

RULES

FOR

ENGLISH COMPOSITION,

AND PARTICULARLY FOR

THEMES:

DESIGNED

FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS,

AND

IN AID OF SELF INSTRUCTION.

BY JOHN RIPPINGHAM.

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TO THE REVEREND
WILLIAM VINCENT, D. D.
DEAN OF WESTMINSTER, &c.

SIR,

THEY are motives far less unworthy than ostentation, which have induced me to present this volume to you. The solicitude which you so ably evinced for the improvement of youth, will, I am persuaded, obtain your encouragement toward any work which is likely to accelerate this important object.

Whether this book deserves such a character, it does not become me to determine: but the consciousness of having been influenced by the desire of facilitating an elegant and useful accomplishment, has given me confidence to offer this attempt to the public.

If I have been so fortunate as to succeed in my wish of rendering service to literature, I persuade myself that I shall be favored by your approbation; and I may then pride my-

self in the reflection of having given testimony,
by this dedication, that I am, with every con-
sideration of respect,

SIR,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

J. RIPPINGHAM.

12, Clifford-Street,
June 26, 1844.

INTRODUCTION.

THE art of arranging and expressing our ideas is of the utmost utility. Knowledge, however various, and genius, however brilliant, avail but little, if their result cannot be communicated with clearness and facility. Yet observation shews that excellence in this particular is most uncommon. It is by no means unusual to meet young men, respectable in classical acquirement, who are unable to illustrate familiar topics when offered to their attention.

The causes of this deficiency I believe are various; but they do not demand inquiry here. The defect has been felt and acknowledged, and therefore no probable means should be omitted for its removal.

The art of English composition consists of two distinct branches: one is grammar, which teaches the correct dependency of words: the other is a practical union of logic and rhetoric, which teaches order and elegance in the conception and arrangement of ideas.

The former of these branches has been so ably treated by the diligence and ingenuity of Mr. Lindley Murray, that further improvement seems to be almost precluded: but having mentioned English grammar, I cannot omit the opportunity of endeavouring to correct an opin-

ion which is entertained by many persons, that it is a pursuit unnecessary to those who are acquainted with the regimen of Latin.

It is true that every language is formed upon principles which are common to all others : but it does not follow, either that a knowledge of these principles will teach the peculiarities by which the various dialects of mankind are contra-distinguished, or that the Latin grammar can inculcate the particular features of the English. The opinion which these remarks are intended to correct, seems to have arisen from the persuasion that our tongue has been derived from the Latin. If this were the fact, it would not sustain the inference which has been drawn—an inference which is contradicted by the experience of every one who has studied the Persian and Arabic, or the Italian and Spanish languages. But the fact is otherwise. English has been formed, not of Latin altogether, or even in the greater part. Its origin and genius is Saxon ; and the structure of it is Saxon to this day—except that it has dropt much of the Saxon inflexion, and become more simple. This happens to all languages by lapse of time, and the effort of the mind to abbreviate and facilitate expression. