-sighted to the errors of our neighbor. "Every man," say the ancients, "carries a wallet or two bags with him ; the one hanging before him, and the other behind him ; into that before, he puts the faults of others ; into that behind, his own ; by which means he never sees his own failings, while he has those of others always before his eyes." It is the part of reflection and self knowledge to reverse the image, and to lead to a strict survey of our own infirmities, and we may be assured that while engaged in this task, we shall have little time or disposition to analyze with the dissecting knife of ill nature, the character of our fellow beings.

In order to correct a failing so fertile in bad results, we should spare neither energy nor self-denial. It is an excellent rule, although an old one, never, or very rarely to speak of ourselves ; and in directing the train of our thoughts, we should follow the scriptural counsel

to look at the concerns of others, not always to dwell upon considerations exclusively selfish. It is useful to endeavor to see ourselves with the eyes of others, but, above all, we should cultivate the habitual sentiment, that we are seen, and that without any disguise, by the eye of Omniscience, for a consciousness of our insignificance in his view, will give us a clearer apprehension of the claims which we really have upon the esteem of men. We truly are, what we are in the sight of our impartial Judge, not what we may be pronounced by the mistaken affection, the erring judgment, or the malevolence of the world.

THE OPENING YEAR.

LAST week, we took a hasty retrospect of the past year, reviewed its struggles and vicissitudes, its griefs and joys, and bade it farewell, with something of the feeling, with which we part from a tried friend, who, though sometimes severe, has often been kind, and whom long intimacy has endeared to our affection.

We now stand on the threshold of another of those portions of time, in which it has been man's wisdom to subdivide his fleeting term. If the remembrance of the past is invested with solemn and tender recollections, the prospect of the future awakens reflections, different, indeed, in character, but equally thrilling in interest. While we feel that we are only pensioners of an hour, forming but a small part of an innumerable crowd, who are hurrying through the scene of existence, yet does a noble consciousness proclaim to us, that we are heirs of eternity. Amidst life's cares and errors, agitated by its conflicts, and almost dismayed by the swiftness

with which we feel ourselves borne on by its current, a feeling within us, which cannot be repressed, assures us that "it is not all of life to live," and surrounded as we are by frailty and decay, claim a being without end. Yet when we look towards that futurity, to which man's heart is set, by "secret and inviolable springs," what darkness rests upon it, what an impenetrable cloud hides to-morrow from our anxious glance. One of the most amazing attributes of deity, one that overwhelms the mind, is that of prescience: when our limited power would strive to fathom the abyss of knowledge, we shrink back in a humbled sense of the weakness of humanity.

We need not, however, repine at our blindness to the future, but should rather consider it as a great alleviation of our destiny; for since we are not the arbiters of our lot in life, to foresee what we could not prevent, would be a misfortune beyond aggravation. Suppose it possible, that each individual who reads these lines, could behold in perspective, only the pleasures which await his enjoyments for the year to come; how would the anticipation and the certainty, rob them of half their zest; he would be cloyed, ere he was in actual possession. But could the friendly veil be drawn aside, which conceals approaching evils, were it ours to number the pangs of disappointment, the embarrass-

ments of business, the varied sufferings which, it may be, are in reserve for us, with what discouragement would we proceed to the discharge of duty ; the dread of impending ill, would absorb the sense of present joy, and life would be deprived of one grand spur to enterprise.

Although we are fully aware of the uncertainty of existence, and must admit that it is not improbable, that the sun which shall shine upon the closing day of this year may have long ceased to gladden our eyes with his beams, yet, should some prophetic voice warn us, "this year thou must die," what a damp would such an intimation throw upon every effort ; we should feel ourselves—nay, we should be, doomed men ; all indeed are sentenced, but ours would be the unblest privilege to read that fatal mandate. The voices of friends would sound like knells to our ears ; all nature to our saddened view, would wear a shroud ; desire would cease, hope be extinct, and every object disappear, before the appalling and dark image of an open and a near grave.

Wisely, mercifully, then, it is arranged in man's economy, that he should be left unknowing of future events, while by the aid of experience and revelation, light is afforded, sufficient to arouse his best energies. It is this uncertainty which envelopes the future, that stimulates the two great motives and encouragements of

man, expectation and hope. The ancients represented hope, weeping over the tomb, with her torch inverted and its flame extinguished, intimating their fear, that she left man forever, when he entered its dreary precincts ; an affecting illustration of that which is supported by earthly props. But there is a hope, heaven born, which, while it attends and supports our steps through the weariness of life, deserts us not at its close : far otherwise, her torch emits a brighter radiance, as the flame of existence diminishes, trembles, and expires. While time rises in prospect before us, it is hope like this, that will urge and sustain, through our various efforts. This occasion seems peculiarly appropriate for surveying the situation in which we are placed, of numbering the talents entrusted to our care, of carefully ascertaining the responsibilities which rest upon us, and of drawing out, as it were, a chart, for the direction of our moral course. We know not, it is true, what adverse tempests we may encounter, or to what strange seas we may be driven, but we do know that truth is eternal and the same, and making that our pole-star we need not fear a storm so dark, as to altogether intercept her light.

We have commenced a fresh stage in our mortal journey, looking forward to new scenes of action ; instructed by the past, supported and urged by hope, be-

ing in a very great measure, the formers of our own characters, with rewards proposed to our attainment, of a value commensurate with the dignity and worth of immortal spirits, there would seem to be no motive wanting to incite to virtue and excellence. If awake to regretted errors, conscious that life has been vain or selfish, or frittered away in uselessness, or blotted with guilt, so that we avert our eyes from the unpleasant retrospect, and sigh for permission to live it over again.—Behold, the wish is granted: time and opportunity anew is conferred. It is in our power to render this undeserved gift, a blessing of infinite value; it also remains with us to add this aggravating sting, to the conscious abuse of time, that

.....“ We are poorer for the plenty poured!
More wretched for the clemencies of Heaven!”

VINDICTIVENESS.

“NINETY and nine years have I borne with him, and couldst thou not have patience with him for one day?” Who can forget the beautiful apologue of Franklin, who remembers to exemplify its sublime moral in his daily practice. Pensioners on the bounty of heaven, ever encroaching on its forbearance, yet incessantly receiving tokens of its clemency, the asperity and intolerance which characterises the intercourse of men, might excite astonishment, did not an insight of that mysterious element which we call the heart, diminish the wonder. It is a sad truth, that from the beginning, man’s hand has been lifted against man ; when there were but two to call each other brother, discord severed them ; and here that earth counts her children by millions, we behold every day a representative of that fatal scene, when pride and anger introduced death into the dwelling of our exiled forefather. Alas, Adam, little didst thou think that the corpse of Abel, and the

branded brow of his murderer, were but the first outpourings of that bitterness, which should in some measure corrode the hearts of all thy offspring. Of all, for in this matter we all offend. Where is he, who in the review of only one day, can ascertain that in no instance he has strained the bond of kindness, that he has not indulged in censoriousness, that he has made all allowance for a brother's faults, forborne with the perverse, pitied the erring, and, still more difficult, has withstood the desiré of injuring an enemy, or when the tempting cup of revenge was proffered to his lips, has put it aside untasted. Yet to this we are required to attain; this temper is an important item in that strict account which we must finally render. How little do we think of this in our conduct in society, how little do we regard the irreversible decrees of that approaching tribunal. Pride, selfishness, passion and thoughtlessness, regulate our words and actions in apparent defiance of Him, who has said, that he shall have no mercy that showeth none—words, which while they exhibit the rule of judgment for eternity, are remarkably fulfilled in the events of time. Could we accurately separate the sorrows which proceed immediately from the Divine hand, from those inflicted by our fellow beings, how startling would the sum of unkindness received from man, appear in comparison with

the leniency of God. When our own follies and errors had been awarded their due, and the severity of men rendered its full amount, there would seem little remaining to impute to the rigor of heaven; cheerless indeed would be our lot, did our Creator exercise towards us, that measure of intolerance which we are obliged to take at each others' hands. There are many ways by which we can afflict our neighbor. Slander is an overflowing spring of poison. Calumny, whose forked tongue, according to the Jewish Rabbins, inflicts three injuries at once, harming the slanderer, the slandered, and the hearer of the malicious tale. Censoriousness, which though it invent not, gloats upon the faults of others, and delights to retail them. These are sharp weapons, and every one has felt how acutely they wound, yet too many of us go around with them habitually, and are ready to use them even unprovoked. But still more to be deprecated is the love of retaliation, so fondly cherished, and which men do not hesitate openly to avow. Some writer has said, that there are three ways of conducting under ill treatment, one is to despise the injury, the second is to return it, and the last is to live in such a manner as to reprove our enemy. The first is usually but unsuccessfully accomplished; the last, is deemed, as it is, of difficult attainment; while the second course, is the general prac-

tice. And yet, were men to be honest, they would confess that the draught mixed by revenge, is after all unsatisfying, sweet to the taste at first, but its flavor always dashed with bitterness. It cannot but be so, "evil will not produce good;" all the gentler qualities, which in their kindly and beneficial influences bear the impress of their great Giver, yield pleasure in proportion to their exercise. But He who breathed into man a living spirit, inspired not the demon revenge; that is a point, springing from the corrupted soil of a deteriorated nature: the growth of a poisonous seed, nursed by the worst passions, yielding the deadly fruits of malice and hatred, how did it find its way to the bosom of man? We read not of noxious plants intruding among the flowers of Paradise; it was when a banished criminal, that man was first pierced with thorns as he tilled the ground from which he was taken, and then, too, his nature partaking of the malediction, began to exhibit dispositions only evil. Besides, what fierce anxieties do the revengeful experience, while composing the gratification of their unhallowed desire through what windings and shuffling, must they often force their way; and when at last their purpose is effected, does the spectacle even of an enemy's downfall, repay the heart burnings and intrigues it has cost? Slander not the nature of man: evil as it

is, by affirming such a fact. Let him say, who, goaded by the severest provocation, has sought to allay the sense of injury in the blood of an enemy, who has pushed his enmity to the utmost boundary of existence, let him say, if gratified revenge is sweet. Men promptly console themselves when vexed or injured by others with the thought of retaliation, nor does their practice fall short of their intentions ; thus life is spent in receiving and returning offences, and in keeping open and irritating wounds, which a little forbearance would quickly heal ; thus, throughout society, however calm its surface may appear, there is a constant underplot, carried on by a little spirit of revenge. Men's opinions seem not so much to depend on intrinsic worth, as whether an individual has injured, or has the disposition to injure them ; whether he be with, or against us, in the miserable feuds, with which we seek to agitate life.

Sometimes, in a calm mood, we will listen to the arguments of reason, and feel the unworthiness of dispositions like these ; perhaps, if there be no present excitement near, we may even persuade ourselves that we are convinced, and for an interval taste the refreshment which thoughts of peace breathe over the soul. But unless our hearts have been entirely cleansed from revengeful feelings, unless we have learned from One

who alone can teach and bestow the power to practice the heavenly precepts he urges, when offences come, and come they will, we shall find that we had only "scotched the snake, not killed it;" it was but charmed into brief tranquillity, and its fangs are prepared at the touch of injury to return evil for evil. We have been required to do to others, as we would that they should do to us, but we often omit some of the command, and shaping it to our liking, we do towards our neighbor, as he does to us, or, rather, to speak out the truth, we act worse towards him, and more than repay ill treatment. For when anger calculates the amount of injury, be sure, there is nothing omitted; and when revenge broods over it, and malice colors it, there is little doubt but all its enormity will be taken in account, and hence the rewards we return to those who offend us are usually seven fold.

THE BURIAL PLACE.

THERE is no walk I so much prefer, or oftener seek, than that which leads to the spot, where, beneath the overshadowing pines, lie so many, whose hands used to clasp ours in friendship, or with whose joys and sorrows we were once identified. As you emerge from the little grove through which the path suddenly winds, the city of the dead meets the eye with peculiar solemnity. Many serious, but not painful reflections, occupied my mind during the hour I lately spent there,—nor is this an inappropriate season to visit the place of the dead. The general rejoicing of nature, in her annual resurrection from the grave of winter, conveys soothing images to the heart, and seems to give a cheerful reply to that anxious question, “if a man die, shall he live again?” The silence of the place was only broken by the distant hum of the city, and strangely did the noise and bustle of the living invade these sacred precincts. My thoughts reverted to former years, when the sleepers around me

were animated with the hopes and cares of existence ; a little moment, and those, now so flushed with life, will be borne hither to repose beside them, and another race will take their places, and succeed to their anxieties and joys. And is this life ? How dare we trifle it away with lavish waste, or spend its numbered moments in unworthy pursuits ? why should we delight to multiply the ties that bind us here,—to entwine our affections fondly around creatures so frail that they perish in our embrace, while the most fervent love, the passionate entreaties of a breaking heart, cannot, for one moment, arrest their flight ?

What a powerful appeal do these hillocks of earth make to the passions of men ! Come hither, ye whose hearts throb with hatred, or burn with the unhallowed fires of revenge,—have you ever stood beside the grave of an enemy ?—was it this piece of clay that excited such fierce emotions ? How does the earth cover his failings, and his provocations are buried deep as his lifeless form. But not so our injurious thoughts,—our unkind actions ; they rise fast upon the memory, and bring with them the stinging reflection, that regrets are unavailing. Why then should we pursue with unrelenting anger, the being of a day, who to-morrow may lie down in dust ? To weep over the grave of a friend, is a precious luxury : the reciprocal kindnesses

which endeared us in life ; the remembrance of the last illness and the dying hour, the parting word of love, the lingering gaze, the solemn farewell embrace,—all these give rise to emotions inexpressibly soothing. Where rests a friend, there let me linger, and often renew my visits, and receive fresh lessons of resignation ; —but lead me not to the tomb of him I have injured.

As I walked around, I observed from the inscriptions on the stones, that the greater number of those whose memory they preserved, were young—very young to die. Many had been struck down in their prime, but most amid the early joys of life—like a rose fresh gathered

“ In the prime of its bloom
Plucked off and withered.”

In a few instances, a whole family had been taken away at once. This seemed an enviable boon : when the parents had been laid in the same grave, their unsheltered lamb had been mercifully folded, and slept at their side. It is but a few years since our city became of note,—yet, see what a harvest death has already gathered in ! Might we but know the separate history of this dust, what scenes of care, recklessness, folly, crime, of unblest love, of unrewarded virtue, of humble goodness and unacknowledged worth, would pass before us !

Many a head has here been coldly and carelessly laid upon its earthly pillow, on which a mother's heart and tears rained blessings. Some, doubtless, had been born and nurtured in affluence, and their kindred lie together in stately mausoleums; but these were wanderers from their father's house, and in a far country, met their early fate—

“ but many shapes
Of Death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim cave all dismal !”

Of what little importance to those who here are hid in the grave from the storms of life, are the circumstances of honor or poverty which marked their journey! How vain their struggles and repinings,—how useless their anxious cares,—how fleeting their mirth,—how unsubstantial all but virtue! The bubbles we are so eagerly pursuing, were as earnestly sought after by these departed ones; the same blindness, the same vain perseverance in the fruitless chase,—but here the difference—their time and opportunities have passed forever,—ours are passing.

“ Nor love thy life nor hate; but what thou livest,
Live well;—how long or short, permit to Heaven.”

IMAGINATION.

FEW persons are aware how much they owe to imagination, a faculty of the mind which has always been regarded with distrust, and to restrain whose wandering, numerous rules have been imposed, rules at which, indeed, it too often laughs. Though serious evils may result from an undisciplined imagination, and the injudicious indulgence of its powers to the prejudice of our judgment, may convert what is, in itself, a refreshing cordial to an inebriating and poisonous draught, yet, in general, the power of fancy is a great embellisher of life. It is a powerful auxiliary to hope, coloring those agreeable visions which hope loves to believe, and winning the mind from gloomy contemplations.

There are some dispositions of a melancholy temperament, who darken all their thoughts with sadness, and to such, the powers of fancy become a source of almost unmitigated evil; but to most minds, the

Creator has given a desire to regard the circumstances of life under their brightest aspect, and imagination seems kindly bestowed, as wings to the soul, enabling it to soar above the petty difficulties and tiresome commonplaces of earth. This benevolent provision in man's constitution, must often impress those who interest themselves in the happiness of such of the human family as tread the paths of labor and obscurity. How does imagination lighten the toil of the humble slave in the pleasant pictures it draws before his mental vision, adding fresh glee to his rude melodies! Nor should refinement fastidiously sneer at the homely nature of his day dreams, but rather hail the cheering thought, that there are none so low in rank, or confined in intellect, that fancy does not deign to visit with her innocent exhilarations. Who will not own, what a relief to the most irksome employment are the thick coming fancies which beguile the mind; how many an hour of pain is soothed by thoughts not of this world! It is true, much of our irascibility is the effect of the magnifying power of fancy; our wrongs are most imaginary, our quarrels the ferment of misconception,—but it is the same faculty which heightens the delight we receive from reciprocated kindness, enhances the zest of social intercourse, and keeps us in happy blindness to the defects of those we love. Bitter would be the taste of life's

realities, did not the hand of fancy mingle sweets among them.

What beauty, too, does imagination shed over our intellectual enjoyments, skilfully interweaving with her golden threads the most elaborate compositions!—for not alone in poetry does

“Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o’er,
Scatter from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn”—

it is hers to light up the abstruser speculations of philosophy, to make science winning, morality lovely, and attire religion in softer graces.

This faculty is one of the principles whence spring activity and improvement; by leading us to the contemplation of more perfect characters, it excites the desire of imitation, and accelerates our course; the very dissatisfaction which its bright exaggeration occasions, serving as a spur to the mind; and while it elevates the thoughts from sordid objects, it is a wholesome corrective to mental indolence. Indeed, without the sunshine with which imagination, as it were, vivifies the soul, our thoughts would become stale as the dull weed which grows on Lethe’s banks.

Imagination is also the nurse of that poetic taste which seems natural to all, though not always equally developed. This taste is a deep and rich source of en-

joyment from earliest youth to age,—the lullabies of the cradle, the fables of childhood, the reveries of youthful fancy, all breathe into the soul the spirit of poetry. An image of poetic beauty, will often fix a moral truth indelibly in the memory ; the sublime mysteries of religion become doubly impressive, clothed in the rich decorations of an elevated imagination ; and it is indeed as the handmaid of devotion, that this faculty appears most beautiful ; kindled at the altar of heaven, her flames burn with purer brilliancy, and ascend thither without a taint of earth. There is not a more pleasing effort of the fancy, than that of embodying scenes to the mental perception ; and by means of this power of grouping, which imagination possesses, converting descriptions of poetry or recollections of history into vivid existences.

In one of the most simple yet romantic narratives,—one which poets have loved to dwell on, there is an image which never occurs to the mind alone—like some fairy spell it brings before the thoughts a sense of deepest interest,—I mean that incident in the history of Ruth, when, trembling and a stranger, unprotected and sad, “ she stood among the alien corn and wept.” How naturally do we follow her reflections upon former happiness, contrasted with her present desolation, and enter into the sickness of heart with which her spirit

yearned towards her father's land! We feel the fear with which she regarded the approach of the passing reaper, the irresolution which made her step falter and her eye downcast—and what assurance and comfort do we imagine the kindness of her benefactor convey to the heart of the beautiful stranger! When thoughts like these fill the mind, our kindest feelings are unlocked, our finest sympathies elicited. Chaucer has described a scene, which though but a fiction of the poet, conveys pleasing images to the fancy, when Constance, the bride and the widow of an hour, is launched alone in her frail bark upon the deep. The picture of that “lovely mariner” buffeted by the tempestuous ocean, her prayers, her feeble efforts, her resignation and trust in heaven, rise before us with the distinctness of truth: so strong are the chains which fancy forges. Often when the comforts of the domestic hearth are heightened by the terrors of a winter eve, does the image described by Thomson of the cottager perishing in the snow, occur to the mind; we see him bewildered and spent, vainly combating the tempest, and at length, “stung with the thoughts of home,” lying down to slumber for ever; and, turning to the bright reality before us, our hearts awake to gratitude. Surely, when imagination opens trains of thoughts like these, she improves as well as gratifies the mind.

But if we would enjoy the pleasures which spring from this important faculty, we must watchfully guard against its perversion. Especially should we be zealous of purity of thought: none but streams of bitterness can flow from a polluted fountain, nor can images of beauty or goodness visit that mind whose imagination is tainted by the prevalence of debasing passions. We should be firm also in regulating the fancy: an excessive indulgence in works of fiction, or pursuits of taste, will unfit us for the severer duties which devolve upon us all. In passing through our mortal journey, we are freely permitted to cull the flowers which bloom around us, to taste their odors, and to appreciate their beauty; but we may not, with impunity, loiter among their sweets. Our day is short; our sun is hastening towards its setting; let us refresh our spirits with every innocent means of enjoyment, but let us use them as refreshments, not surfeit till we become enervated on what was given to cheer and strengthen.

THE WORLD'S EYE.

PERHAPS there is no one totally indifferent to the opinions of his fellow beings. Appointed as we are to a social condition, linked in mutual dependence, it would seem to be a part of the constitution of our nature to lean upon the sympathies of others, and seek the good will of those with whom we hold intercourse. Of what avail is wealth or knowledge to him, who among all his treasures cannot number that rarest one, a friend,—who pursues his solitary course unaiding and unaided,—whose death excites no pang of sorrow—whose memory lives in no one's gratitude,—is cherished in no one's affection ?

“In the hour of death thine eyes longed for some object of affection, on which they might rest,” is the beautiful complaint of the poet. But not only in life's last hour do we need the consolations of friendship ; through all its varied scenes of pleasure and pain we seek the presence of a friend. I would not die alone ; let my dying bed be surrounded with kind faces ; let

the arm of affection support my sinking head, and the prayers and benedictions of the good, lend wings to my departing, trembling spirit. But neither would I live alone. Of all gifts I would earnestly covet the art of conciliating kindness. What is happiness unshared? Who can tell the bitterness of the grief which is sustained alone? Such thoughts will awaken corresponding desires in every bosom; and it is this principle, extending into a desire of the esteem of men, which has mingled with the motives, and made one of the incitements to honorable action in the bosoms of all good men. It is, too, a powerful restraint upon the vicious. Indeed, I know not but it may be traced to hypocrisy; for it is to pass well with men that the most hardened hypocrite wears his mask. He is conscious, and often trembles beneath that consciousness, that the eye of Omniscience detects him. Doubtless, this principle, operating in this manner, forms one of those numerous springs by which the Great Disposer of events controls the complicated machinery of society. In proportion as men become careless to the approbation of the world, they lose their hold on virtue; and he has arrived at a melancholy degree of boldness, who can deliberately defy the censure of the community of which he is a member. The esteem of men is to be desired on its own account, but it is far more de-

sirable as affording the power of doing good—in giving weight to every word and action, and influencing the hearts of others to receive salutary counsel and admonition. This sentiment, however, must be carefully distinguished from love of applause, and desire of men's admiration. The desire of esteem is a strong support to higher motives in rendering men benevolent, honorable and generous. The love of admiration fills the world with triflers, dandies, and puppets of fashion, male and female. The one tends to confirm habits of usefulness and virtue, the other leads to every species of vanity.

We have been considering the love of praise as wisely regulated; but there is a sensitiveness to reputation, which, when permitted the ascendancy, not only destroys the quiet of its possessor, but the dignity of his character. It apparently proceeds from a too exalted estimate of our own powers,—whence arises a continual jealousy, lest the world should not give that extravagant meed of applause which we claim as our due.

The characters of two illustrious writers, who have now passed away from the earth, afford us striking illustrations of the subject. The reader will instantly revert to him who “touched his harp, and nations heard, entranced”—him, whose unhappy story furnishes

affecting evidence how little genius, dissevered from virtue, promotes the welfare of her most favored children. Of whom but Byron, could it be said that he

“ Drank every cup of joy, heard every trump
Of fame; drank early, deeply drank, drank draughts
That common millions might have quenched,—
Then died of thirst.”

The constant struggle in Byron's mind between pride, which deigned not to solicit praise, and a sensitiveness to applause, which rendered it necessary to his peace, is truly affecting. Conscious of his power, and of the transcendant genius that burned within him, he regarded the world with contemptuous superiority; and yet, upon the wavering breath of the world's applause, did he place his dependence for happiness; and when that frailest of all supports, the capricious favor of man, forsook him, in the agonies of goaded pride,

“ His groanings filled the land his numbers filled,
And yet he seemed ashamed to groan.”

Alas! what havoc did undisciplined energies and mistaken aims make of the choicest mental gifts the Creator can bestow! Behold, in the feverish, agitated, un- honored career of this brilliant mind, the devastations of unsubdued passions; view him in his foreign grave,

shipwrecked in the midst of his course, the victim of misguided feelings and insatiable thirst of praise.

What a contrast does the tranquil life of Scott present? The simplicity and modesty of his character invests him with a dignity, which the proudest assumption could never have obtained; and the very circumstance of his declining the highest distinctions, disposes us to award them to him. That he was sensibly alive to the value of a good name, and the world's esteem, the unwearied and heroic efforts of his later years nobly attest; but, wiser than his cotemporary, he looked upon society with a good-humored philosophy, and, as he narrowly studied human character, its errors excited neither scorn nor bitterness; while the virtues he discovered, called into pleased exercise all his philanthropy. It is impossible to read the works of Scott, without feeling that he was a friend to man, and enjoyed the friendship of his fellow men. We cannot peruse Byron, without the impression that he deemed the world, and the world's law, against him. His bitter levity, his scornful raillery, do not deceive us; we perceive that they are the outbreakings of mortified pride, not the exuberance of mischievous humor; and however we may sympathise with his misfortunes,—and they were many,—or wonder at his genius, for it was resplendent, we cannot entertain for his character one sentiment of respect.

THE LAW OF KINDNESS.

THERE is no complaint more common, than that of the ingratitude of men ; yet, if we reflect upon our motives and expectations, we shall find that this opinion is, in a great measure, unfounded. Whoever narrowly scrutinizes his intention in bestowing kindness on another, will perceive, that he is rarely urged by the sole consideration of his neighbor's benefit ; and, consequently, the just claim on his gratitude is not so great. It may be said, that the recipient of our kindness cannot know how far our secret motives sway us ; but we may be assured, that men are very quick sighted and exact in adjusting their claims on each other ; and it is a mournful confession, but I fear a true one, that when we receive a favor, we instantly look around for reasons to diminish the weight of the debt. So that, though none are able to discover our secret motive, yet by reviewing past benefits which they may have rendered, or glancing at those which it is in their power

to confer, the obliged will put a tolerably fair estimate on the sum of gratitude they owe. So mixed indeed are all our motives, that the most beneficent actions are ever tarnished with some evil which alloys their purity, and the consciousness of this should silence our invective against the ungrateful returns we may sometimes meet. How often is it a sense of duty which alone prompts a series of kind attentions; and although He, who sees the heart, will recompense it, it surely should not surprise or vex us should the individual to whom we extended this kindness prove unheedful. How often, in what is called charity to the poor, does a latent desire of praise pollute the source of benevolence! Perhaps there are some who have not, while engaged, to human observation, in offices of charity, been conscious of a self-complacent emotion, which they endeavored to shake off, as a moral taint, and for the indulgence of which, they hated while they humbled themselves. In such a frame of mind we will not be rigid in demanding gratitude. Frequently, too, we make our alms a bitter draught to the unfortunate, by bestowing it with a careless or supercilious air, by assuming that our liberality gives us a right to control the actions of our needy fellow beings, and to rudely thrust ourselves into the secret recesses of domestic privacy. We need not wonder that benefactions thus

conferred, are reluctantly received, remembered with disgust, and forgotten as soon as possible. Ah! it requires a humble heart and a gentle hand to approach the sorrows of poverty; and the law of kindness should especially govern *their* lips who would inquire into the grievance of those whose very wretchedness renders them sensitive and even envious.

Our expectations from the gratitude of those whom we benefit, are always extravagant, and hence one cause of complaint. Even when we have bestowed an essential service, we are apt to overrate the obligation, and look for a return altogether unreasonable; not satisfied with a fair requital, we would exact usurious interest on our kindness. Besides, in the indulgence of our own selfishness, we leave out the consideration of that of others, and forget that while the former leads us to exaggerate our claims upon our friend's gratitude, the latter is influencing him to lower them in the same degree.

Dr. Johnson, when consoling an acquaintance upon the death of a benefactor, observed, "at least you are relieved from the weight of gratitude." Perhaps this was saying bitter things against our nature, but the remark is not wholly destitute of truth. There is a species of gratitude which has been wittily defined, "a lively sense of favors expected:" this is the coin

which passes among us as the representative of the real virtue ; and, as interest and convenience are the grand hinges upon which society moves, it serves the purpose well enough. It must be confessed, this prospective gratitude does not lack fervour, but it has this drawback, that the warmth can only be retained by incessant gratuities.

Instead, then, of exclaiming against the rare occurrence of real gratitude, we should rather be surprised that it is so frequently expressed. The true reason that it is so rare, is, that it is so seldom deserved. Man is, indeed, naturally wayward, easily hardened, and exposed to sufficient evil to embitter his gentle feelings ; but few, nay, none, are so entirely imbruted as not to acknowledge the touch of kindness. The accents of heart-felt compassion will reach the dullest heart, and awaken its kinder emotions ; the locked sensibilities of the most rugged will give way to the " open sesame " of delicate kindness. Those who are most fond of railery against man's ingratitude, will commonly be found to have the least reason to expect it ; it is possible to be extremely liberal in our benefactions and to confer important benefits, yet, by an imperious temper, unreasonable requirements, or ostentation, to deprive ourselves of the affection of the very persons whom we oblige. It is difficult to decide which is the most pitia-

ble, the giver or the receiver, in such circumstances. When we thus make our kindness a heavy chain to those whose necessities force them to receive it, the impatience with which it is borne should not be called ingratitude. It is true, that instances of this odious vice do sometimes startle us, but when we reflect on the preceding considerations, we must allow that there is not so much of it in the world, cold as it is, as some would suppose. While we act from selfish intentions, and cherish unreasonable expectations, we will never be contented with the returns of kindness we do receive.

But, doubtless, he who makes it one of his principles of action to cultivate a habitual spirit of benevolence, and avails himself of every occasion which presents itself, of imparting sympathy and aid, will seldom be heard complaining of ungrateful treatment. He will be satisfied with his share of reciprocated good will; he will taste the most delicious pleasure earth can give, the gratitude of a relieved sufferer. Let no one shut his heart against his fellow mortals on the score of their ingratitude; let them extend to them their sympathies as well as their assistance; let them give good measure of kindness, and they shall not fail to receive an abundant return, full pressed and running over. Gratitude, however, in all its elevation and pu-

ity, can only be entertained towards our beneficent Creator and Preserver. Favors from man to man are given and received in infirmity, even in noble and virtuous natures. Where the obligation is great, though it be fully and gratefully acknowledged, there is a regret at the occasion which calls forth the kindness, which even that kindness heightens; there is a longing for power to repay it, which betrays that the spirit feels the pressure. Not so with the bounties of Heaven: so high and sacred is their source, so overwhelming is their magnitude, all thought of repayment is absorbed in our inferiority; so thickly cluster blessings around us, that we may not count their number. Our vision dazzles as we view the splendor of Heaven's goodness over us, till, touched with awe, we surrender our hearts in fervent gratitude and praise.

VIRTUE OF COURAGE.

THE Romans among their many Gods, erected an altar to courage, and it had been well, had all their deities been as unexceptionable. The definition which the Swedish monarch gave of this quality, is familiar to all, but he had reference to mere personal bravery, which is courage in its most inferior sense. The generality of men possess that bull-dog disposition to violence, when opposed to each other, which is often dignified by the name of courage, but which might justly be classed among those propensities which 'debase our nature. The courage of which I would speak, and which alone deserves the name, is that moral quality which comprehends fortitude to endure, readiness to suffer, or to dare difficulty, in defence of justice, or for the sake of truth. We see from this simple statement, that this is a different sentiment from that which prompts us to fell an offending brother to the earth, or from that more deliberate manner of shewing valor,

when men meet, to coolly murder each other after approved rules. Such displays of courage, require no elevation of feeling. In some cases they are the direct consequences of fear. Many are the duellists who have stood the fire of their antagonist; many the soldiers who have not turned their back in battle; not from the love of honor and contempt of danger, but from fear of the world's scorn overcoming their natural reluctance. While we allow, then, that there is a certain manliness of character, which shrinks not from danger, and concede its full value, let us recollect that it is not this alone which constitutes a courageous man. Let us distinguish true resolution from that noisy bullyism which abounds in the world, whose swelling threats, however loud they may sound, when put to the test, will invariably be found to signify nothing.

There are two or three striking characteristics of real courage. One is an entire absence of boasting. We are very prone to dwell most upon those qualities in which we feel most deficient, just as it is common for those who would be thought refined, to be incessantly talking of good society, and smatterers in learning and science, to be overwhelming their hearers with pedantic quotations. The bravery which evaporates itself in words, will be found in the moment of danger of little worth. The really courageous are thorough going,

—not soon disconcerted, nor easily dismayed by difficulties ; but, above all, they may be distinguished by magnanimity. To the brave belong the noble privilege to forgive.

There is scarcely any situation in life, wherein we do not need the quality of moral courage. We require it to encounter the ills of life, for ills we may not hope to escape in this, our day of proof. It is kindly ordered that our afflictions occur suddenly, thus sparing us the pang of apprehension—the sickening anticipation ; but this very circumstance makes a sudden demand on courage to endure,—for if it be presumptuous to abuse ungratefully the bounties of Providence, it must be equally criminal to faint under his rebuke. It is right to tremble and submit, but wrong to sink in despair, forgetful that the hand which wounds, means not to crush its creatures. We also need the assistance of resolution to resist solicitations to evil, and to withstand the powerful effect of pernicious example. Whoever is desirous to fulfil the trust he has received from the Creator, will perceive the continual inducements offered to his senses and his passions to lead him to its betrayal. It is the custom indeed, to admire virtue and religion in the abstract, but when embodied in practice, it comes too closely in contact with the follies of men, is too severe a reproof to their vices, to win their love ;

it is well, if it obtain their toleration. Hence, a truly good man may well be a courageous one.

There are many parts of relative duty, which require courage faithfully to perform ; to instance only two : —What resolution is necessary to warn a friend ? How does the hand tremble, which would tenderly probe the wound it wishes to heal, but fears to touch ! When we see a friend betrayed into error, how difficult is it to incur the risk of anger, perhaps loss of affection, by plain reproof !—painful, indeed, the task of inflicting these faithful wounds !

Another distressing act of courage, is to deal candidly with dying friends,—tenderly, yet unshrinkingly, to unveil the impending danger, and urge the solemn considerations which attend it. How often do we falter here ! How shall we discharge this task of painful kindness ? What language can we find tender enough to convey such evil tidings ? With what words shall we speak to the grief of him whom God has wounded ?

But if we require courage through the various events of life, there is a scene opening upon us, when we shall invoke all the energies of our spirit upon our own account. We shall need courage to die. Not to die like a buffoon, or with the insensibility of a slaughtered bullock, nor in the paroxysm of hotheaded valor,—but to meet death with the dignity which becomes an immor-

tal,—the cheerfulness which becomes a christian. It all comes to this at last. However strong in resolution, however firm of purpose, if our courage be not based upon the eternal foundations of religion, at the hour of trial, in our utmost need, it will desert us. It cannot sustain the pressure of a wounded spirit; it must have to struggle alone with unknown terrors. “Life offers many objects to stimulate the mind—death but one,”—the hope of future happiness. That only, can inspire resolution, when the glare of the world, the excitements of false glory, disappear like the phantoms of a vision, and with them the delusive support of unreal courage.

SENSITIVENESS.

WHAT a medley is human character! While there are many of its qualities that excite admiration, and many, too, that extort feelings of regret, there are some which, when acted out in society, cannot but provoke the smile of good-humored ridicule. Of this class is that proud modesty, or irritable humility—as, for lack of a better epithet, I must venture to designate it—that not only renders its unfortunate possessor ridiculous, but unhappy. Such a person has really an humble opinion of himself, and it is his very distrust of his parts which occasions his sensitiveness. It were better, had he more pride or more humility; for he has not enough of the latter to prevent his being easily offended, nor of the former to enable him to conceal the mortification of his vanity. A disposition thus tainted, is ever on the outlook for slights and affronts, watching the variations of manner in an acquaintance, and depending for peace upon smiles and courtesies,—those counterfeit coin

which pass current among the world, in the stead of good will and friendship.

Bulwer has amusingly hit off a caricature of this foible, under the name of Mr. Nokes. "Should you, through haste or inadvertence, pass him with a slight salutation, he is sorely galled at your omission; he pondereth the reason; he looketh at his hat; he looketh at his garments; he is persuaded it is because his habiliments were not new, and you were ashamed to be seen with him in the street. He never hits on the right cause; he never thinketh you may have pressing business; Nokes dreameth of no business save that which to Nokes appertaineth."

There are many Mr. and Mrs. Nokes's in the world; and if we examine closely, we can trace this perverse bias of temper to a source which is indeed fruitful of more important evils,—even the enthronement of self. It is selfishness which prompts us to think that others are always consulting our feelings instead of their own, and it is the same spirit which makes us angry when we discover how small a space we occupy in their attention. One of this turn is always at odds with the world; he is either enraged if disliked, or wretched if forgotten; and always ready to think the community employed in discussing his demerits, when in truth they seldom recur to the fact of his existence.

Some men of genius, but of inordinate vanity, have been disgraced by this error. Witness the sincere, the pitiable, and yet amusing lamentations of Rousseau, when he dreamed the world was conspiring against his life, while they were only pitying his waywardness. Nothing can be more absurd than his weakness, unless it be the simplicity with which he betrayed it. But though in this, and a few other instances, this feeling has blurred the reputation of really eminent authors, it is to the mediocre tribe of writers that it is mostly confined. Alas for the composers of sentimental tales for souvenirs, and of little thin volumes of poetry! How much of this imaginary ill treatment, at the hands of a stupid public, have they to endure! How many slights do they meet, which were not intended! how many an arrow wounds their pride, which the unconscious archer never aimed! And these self-inflicted wounds are very severe, because they must necessarily rankle in secret. I have known persons suffering under such smarts wear the look of a martyr, to the perplexity of all their acquaintance, who little thought that they had been themselves the innocent torturers.

This captious humor, whether in writers, or in those who walk in the more beaten track of life, ceases, if it be indulged, to be a trifling error. Its disagreeable results are, acerbity of temper and a vindictive spirit; and

it degrades the mind, by harassing it with petty irritations. The best corrective against it is self-knowledge—a careful and impartial estimate of our own character, the position that we occupy in society, our claim upon those around us, and the demands which they justly have upon us. Could we be convinced of our relative insignificance, we should cease to be unreasonably anxious concerning the opinion of men; and having marked the course of action which correct judgment approved, their capricious decision would not have power to turn us aside, nor their cavils sufficient weight to produce unhappiness.

There is a degree of self-esteem necessary to peace and virtue—I mean that which springs from a conscience void of offence. It was an acute observer and a deep thinker, who said, “he is happy who condemns not himself in that which he allows”—words worthy to be indelibly inscribed on every heart. There is also a laudable desire of the good opinions of our fellow-beings, for precious at all times is the kindness of friends. But it is necessary to watch our hearts, lest we flatter ourselves into sensitive vanity, and cherish an insatiable thirst for that delicious draught, the sound of praise. Habitual humble thoughts of ourselves, moderation in our expectations from others, and a desire to please God, is, after all, the best panoply against

the censoriousness of a world, which the slings and arrows of unfriendly tongues, aided by our own weakness, render often a scene of discomfort. Let, then, the proud spirit, ruffled by very trifles—the sensitive heart, so often stung by the meanest reptile, seek the sacred fountains guarded by humility and charity, whose streams, more blest than Lethe's fabled wave, induce oblivion, not of life's sorrows, but its wrongs; while they impart tranquillity and refreshment to the bosom heated with that worst fever of the soul, the anger of disappointed pride.

CURIOSITY.

OF all the propensities by which we vex our neighbors, and waste our own time, there is not one more decidedly unprofitable than the indulgence of idle curiosity. The habit of searching into trivial matters, and interesting the feelings in unravelling affairs entirely unimportant, or cherishing a craving desire for something novel or exciting, however petty it may be, is certainly beneath a rational mind. Yet this trifling humor, obtains among men in a singular degree; it was not the polished Athenians only, who spent their time in speaking and hearing some new thing. It is no other but these Paul Prys of society, which keep it in a ferment;—mortifying indeed, that such insects should produce so much uneasiness,—but the tongue, though a little member, boasteth, and not without reason, great things. Were it right or safe to smile at evil, it would not be unamusing to observe the avidity with which people of this turn seize upon some fruitful

topic. What a faculty they possess of enlarging on every passing occurrence! how many conjectures and cogitations will they lavish! how earnestly enlist in discussing an accident—a marriage—a gossiping tale—the authorship of a trifling paper, or any like insignificance! Alas, for breath thus idly spent—for ingenuity thus perversely misapplied! This puerile spirit of inquisitiveness should be repressed, not only for its pernicious effects on society, but for its deleterious influence on our own character. The mind that is constantly absorbed in such minor concerns, insensibly lowers itself; the attention, ever on the stretch for ‘news,’ as it is called, is withdrawn from higher objects, and dissipated on trifles, while our meditations, chained down to the narrow circle which bounds the flight of vain curiosity, forget to rise to themes more suitable to our capacities, our responsibilities and our destinies.

This same quality, however, when elevated in its pursuits, when given a higher aim, becomes noble and useful. The spirit of investigation has perhaps bestowed more benefits upon the world, has produced more important results, than the most brilliant gifts of genius. The Pharsalian rustic, when he detected the attracting powers resident in amber, little thought that he was handling the infant bolts of Jupiter. The simple shepherd, as he wondered over the the phenome-

na of the loadstone, and traced its effects, saw not, in his farthest range of thoughts, the magnetic needle guiding the mariner over the trackless waves of the ocean. How important the results consequent in these instances, upon the spirit of inquiry! Hundreds have passed unheeding, over the hints of Nicetas and Philolaus, respecting the motion of the earth; the investigating mind of Copernicus saw in them, the germ of his immortal system. It is thus to patient, laborious research, to curiosity considered in its noblest sense, that we owe so much that is conducive to knowledge and comfort. Curiosity held the lamp which lighted Newton through the skies. Curiosity discovered the key which has unlocked so many secrets in mechanics—facilitating the progress of all useful arts, almost annihilating space, and reducing to reality, plans which would, a century ago, have been pronounced the dream of delirium. In the moral world also, this quality has accomplished much; the attainments which have been made in modern times, and are now in progress in the science of metaphysics—the insight into that interesting study, the philosophy of mind, which has been afforded by persevering investigation, and above all, the added light which consecrated study and inquiry have shed around the fountain of true knowledge,—the sacred volume,—evinces its usefulness. But much as has been

discovered, much, as doubtless in the advancing state of the world, remains to be explored, there is a boundary, beyond which our limited capacities may not pass, at whose threshold, it is wisdom to pause with humility. The spirit of inquiry may be carried so far, as to be dangerous and criminal,—indeed it has been, for what good gift does not man abuse to his own detriment. It has been the lot of many deep thinkers, to lose themselves in labyrinths of their own contrivance; many, more curious than devout, departing from simple truths, have wandered in the mazes of confusion and skepticism. “Not deeply to discern, not much to know,” is, after all our attainments, justly inscribed upon the efforts of the wisest of our race. “Alas,” said Newton, when allusion was made to his discoveries, “I am but a child gathering pebbles upon the shore.” He had learned what science does not always teach, self-distrust, and by his practice, allowed that “humble love, and not proud reason, keeps the door of Heaven.”

But there is a view of this element of human character, which throws every other in the shade. The limits appointed to its researches here, are incident to our situation;—how greatly shall they be enlarged, when that change takes place which must pass over every son of earth. Our Creator, in his beneficence, has constituted this spirit of inquiry, this spirit of knowledge,

even one of the sources of enduring happiness. In the sublime mystery, which, in the nature of things, must ever surround an infinite Being, there will be subjects of unceasing admiration and wonder to a purified spirit. That created beings can never know the uncreated to perfection, will cast no shade over celestial blessedness,—there will ever be new objects of contemplation, opening their glories upon the enlarging faculties. Nor idle curiosity, nor vain reasonings there; the spirit of investigation, hallowed to its noblest purpose, will be always rejoicing in new acquisitions of knowledge, and always athirst for more. Let us then while we sternly banish curiosity in its inferior application, cherish its elevated use with wise caution, and be it our care to exercise it on such subjects now as may bear the scrutiny, and make part of the enjoyments of a holier state.

SYMPATHY.

IN a world so full of change and trial as this, exposed as we are to sorrows varied and severe, how inexpressibly precious is human sympathy! The tones of kindness, the look of affection, the tear of sympathy, come to the agitated or sinking spirit like healing balsam poured with a gentle hand upon a burning wound.

To one staggering beneath a heavy burden, and ready to fall, a slight assistance will enable to keep on his way; thus be it but a word, or only a silent but affectionate pressure of the hand, it may soften the pangs of grief, and aid the sufferer to bear his load of sorrow.

That the sight of happiness does not excite our sympathy as vividly as that of affliction, is no evidence of selfishness, but rather the contrary. They who are wretched need commiseration most; and it is kindly appointed that our kind feelings flow out to them more readily and strongly than they do towards the happy.

We sometimes think, in witnessing the calamities of others, that because we cannot render essential service we have nothing to do. But we can give that which is more precious than gold: it is placed in the power of every human being to soothe affliction, though he may not avert or remove it. Fellow-sufferers in the scenes of life, in the kind sympathies of the heart there is opened a source of consolation, always available and welcome. Imperfect as we are, and too often swayed by evil passions, this faculty of the soul by which it enters into the sorrows it sees, and by sharing lightens them, is still left us. What would life be were it not so—were this moral law of attraction annulled, and man condemned to suffer unpitied and uncared for by his brother? How desolate would our journey be, so frequently clouded by lowering skies? how often would the feeble hands sink down for ever, if friendly ones were not outstretched to grasp them? Many times the grief of those whom God has wounded would sink them in hopeless despondency, did not some kind voice speak comfort and awaken the stunned heart, by suggesting thoughts of the merciful supports of heaven. Intense grief sometimes imparts a fearful sternness to the mind, which nothing can touch but sympathy. I witnessed an instance of immoveable despairing anguish in a bereaved mother, which nothing could touch but the sym-

pathy of an humble slave, who, kneeling at her mistress' feet, took her passive hand and wept over it tears of affection. The silent, modest token of love, reached the chords of feeling, awakened her softer emotions, and probably averted frenzy from her over-strung spirit.

But sweet as is human kindness in the hour of need, how much more efficient is divine sympathy! One of the titles given to the Supreme is the God of consolation—one of His dearest attributes is that of compassion. How beautiful the language used to express His kindness for His ancient people: "In all their affliction He was afflicted!" So our Redeemer is said to have a fellow feeling for our pains,—the word used in the original being perhaps the most beautiful and expressive of any word in any tongue. In all the rugged paths which the children of sorrow may be called to walk, they may trace His footsteps; and there is no storm so loud that they may not hear His voice cheering them.

There are some minds so peculiar in their structure, with whom grief is such "a sacred thing," that they cannot reveal their sufferings nor unveil their emotions even to the heart of friendship. But He who formed that too sensitive spirit can open avenues of comfort,

and touch with soothing power those hidden springs of feeling, which human sympathy could not reach.

Doubtless there are many instances where the stroke is heavier than the groaning, and where, when friendly efforts have done their best, the heart still writhes under its pangs uncomforted.

Some sorrow flows forth at the touch of sympathy, and finds relief in wailing ; there is a grief which seeks to hide itself, and nourish its bitterness in the inmost soul, that sheds no tears, nor desires to shed them. Time, with its gradually deadening influence, is too slow for the affliction of such a mind—it must be soothed, or perish. There is but One who can say with authority to the tumults of intense grief like this, “ Be still !” Happy, they who in tribulation taste the sympathy of friends ; but more blessed they who look for and receive the consolations, which the Infinite Mind alone knows how and when effectually to impart.

OUR INFLUENCE UPON OTHERS.

THAT we live for ourselves—that we are independent of, and irresponsible to our fellow creatures, is a species of philosophy as cold as it is false. But while most will admit the fact of our mutual dependence for companionship in joy, consolation in sorrow, or support in the adversities that track our steps from the cradle to the grave,—our mutual responsibility, and the influence which we involuntarily exert upon the character of each other, are very much kept out of sight. The sedulous care and skill, with which we exclude or conceal unpleasing truths from our thoughts, is a notable trait in that strange anomaly, the human heart, and is the probable cause of the neglect of this important consideration. - A few moments' reflection on the relation, which, in this view, we hold to those around us, and the duties which grow out of it, may not be idly spent.

Our great Creator has so arranged the machinery of

society—so adjusted the complicated parts, that each has its allotted station and task, the irregularity or omission of any of which, mars the harmony of all. It is a vain thought, then, that insignificance will screen us; the co-operation of the smallest wheel is essential to impel the whole, and it is generally a false humility that prompts this plea. It is often, but not always sincerely asked, what good can I effect, what power can my obscure character possess? We should rather, surveying the high faculties with which we are endowed, the various furniture of our minds, the innumerable ways in which, by our relative situations, we touch the springs of action in all connected with us, inquire, what good can we not accomplish? Why are all these gifts and opportunities lavished upon us? Certainly to promote our happiness, but that is only to be enjoyed by contributing to the welfare of others. Such is the constitution of our nature, that joy is not joy, unless it be imparted and shared, and what purer pleasure can there be, than that of directing those who look up to us, to the light of truth and heaven. Thrice happy the man, who consecrates all his influence, whether it be great or little, to the service of virtue,—the amelioration of his species; for as the duty is important, so the reward of its fulfilment is great. We, perhaps, can never fully appreciate the power we exert over other

minds. Whoever has watched his motives, will remember the force of even a trivial remark, in swaying his conduct; a feather's weight inclines the wavering balance,—a few words often decide the vacillating opinion. Besides, there are multitudes of that indeterminate character, who always take their impressions from others, and are inoffensive or vicious, as they are led by the good or evil examples around them.

When, in addition to this, we reflect how extensive, as well as powerful our influence may be, we will have a still deeper sense of the importance of this subject.

The cast which we help to give to the character of another, is not confined alone to him, but will be imparted to those upon whom he reflects his opinions; thus, every immoral act we commit,—every false opinion to which we give weight and currency, may be exercising a baleful influence, long after we have repented of the one, retracted the other, or ceased to be an actor in the busy scenes of life.

Who then can be careless, whether the power which he exerts in society be evil or beneficial? This is a concern which comes home to each individual. The heart of the parent must tell him his responsibilities too loudly to be easily silenced; he knows, for he daily sees the reverence with which his child regards him, and the accuracy with which the little observer imitates

him. He must be aware, that it is his own character that is forming his offspring's,—it is his part solemnly to consider whether it shall be good or evil. The destiny of his child for life, and for eternity, is in a measure, placed in his hands,—nay, his remote descendants may owe to his example their peace or misery, and in the day of retribution, appal him with their accusation, or hail him with their grateful blessings. But, though more important claims rest on some, and their duties are more plainly marked, no one may plead entire exemption. There is no discharge in this war, and fidelity is required of the humblest heart that is enlisted in the combat. We may invent excuses, and shrink from our duties, but we cannot evade them,—we must not abuse them.

The young, too, possess influence—direct, powerful influence, with the young. How often do we see the solicitations and example of a youthful associate, outweigh the counsel and entreaties of more experienced friends. It is indeed, upon the youthful portion of my readers, I would impress this truth. You, who have not yet incurred the guilt of misleading your fellow beings, spare yourselves the unknown pangs, which the remembrance of such guilt brings. Arrange yourselves, and all the power over others which you possess, on the side of religion and virtue; and forget not that this

power is increasing every day, as character matures, and opportunities of action open upon the view. Do not cloak sloth and selfishness with the mantle of humility, but be awake to the influence you do possess, and be assured, you will find the desire of winning those around you to virtue by a virtuous example, the noblest incentive to purity, the strongest guard against temptation to evil, and the most abundant reward for self-denial, or salutary discipline, which the prosecution of such a course may render expedient. Indeed, the desire of usefulness, of reflecting honor upon our divine benefactor, will lead us in every way to approve ourselves blameless before men. How can we exert a good influence, if we do not practice that which is good; how shall we allure others to walk with us in the paths of goodness, unless we evince by our alacrity—our purity—our cheerfulness, that we breathe her sacred spirit, and taste her animating cordials.

Let us not be mistaken. If the heaven lighted flame of piety and virtue warm our hearts, it will diffuse far around, its radiance, attracting the heedless, directing the perplexed, cheering the mind. But we cannot be neutral; if the influence our example affords be not positively good, it will be positively evil—and oh! the tenfold aggravation of that guilt, that cold selfishness which not only impels men to surrender themselves to

the slavery of vice and error, but can unmoved contemplate the fearful risk of drawing numerous victims, by precept, example, and influence, into the same loathsome bondage;—victims, perhaps the partners of their blood, to whom the very nearness of their ties has given a sad title to shame and misery.

SOCIAL INEQUALITIES.

As I was lately enjoying an evening walk, and strolling through the outskirts of the city, a handsome and well appointed equipage, filled with smiling faces, whirled by me. These people, I thought, are happy—probably affluent; and wealth is certainly one great item in the sum of happiness. Setting aside the gratification of luxury,—the command of time—the enjoyment of leisure, is no small privilege; besides, wealth buys kindness and attention. Whose health and spirits are made subjects of importance, and discussed with interest? The rich man's, certainly:—None think of distressing themselves about the poor man's health, or notice when he droops. This kindness is, indeed, only purchased, and has not much reference to intrinsic worth; but we are apt to forget a truth so unpleasant, and to set to the account of our own merit, the good estimation which we owe to our prosperity. While thus considering the advantages which the possession

of a certain quantity of Bank notes confer, my eye rested upon a female, who had hastily stepped aside, to make way for the gay party which had just passed, and her humble, but respectable appearance, gave my thoughts a different direction. When she had walked a few paces before me, she stopped, and entered into a very lowly tenement; one apartment was all the room it seemed to afford, but that was spotless in its neatness. A bright fire blazed upon the hearth, some healthy children played upon the floor, and welcomed their mother with glad voices, while she herself looked around her with an air of contentment, and there was cheerfulness in the tones of her voice, as she spoke to her little ones. Here was happiness, too. Wealth, then, I thought, is only one item after all. In endeavoring to thread the tangled events of life, a close observer will avail himself of the most common incidents, and will often find a clue to his inquiries, in what heedless eyes would pass unnoticed, or regard as trivial.

When we survey society *en masse*, and perceive the apparent inequalities which mark men's circumstances,—some exalted so high—others depressed so low,—some borne smoothly on by favoring currents—others shipwrecked by adverse gales,—one enjoying the light of knowledge—another enveloped in the darkness of ignorance;—when we observe how one half of the

world are bullying the other half into a belief of their merit, while vice and folly too often triumph, and virtue withers in the shade, we recoil from the complicated—the disheartening scene. But if we take a closer view, and pierce beyond mere externals, we shall find the consolatory truth, that happiness is meted out with an even hand,—that there are none so blest, as to feel no pain—none so wretched as to taste no bliss. The slave, whose life is a task, whom every rising sun calls to labor without motive or reward, would seem placed without the pale of enjoyment;—yet provision is made, even for him. What though his pleasures lie in a narrow circle, his desires do not overstep it. Behold him released from toil, whistling and dancing,—no cares for the future oppress his mind,—he literally takes no thought of the morrow; no responsibilities cast a shade over his brow; all these he leaves to his master, who, perhaps, lies restless on luxurious couches, disquieted or unsatisfied amidst abundance!—yes, who often, in the secret bitterness of his heart, envies the very menial whose fate would seem so much darker than his own. The lot of the laborer, who, by his daily exertions, earns only his daily subsistence,—to whom a fever, or an accident, may bring absolute want—who, when he looks upon his children, must sometimes tremble to feel that on his precarious life and strength they

depend alone, his destiny would appear a hard one. Hard, indeed, were it not mercifully mingled with peculiar comforts. He can speak of unbroken slumbers, and he feels that the fruits of his industry are inexpressibly sweet. He is a stranger to capricious or artificial wants, and never heard of *ennui*. Neither are the unlettered so cut off from enjoyment as their more intellectual brethren would suppose;—we cannot mourn a good we never knew, and though far from undervaluing the delights which taste and cultivation afford, who that has tasted them, need to be reminded of their alloy. Man has always paid the penalty of plucking fruit from the tree of knowledge. The insatiable thirst, the ever unsatisfied excitement of mind which progressive advances in intellectual attainments produce, the toil of thought, those hours of mental abstraction, when the overwrought powers recoil upon themselves,—are we quite sure, that all this is compensated for, by the pleasure of knowledge, or the distinctions of fame?

Who will show us any good? is the universal cry; and to seek this good in external circumstances, is the universal mistake. We toil for wealth, grasp at honors, and pant for fame, ignorant or forgetful that happiness originates deep in the soul,—that man is, in a great degree, the framer of his own peace,—that to practise virtue is the science of happiness,—self-govern-

ment its noble secret. Vain are the appliances of rank or fortune, the endearments of affection, or the gratifications of taste, to the miserable vassal of his own passions. True pleasure blooms only for the free, and there lives not a more helpless slave than he who resigns his will to the dominion of appetite, or the sway of evil tempers. The foundation of true happiness is laid in moral goodness,—we shock our own peace in every instance that we outrage the commands of virtue.

“For united close her sacred interests with the strings of life.”

Another general error is, to mistake merry mirth, or giddy excitement, for enjoyment. A master in morals has said, true pleasure is a serious thing,—drawn from the depths of an approving conscience—not the evanescent smiles of flatterers; living in the light of heaven—not in the meteor glory of human applause, it is independent of changing events—makes one in the abode of poverty—deserts not the bed of suffering, and can “talk with threatening death and not turn pale.” This is a very different kind of happiness from that which needs the accompaniment of the harp and the viol,—the stimulants of show and vanity.

But if the means of pleasure be thus accessible to all, how is it that so few have tasted her delicious cup? Nature unconsciously invites us to rejoice with her, and

why do we not rejoice? Is it not that, too frequently, we aim entirely wrong? we fix upon some fancied good, and in endeavoring to obtain it, we pertinaciously refuse the enjoyments within our reach;—nay, ungratefully trample upon proffered pleasure which would seem to impede our progress; nay, when, gratified in our pursuit, we grasp the bubble, and find it painted, we complain of fate, and wonder that we are unhappy. Are not our pursuits too often selfish, thus securing to ourselves disappointment? Are they not sometimes unworthy, exposing us to those rebukes of conscience, which sting like poisoned arrows? Have we any right to complain of that beneficent hand which has placed so many blessings within our reach, if, in our waywardness, we turn away from them? and can we, with any show of reason, repine at evils which we inflict upon ourselves?

It is true that clouds do darken the path of the good: virtue shields not the heart from sorrow. Affliction, as she walks her dreary round, leaves no human breast unvisited. But, even in calamity, there is a noble happiness, if I may so express it, which none but the good taste. It is the upright man alone, who is serene, when others tremble; it is he who sustains the adversities of life with fortitude and dignity; encounters its difficulties with courage, or bends to them with patience—

“And when he falls, writes *Vici* on his shield.”

PRUDENCE.

WHILE the admiration of men is attracted by talent, courage, and the more showy qualities which adorn the character, those substantial ones, which, though less obtrusive are not the less important, are passed over almost unnoticed. The brightest gifts of genius are no compensation for the absence of prudence; yet while we daily hear talent and genius lauded, how little is said of this cardinal virtue, which is indeed the basis of all that is valuable. Prudence, which is but another name for common sense, or the faculty of judging and acting discreetly, would seem to be distinct from wisdom, though a department of it, as it is applied to the conduct and opinions as they operate on conduct, while wisdom comprehends intelligence and speculative knowledge. Prudence, therefore, is knowledge applied to practical uses, and includes foresight and reflection; and if we follow the influence of this virtue into actual life, we must immediately perceive

its great importance, and the bearing which it has not only on the every day concerns of the world, but on the regulation of the conduct as respects man's happiness and highest hopes. When, therefore, we counsel the youthful aspirant for life's distinctions to be prudent, though it might seem a homely saying, it would in effect be urging him to be virtuous, honorable and beneficent;—for in arranging this plan for future action, prudence would suggest such a course as the most effectual towards gaining his desired object—God's approval, happiness, and the world's esteem.

It is a subject of regret that we are so prone to be imposed on by appearances,—so apt to call things by wrong names. Well may man be styled imagination's fool, thus easily misled by glare, and betrayed by unreal pretensions. Were we always to judge soberly, many applauded qualities would begin to take the lowest place in our consideration. Profuseness, for instance, so often named generosity and whole-heartedness, would be abased; and prudence, in that branch of it called economy, which is the source of liberality, would be elevated in its place. It is not uncommon for men to ascribe the untoward occurrences of life to misfortune or fate, (whatever they may mean by that absurd expression,) when in fact they can be traced directly to want of prudence. Whatever consolation it may afford

to think ourselves victims, when we are only the agents of our own vexations, it must have an evil tendency by preventing the detection of the true cause, and thus leading us to repair the error. Afflictions indeed are incident to humanity, but it is necessary carefully to distinguish those which are unavoidable, from such as we draw upon ourselves by our heedlessness or folly,—and to endeavor to profit by the experience they afford. It is a usual thing to hear one who is careless of speech, complaining of petty feuds and embarrassments, and of the perversity of his neighbors; but, had prudence kept the door of his lips, he would have been preserved from the strife of tongues though surrounded by discord. The merchant whose too extended plans and rash calculations entangle him in perplexities, bewails his misfortunes and rails at the uncertainty of commerce; but had prudence directed his schemes in the stead of that spirit of gambling which, by a common mistake, is called enterprize, these disastrous results might have been averted. Unfortunate men are not always imprudent ones, but the imprudent are ever unfortunate, by a consequence as inevitable as that they who will not use their vision, must stumble or lose their way.

There is another strange perversion of language which may be noticed in this connexion. When one

is spoken of whose deteriorated appearance and debased faculties proclaim him a victim of that destroyer on whose life, and soul-consuming altar, the most precious sacrifices are daily offered—how common to call such a one unfortunate.—Nay, let us call his wife, his children, his kindred unfortunate; he is erring and imprudent; grant him the deepest compassion of the soul, but accord your pity to his vices, not to his misfortunes. To the gentler sex prudence recommends itself by every consideration. In the retired circle of domestic duties, occasions seldom occur to call forth the more splendid qualities, but discretion or prudence is in constant requisition. Indeed, beauty, taste, genius, those graces which render woman lovely and endearing, unless they are allied to prudence are absolutely fatal to peace and usefulness. There is a spurious sort of prudence, which is little else than cold selfishness, indulged to the exclusion of every generous sentiment, and which seems to entitle its possessor to regard with contemptuous pity, those whose heart and property are alike open to the wants of suffering humanity. Christian prudence also, though proper in itself, serves too often as a convenient and specious cloak for indifference or formality, or cowardly desertion of principle. Who then is a prudent man? He who carefully reflects on the consequences of different opinions and actions,—who weighs

the benefits and disadvantages of any proposed end, and if it is proper and attainable, ascertains the best means for its accomplishment,—he who is directed not by impulse but reason, who does not even approach the line which separates virtue and vice,—who, while he forms wise plans for time, forgets not that they are for time only. He alone is prudent who considers rightly his situation here, and perceiving that all go to one place, all are of the dust, and all return to dust again,—and that to his final rest he shall take nothing of his labor which he may carry away,—sends before him works of mercy and goodness, thoughts of purity and peace, the fervent aspirations of a humble spirit.

THE DAUGHTER.

THE mother looks upon her son, as he rises into manhood, with feelings of pride and trust: if calamity assails her, and robs her of other protectors, his arm will be her defence; and she can even think of leaving him to win his way through the world, with composure. But, when she sees the smiling girl by her side, she trembles. How willingly would she throw herself between that young heart and the trials and changes which she knows must come. With similar emotions the father beholds his son's entrance into the active duties of life: he must struggle and toil; it is man's part, and the resolute boy can brave it all. But the fair flower that grows beneath his sheltering care, his timid, helpless daughter—what a delicate, holy tie is that which links her to his heart, which enwraps his honor and happiness in hers! Dear are all children to the parental heart, but the daughter claims and takes the tenderer, deeper interest there. Guarded by the father's

care, watched and guided by maternal love, and often doubly shielded by manly brothers, how little would seem left to a youthful female to wish, how plain and easy the circle of a daughter's duties! Yet some err here, it may be, not well aware of their responsibilities. Selfishness and petulance are the sins peculiarly incident to this stage of female life. Sins they are, for they lead to the neglect of the claims of others, and cause pain to the hearts of those whose happiness it is the child's first duty to consult. Ah! let them beware: if there be any offence visited on earth, it is breach of filial tenderness. The tears of many a neglected mother are followed by the blush which memory brings at the thoughts of past unkindness to one whom neither kindness nor repentance now can reach. The part in the domestic group which God has assigned to a daughter, is one filled with usefulness, comprising precious, thrice blessed duties. It is hers to beguile the anxieties of her father, by a thousand attentions, the promptings of affection,—to draw him from his cares, and win him to cheerfulness. Above all, she is to be her mother's comforter, the sharer and lightener of her domestic cares, her constant companion, her tender, sympathising, respectful friend.

To the younger members of the household, she is at once the gentle monitress and endeared playmate; she

stands between them and the parents, the moderator of all difficulties, and comforter of all troubles. From the urchin who wants his ball covered, the little one who desires a dress for her doll, to those of larger growth, who encounter, as they advance, more serious difficulties, the eldest daughter is the confiding resource, and her deportment and character go very far in the moulding of the rest.

I have often thought that I could see the good influence of a gentle, sensible, pious daughter throughout the whole family, even to the humblest servant. I knew one such spirit, who exercised a healthful power over her household, leading, as with silken bands, her turbulent brother, impressing her loving temper upon the dispositions of her sisters, and sending a benign influence into the rude cabin of the cotton field.

When she departed, for she died in the freshness of her bloom, it seemed as if the glory of the house had passed away; yet, as the younger children attained maturity, they developed the same traits of character, and were wont to refer to her as the model by which they wished to live; so that long after the gentle girl had left the world, she really lived to bless her family in the permanent influence of her example.

There has been much written in the present day of woman's rights and privileges. She has rights and

privileges important, I had almost said unlimited ; the privilege of loving and being loved : she has an empire the most precious that heart can wish, that of affection : she has an office the holiest that pure minds can desire—to her is committed the trust of domestic peace—to her it is given to be the comforter of the family group, and the presiding spirit of the household hearth.

EVILS OF DISCONTENT.

“WHETHER it be not delightful to complain, and whether there be not many who had rather utter their complaints, than redress their grievances?”

This inquiry of good Bishop Berkely has probably arisen in every observing mind. The universal restlessness and dissatisfaction of man with the present good, however passionately it has been desired, or eagerly pursued, has afforded moral writers an argument in favor of the eternal and noble nature of the soul. One who has treated the subject with equal skill and eloquence, inquires—

“Deep in rich pasture, will thy flock complain?
Not so; but to their master is denied
To share their sweet serene—
Poor in abundance, famished at a feast!”

And hence he affirms that man’s “discontent is immortality.” But there are some who inherit a double share of discontentment, or rather whose choice and folly it is, to cherish a sensitive complaining temper,

which magnifies the common cross accidents of life into misfortunes, and gives to mere vexations, the poignancy of affliction. Such a habit of mind, clothes the world in mournful drapery: ever searching out evil, it overlooks the good that is so abundantly mingled with it, and receives with sour distrust, the beneficence of Heaven. Hope itself, that "cordial, innocent, though strong," loses its cheering influence over the discontented; those bright anticipations which invigorate exertion, and delight the cheerful mind; those aspirations for excellence, and that affectionate hope we love to indulge for others; all these are unknown to him who resolves to be unhappy in spite of Providence, or who perversely cultivates a disposition which so anxiously prepares for the evils of to-morrow, as to poison the happiness of to-day. Wo to those, over whose peace a temper such as this sheds its malign influence! The storms of anger are indeed painful to encounter, but the sun will beam out, when the thunder cloud has passed; the moral atmosphere in which the peevish dwell, though dark and dull, is never cleared by an explosion, but keeping the fretful tenor of their way, they will even inveigh against the violence of the passionate.

The ingenuity with which these murmurers evade all attempts to console them, is wonderful, and vexatious too. In vain is some soothing topic, or alleviating cir-

cumstance suggested ; grievance upon grievance, like hydra heads, start up as quick as they are demolished, and bid defiance to reason ; like honest Dogberry, they are proud that they have “ had losses,” and seem to imagine their complainings invest them with a kind of importance. There cannot be a greater mistake. While real sorrow does command profound sympathy, and the heart unlocks its gentlest emotions to the accents of unfeigned grief, the querulousness of the dissatisfied, and their thankless lamentations over trivial ills, have a direct tendency to harden the feelings, and produce weariness or disgust. There is no object perhaps which inspires so deep and tender a reverence, as an uncomplaining sufferer ; one who sustains in silence the pressure of calamity. How do the kindest sensibilities awaken towards him whose stroke is evidently heavier than his groaning ! We bear with allowance, even the clamorous wailings of the truly afflicted ; but to the language of fretful complaint, it is impossible to give our sympathy. Persons of this description would doubtless be surprised, if, instead of condolence, an honest adviser should counsel them to redress their grievances, by mastering their perturbed spirits. The limited income, the perplexities of business, domestic cares, the numerous little disappointments which it is the lot of all to encounter daily, derive most of their

bitterness from our own indulged susceptibility. They have little power but that with which we arm them, by receiving them with impatience, or brooding over them in sullenness.

Great, amid the turmoil of existence, is the benefit of a prepared heart; and, as it is the duty, so it is within the easy grasp of all, to seriously consider the scene on which we act a part, to contemplate calmly its real evils, to fortify the mind with patience, and strengthen it by trust in Providence, to keep in exercise kindly and grateful emotions. This seems a task, reasonable and delightful to one who would wisely use the gift of life. A cheerful spirit, while it contributes to our own felicity, and that of others, is a suitable return of gratitude to our Creator, and an expressive way of honoring the arrangement of His providence; but the discontented reproach their Maker, and calumniate his wisdom, while they disparage His goodness. It is to repining hearts, the poet says,

“Thy course of duty run—
 God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,
 But thou wouldst do thyself, couldst thou but see
 The end of all events, as well as He.”

Some there are, who possess by constitution, gaiety of disposition; these may be said to “live in the sun;” even the clouds of sorrow hover not long over their horizon. Their errors are in the contrary extreme.

While the gloomy mind overrates evil, the gay spirit shakes it off too lightly ; vivacity is apt to emerge into frivolity and recklessness, instead of being elevated by gratitude, and restrained by reverence for Heaven. But I know not why all men should not possess at least tranquillity of mind, why the world is filled with moanings and rebellious murmurings, except it be that we wander so far, and so blindly, from the true and only source of cheerfulness. We lean upon human affection, and it fails us ; we amass treasures, and find that they are not happiness ; we struggle for honors, and discover that they are not peace ; or, lowering our aim, we follow the phantom pleasure, but are compelled to confess, that riot and excess, though it is excitement and turbulence, is not joy. Thus, wounded and complaining, we pass on through life, while on the munificent bounties around us, is legibly inscribed by their Giver, "acquaint thyself with me, and be at peace." This, then, is the one remedy for discontentment, the effectual rectifier of every ill, the eternal spring of happiness, friendship with the Most High. Human language fails in endeavoring to express the fulness of this felicity, but inexpressibly exalted as it is, it is graciously proffered to erring, sorrowing, but penitent humanity.

THE CLOSE OF THE WEEK.

ANOTHER Saturday evening! How steady is our onward course; how swiftly are the moments hurrying us towards that undiscovered country, which, so near in reality, is, in our apprehension, at such an immeasurable distance! The flight of time—what a trite, yet what a startling theme! It is, alas, the deep conviction, the repeated experience of life's perishable nature,—its fleeting term, that makes the subject trite. We hear of it from the admonitory voice of the preacher,—we see it in the fading countenances of our friends,—we feel it in the wasting energies of our own frames; and yet we forget it. We are sailing so rapidly down life's current, that we have scarcely time to pluck the flowers that bloom on the receding shores; even while we would pause to gaze upon the scenery, it disappears. Heedless travellers, we take little thought of this perilous haste,—we know not, or will not recollect, with what a shock the ocean beyond will swallow up the

stream that bears us;—and shall we shut our eyes till our frail bark is dashed upon its waters—till we “awake too late, a wreck,”—a wreck of what? not of life’s visionary bliss—not of the brittle joys and possessions which belong to time’s little hour, but of immortal hopes, exalted destinies, noble as our capacities—eternal as our being. And shall we deem such a subject tedious, as an oft-repeated tale? Would that I might borrow the burning eloquence of a seraph, that my own heart, and the hearts of those who read, might be impressed with its importance! Amused by life’s rattle, pressed by its various cares, and occupied by its alternate hopes and fears, it is not strange that amid the din, the noiseless step of time should be almost unheard. But it is wise often to remember, that, though unmarked by us, he slackens not his pace: through scenes of joy or sorrow, pain or ease, he never folds his wing. Why, then, exclaim the thoughtless, let us enjoy his fleeting hour—“let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!” Bravely resolved, if that, indeed, were all,—were “the be all, and the end all, here;” but since too many stern arguments convince us of the contrary, let us step aside from the world a little while and consider the preciousness of that momentary being which men call time. Its true value, indeed, none but the dying can tell,—but we may form some idea of it,

by simply looking back and asking ourselves, what time has done for us? Have we treasured up the experience which he has brought?—for to the considerate, each added day reveals some secret of existence;—or has he come and gone, a thousand times, and left us stupidly slumbering,—living without a purpose,—swayed by the humor of the instant, or agitated by restless passions? Time, says one, waits upon us each morning, and asks, what wilt thou have me to do? Were we wise to answer, we might say,—“bring me in thy course to the abodes of want; make me acquainted this day, with the luxury of doing good; let each of thy golden moments, O Time, be laden with useful efforts—virtuous thoughts—such as I would wish to see engraved on yonder firmament,—as I shall not tremble to hear proclaimed, when all secrets are revealed.”

It will give us a correct notion of time's importance, also to reflect what can be effected in one of its shortest periods. How much can we live in a single hour! A few moments,—what a change in our destiny may they effect! What a revolution in our character! A little while ago, my name was irreproachable,—now, corruption stains my hands. Yesterday, my heart was light and innocent—to-day, weighed down with blood-guiltiness;—but yesterday, I clasped the form I loved,—to-day, I lay it in the grave. To-day, I am in the

region of life, of hope—immortal happiness within my reach ;—where, and what shall I be to-morrow ? An hour, fully employed, will give us an estimate of the value of our moments. “An hour well spent, condemns a life. When we reflect on the sum of improvement and delight gained in that single hour, how do the multitude already past, rise up and say, what good marked us ? Wouldst thou know the true worth of time, *employ one hour.*” It is inconceivable with what mad wastefulness we trifle away our days. The busiest of us all are but busy idlers ; heaping up straws with perverse diligence, while heaven’s glories open unheeded above us. Even when our energies are well directed, for lack of constancy of mind, how little do we make of life ;—how are its most precious opportunities frittered into nothing ! The lavishness of him who would scatter diamonds to the winds, is nothing to ours,—for what arithmetic can compute the value of those days and years, which we suffer to glide past us, as idly as the summer gale !

We should not, then, enter the list against time, nor treat him as an enemy. Alas ! the contest is unequal ! Be it our wisdom, to make him our friend, who must ultimately be our conqueror.

“ Go fix some weighty truth ;
Chain down some passion, do some generous good ;

Teach ignorance to see, or grief to smile ;
 Correct thy friend, befriend thy greatest foe,
 Or with warm heart and confidence divine,
 Spring up and lay strong hold on him who made thee."

There are those, (rational and intellectual beings too,) who complain of the tediousness of time. Have they ever reflected, how short will seem that day, which, to them, will know no morrow ? For careless as we are and lavish of our choicest treasure, we shall not always remain so ; a period is approaching, when time will have its due value in our judgment,—when its very minutes will be breathlessly counted, and the added years of a long life will dwindle to a speck, and the world's brightest show of honors, appear like passing shadows.

That mysterious curtain, which conceals from our view the invisible world, must soon be drawn aside ;—perhaps, even now, the hand that upholds it, may be gathering up its impervious folds, and a new scene shall flash upon our dazzled eyes. Let us often,—let us solemnly consider this truth, and reflect upon the appalling signification in such circumstances of those brief words,
TOO LATE.

PRECEPT AND PRACTICE.

AMONG the various inconsistencies which we witness in the world, there is not one more striking than the wide discrepancy between the opinions which men hold, and their general practice. When, overborne by the force of truth, persons are obliged to admit right views, we need not wonder that they do not apply these views to practical purposes; but when these admissions have become settled opinions, and even deepened into conviction, we might reasonably expect corresponding action. The most superficial observation will convince us, however, of the contrary. He knows little of himself, who knows not what a different being he is in the calm moments of retirement, and amidst the excitement of society; and who does not daily feel how little his practice coincides with his theory. I know and approve the right, but pursue the wrong, was an honest confession, long ago, nor has it ceased to be appropriate now. The refined Heathen, who made this declaration, was

guided by the light of nature and conscience alone, and though that was distinct enough to reveal this truth, how feeble were its rays, compared to the mid-day splendor which is shed upon our path, and which makes our departure from right so much the less excusable, that it is not because we do not know the better, but perversely choose the wrong way. We do not perceive this disagreement in all the conduct of men. The merchant does not give credit, where he has probable ground of suspicion, nor venture his property in investments that he deems unsafe; the professional man will not risk his reputation, nor waste his abilities on cases which he knows to be untenable or disgraceful: here they honestly follow their opinions, and act them out. My judgment tells me, that such means are the best to secure or advance my reputation or wealth: at the expense of severe toil and thought, I follow its dictates, and am right and consistent in thus doing. My conscience tells me, "your course is adverse to happiness and virtue;" experience suggests, life is short, no longer trifle with its uncertainties; reason commands, restrain this evil habit in its birth, lest it grow to be your tyrant! My creator is ever speaking in numberless ways, return, return, my son, give me thine heart. Yet I pursue the same wayward course, bestow no regrets on lost opportunities forever past, but yielding myself a willing

captive to passion, turn away from the fountain of life, and wander in the dark. And all the while not pretending to question the justice and reasonableness of these requisitions ! This *is* inconsistency—this is indeed to know the right, but follow the wrong. The question then occurs, why men are so consistent in one part of their conduct, and so extremely deficient in another ? Why do they yield obedience to their convictions in some instances, and pertinaciously and successfully resist them in others ? Is conscience weak ? Let the restlessness of those, who, surrounded with every outward means of happiness, war against their own perceptions of right, answer. Let their dissatisfaction, who have received all the rewards the world can give, let the feeling which urges the suicide to draw aside abruptly the curtain of eternity, answer. Neither is conscience treacherous : she never betrays, until again and again betrayed and outraged. It is true, that conscience marks down each secret and open error, in leaves more durable than leaves of brass ; it is true, that death shall read this appalling list in every “ pale delinquent’s ear.” But it is no less true, that she is faithful in her warnings, faithful even in the pangs which she inflicts, nor have her admonitions ever been withdrawn, until they have ceased to be revered. The answer to this serious question, must be referred to the

heart of the candid and reflecting inquirer ; the fact from which it is elicited, is that which arms death with its deadliest sting, and robs life of all its solid peace. It is this which causes us to shut our eyes upon our past life. Alas, little comfort is there in the remembrance of right sentiments belied by wrong actions, of virtuous resolves melted by the first breath of temptation, and of little avail to have been the nominal admirers of goodness, when we have really been the friends and upholders of vice. This discrepancy may also be remarked between the writings and the actions of men. Publishing one's opinions to the world, would seem to be a strong tie upon their conduct ; it is a public committal, a pledge to virtue, which might surely be held sacred. But nothing more fallacious than this idea. How many instances rise on the memory of signal disagreement between the published sentiments of an author, and the tenor of his life ! And virtuous opinions, without corresponding actions, are calculated to diminish the force of their impressions, and thus harden the heart, and deteriorate the character by those very means which should produce its amendment. And certainly, if there is great guilt incurred by acting contrary to the convictions of right which we feel, there must be much heavier accountability resting on such as give their opinions shape, and record them for

the instruction of others,—an accountability which might well make the hand of the writer tremble,—instill in his mind feelings of caution, and stimulate him to illustrate his sentiments by a consistent and virtuous practice.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END.

I HAVE often been struck by the apparent disproportion between a cause and effect. It is a curious and interesting subject of research to trace consequences to their causes, and to observe from what trivial springs, the most important events frequently arise. When Bruce stood by the little fountain, among the mountains of Abyssinia, the reward of all his toil and danger, his emotions, which found vent in tears, must have partaken not only of gratified ambition, but of moral sublimity. His thoughts must have followed in its course the quiet rill which glided at his feet, gradually deepening and widening, until at a far off distance, he beheld the Nile, the glory and support of Egypt. Thus, in the moral and political world, we may see the same phenomena; history affords numberless instances of great revolutions originating from apparently trifling causes,—the taunt of a rival, the omission of some point of etiquette, even the frown of

a woman have, before this, been the occasion of years of misery and war,—indeed we cannot investigate past events without often recollecting the remark of the Swedish statesman, “you see what small matters decide the fate of nations.”

If we look into nature, we shall perceive a beautiful exemplification of this subject. What treasures of amusement and instruction, does the vegetable tribe alone afford! Who that possesses powers of observation and reflection, need ever complain of tedium, when he has but to walk abroad and open a volume which all may read,—whose pages are replete with beauty and variety. When we commit a seed to the ground, the thought that we have done all in our power, should bring with it an humble feeling. That it should swell and germinate,—that piercing the earth, it should by minute degrees acquire strength, till at length its spreading foliage affords us refreshing shade, is an effect, not only beyond our power to accomplish, but even to explain;—we may trace, and wonder, and admire, but no farther.

I was led into these reflections by passing a field of cotton now in luxuriant vegetation. Little do the heedless laborers, who whistle through their appointed task of planting and weeding, dream of the important results that shall flow from their homely toil. Beneath

the sun and dews of heaven, the blossom expands and ripens, till, opening its fleecy treasure, the seed is extricated by the aid of man from its snowy covering.

But here a new scene opens,—a new set of operatives are called into action. The precious article is compressed, weighed, prepared for sale;—how many anxieties, how much shuffling, how many broken promises, what waste of words and needless altercation take place between buyers and sellers, before all is satisfactorily settled, fortunate, indeed, if the Attorney be not called in to make confusion worse confounded, and all this pester about the product of a weed! The cotton is raised, brought to market, sold, insured, shipped, and safely landed at its destined port, where after another scene of barter, it is at last delivered to the manufacturer.

Hitherto the process has not been disagreeable; the toil of the planter is not uncongenial to man, for he has long learned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; the excitement of trade does not necessarily include fraud, though too often accompanied by it; but the manufactory,—its sickly, wearied inmates alone can fully describe its privations. Shut out from the air and light, God's free boon to all, breathing a deleterious atmosphere, pent up in ill-assorted groups, the pure and the polluted, the urgent claims of nature for re-

freshment and repose unheeded, when drooping over the monotonous toil, to be goaded into watchfulness, and if overpowered the laborer yields to sleep, to be in danger of cruel death from the engine, which like some fabled demon, crushes all that approach too near its voracious maw,—these are but some of the miseries witnessed within the walls of a factory. But the aggravation of all, is, that it is the tender years of infancy and childhood which are thus sacrificed. You, who are blessed with freedom from such chains, who see your offspring happy around you, complain not of hard labor and frugal fare ; look here,—be silent and grateful.

What a contrast do the delicate fabrics, which pass from the hands of the artisan, present to the cotton ball, in its native state ! Only suited then to line the nest of the forest bird, by the skill of man, it helps to clothe the world. Let our fair belles, as they envelope their forms in the graceful drapery woven from the humble plant, bestow a serious thought upon the labor, and perhaps sorrow, that have been spent to decorate the robe they wear.

In connection with this subject are the labors of an insect, the loathsome looking worm, from whom we receive the beautiful material of silk, once deemed too costly to deck an empress. Here again we must be

silent, and wonder, as we watch the insect emerging from the egg, no larger than the point of a needle, gradually, but surely accomplishing its course, and fulfilling its allotted task—when having enjoyed its brief hour the little artist cheerfully weaves its shroud, and lies down to sleep in its silken tomb.

Let us not disdain to learn a lesson from the worm, the product of whose labor we condescend to accept. But there is no limit to our illustrations ; nature is filled in every department, with subjects of beautiful interest, and of solid instruction. A deep moral is couched in every lesson she reads us. It is the very perfection of the beneficence of God, that in all his wonderful arrangements, while he would gratify our taste, he could also elevate our affections and instruct our understanding. But all are not apt pupils. He is to be pitied, who, beholding the rich array of nature, is not touched by her sublime appeal. I envy not the man, who, in the waving meadow, the flowing stream and romantic forest, sees nought but grass, trees and water.

In the growth of the minute germ, to the stately tree—in the important consequences resulting from the cultivation of any one of the various tribes of plants, and in similar instances which lie open to our inspection, we may gather many valuable hints. We may look to the good or evil principles, which are like seed

sown in our hearts, and which, as they are cherished or repressed, will poison or refresh us with their fruit. We may learn not to overlook an error because it appears a slight one, but for that very reason, diligently to overcome it, lest taking deeper root in our character and acquiring strength, it becomes invincible to our efforts: lest we find that the spark we once could have extinguished with a breath, has become an overwhelming flame, which many waters cannot quench.

MENTAL DISSIPATION.

WHILE some are wasting their time and health in ruinous pleasures, and enervating their energies of mind and body in excessive pursuit of amusement, there is an erroneous habit in which a different class of persons indulge, who would shrink from the idea of excess, but which is most pernicious in its effects upon the mind. I mean intellectual dissipation, and want of discipline over the thoughts and imagination. That this is a greater evil than is generally considered, we may perceive, by reflecting how intimate is the connexion between opinion and practice, and how certainly our opinions will assume the colour of our prevailing thoughts, and be tinged with the hue of imagination.

As it is from the heart, as, for want of a more defined term, we call the innermost and noblest powers of the mind, and the seat of the affections, whence thoughts, and words and actions originate, a moment's reflection shows the importance of guarding watchfully this co-

pious source of good and evil. That this is very generally neglected we may gather from our own experience. If we endeavour to follow the current of our thoughts for half an hour, we shall find it a difficult task to make sense of the incoherent, rambling, and unprofitable crowd of images which hurry through the mind, even in so brief a space.

It is a common remark, that we are not accountable to man for our thoughts; but this is a low and defective principle by which to regulate our conduct, even if the remark was correct, which it is not. We are accountable first to our supreme Judge, and in a secondary degree to our fellow creatures. We are under the strongest moral obligations to be active in seeking their benefit, and in abstaining from whatever may injure them; hence if our actions depend upon the wise regulation of our thoughts and opinions, it becomes our duty to watch over them for the sake of others, as well as for our own advantage. Akin to this common error is another expression which is heard every day, "he is no man's enemy but his own," as if he who debases his own character, did not at the same time inflict severe injury upon society, and commit daring rebellion against Heaven. If these remarks be correct, we may conclude, that though a person love not cards, or dice, or wine, the sports of the turf, or the delight of running

miles after panting foxes, or any other of those laborious diversions which are called pleasure—yet he may be equally useless, and in his way dissipated and involved in the guilt of unfulfilled duties.

One very general species of mental trifling and waste of time, is practised by those who employ one half of their lives in reading fictions, and the other half in dreaming of them, in building airy castles “baseless as the fabric of a vision,” and sighing over their demolition. These are citizens of an unreal world,—their thoughts such stuff as dreams are made of,—their state becomes morbid,—they are ever in quest of excitement, while the sober enjoyment of every day scenes is looked upon with disgust. Such a habit of mind forms a character neither useful nor amiable.

But we may waste our moral energies even in rational pursuits, if we suffer our reflection to be absorbed by them, to the prejudice of important duties. If we devote too great a portion of time or money (to both of which our fellow men have a just claim,) to the indulgence or acquisition of any refined taste, we are only elegant triflers.—Could I count the stars—did my fancy continually soar among their glories—could I remember all their courses, yet forget to do justice and love mercy—could I name each flower that blooms in Flora’s wreath, or classify with patient accuracy the mineral

treasures which are hidden in the lap of earth, yet did I at the same time neglect to cultivate the social affections, to perform the charities of life, I should be justly convicted of moral trifling.

But there is still another, and more serious view of the subject. If we should watch our thoughts, those first springs of will, lest they ripen into unworthy opinions and actions, and thus expose us to the censure of others, we should also take heed to them, for reasons yet more sacred. To further our advancement in virtue, and to render us acceptable to that eye, before whose glance nothing is hidden, we should strive to exclude thoughts of revenge, anger, and discontent, out of regard to our own happiness. For though they may never find vent in words, (which is hoping almost an impossibility,) they will render the spirit restless as an unquiet sea. Their frequent intrusion will grieve away the influence of peace, and their allowed presence will assuredly lead to violent and criminal deeds. We should carefully shut out ideas even tainted with impurity: an evil lesson is easily learned, but with difficulty forgotten; and the indulgence of unhallowed imaginations blights the germ of every virtue, and spreads a moral leprosy over the whole soul. We should shun, too, those vain, unprofitable reveries, which have neither form, nor sense, and if they leave

no evil, certainly produce no good effect upon the mind. That thus to discipline the thoughts is no slight achievement, whoever has endeavored diligently to accomplish it, must have experienced. The most effectual way to exclude evil ideas, is not only to watch against their entrance, but to pre-occupy the mind with such as are lovely—such as are pure; to think of these things,—and here we have much assistance from exterior objects. The works of the Divine Hand, are always breathing beautiful and pure language to our hearts;—the sorrow, the follies, even the crimes we daily witness, would, if our thoughts were regulated aright, excite reflections of pity, forbearance and mercy.

The hours which come to us laden with blessings, should bring with them subjects of grateful thought; or, if commissioned on mournful errands, should excite reflections of submission and humility. Above all, the consciousness that an omniscient and infinitely pure spirit, was watching the secret workings of ours, should operate as the strongest motive to the strictest vigilance over our thoughts. Is it true that we would shrink from having the reflections which occupy our minds one day—all their vanity, their selfishness, their impurity, their folly, exposed to the gaze of a fallible fellow mortal? Could we not bear such a scrutiny without confusion? And shall we not remember with

humiliation, that they are actually laid bare in all their deformity, to the cognizance of Him who seeth not as man seeth?

H O M E .

Weep not for him, who, dying,
Returns to earth again,
Weep not for him who's lying
On field of battle slain.
For him, the broken hearted
Breathe forth the pitying sigh,
Who from his country parted,
In stranger lands must die.

SUCH is the sentiment, feebly imitated, of the mournful prophet, whose tender spirit sympathized so deeply with his unhappy nation ;—a sentiment which finds a response in every bosom. The human heart has in every age, acknowledged the strength of the tie which binds us to our native land. The familiar scenes of childhood are alike dear to all, and the desire to rest in the place of our father's sepulchre, throbs as strongly in the breast of the savage, as in the heart of his civilized brother. Those who have passed their lives among the scenes of home, whose lot it is to live and die among objects of early attachment, cannot easily realize the vividness of this feeling, for it is not until

the tree is upturned, that we see how strong a grasp it had taken of its native soil.

It is, however, of a minor species of exile, if I may even use so harsh a term, that I would now speak:—not an inappropriate subject of reflection at this season, when friends separate, and thoughts of affection and regret are wafted to distant regions of our country. There are but few of our community, who have not experienced the pain of severing the numerous bonds which attach us to our home. Most of us have turned our backs on scenes consecrated by affection,—by a mother's tenderness,—a father's care. We have, at some time, felt that sickness which overwhelms the heart, when, having cherished friends, we set our faces towards a land of strangers; and it has been the destiny of almost all, who here terminated their mortal course, to be by "strangers honored, and by strangers mourned." It is a desolate moment which finds us amid faces who have never before met our view, mingling with those on whose affection we have no claim, and the indifference of whose aspect presents a severe contrast to the kind looks and warm hearts we have left behind. But, as the evening dews and cheering sun gradually revive the transplanted flower, till at length it raises its head in cheerfulness,—so the heart, opening to the voice of kindness, and seeking new

friendships—forming other ties, finds itself, at last, a home. A home! How much that is dear and peaceful, is comprised in that word! What recollections of deepest interest, cluster around it! How sacred, and lasting, the influence which a home, hallowed by virtue, sheds upon the mind! It has, with gentle force, preserved many a wanderer from excess, and even brought to the guilty such touching reminiscences, that, in thinking of his father's house, the hard heart of the prodigal has broken, and he has returned. Sad is his lot, the quiet of whose home is embittered by turbulent passions, whose household gods are noise and anger,—pitiable his destiny, whose domestic peace has been broken in upon by death,—whose home is desolate, and the eye that cheered—the voice that welcomed him, have passed away forever. But, let us reserve our deepest commiseration for him, who, in his blindness, puts aside the calm enjoyments of domestic life, for more exciting pleasures,—whose taste exchanges the voice of his children, the smiles of his fireside, for the noise of revelry, or the blandishments of vice.

Those who, in pursuit of fortune, health, or the numerous objects which men sacrifice so much to obtain, leave their native soil to venture upon an untried scene, have peculiar dangers and difficulties. Every one knows how much we are what circumstances make us.

When old habits are suspended, our plans of life broken up—when the powerful, though perhaps unknown restraint, of the inspection of friends is removed, and we feel ourselves amenable to none but our own treacherous hearts—then if we be not upheld by strong principle—if we keep not a strict watch upon our conduct, we may be led into errors, the consequence of which may darken our after life. How many youths of promise, who left the paternal mansion unsullied, have, from some of these causes, made shipwreck of honor and of life, the members of our community need not be reminded.

It is difficult, in the strangeness of a new scene, to resume our habits,—to collect the scattered threads of thoughts—to preserve steadiness of mind amid the embarrassments of novel circumstances, or consistency of purpose among the tumult of new excitements. How necessary then is it, in important changes of situation, to preserve self-recollection—to examine the position we occupy,—the new duties which spring from it, that we may bear our part, in the drama of life, honorably and usefully ; for, change our station as we may, we cannot escape from our responsibility. There are, however, many advantages to be derived from emigrating to this new, but improving region. We have an opportunity of breaking through many prejudices,

which were cherished by moving in the same circle, and going the beaten round of the same set of ideas and opinions. Thrown into a wider sphere,—brought in contact with many different peculiarities of character, we are aroused to investigate for ourselves, what, perhaps, we had taken too much on the authority of others, while the little wounds which our vanity incidentally receives, gives us useful lessons in humility. Besides, in a society alive with enterprise and spirit, thought takes a wider range,—our plans have freer scope, and our energies acquire fresh vivacity. New impulses incite us, and we must be of lethargic mould indeed, if, when we perceive a community, pressing eagerly forward in pursuits that make men honorable and virtuous, we are not stimulated to contribute our quota towards the common good,—to raise our hands, however feeble, in aid of the general effort.

To such as have found a resting place in this once strange land, it must be interesting to retrace the way they have come, since first, with saddened hearts, they quitted the spot they have almost forgotten to call their home. Through what various scenes of distress and danger have they passed ; how often, in the seasons of pestilence, have they felt like men in a battle field ;—friend and neighbor falling around them ! How many they have followed to yonder cemetery, let the stones

that whiten its surface, remind us ! How many be-
 reaved ones have they seen depart, who had left there
 all that endeared existence ! Such recollections must
 have a salutary effect upon the heart. Has past dan-
 ger induced no reflection,—shall present safety excite
 no gratitude ?

ROBERT HALL.

WHEN a conspicuous character passes away from this earth, when death sets the seal upon the merits and failings of a noble spirit, it is natural and useful also, attentively to analyse, and deeply to contemplate those virtues and attainments which have produced such striking results. "The name of Robert Hall is rich in sacred as well as splendid associations; a memento of consecrated intellect and energy." It is this remarkable character as delineated in his biography, and illustrated by his works, that we would consider in some of its most impressive features.

The peculiar virtues of Mr. Hall, and those which shed lustre over his whole character, were his beautiful sincerity of intention, and transparent rectitude of conduct. It was not his talents alone, though they were of the first order—it was not the fluency with which he poured forth noble thoughts clothed in felicitous language, which was to him a ready servant, which gave

him such an ascendancy among men, and chained them in breathless attention upon his accents,—it was the deep earnestness, the singleness of mind, the simplicity and sincerity, which like wings wafted his thoughts to Heaven, which gave to his eloquence its greatest charms, to his instructions their powerful weight. His genius must, under any circumstances, have elicited admiration, but it was because it was kindled by fire from Heaven that its flame was so pure, so steady, so beneficial. It was a matter of regret, among some of his admirers, that he had not devoted his talents to a more extended field; but how would the aspirations of such a spirit have been chilled in the disturbed atmosphere of the political world! How temporary would have been the influence of the most brilliant efforts, compared to that which he exercised when living, and which must attend his works while the tongue in which he wrote remains a language.

There were combined too in this extraordinary person, virtues which rarely meet in such perfection in the same character. Brilliancy and depth, grace and solidity, just self-confidence without arrogance, an assemblage of talents, and the most unaffected profound humility. These were some of the gifts and virtues which rendered him a conspicuous light in his day:—the shades of his character, for clay is ever mixed with

the most precious ore, were such as we might expect to find. A natural vehemence which he ingenuously deplored, an over earnest manner of speaking, and an indulgence, particularly in earlier life, of a curious and rash spirit of speculation, and perhaps a too fastidious pride of composition, make up the sum of his important failings. Failings, which, though they were cast entirely in the shade by his christian virtues, were subjects of continued self-abasement in his own view.

There was one event in the history of this individual, which brings to a thoughtful mind very solemn reflections. In the meridian splendor of his faculties, while crowds of admiring hearers attended upon his weekly ministrations, and the intoxicating accents of applause were ringing in his ears—his mind failed,—his mighty faculties became clouded, and reason faltered. How should such a fact as this wither the blossoms of human pride,—kill the root of self-dependence, and temper the consciousness of superior gifts with awe and humility! Such at least was the effect of this temporary malady upon Mr. Hall. The ordeal was a dreadful one, but it purified him as he passed through it, for a decided and elevating change was perceptible from thenceforward in his sentiments. Doubtless, He to whom he had devoted his life, beheld his servant's peril, when he knew it not himself, and kindly took this

severe, but effectual method of crushing the rising thoughts of self-elation, and averting the mischievous effects of praise.

Another peculiarity in this eminent man, was his sustained, laborious course of study,—the determined perseverance with which he removed every obstacle in his way to the thorough knowledge of any subject. And this *is* a peculiarity, in this age of talk and show, when exaggeration, and love of effect, and superficial glare, threaten to crowd out all that is solid. We turn from the current literature of the day, to the works of such a writer, with something of the feeling one would experience as he escaped from the noisy dashing of a shallow water-fall, to the contemplation of a silent and majestic lake, whose waters revealed its depth, and whose calm surface reflected unbroken images of peace and beauty. What a sublime position does such a mind assume, thus stored with knowledge, cultivated by taste, adorned by science, and aided by the charms of eloquence, when it takes its place with graceful lowliness at the feet of its Creator! Such a spectacle conveys those pleasing sensations which we instinctively feel when events follow their natural order. When we behold perverted genius, or abused talent,—or even when we see these advantages wasted on some secondary object, and thus failing of their great and legitimate

end, we are conscious of a sense of disappointment ; but when a noble intellect is devoted to the noblest cause,—employs its energies in the noblest service ; when the precious gifts of God are rendered back to the giver, with ardent gratitude, we know that this is coincident with right, and our judgment and our feelings acquiesce in full satisfaction. Another important reflection arises from the contemplation of this character, a reflection full of encouragement to those, who, less gifted, walk silently through the retired paths of life,—the genius and attainments which embellished the mind of Mr. Hall, did *not* constitute his happiness. They were but the exterior adornments of his cup,—the blessed draught it contained was mixed by piety, benevolence, and faith.

In following the course of an exalted character, we involuntarily acknowledge the instability of man, by trembling, lest infirmity should cloud its brightness,—lest the light so resplendent should even yet be obscured ; but in this instance there is no such drawback to our satisfaction. The subject of these remarks consistently fulfilled his course, and the mind rests upon his character in life and in death, as on a beautiful and harmonious whole. He is now the witness of those glories which few like him have so vividly painted. He enjoys the

light of that purity, a beam of which irradiated his mind on earth, and has left a glow upon his writings which shall never fade away.

VICES OF TEMPER.

“Dost thou well to be angry?”

THERE is no word more misapplied than amiability, nor any ingredient of our happiness so lightly considered, and yet so all important as temper, which, though very much kept out of view, exercises so strong an influence over the trivial occurrences which make up the amount of life's enjoyment.—Amiability is commonly applied to such as are of an equable temperament,—whose resentments are not easily excited, nor when aroused, violently expressed. But though I might congratulate the possessors of such dispositions, I would not applaud them for the exercise of a virtue, in merely following the natural bias of temper. Besides, there is a true saying, “beware the fury of a patient man;” these smooth and quiet tempers are able to cherish a concentrated venomous feeling, which is

any thing but amiable, and perhaps wounds the deeper that it is expressed in cold and measured terms.

There is another class, who are generally called "passionate, good-hearted people." These are the volcanos and whirlwinds of the domestic world, and because, after they have outraged the feelings of friends, inflicted violence and injustice upon their unhappy dependents, they condescend, when reason returns, to feel—perhaps confess a late regret, they are termed "good-hearted." Miserable those who share the goodness of such a heart! Others there are, who have been aptly likened to the "continual dripping of rain;" their ill temper does not vent itself in any one act of violence, but oozes out in perpetual peevishness.

But many are the shapes that ill temper assumes, and all dismal. By indulging an asperity of speech in trifling matters, we discover and aggravate ill temper. We would often excuse ourselves by urging that it is only our way and manner; but that which renders another uneasy, even for an instant, is surely an evil way.—Neither is the assertion strictly true, "*The manner of the moment, is the feeling of the moment.*" Away then with this insufficient plea; amend the temper, and the manner will be softened; cherish the spirit of gentleness, and kind words and a gentle demeanor will necessarily follow. The various cross

accidents of life, and the petty vexations to which every one is exposed, occasion a constant demand upon the temper, and he who would pass usefully and pleasantly through the world, must acquire some government over his passion, for an unstable man, like a city without walls, is at the mercy of fools and children, or like a helmless vessel, the sport of every passing wind. Our path is often rugged—sometimes so beset with difficulties that it is narrow too; some walk alone,—some, surrounded with helpless beings, whose presence is at once their joy and their anxiety; while a few seem to bowl through life,—so even is their course; but all are mutually dependent for kindness; every one needs the cheering influence of good temper—the soothing charm of a soft answer. How are the perplexities of business increased by the indulgence of unconciliatory dispositions! How many feuds and litigations arise from an easily offended spirit, or for want of a few calm words!

But it is in domestic life, man's last, holiest sanctuary, where, frightened from a selfish clashing world, peace would seek an asylum, that temper would seem the dispenser of good or evil. Wearied, baffled, wronged and chagrined abroad, we may find consolation in the charities of home. There we are sure of sympathy; there is faith unswerving; there the

welcoming hand, the listening ear—but let us beware that we introduce not evil temper within its sacred precincts, lest we excite terror instead of confidence, and find forced submission in the place of sympathising affection. Who has not painfully felt the influence of ill-temper over his home enjoyment? How many a gloomy hour, a clouded brow, and silent meal—perhaps an unkind word, may be traced to this prolific source of unhappiness! How frequently, under its evil perverse sway, do we wound the heart we love!

What bitter accents does passion prompt whose import we would fain recall, but like water poured upon the earth, they may not be gathered up,—and how often do the looks of our friends—the fearful obedience of our menials, and even the monitor within, ask, “dost thou well to be angry?” This one defect will cloud the brightest qualities. The gift of genius, the pride of integrity, linked with unamiable feelings, may win distant admiration, but cannot secure to us the love of those around us; and where is the heart that is satisfied with cold applause,—that seeks not some object on which to repose its tenderness? Worse than in vain too all religious profession, where the temper is unrestrained. Empty and unacceptable the most splendid offering, if on the altar of sacrifice, we have not laid the spirit of anger:—for, surely, the first step

towards the source of benevolence must be the cultivation of his spirit.

Pernicious, as all will readily allow, the effects of ill temper to be, to restrain and subdue it needs no common effort—is no light task. Most other errors steal upon us gradually ; we have a little time to fortify our hearts ; but this, as it were, takes us by surprise. Hence the necessity of resolute vigilance. Greater is he that ruleth his spirit, than he who taketh a city. Greater indeed, inasmuch as the concerns of the moral, outweigh in importance the concerns of the physical world. The spheres which roll around us in such order and majesty,—how almighty the design and power that appointed their mysterious course ! These material existences obey the laws of their divine mover, and are subject to no erratic influence. “The stars stand in their courses, and none ever fail in their watches.” But who shall govern the tumultuous spirit ! What laws circumscribe its wanderings ! With every promised aid from Heaven, how difficult for man, even in one particular, to rule his passions ! Yet, arduous as the performance of this duty may be, it must be attempted, not only to secure our present happiness, but to warrant a hope of future felicity. And who is willing to forego this hope ? Not the most debased of men. It is twisted around our heart-strings. Among all the

pollutions of guilt, or the entanglements, the hurries of earthly cares, there are moments when the soul, conscious of its destinies, aspires, though perhaps but feebly, towards its native heaven. But how shall an envious, revengeful, violent spirit, enter that abode, whose very atmosphere, we are taught, is composed of serenity, purity, and love? Shall the unmerciful find welcome at the throne of the merciful? Can the violent stand before him whose appellation is the Prince of Peace, whose last precious gift to men was peace? Let us not then be deceived, nor think slightly of that which is so intimately connected with our well being. In the temper that we allowedly live, we shall probably die; and we have no reason to believe that the seal which death shall stamp upon our characters, will be effaced, even by the hand of Omnipotence.

D E A T H.

To-morrow ! Oh, that's sudden.

DEATH, in any shape, is awful. Softened by every possible alleviation, the descent to the grave is a painful one,—a path which we are all reluctant to tread,—from whose fearful entrance, our nature instinctively recoils. It is true, through superstitious fancy, man, ever the fool of imagination, invests the subject with unnecessary terror, and “makes a death which nature never made.” The stiffened corse, the darkness of the grave, the coffin and the worm, are the “terrors of the living, not the dead ;” yet sober reflection will find sufficient in the mystery which surrounds that final change,—mystery beyond conjecture,—in the wrench from all we love,—in the severe test to which that event must bring our characters, to render death not only a solemn, but an interesting and oft recurring theme.

But sudden death has almost universally been depre-

cated, as an aggravation of our inevitable doom. Men fondly think, that if time is granted, warning given, the stroke will be less terrible; dreadful as the aspect of our enemy must be, we would fain look him in the face. Besides, were we but to depart for a season, we would linger among our friends, interchange kind words and affectionate embraces,—how much more, then, would we wish to say farewell, when we depart forever! Some have, indeed, expressed a wish that their dissolution might be speedy, and exempt from the struggles of illness, but such a desire is abhorrent to our nature. Who that knew his hours were counted, who knew that when the dial pointed to a certain moment, that moment was to be his last of life, but would strive to make those closing hours his best ones? how carefully would he exclude unholy thoughts, how would revenge and anger die in his heart,—earthly dreams of honor and wealth fade into nothingness, and approaching eternity swallow up every vain and grovelling imagination! I have often thought that providence, indulgent to our weakness, always kindly veils the last moment from our perception, that, even when girded for the journey, fully prepared and supported by christian hope, we are spared the exact knowledge of the approach of death, and that, lest our heart should fail us, we receive, not suffer “death’s tremendous blow.”

But in the midst of folly, if not of guilt, with the heart crowded with vain and selfish tempers, unprepared, suddenly, swiftly to pass from the cheerful scenes around us, into an untried scene, to have existence torn violently from our tenacious grasp, there to stand a surprised, a trembling, a self-accused spirit—can reflecting man desire a boon like this? If, when cheered by light from above, and with a fortified mind, even the good man trembles, as he enters with gradual steps that gloomy vale, dare any wish with hardened bravery to be hurled in the midst of its darkness, without space to offer a supplicating breath, or time to uplift the eye to Heaven?

How appalling is death, when he strikes down a companion by our side, as it were before our eyes! Of all the numerous ills we suffer, pain, want, difficulties, separations, banishment, none wound so deeply as the loss of a cherished friend. Pecuniary deprivations may be restored or forgotten, difficulties overcome, bodily anguish sustained or mitigated, but who shall bring back the heart we trusted, the hand upon which we leaned, the eye that cheered us with its kindness? Time soothes, and at length will heal the wound, but there remains evermore a scar, tender to the gentlest touch: one cord which bound us to life is broken, and the lightest allusion will cause it to ache and wring

us with anguish. Religion will enable us humbly to acquiesce, but he whose tears fell on the grave of a friend, permits us to weep, and has not required us to forget. It is sad to part with those we love, when illness has prepared the mind, and the sinking frame and pallid countenance have disclosed the mournful truth;—difficult to be consoled, when affection has had an opportunity to overflow in attentive kindness, when we can look back with the thought, that our eye never slumbered over their sufferings, our ear was never dull to their feeblest moan, that our love has smoothed their pillow, our hearts drank in their last accents, and our hands reverently closed their failing eyes! With all these consolations, how inexpressibly affecting the “last, last silence of a friend.”

There are none who have reached life's meridian point, but have experienced some of these painful emotions, for dear as are the ties of affection, and enjoyments of relationship, they are as fragile as they are precious. But those alone know the full bitterness which death brings with him, whose circle he has entered, without one friendly intimation, who have been awaked from tranquil sleep by a cry at midnight,—whose peaceful occupations have been broken in upon, by a pale messenger of evil tidings, or who, when at evening, they watched for the returning steps of a

friend, have received in their arms his inanimate remains. If there be any sorrow like this, sorrow which includes not guilt and dishonor, I know it not. But let not our hearts bleed and tremble in vain, nor turn away from the admonitory voice of friends, who speak the more emphatically, that they speak from the grave. The blow that has made their pulse stand still, will soon stay the beatings of our hearts ; but of little avail their death or our sorrow, unless it induce serious reflection, and lead us to diligent preparation. If on all our plans of life, our scenes of pleasure, the wall of our happy homes, and the brows of our friends, that “ shadowing hand is seen inscribing Death,” surely it is not an intrusive voice that would say, be wise in time. Are we liable, among the unforeseen casualties of life, to exchange worlds in the course of an instant,—while warm with health, and buoyant with hope and youth, to be dashed unconscious and expiring on the ground, —while walking the earth with a joyous step, to have it break beneath us in a grave ? Do we call this a solemn fate, it remains with us to avert its worst terrors. Do we dread to die suddenly ? Let us seek to die safe.

AFFLICTION.

Amid my list of blessings infinite
Stands this the foremost, that my heart has bled.

THIS is a sentiment which may not find general acceptance. The young, to whom life is yet a bright future, and whose anticipations are all *colour de rose*, will naturally turn with distaste from the thought of suffering; and such as are immersed in pleasure, who heed nothing but the gratification of the passing hour, and deem "a moment unamused, a misery," will recoil from the every sound. But those who have ever reflected upon the human character, who have observed the strength and waywardness of passion, the tendency to presumption, the enthronements of selfishness and the prevalence of unkind tempers within them, will perceive how inevitably uninterrupted prosperity must cherish the growth of these rank weeds of a corrupted soil, and will readily allow the necessity of that species of discipline which the calamitous events of life are

calculated to bestow upon the character. Especially those who have felt this discipline, whom sickness or sorrow have not visited in vain, who have owned that "smitten friends are angels sent on errands full of love," and whose earthly comforts, crumbling in their grasp, have taught them to take fast hold of Heaven, will join in the exclamation of the poet,

"For all I bless thee : most for the severe !"

Among the various uses of adversity is the gift of sympathy, a most amiable and endearing trait, but which is only to be learned in the school of suffering. We may commiserate our friends' distress, and even think we share it, but it is impossible to enter into the sorrow which we have never experienced, to be touched with a feeling of the afflictions we have never known. Hence, when bleeding under recent wounds, it is not to the gay and happy that the sorrowful heart has resource, for consolation ;—it rather shrinks intuitively from them, knowing that they can offer nothing but forced, unmeaning condolence. It is the stricken deer that leaves the herd, and those only who have themselves been "hurt by the archers," know how "with gentle force, soliciting the darts, to draw them forth and heal." Affliction, too, opens the fountains of benevolence and mercy. When the hand of God presses

heavily upon us, we feel little inclination to lift ours in severity against our fellow men,—the desires of revenge become deadened in the heart, and even hate itself is disarmed. Besides, such is the insensibility of some natures, and such the ingratitude of all, that the very continuance of ease, the often recurrence of benefits, seem to produce an unnatural thanklessness and presumption. We would be apt to deem our most valued blessings as things of course, or even our due, were we not sometimes reminded of the tenure by which we hold them, by their withdrawal.

How many have indulged in a course of cold selfishness, until affliction taught them to feel for others! How many hearts are there, that, like the aromatic wood, which exhales not its fragrance till it is bruised, must be wounded ere they yield the tribute of gratitude, whom sorrow must almost break to “bring forth sweetness out of woe.” Many latent virtues are elicited by adversity. Fortitude under ills, patience through suffering, courage in peril, and resignation through all, can only be practised in the different scenes of distress.

Prosperity conceals entirely the lustre of these virtues. Suffering, too, prepares us for the enjoyment of true happiness,—they need not look for solid peace, who never knew a serious thought. Vividly and gratefully does the once darkened vision welcome the re-

stored light ; thus does the heart know how to value the gifts of Providence which have once been withdrawn, and is prepared for the right use of those blessings which were perhaps slightly received before, or ungratefully wasted.

May Heaven ne'er trust my friend with happiness
Till it has taught him how to bear it well,
By previous pain ; and made it safe to smile !

Physical sufferings are particularly suited to improve the character, not indeed by reason of any virtue there is in pain, but illness withdraws the attention from exciting objects, and produces a temporary calm in the passions. The disappointments we meet with from the treachery or instability of man, leave a bitterness in the memory, and sorrow inflicts a lasting sting in the heart, "for sorrow's memory is a sorrow still ;" but the recollection of those painful and helpless moments which called forth the kindness and affection of friends, must fill the soul with benevolent and grateful emotions. While suffering under the visitation of sickness, there are many silent hours in which the spirit has solemn opportunities of communing with itself ; the scenes of time, divested of their borrowed hue, appear in their just light, while considerations of eternity press upon the mind with deep earnestness. And this is the most precious use of illness, that it leads us with gentle

steps, to the contemplation of the opening grave. In the enjoyment of health, amid the bustle of life, and the various engagements of business, it is not easy even for the thoughtful, to realize as they ought that closing hour which is swiftly approaching. But sickness dissipates the mist which we endeavor to throw around the tomb, and discovers to us our real distance from it; and if while looking into the deep and narrow house which awaits us—if in this solemn pause our spirits are awakened to a stricter search, to the exercise of humility in the view of errors and infirmities—to cling with stronger hope on the divine promises—whilst our attachment to the world is weakened in proportion, have we not reason to say that the effects of suffering are salutary? If this be true, we must allow that we are as responsible for our improvement of the calamities of life, as of any other means of ameliorating the character. When parental kindness is lavished in vain upon an erring child, severer means are used to reclaim the wanderer—behold the outline of the dealings of heaven with man: its last effort of good will is often the infliction of severe suffering. Thrice unhappy he, whom blessings and sorrows leave alike unmoved. “When pain can’t bless, Heaven quits us in despair.”

MRS. INCHBALD.

I REMEMBER when first reading Mrs. Inchbald's works, being impressed with a peculiarity about them which I could not define. Along with the power of delineation and strength of mind which they evinced, there was also a certain hardness of pencil, if I may so term it, and a want of delicacy in adjusting the different shades of character, which marked the style of this gifted writer. Her memoirs, which, compiled from a minute and most honest diary, are almost auto-biographical, and which have been recently published, throw a clear light on what might seem inharmonious in her productions. So diversified a volume is human character, that every page we turn discovers something to surprise, and affords material for useful reflection.

Beauty and talent, gifts not often bestowed on the same individual, met in Mrs. Inchbald; and the alternate sway which these rival qualities exercised over her woman's mind, (for in caprice and love of admiration

she was a very woman,) forms a subject of curious speculation. It is not so much of her life, however, that we would speak, as of those peculiarities of character, which, though in this instance more striking, are to be met with daily in our intercourse with men.

Though virtuous and pure-minded, her character was destitute of that timidity, the absence of which we can scarce forgive in her sex. Armed with conscious rectitude, she disdained compliance with the forms of society by which females are surrounded; but, though irreproachable in manners, she was not modest. Kind in all essential matters, she was not amiable and endearing. It would appear from these traits, that some minds may possess a solid and noble strata of generous qualities, to whom is not given the more winning and softer virtues; and in a different view, that many may boast the decorations that make goodness lovely, without owning the elevating principle itself. Without adverting to this fact, we are liable to be imposed on by specious appearances on the one hand, while there is no real excellence; or, on the other, of lurking away disgusted from one, who, though intrinsically valuable, would not, or could not be winning.

The moral courage of this extraordinary woman is worth, shown out as it is in her actions, a volume of dissertations. It was this that bore her through sneers

and flatteries, and solicitations, in a course of laborious self-denial, which obtained her the luxury of independence, and the power of aiding those whom error or misfortune had involved in calamity. To the numerous temptations to indulgence and improvidence which surrounded her, she had the courage to say ‘No,’—not a trifling conquest over vanity, by a young and beautiful woman. This same virtue of self-denial, though much lauded, is really of rare occurrence. Mrs. Inchbald in her solitary room, denying herself the comforts of a fire, that her aged sister might be soothed through her years of infirmity, is a picture which every one must admire, perhaps very few imitate. Yet such are the habits which form characters whose influence tells on those around—the very act of repressing an idle desire, and denying an improvident wish, gives us to feel our power over our own spirit, and braces the mind with new energy. Self denial is the basis of independence, and this in man, or in woman, is the truest safeguard to virtue. Many, many there are, who had not fallen into the toils of vice, had not an imprudent indulgence first led them to forfeit their moral liberty; many must eat the bread of bitterness in age, because their youth would not forego the viands of luxury.

There is an expression in her diary, full of sad meaning—“very happy but for my years;” how nume-

rous would such confessions be, were all as candid as Mrs. Inchbald! But surely when lengthened life brings such regrets, there must have been some serious miscalculation; the aim must have been a wrong one, or be inadequate. Sad indeed, when the shadows of life begin to lengthen, and the gloom of evening to gather round our steps, to feel the heart grow heavy while it looks back fondly to the cheerful precincts of youth, and trembles at the thought of approaching age! But let us remember, these were the steps of a waning beauty. Alas for beauty, so dangerous in possession, so transient in its bloom, and yet parted from with so much sorrow! Talent, principle, and we would hope piety, survived the death of beauty; and we find a more grateful object of contemplation in Mrs. Inchbald, as with failings mellowed by years, asperities smoothed away, but with all her best energies glowing in unabated fervor, she peacefully terminated her long career, leaving a remarkable example of the value of self-denial and independence of mind, while at the same time she affords an impressive testimony, how insufficient even these are to bestow happiness or entire consistency, in the absence of religious principle!

TENACITY OF PREJUDICE.

It has been remarked, that at the period of the reformation, few embraced the new doctrines who had passed the age of forty ; the impressions of youth, and prejudices of education, rivetted by habit, became almost invincible to the strongest arguments. This, if it be true, is a striking feature in the human character, and it will be sustained and exemplified, not only by events recorded by historians, but by those which are constantly passing before our own observation. In the remarkable history of the Hebrew nation, we must be struck with the difference of character which existed between the race which left Egypt, and their children who crossed the river of Jordan. The former never forgot the land of Egypt, although it was the land of their captivity ; with a perverseness which seems natural to man, they remembered all their indulgences, few as they were, while the bitterness of their slavery, the

weight of their oppression, which extorted such cries of anguish as reached the heavens, seemed totally obliterated from their minds. Their early rooted prejudices never entirely gave way, and their murmurings and rebellion brought with them, as is always the case, their own punishment. They were denied the sight of the country which they despised. The prepossessions of their children, however, were of a different kind; they grew up under the direction of their lawgiver, and obedient to the divine guidance, their earliest associations rested on their holy tabernacle and the glories which surrounded it, while the precepts to which their fathers yielded reluctant obedience, took deep root in their youthful minds, and gathered strength in their advancing years. Thus we see them an united, faithful and brave people. If we pass into general history, we may observe the same remarkable facts, though not portrayed with such minuteness, as it is an inspired pen that alone can lay open the hidden springs of human motives. Perhaps it is not asserting too much to say, that all momentous revolutions, have been effected by the comparatively youthful;—not so much by the wisdom and experience of age, but by the enterprise, vigor, and enlarged apprehension of the younger portion of the community. In the most important change that has occurred in the destinies of man,—I mean the intro-

duction of christianity, the first believers were, with few exceptions, young men. The elder part of that generation to whom it was first offered, died in their ancient unbroken prejudices. Turn to the succeeding pages of history,—how sternly, at first, was christianity put away by the heathens; it was reserved for those that came after them, to bow to its gentle sway; its mild admonitions met them at the threshold of life, before prejudice had occupied the strong holds of the heart. Glancing over the states of Rome and Greece, and through Europe down to the convulsions which have agitated the last hundred years, and crowded them with events as appalling as unlooked for, we may trace the same truth, that the fate of nations and communities is committed by providence, into the hands of the young. We have given character to the age in which we live,—they will decide that which is approaching. It should be a solemn thought, that the character once formed, though it may be modified by changing circumstances,—may make progress in good or evil, will, generally, remain unchanged.

The habits and prejudices of youth, when confirmed by manhood, seldom surrender to argument or conviction. Age is too indolent, too unwilling, too dogmatic, to learn with aptness new lessons. The world seems just awaking to the importance of this truth :—hence

the general anxiety upon the subject of education, the banishment of old defective systems, and the introduction of new ones. There never was a period in which so much has been done for the advantage of the young as the present. Those who have arrived midway in their journey through life, behold with wonder the facilities afforded for those attainments which cost them so many arduous efforts. Genius and Philosophy, unite to render the path of science pleasant ; the christian world has roused from its lethargy, and many friendly hands are leading the young along the ways of piety, and unlocking to their minds, the treasures of sacred knowledge. But the work has only commenced. Wide prospects of improvement are before us. When the energies of the mind are fully excited, at what point shall we venture to say, they will pause ? He that looks around and observes the moral effect throughout Christendom, must feel that he lives in an age of peculiar interest,—that existence is a trust doubly solemn at this period. The results of the mighty experiments which are about to be put to the trial, will affect the happiness, not only of the civilised man, but of the savage,

“ whose untutored mind,
Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind,”

and of the Heathen nations, who, in “ their blindness, bow down to stock and stone.”

May we not reasonably hope, that the generation who shall succeed us, will be more enlightened as regards duty, more emulous of good, more judicious in the use of means, and more vigorous in the prosecution of enlarged designs ? The heart must be cold that swells not at anticipations of such improvement and added happiness and virtue in our fellow beings ; but may I not say, happy they, who, by their efforts, have in any degree contributed to such results ? This consideration brings the subject home to the heart and conscience of all. In contemplating the subject at large, we must not be content with the gratification it yields us, nor forget that an aggregate good is accomplished by united individual exertion. At the present time, to be useless, is not the privilege of any—even the most obscure. The influence of a good example is in the power of all, and how great is that influence we must, perhaps, exchange beings to estimate. Woe be to him who, entrusted with talent or power, in the indulgence of indolence folds his hands, or in a spirit of perverseness, opposes the benevolent schemes which distinguish the present day. To our own state, these reflections are singularly appropriate.

The advance of improvement is already rapid beyond

expectation ; education has commenced its cheering progress ; religion, the friend of all, is finding its way from river to river, and the dense forests of the interior resound to the melody of sacred praise. We hail the universal concern, evinced respecting education, as the sure pledge of great things for our section of country. Upon the youth, who are advancing to manhood and action, the prosperity, under Providence, of our state, must depend. Surely this reflection should strike deeply into the hearts, not only of parents, but teachers, pastors, all who have influence over the young, all who love their country, and desire its increasing happiness.

In reflecting upon the responsibilities of the succeeding generation, we must perceive our own. If they are to be a well trained and intelligent community, ours must be the care to provide the means ; if they are to hold fast and defend that holy religion which is at once the glory and the safeguard of our institutions, the eyes of the young are directed to us for example. Let them receive this sacred treasure, unpolluted from our hands. In vain do sceptics offer their reiterated and worn out cavils—experience has fully proved that there is no real greatness apart from religion and morality, and that no nation can attain prosperity, except in the prosecution of such a course as may claim the protection of the God of nations.

THE HABIT OF DETRACTION.

Polonius.—My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Hamlet.—Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity; the less they deserve, the more merit in your bounty.

THIS is a fine sentiment; would that it were acted out in the intercourse of society,—that men even followed the rule of old Polonius, to give to each his deserts. Judging by common practice, we reverse it, and seldom accord to merit its due praise, or to infirmity its reasonable allowance. Perhaps, among the *petites morales* of life, there are none more violated, than mercy in judging, and tenderness in speaking of the characters of others. Whatever company we enter, we must, if awake to the subject, perceive with what harshness men's conduct is criticised,—with what rashness their motives are taken for granted, and how recklessly incidents are narrated which involve the feelings, if not the credit of another. This, though too

often arising from premeditated malice, is generally the result of heedlessness—an ill cultivated mind—an indulged unmercifulness of temper, or an undisciplined tongue. But whatever the cause, it is no light matter, in truth, it is one of the great evils of social intercourse, and might demand the notice of an abler pen, than that which traces the lines of these ephemeral papers.

The abusers of one of the noblest gifts of heaven, the power of expressing emotions, interchanging feelings, and embodying thought, have often been divided into classes. Of the known malignant man, or the open slanderer, I would not be much afraid; the backbiter, (expressive phrase,) I would avoid as an insect I despised more than I feared; but how shall I defend myself from the insinuator, who may take away my good name by a nod, or significant wink,—from the detractor, who allows the fact of a meritorious action, but whispers me into discredit by suggesting an unworthy motive? Whose peace is secure from the tale bearer, whose miserable business it is, to collect and circulate gossip,—and who in equal waste and abuse of time and breath, may, in one round of visits, create discord among families, and snap the bonds of friendship? The whisperer, it is said, separateth chief friends. Bitter strife, blood shedding, and even death, have attended the steps of these incendiaries of society.

The guilt is not, however, confined to those who vend these unworthy wares; many who would not directly commit the fault, or even repeat the tale, share it by listening calmly, if not graciously, and thus give the evil tacit encouragement. Amiable, and in other respects conscientious persons, fall into this severe habit of judging. Men who would shrink from a dishonest transaction with their neighbor, will not hesitate to give an unfair estimate of his character; they will say bitter things against the very man, who, if he were in distress, they would hasten to relieve,—if he were dying, they would unfeignedly deplore. To listen to the sweeping censures that we pass upon each other, one would suppose them prompted by personal dislike, yet we would start, were such cause intimated; we do not hate, or really wish to injure the acquaintance of whom we are speaking,—we only speak as if we did: we would not use daggers, but we very smilingly speak them.

We strike a blow at one, whom we have not even the poor excuse of hating,—with whom we have, perhaps, exchanged cordial greetings,—one, the sound of whose retiring footsteps is still heard; and whose character we commence demolishing, before the smile with which we bade him farewell has passed from our faces;—a blow, be it remembered, whose peculiarity

is, that though it wounds, the injured person does not feel—until too late to protect himself. Is this picture over-drawn? Let the observation of every one, who, as the phrase is, is much in society, decide. There is a pleasant story of a tune being suddenly arrested and congealed by frost, and in the evening, as the instrument hung near the fire, delighted the hearers as it thawed into melody. Could the conversation that enlivens our tea tables or social circles, be, in some miraculous manner, preserved and conversed over again to our wondering ears, is it not to be feared that confusion and regret would mingle with our amazement? But, it would be ill-bred to express our low opinion of another to his face,—yes, and sometimes dangerous too! That we may not be uncivil, must we be dastardly? Is there no alternative between breaking the conventional rules of politeness, or bursting the golden cords of mercy? The truth would seem to be, that our attention is too much occupied by persons, instead of things. When taste, in its various departments, offers such a boundless field, it is a pity to trifle time in petty details of anecdote or slander. Surely, in this age of general cultivation, there are higher themes for discussion than the demerits of our acquaintances. For my part, I cannot hear a severe remark without disgust, though it fall from beautiful lips; and when pained by

such sounds, I involuntarily think of the fairy tale I believed in childhood, of the maiden, from whose mouth proceeded reptiles. In all my wanderings I have met with few who realized the idea of her more fortunate sister, who spoke pearls and diamonds.

Happy, indeed, are those whose hearts are so sweetly attempered, whose lips so prudently guarded, that their words are valuable as precious gems. Mercy, in this, as in higher things, is "twice blessed." Would we win golden opinions, we must express kind and just ones. Would we endeavor to preserve harmlessness of speech, let us keep our hearts innocent from censoriousness, and occupy our reflections with rational and exalted subjects. It has been remarked, that we think of people very much as we allow ourselves to speak of them; by constraining ourselves to dwell upon the brighter traits of a person's character whom we even dislike, we will be won to softer feelings as we contemplate what is good in him, and the generous feeling which we exercise, will repay us with a pleasure which will still more conciliate our hostility. Let us never venture to prophesy evil of a fellow being, lest, enlisting our pride, the ruin we at first foretold, we may at length desire. Under the peculiar government of the Jews, there was an express statute against tale bearing. If the practice were penal now, who would 'scape whipping?

But it is the harsh spirit which prompts this want of kindness in speaking, that is most to be deprecated. Strange, that in a world, where there is sufficient calamity, sorrow and death, to soften our hearts towards each other,—where we are hourly made to feel our mutual dependence, we should delight in adding to burdens already heavy, and strive by unnecessary severity, to embitter the common voyage we are all pursuing. Fellow passengers through dangerous seas, so soon to terminate our perilous journey, that we should derive satisfaction in laying open one another's infirmities, opens a dark page in the human character.

Were this subject more seriously considered, rash judgment and evil speaking would be, in a great measure, corrected. There is no weapon sharper than unjust censure,—no poison more venomous than that which distils from malicious tongues. Were all the wounds and sorrows that have been inflicted by ill-nature, or heedlessness, collected in one mournful picture, it would startle those who never think of weighing their words. It seems a little thing to set the circle in a roar at the expense of an absent acquaintance, yet after-reflection will crimson the cheek of an ingenuous man.

A few hasty words are soon forgotten; but they may have left a stain upon the character of another, which tears of remorse can never wash away; and thoughtlessness is poor apology to offer to lacerated feelings.

The opposite practice of benevolence in judging and speaking, is within the reach of all. Our conversation may never sparkle with wit, but it may glow with the kindlier warmth of gentleness. We cannot always be performing generous deeds, but we can unceasingly utter words of kindness. Labored discussions, philosophical displays, are often out of place, but the language of benevolence is ever welcome, ever appropriate. Candor and good nature add charms to talent, and where talent exists not, supply its place with more endearing graces.

CONSTANCY.

—————Abdiel faithful found
 Among the faithless, faithful only he ;
 Among the innumerable false, unmoved,
 Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
 His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal ;
 Nor number nor example with him wrought
 To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
 Though single—

A NOBLE picture, illustrative of one of the noblest virtues ; a virtue worthy an angel, yet not unattainable by man. Induced by our peculiar situation, too often to deviate from the strict rule which our judgment approves, solicited by love of pleasure, borne away by force of example, or betrayed by a traitor within, we have great reason to regard constancy or firmness of mind, a desirable attainment. It is, indeed, the keystone of all other virtues ; without it, the most brilliant qualities will be only splendid materials of a character,—talent a useless gift, and life itself a wasted opportunity ; while with it, even moderate abilities

will be sustained in an honorable and useful course. This excellence, like every other, is often counterfeited; obstinate, wrong headed people frequently mistake their mulishness for firmness, and rude, unfeeling ones, misname their unmannered malice, plainness, and plume themselves upon their courage. But firmness of character, while it is the reverse of obstinacy, is never incompatible with gentleness of temper, and is, indeed, generally marked by mildness of demeanor. Where the mind is assured, and the purpose steady, there is no need of noise or bluster; it is in very protestation and clamor, that the vacillating will betrays their weakness. Milton, with his usual judgment, represents Abdiel as first tenderly persuading the rebel spirits to return to their allegiance, and not till he is repulsed with menace and blasphemy, does he rebuke them with severe dignity, "though alone encompassed round with foes."

In the ever changing circumstance of life, this virtue will be called into various kinds of exercise, and modified by varying events. How much will we need constancy of mind, when the path of duty lies plain before our own eyes, but is unperceived by our friends! No easy task to preserve the mind well poised, between persuasion, ridicule and menace, to walk the way we think the right one steadily, though we walk it alone;—difficult to pass "long way through hostile scorn"

unmoved ! When adversities darken our lot, we have need of firmness to grapple with difficulties,—to sustain us under the pressure of evil circumstances. What a high degree of firmness does it require, to submit without repining to the stroke that withers our earthly happiness, and while the heart is bleeding, to look upwards with confiding affection to the hand that has inflicted the wound !

We must possess strength of purpose, too, to enable us to examine our own characters,—to repress a rising evil, or enter into steadfast combat with an indulged error, or an over-mastering passion. No one who knows himself, or has ever attempted to stem the current of wrong inclinations, which are ever issuing from the heart, as from an overflowing spring, but will feel the necessity of going well armed into this battlefield, where his foes wear the guise of friends, and his friends themselves are half won over to the enemy. It is the natural and laudable wish of all, to possess some weight in their own sphere of action ; none are so destitute of ambition, as to be willing to live unregarded, and unlamented die. But without a share of firmness, we can exercise no influence over others. It is not saying too much, that we cannot be truly virtuous, if we have not courage to be bold in virtue's defence. We more than suspect the fidelity of that pro-

fessed friend, who steals from our side in the hour of peril. But most of all do we require unswerving constancy, to resist the solicitations and example of friends and associates, to commit or countenance actions that we disapprove. It evinces more true courage thus to deny a friend, than to punish an enemy, and he is more the hero who resists persuasion to error, than he who avenges an insult.

“Learn early how to say no,” was wise counsel; and a celebrated writer has written an *affecting* narrative to illustrate its force. We may withstand threatening language, for aroused pride steps in to our aid;—we can even nerve ourselves against the potent entreaty—our best resolves often melt, like snow beneath the sunbeam. False shame, and moral cowardice, too frequently betray us; we are ashamed as well as afraid, to say no, and thus give way to error—violate our sense of right, that sacred guardian of principle, and ultimately bring upon ourselves the very contempt we risked so much to avoid. How many, have the want of this conservative principle, led into misery; how numerous the victims of indecision, who have commenced the career of vice, not that they were at first victims, but that some influential associate was! What desperate, but unavailing struggles have they made, before they reluctantly turned away from the rules of

virtue and rectitude ! Pitiabie situation ! to dislike evil, yet ever to be found in its haunts—to fear disgrace, yet feel it weighing down the head, because we have not the constancy of purpose to withstand solicitation, to do what we condemn,—yet lack the courage not to be what we despise.

HAPPINESS.

WHEN we look around upon this bright world in which we live; when we enjoy the cheerful light of the sun, the refreshing breezes of heaven; when the grateful alternations of day and night recruit our wearied frames; when we survey the scenery which makes day beautiful,—the magnificence which renders night glorious; when we observe our capacities for friendship, affection, gratitude, taste and science—why is it that we ever complain?

We are not unhappy because our Creator wills us to be so. He has made ample provision for our enjoyment; he spreads under our feet the verdant carpet of summer; he raises over our heads the foliage that screens us from its heat; he strews flowers of richest hue and odor on our path; it is his care that commands refreshing streams to fertilize the earth and supply the wants of his dependent creatures. The air that fans us blows by his appointment; the various delights that

regale our senses are provided by his bounty; the whole creation seems to have been made not only to serve man, but to delight him also. Why should the recipient of such favors be discontented, the object of such munificence be restless and unhappy? The fault is indeed all our own; like froward children who demolish their toys and then weep over the fragments, we destroy our very blessings by wasteful abuse of them, or we ungratefully despise them till they are torn from us, when we childishly repine at the deprivation of that which, when in our grasp, we held as an unregarded thing. How lightly, for instance, is the blessing of health esteemed! how many outrage nature by excess, and act as though they would hurry death to strike,—yet when at last the hour of languishment does come, what impatience and complaints!

How universally do we slight the present good, while we look for that which is to come, but which never arrives; and, undeceived by perpetual disappointments, ever ready to be duped again, the morrow finds us no wiser from the mistakes of to-day! But amidst all this disappointment and chagrin, there are sources of happiness within the reach of all. The sacred maxims of religion raise our views to scenes of exalted felicity, which burst upon the darkened soul like visions of heaven,—to springs of peace, which, though they ema-

nate from the throne of the eternal, heaven-directed find their way to earth. I have said in some preceding remarks that the means of happiness are dealt to man by an impartial hand;—it may not be amiss to consider what are some of those means.

I am aware that this subject has been treated till it is almost common place, yet it is always interesting. There are moments in every one's existence, when we weary of the routine of little cares through which we walk our daily round;—when the rewards which the world offers its votaries, seem insufficient to arouse us to exertion,—when in view of the calamities of others, or of those which threaten ourselves, the soul feels dismayed, and, unheeding present blessings, looks upon life as a gloomy thing, and trembles as it feels its earthly props shake beneath it. At such an hour, the reflections which are calculated to cheer and strengthen, owe their power not to their novelty but to their truth. If then we would allay the thirst of our fevered spirits at the fountains of peace and contentment, we need perform no weary pilgrimage, nor wade through pages of abstruse reasoning to find them; behold, the streams flow at our feet, inviting us to stoop and drink! Yes, to stoop: for content cannot abide in the mind elated by pride and haughtiness, or in those soaring but vain dreams, in which the young

are so prone to indulge, till dazzled by the illusions of fancy, they loathe the quiet pleasures of an every-day world.

Would we cleanse our minds from this mental vice, and look at things soberly as they are, we might escape much disgust and disappointment. Would we cherish humbler views of our characters and attainments, we should be spared many a sore wound,—mortified vanity would not so often be obliged to shrink. Happiness, let it be remembered, must be sought in the spirit of humility; her gifts cannot be extorted, they must be deserved. If we would have our hearts the temples where peace presides, we must not forget that she can only breathe a pure atmosphere. Experience would tell us this, though a divine voice had not confirmed it. Go, then, ye who are restless, unsatisfied, who fly from change to change unconscious that in yourselves the cause is to be found,—upon whose hearts the gentle showers of heaven's beneficence fall as water on the unmoistened marble,—cease your unavailing efforts and complaints. Look narrowly into your own characters and habits,—there is the wound which is ever ulcerating, which art nor emollient can heal.

Do you there detect unhallowed passions? Be sure it was they who barred the entrance against happiness.

Virtue and contentment are joined sisters. Where malice, anger, and censoriousness brood in the bosom as in a nest, how shall the fair dove of peace be content to share it with such inmates! Have you taken blind passion for your guide, are you pursuing the paths of guilt and error, and do you wonder you have lost your way,—that disquiet and remorse, though unbidden, make part of your company, and that gloom and danger darken around your steps? Yet it is not too late to retrace the way,—though difficult, not too late to break off the shackles of vice, and with determined effort to rise to freedom, to peace.

It greatly promotes a contented temper, and aids us in bearing with equanimity the vexations which assail us, to consider that our trials are appropriate—not only best for us, but suited to our dispositions. Addison, with his quiet, inimitable pleasantry, has happily illustrated this thought in one of his allegories, where he describes the discontented sons of earth as having the privilege of exchanging burdens. Every one knows the fable, and how pleased each applicant was, in the sequel, to resume his own appropriate weight of care. I have often, in a mood of depression, endeavored to fit my neighbor's burden to my shoulder, and have invariably been consoled by the discovery that it would sit still heavier than my own. That is, indeed, a rare alchemy,

which can thus extract matter of gratulation from our very misfortunes. The gay and prosperous, may perhaps smile at the thought of directing them to happiness. But gaiety, unless it be based upon piety and virtue, will be evanescent as the morning dew; we look at it, it is beautiful; we look again, it is gone. Who does not know that prosperity and peace of mind are not synonymous terms—that it is a deceitful glare, which, while it appears to light, too often misleads our steps? But even to the afflicted,—to the weariest spirit that ever bowed beneath the ills of life, I would boldly say, “be happy; you cannot command away these external evils; you cannot recall the buried, nor bid the painful malady to depart, but you can cherish pure thoughts, repress the rising evil, recall the broken resolution, and exclude those guilty passions which inflict more disastrous consequences upon the soul, than many troubles; above all, in the discharge of duty you can

‘Lean on him on whom Archangels lean.’

INTIMATIONS OF A FUTURE LIFE.

Nature's first wish is endless happiness.

It was a pathetic expression of Young,—one of his most felicitous touches, when in allusion to a deceased friend, he said, “She, for I know not yet her name in heaven.” The mingled emotions of hope and regret, the indefinable mystery which pervades our thoughts of the dead, has ever been to me a strong intimation of immortality. If we endeavor to analyze our reflections upon a departed friend, how runs the train of thought? Time, which has stilled the throb of sorrow, allows us the sad pleasure of reviewing scenes, through which we have together passed, and recalling the lineaments of a countenance, once so pleasant to our sight. Our reflections gradually pass to the hour of illness, the bed of death, the funeral solemnities, until they rest upon the silent spot, where a heap of dust only remains of

one, perhaps "dear as the ruddy drops that visit our sad hearts." Do our meditations pause there? Are we content to confine them to the coffin or the grave? When we think of our friend, do our thoughts dwell upon the inanimate frame which is mouldering in the earth? Rather are we not conscious of an instinct, which urges the mind beyond all this? We leave the considerations of time, and forgetting the external objects which at first absorbed our attention, we find ourselves in an unknown world. Perhaps there are none whose lot it has been to survive a dear object of attachment, who have not detected themselves apostrophising that object, not as insensible clay, but as a living intelligence. "Where is he," is the natural question of a bereaved heart. It is not to the tomb, that we look for a satisfactory answer. I have heard persons in the moments of dissolution, addressing friends who had long been dead, and apparently forgotten, with an air of interest and reality, which evinced that they, at least, thought they were not invoking the remembrance of a mere name. That this is not the play of imagination, we may confidently appeal to the feelings of those who have studied the workings of their own minds. It is not enough to say, that these convictions of a future being are produced by the power of association, strong as that principle is conceded to be, nor by the instil-

ments of education. It seems to pervade the minds of all the denizens of the earth, cultivated or unlettered, refined or savage. Bar out from the hopes and fears of man, the future state, and what a blank does the present state become! Never, since Adam opened his eyes upon the paradise he was so soon to forfeit, has man been content with the possession of one world. He, our first progenitor, perilled all in grasping at what he deemed vaster worlds of knowledge; and his children still experience that intense desire, which is ever reaching forward to what is unknown and invisible.

The Indian mother, who cradles her dead babe among the trees, cherishes her own wild fancies about its future destination; her rougher mate soothes his dying hours with dreams of a world where winter never comes, where game is never scarce, and where his "faithful dog may bear him company." Why does one tribe of savages, when they deposit their dead in the ground, so carefully provide provision by their side, but that something whispers them, that the grave is not to be the termination of their brother's journey; though, in the rudeness of their simplicity, they confound the spirit with its grosser covering. The Hindoo collects his failing strength, and with a last effort, lies down to die on the banks of the Ganges, deeming that its sacred waters will purify his spirit—its hallowed streams con-

vey him more surely into bliss. But not to confine our view to man, in his ruder state, if we revert to the popular belief of those nations, whose works of art and genius are still the objects of classical veneration, how many images of beauty occur to the mind ! The Greeks employed the most exquisite similes, to express their hopes of immortality ; the Roman Mythology is filled with striking and pathetic allusions to the same subject. The Hebrews, with the emphasis of oriental language, called the cemeteries the “ House of the living,”—a sublime hint, worthy the guardians of the lively oracles of God.

Closely interwoven, then, with our moral constitution, is the expectation of a future scene, when that which now occupies us shall have passed away ; wherever man has died, man has hoped to live again. It is true, that the analogies of nature lead us to the pleasing expectation, but they do not originate it ; they only meet the desire of the soul, which eagerly embraces every argument which would tend to confirm its aspirations.

Madame de Stael has observed, that the most pathetic expression in our language, is “ no more.” Though they no doubt impressed a foreigner more vividly, there are few words which convey so much meaning ; they strike a key, to which a thousand linked chords respond

and vibrate. Yet mournful as they are, they express hope—their sense is incomplete. We say of the buried, that they are no more—on earth, the heart replies, and lifts its hopes to a brighter scene beyond. We feel that they are no more, to cheer and sustain the fainting spirit ; no more, to excite and reward exertion ; no more, with kindly hand, to help us through life's rugged places ; but we dare not set the seal of annihilation on their tomb—we recoil from the idea that they are no more forever.

Though then around our dearest friends, "death's inexorable hand draws the dark curtain close," we need not tremble, lest it should never be undrawn : let us then learn to

———"Love the place where now they dwell,
And scorn this wretched spot they leave so poor."

ORPHANS.

No father's tenderness, nor mother's care,
Shielded my infant innocence with prayer.

THERE is no word in human language which conveys to the mind such mournful images as the name of Orphan. Living in a world where our dearest ties are daily falling off, and where the very tenderness of our affection renders us but the more conspicuous marks for the arrows of affliction, none of our bereavements comprehend so much that is desolate, helpless and melancholy, as the loss of our natural protector.

I know that bitter indeed is the anguish of the parent whom death writes childless in the earth, who is called to close those eyes which looked into his with such guileless love, and to perform those duties which, in the order of things, he might have hoped to receive at the hands of his child. Unspeakable, too, a mother's sorrow! Agonizing is the pang which separates hearts affectionately united, and overwhelming is that desolate feeling with which the survivors look around upon a

world dark and empty. But time will soothe these wounds,—new ties supply, in part, the place of these severed cords of love; but who shall replace a parent's tenderness? What heart can beat towards a child with the warm throb of a mother's? who can exercise that forbearance which, though long trespassed on, still endures? whose love grows fonder as afflictions gather darker, and clings to its object even in the depth of moral degradation? Whose eyes beam kindness when every other frowns; whose heart and arms are open when all beside are closed against the erring and unfortunate? A mother's alone! We may win friends, and gather round us objects of dear affection, but our truest, our only disinterested friend, lies in the grave of a parent.

I cannot behold a group of orphans without a deep sensation of interest; their very unconsciousness is dreadful;—tender plants, thus early exposed, what shall protect them,—who shall shelter them amid the rough storms of life? A solemn claim have they on every heart—on the ready protection of every hand. But, is this claim always heard, or allowed, if heard? To the disgrace of humanity, it is not. It is the aggravation of the woes of the fatherless, that they are not only bereft of parental protection, but too often experience oppression and unkindness.

It is true that there are bright exceptions to this

charge ; there are many who hear the cry of the fatherless, and protect those who have none to help them ; and surely a tenfold blessing will descend on such,—the blessing of the orphan and the orphan's God. But making every charitable allowance, it cannot be denied that, in the struggle and crowd, and clashing of the world, the rights and interests of the feeble are forced to give way to the strong, and hence the situation of orphans leaves them peculiarly defenceless from the wrongs of the defrauder, or the severity of the unfeeling.

There is nothing more pleasing than the overflowing gaiety of a youthful heart. How cheerfully does the laugh of childhood ring upon the ear, so heartily, so untainted. But it is only to the winnings of a parent's love, that a child will thus freely unbosom itself ; children have the keenest perception of kindness, and the orphan feels it, though unconscious perhaps of the cause. A restraint is felt upon its happiness, the feelings are thrown back upon the heart, for want of that sympathy which a parent alone can inspire. The blossoms of affection expand, but slowly and timidly, for the hand that would have watched and guarded them is gone, and the heart that would have hailed them is cold.

As children advance in life, in many instances do they experience the painful want of parental guid-

ance. They may commit many errors which they can confess to none but the indulgent ear of maternal love, —they will be involved in perplexities, which they look in vain for a father's kindness and wisdom to lead them safely through.

If we add to these moral ills, the outward sorrows which so frequently attend the lot of orphanage,—the bitterness of dependence, the reserve or unkindness of friends, and the coldness of the world's ungracious charity, we must feel how strong is the claim of this class of unfortunates, not only on our commiseration, but upon our active kindness and tenderest sympathy.

In contemplating this subject, the heart of a parent would be weighed down with melancholy considerations, and the destiny of unprotected children, would seem altogether dreary ; but here, as in every other dark moment of man's experience, religion hastens to his aid. As if to meet the peculiar necessities and griefs of the orphan, the sacred oracles abound in assurances of protection. The supreme Being has most emphatically declared himself the defender of the fatherless. When in his providence he removes the parents, he assures the defenceless offspring that He will supply their loss ; and he has laid up, as it were, a fund of charity for them in all ages, by the promises and rewards held out to those who befriend the poor and helpless. His threatenings,

too, against the oppressor, are awfully solemn. There is one remarkable passage on record, which I have thought must stand like a hedge around the property of the orphan, and stay the hand of the most rapacious. "Enter not into the fields of the fatherless, for their Redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee." These gracious assurances of that Being who directs our destinies, are sure supports on which to rest the discouraged soul; indeed, without this confidence in the divine protection for their children, I know not how parents meet death with the semblance of composure; but, with these promises on their hearts, they can descend to the grave in cheerful trust,—nor is that trust in vain. Sad as is the lot of orphans, and bitter as must be many of their feelings in numerous instances, these sorrows have a salutary tendency, and if we see some, who, like the gifted, but unhappy author of the lines of our motto, squander their talents in sloth and vice, we may recollect many, who, apparently unprotected, have won their way to fame and usefulness.

LOVE OF LIFE.

WHAT is this mysterious tie, which binds the affections of man to life; a tie which afflictions the most exquisite cannot dissolve, sufferings the most appalling cannot break? That life should be inexpressibly sweet to those who are in the enjoyment of even a moderate share of happiness, is easily explained. A thousand ligatures, woven by affection and friendship, chain us to earth, and compensate for the numerous ills flesh is heir to; cheering hopes are ever springing in the hearts of the sorrowful; native resolution upholds many; the supports of religion are the prop of some; but setting aside all these considerations, if we examine closely, we shall discover a love of life in itself, powerful enough to sustain us under the extremest pressure. Visit the dying beggar—the pensioner of charity, to the darkness of whose lot no ray of cheerfulness can find its way,—homeless, helpless, unfriended and desolate;—what has he to live for? But he prays, nay, agonizes

for prolonged existence. Hard as is his destiny, it is harder still to lose his grasp on earth. The condemned malefactor, an outcast from the fellowship of men,—he who has forfeited all that would seem to endear existence,—even he can consent to live;—to return, Cain-branded to a world, which he knows will take seven-fold vengeance on him. This is the love of life.

If we extend our view over the condition of man, we shall perceive wise and kind reasons for this provision in our moral constitution. Notwithstanding the numerous gifts of Providence, we must allow that our lives are chequered with suffering, that while we have some enjoyment we are called to much endurance. We often writhe beneath the afflicting stroke of God; our own passions and the evil tempers of others, are perpetually wounding our hearts, and frightening away man's truest comfort, inward peace. Add to this, the severe casualties of life, the perplexities and reverses of business, the ingratitude or treachery of friends, the accusations and injuries of enemies, and we shall look upon a scene of discord, confusion and woe, which might well dismay the most resolute. Against this array of actual evil, how many have nothing to sustain them but the bare love of life! It is true that the fear of death is intimately connected with this principle, but that does not operate on all with the same force. There are

minds, who, from natural hardness of temper, insensibility,—acquired familiarity with death, or better and nobler motives, can contemplate the end of a being, without dread ; but even these do not loath their life, do not feel impatient to die. An inspired apostle to whom the glories of Heaven were partially unveiled, yet owned a natural reluctance to being “unclothed” of his mortal habiliments. He to whom it was gain to die, did not despise his existence.

There are not wanting melancholy instances where remorse,—the fear of shame, the pressure of melancholy and calamity, have urged the maddened spirit to choose death rather than life,—have nerved the hand with fatal rashness to cut asunder the silver cord which sustains the vital principle. But how would the number of this sad list be swelled, did not the human heart, in its darkest hours of despondency, cling, with an instinct which enters into its very essence, to this living breathing world, sorrowful as it is, little as it has to allure. With all its struggles and its woes, it yet is life. If, in the midst of our complaints and murmurings, we think that death approaches to terminate them, how instantly are we silenced by the proximity of this greater evil ; and like the old man of the fable, we are thankful for leave to resume our burden, and struggle on our way. While this conservative principle thus

prevents some from forsaking their post in the hour of peril, and others from seeking death in the delirium of grief, it also acts as a safeguard from the assaults of violence. Man has naturally a horror of taking life: the fiercest anger will be slaked in the blood of an enemy. That instinctive care over the precious spark that animates our own mortality, which, though every hour exposed to extinction, yet glows so long unquenched, leads us to respect the life of our fellow beings, even independently of the restraints of conscience and moral obligations. Doubtless, many a savage spirit, whom neither fear of God, nor man's regard, can bind, is withheld from acts of atrocity by this feeling, so strong and so inexplicable! A noble poet, in vain levity, has endeavored to ridicule the expression, "why should a living man complain;" but to a reflecting mind it must be replete with meaning. Environed by difficulties, bowed by affliction, bruised and suffering man still esteems it a precious boon to live—and with sufficient reason. The evils which surround him here are known, but none have returned to reveal the secrets of the grave. Even when cheered by light from heaven, by that revelation whose promises have illuminated the long-darkened portals of death, even then, so much are we the creatures of sense, that, against our better judgment, we hold with tenacious

grasp to tangible things; we linger with regret among objects to which a life-time has familiarized us;—for we are going a way that we have never gone before, a way we must walk alone, for at its threshold we quit forever the grasp of friendship and the embrace of love.

NIGHT.

PERHAPS there is nothing among the phenomena, surrounded by which we almost unconsciously live, more striking than the return of night. Wonderful is the machinery of the universe. With what beautiful, unerring regularity do the shadows gradually lengthen,—the rays of the meridian sun become less intense—grow still mellow, then indistinct, and fade away. How grateful to the mind, naturally impatient of monotony, is this continual change; and after the fatigues of an active day, or the struggles of an anxious one, with what soothing influence comes night, to draw around each throbbing heart, the curtain of silence and repose! Among the thousand absurdities of the heathen mythology, we find many poetical images inspired by this subject;—indeed, it is not possible to lift our eye to the magnificence of Heaven—to behold those eter-

nal sentinels, who stand in their order, and never faint in their watches, without corresponding emotions of elevated praise. Great as is their material beauty and splendor, it is surpassed by their moral sublimity. Few can fixedly contemplate the heavens at night, and not feel a crowd of thoughts and emotions press upon their hearts, which reach far beyond this earth, and which it were vain fully to endeavor to express. An overwhelming conviction weighs upon the mind, of the power of that superintending hand which lighted up these worlds, and suspended them in the air; while the aid which astronomy affords, increases our wonder. How infinite the intelligence, which conceived the laws that regulate the planetary system, and yet how sublime in its simplicity! While contemplating these worlds, what a speck does our globe appear; how fades into nothingness, the petty strife—the sordid cares of men! Our thoughts ascend into a purer atmosphere, and assimilate with the sublimity of the scene. It is wise, then, to converse frequently with the glories that adorn night, to imbue our spirits with the harmony and tranquillity they exhibit, and avail ourselves of the moral lessons they so impressively teach. It is well, often to enter into this august temple, before whose glory the proudest efforts of man dwindle into insignificance, and where the supreme architect has stamped such evi-

dent traces of his skill, that every burning star would seem to bid us reverence the presence of the Deity.

Not alone interesting in surveying the worlds above us, night also sheds a peculiar awe over the abodes of men. There is something strange and solemn in the aspect of a large city viewed at midnight; we are surrounded by thousands of living beings, yet all wrapt in silent unconsciousness, " 'tis as the general pulse of life stood still." At intervals among the silent mansions, some window emits a light, and our thoughts penetrating the curtain, imagine the cause. Perhaps the eye of affection watches over the dying, or weeps beside the remains of the dead; or beyond yonder half drawn drapery sits the sad wife, watching breathless for the footsteps of her truant lord, and tastes the bitterness of hope deferred, and ill requited tenderness. Many are the romances, might we but read them, acted within these brick walls. What wild hopes, what fears and anxieties may agitate the bosoms of those slumberers, for it is one of the often observed mysteries of our being, that the heart wakes, and grieves, and trembles, even while the senses are locked in sleep! What an inexplicable theme is this! Where is that world whither our spirits fly, in which they converse and act as if half unfettered from their earthly companion, and enter so passionately into its imaginary scenes, that man's

sleep is often like a day of keeping watch, and he awakes as one escaped out of a battle ?

In the still hours of night, we instinctively revert to that period when we shall rest in more unbroken slumber, a slumber which as to this world knows no waking. How appropriate is the expression of a heathen writer, who called sleep one of the " lesser mysteries," so like to death, it would seem almost a provision to remind us at least within the space of a day, that we must die,—so refreshing to our wearied frame and spirits, as to intimate the sweetness of a better rest, and, definite in its duration, to cheer us with the image of a brighter awakening from the repose of the tomb.

CHRISTMAS.

FAMILIAR, yet welcome, awakening associations, alternately pleasing and painful, what mingled recollections does the natal day of Christianity bring to our bosoms! With what a pleasure do we revert to the scenes of infancy at this season: memory paints in restored brightness, many an hour of unalloyed happiness. The house of our father,—the maternal tenderness that cherished our youth, the happy group that shared that love with us,—companions of our sports, with whom we knelt around that mother's knees, or nestling together, enjoyed the slumbers of childhood; these, linked with a thousand sweet remembrances, arouse feelings which neither the cares, nor evils of the world nor time itself, can utterly extinguish. How soon, alas, does the happy and affectionate company which, from our paternal

home, set out together in life, become broken, separated, perhaps alienated. The mother who nightly breathes a blessing over her sleeping group, as they lie like "folded flowers" not yet severed from the parent stem, blest in her ignorance, little thinks where they may repose their heads, when life's wanderings are ended. For those who are arrived midway in their career, can seldom look around upon an unbroken circle, and it is the penalty of living long, to live alone. Some with whom we commenced our course, were early hid in the grave from the storms of life; others were shipwrecked almost as soon as they had left the shore, and live to pain us with the sorrowful spectacle of their ruin. Seas and mountains intervene between one, perhaps anger and unnatural strife separate us from another, of those who have been hushed to rest upon the same bosom. Oh, how should such retrospects tighten the bonds which unite us to those that remain, and imbue with kindness and forbearance, our social intercourse, for very bitter is the thought of past harshness to friends who are beyond the reach of our repentance.

But this season, while it suggests remembrances which are tinged with sadness, brings with it, also, cheerful images, and pleasurable hopes. The countenances of our friends seem now to wear a kindlier aspect, the heart expands and throws off awhile its world-

liness, and for one brief day society looks placid, as if to each ear some kind voice had whispered, "there is peace on earth, and good will towards men." All Christian nations have delighted to consecrate this occasion with various and singular ceremonies, and heathen customs have been borrowed for its observance, until hallowed by time, and identified with sacred images, their origin has been forgotten. The remains of druidical superstition lent to an English Christmas, many of its ancient rites; the misletoe bush, and the yule log, were evidently of indigenous growth. In Germany, the custom of exchanging presents, which is indeed one of the pleasantest that has come down to us, arose from the celebration of a pagan festival in honor of the birth of Sol, which was afterwards transferred to the day of Christmas. That is a beautiful picture of the *first Christmas Eve*, represented by the sacred historian with graphic skill, but in the perfection of simplicity. Eighteen centuries ago, nearly at the season, and in much the same climate as that we enjoy, we may imagine the shepherds of Palestine as they watched upon the plains of Judea. The scenery of that picturesque country in its diversified beauty, was spread around them, touched by the moonlight and arrayed in mellow splendor; while the constellations of heaven, familiar to their gaze, looked out of the deep blue ether

with unwonted lustre. Solemnly impressive is the midnight stillness of nature, "nor eye nor listening ear an object finds : creation sleeps !" and solemnly was that silence broken, when angelic heralds clothed in the glories which irradiate heaven, appeared to their dazzling vision, and in sounds of melody worthy of the message they conveyed, spoke of peace and hope to a benighted world. A light then dawned upon earth which through each revolving year, as ages have elapsed, has emitted a clear radiance ; a plant then upreared its head, which time has matured to a stately tree, beneath whose ample shade nations have found shelter ; a power then appeared, whose influence has sustained the hopes and guided the steps of millions, and which remains in undiminished plenitude to administer to the happiness of all earth's countless tribes. Well, then, might the messengers of gladness address the awe-struck peasants with "fear-not ;" and impressively to every heart, does each returning anniversary of the scene repeat these words of encouragement. Though life looks dark, though our course seems perplexed, and the draught which we must drink, is sometimes mingled with our tears,

" Though wide the waves of bitterness around our vessel roar,
And heavy grows the pilot's heart to view the rocky shore !"

Let us fear not, but look for light and strength to that

sun of righteousness which shall know no setting. Or if, surrounded by enjoyments, reflecting happiness from the eyes of those we love,—our hearts responding to the voice of friendship, we are so rich in blessings, that our very abundance excites a feeling of instability,—let us fear not ; though the friends and pleasures of earth must pass away, the favor of Heaven endures! Life is indeed mutable, but “ there surely is some blessed clime, where life is not a breath,” and the event which this season recalls to mind, is a pledge of that happier existence.

While many are reciprocating expressions of kindness, and the coldest heart is aroused to livelier sensibilities, it should not be forgotten, that there are some to whom this season of general hilarity brings no joy. Will not a slight search (if indeed search be necessary) discover a helpless orphan, a desolate widow, or a poverty and disease stricken sufferer, whose woes, a little active kindness may alleviate! Are there not within our observation, some in pain, sorrow, or penury, to whom we might be messengers of joy, and bid them fear not! If there is no demand upon our charity, are there no claims upon our kindness, no humble merit to advance, or modest worth to encourage? Have we inflicted harshness or injury on a fellow mortal, is there one to whom we owe reparation or concession,

let us hasten to make it ; are there any to whom kind notice or attention would be a grateful balm, let us not delay those friendly offices, but consecrate this season by acts of kindness, and by words of peace !

THE CLOSING YEAR.

As when o'erlabored and inclined to breathe,
 A panting traveller on some rising ground,
 Some small ascent has gained, he turns him back,
 And measures with his eye the various vales,
 The fields, woods, meads, and rivers he has passed.

I HAVE read somewhere of an allegory in which was represented an imaginary elevation which commanded a prospect of time and eternity; from which the eye could not only survey the busy scene of human existence, but extend a glance beyond the gates of death. Will it be too fanciful to apply the thought to the closing year? Arrived at a brief stopping place in our journey, let us snatch one moment to compose our hurried spirits, to ask ourselves some serious questions, and to review with impartial scrutiny, the way that we have come. One moment, "for the day in hand, like a bird struggling to get loose, is going," the hours fly past with fearful rapidity; who can estimate the worth of

time, or count its swiftness, or appreciate its responsibilities—one moment, for as the hours pass, new claims arise, fresh duties press, and other scenes of action open on the view. How much of life is composed of trivial occurrences, and yet how seriously do those insignificant circumstances when combined, affect our happiness, and determine our character. There are perhaps but few, who, during the elapsed year, have had opportunities of displaying splendid qualities, or have been called to act in those great emergencies which elicit the nobler powers of character. But the manner in which we have availed ourselves of lesser occasions, the spirit in which we have endured slight evils or resisted small temptations to wrong action, is a surer criterion of character, than a few displays of generosity, self-denial, or courage, however brilliant. Thrice happy he, though humble and unknown, whose round of obscure duties are faithfully performed, and consecrated by pure intentions; what though he live unnoticed, though over his grave no sculptured marble rises, though fame has never heard his name! Though silently passing through the world, he has departed unmissed from its crowd—yet who will not envy his tranquillity of heart, and the honor which awaits him where human actions are weighed in a just balance—where the bubbles of fame appear what they are, unsubstantial froth,

and where gold looks dim. Amid the various incidents, whether pleasing or otherwise, in which we have been placed, it is well, now that the excitement of feeling has subsided, to enquire whether, might we pass through them again, our conduct would be the same; whether in difficulty we would not be more serene, and more patient in the reception of injurious treatment? In the enjoyment of the innumerable bounties of Providence, have we heightened their zest by indulging emotions of gratitude, or, even more heedless than the animal who acknowledges with mute eloquence the hand that feeds him, when heaven has remembered to be gracious, have we forgotten to be thankful! In the possession of so much good, could we unwisely deny the most precious of all joys, those of cheerful and adoring gratitude!

To those who have been borne through the events of the preceding year as on the bosom of an unruffled stream, whom this day finds with uninterrupted health, and spirits unbroken, whose happiness it is to look around upon the treasures of their affection and count the number full, whose peace no cruel disease has invaded, nor fierce passions marred—how can they receive such gifts unmoved, and hope to be forgiven! For exemption like this is not the lot of all. To many a sufferer, the events of the past months have been

written in characters of woe ; what cords of tenderness have been forced asunder ; what desolate hearts have asked in their loneliness, where is he ?—alas, “ not by the side whose every want he loved to tend.” How many may apostrophize the grave in the touching words of the ancient poet—

“ Kind mother earth, I kneel to thee—I leave her here alone ;
Oh ! gently hold her in thy lap, my all lamented one !”

How many a parent weeps over flowers plucked in prime of spring ; how many an orphan head has been left unsheltered, with no stay save innocence and heaven ! Some whom the year found buoyant with health and hope, it leaves with blasted frame, and prospects darkened by the shadow of coming death. But still more unblest, if sorrow has not loosed from earth in some degree our grasp of fond desire, and induced reflection and submission. Yet thus it is—we read mortality on every brow but our own, our friends and companions fall at our side, we bear the “ loved and beautiful to earth,” then turn with bleeding hearts to the world, to forget, to be again wounded, until, sinking ourselves, we are what we deplore !

As we proceed in our retrospect, how unavailing now appear the anxious cares for the future which harassed our mind, with what an undue weight did we suffer trifling vexations to oppress us ! Has hope been false

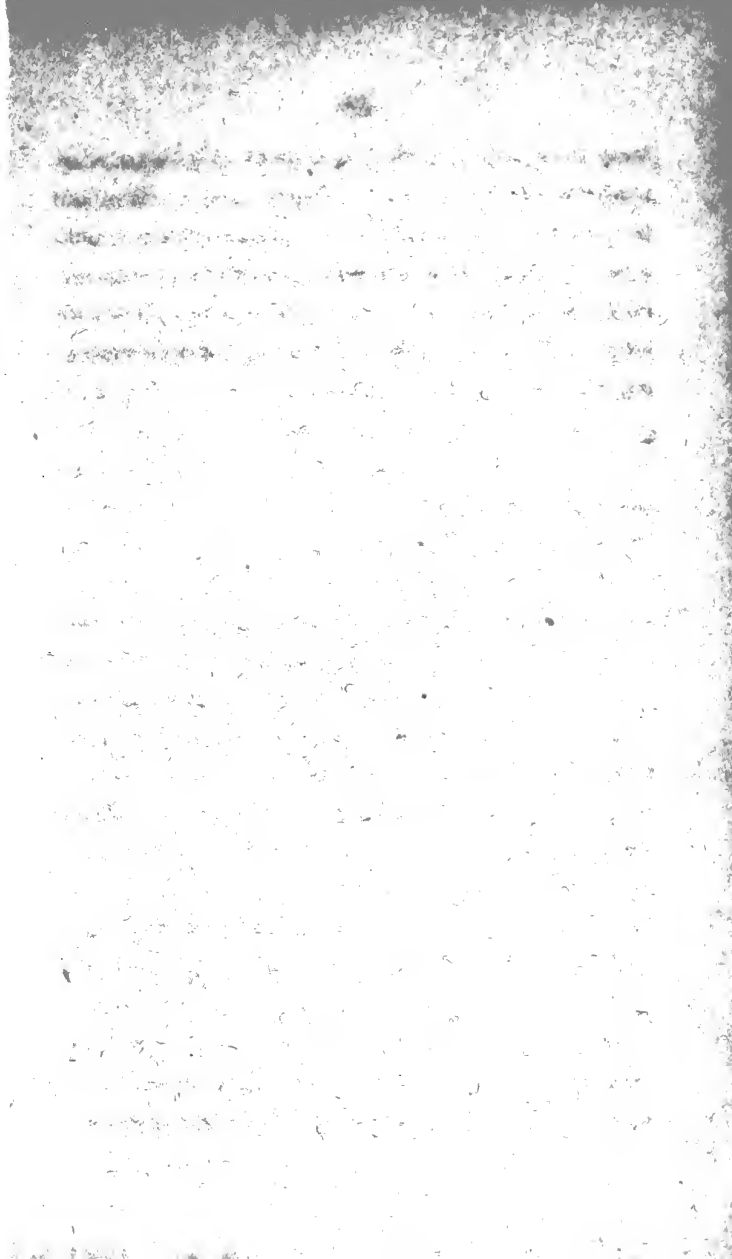
to her promise—the past may warn us how we unreservedly confide in her fallacious dreams again; has the friend we trusted deceived us; are we wounded even by the hand we loved; let us turn from man, not in bitterness, but in wise distrust, and “lean on Him on whom Archangels lean.” If disappointments have dogged our steps and made our way thorny, we need not wonder; earth’s wide surface is thickly sowed with seeds of vexation, requiring of us a watchful perseverance. But even when high wrought expectation has been fully realised, and we have touched the goal of our hopes, we must be conscious, in the very moments of enjoyment, of a latent feeling of disappointment—the dissatisfied spirit asks, is this all? Oh earth! alike transitory in thy pleasures and griefs, when will thy children cease to thirst for thy cloying evanescent sweets?

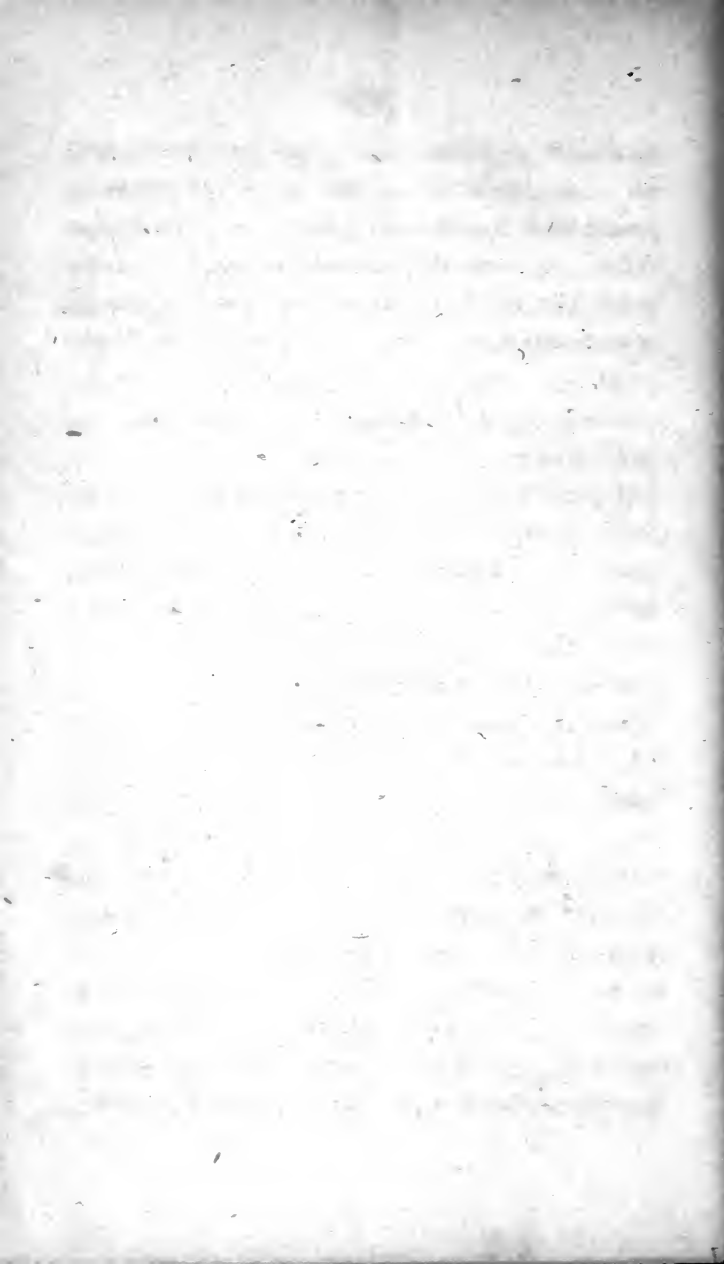
Above all, the reflection of the present season should convince us of the nothingness of life, and yet of its importance. This evening repeats to each, where is the fable of thy former years? Fled, each may say, like a forgotten strain of music; vanished, indeed, they are; but are we sure they are forgotten. Though the waste of time, the idle words, the evil actions of the past have faded from our memories, may we not justly fear that their remembrance may return uncalled, to our affright

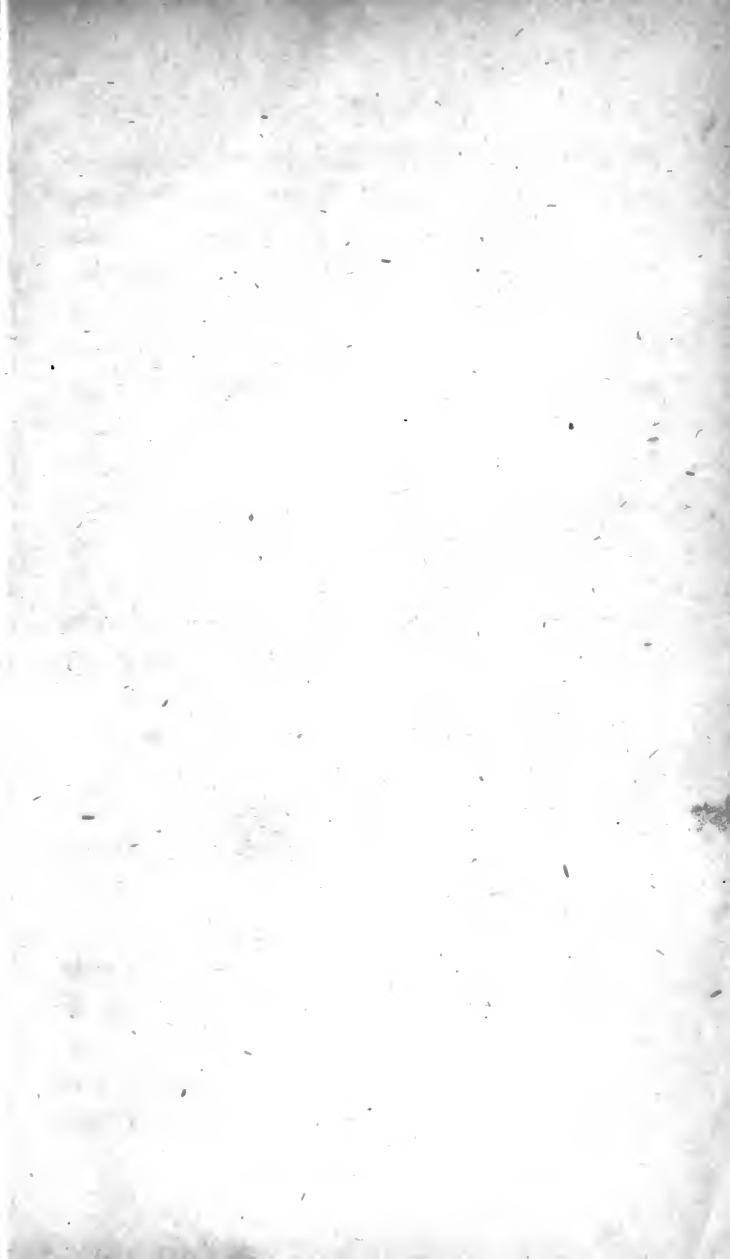
and confusion? Days, and the trifles which occupied them, may indeed be lost "to dumb forgetfulness a prey," but not the actions which have marked their course. Guilt may be forgiven, but its remembrance is never annihilated; not "eternity that rolls her endless years, can wash the guilty deed, once done, from out the record of the past." What a thought is this; how do the little struggles of earthly ambition sink beneath its solemn import!

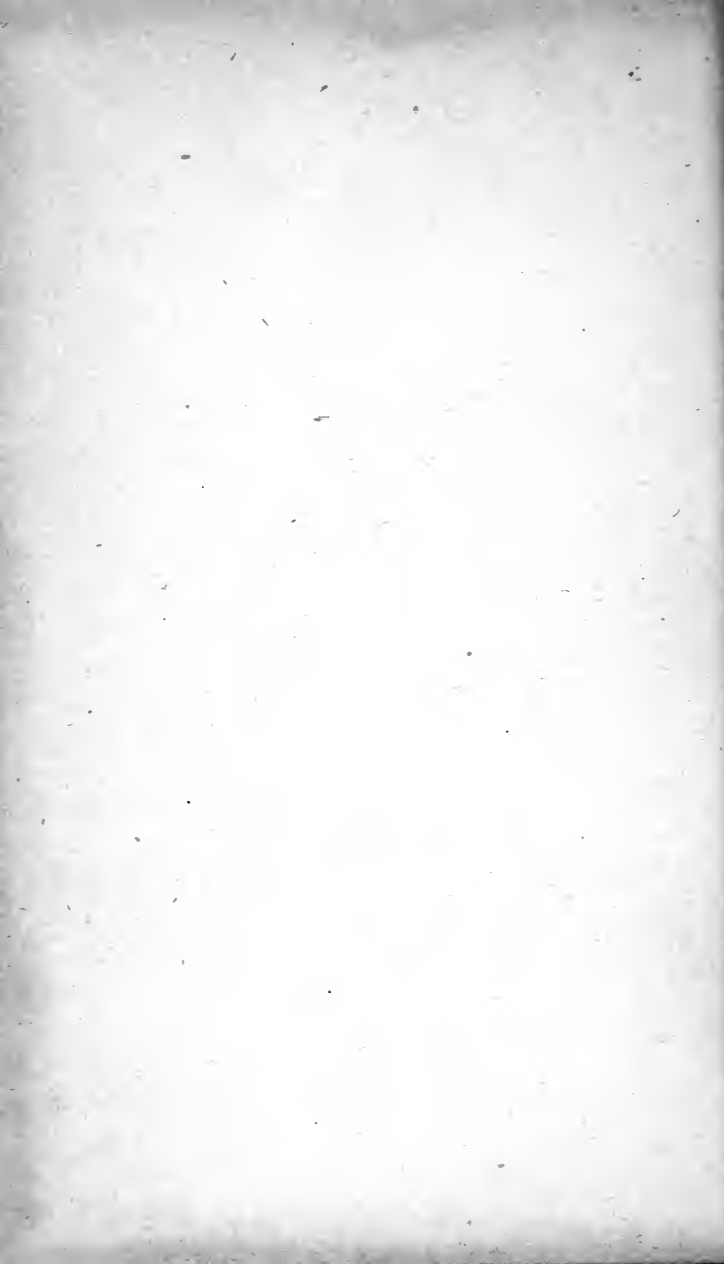
What matter how much abundance the past year has poured into our bosoms, if it has not conferred self-approbation? and with what elasticity of spirit may we resist the pressure of calamity, if in humble confidence we can bare our inmost souls to Heaven's inspection, ashamed of their imperfections, but conscious of obedience and sincerity? If sorrow, sad acquaintanceship, has met with us, not unwelcome if she has kept us humble or made us thoughtful; better to look back upon a year saddened by grief, and interrupted by calamity, yet filled by virtuous actions, than to behold the spectacle of time destroyed, that worst of suicides, though filled with the splendor of prosperity. Should it then be true, that our deeds are irrevocable, and their memory never obliterated,—should it be only probable that an hour is approaching, when, stripped of every specious plea with which we now extenuate our errors, we shall

meet those errors in their true deformity, with what sensation should we reflect, whether the record of the past months which have now completed their annual circle, will appear in our favor ; whether in that eventful crisis, when the awed spirit will feel its need of sure support, we shall hail the portion of time, now emerging into eternity, as a friend ?









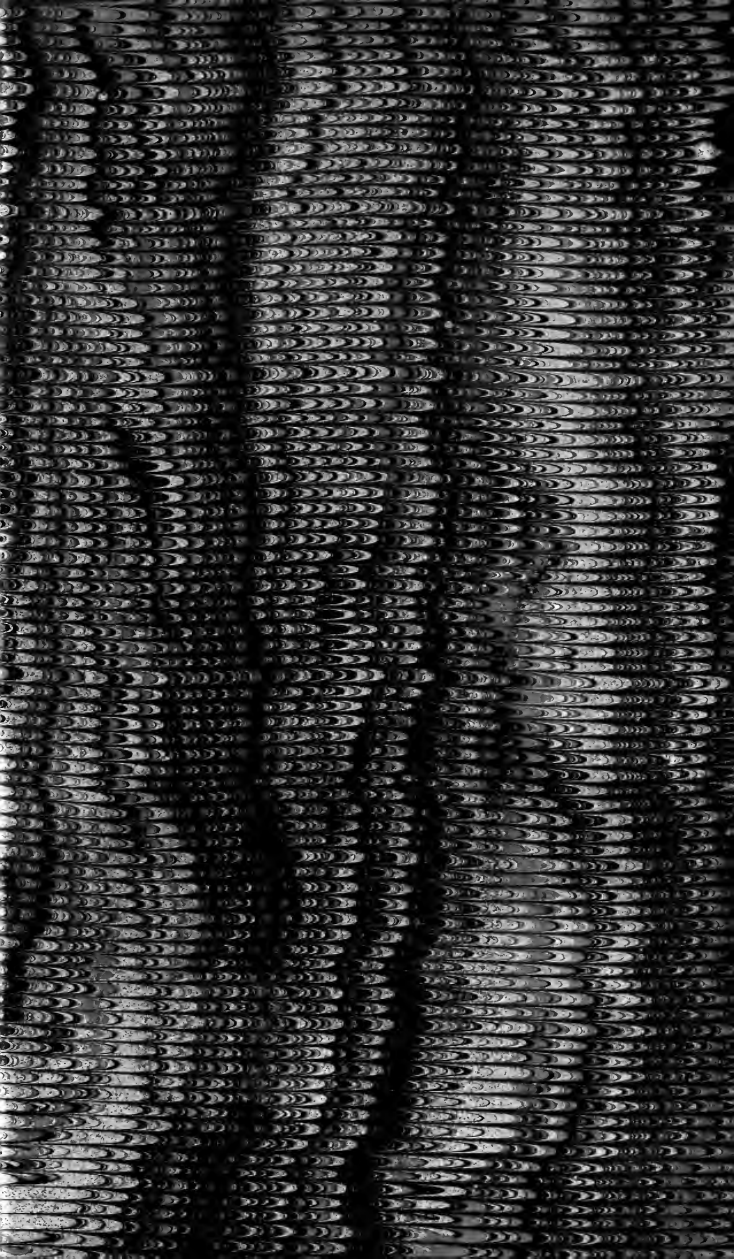
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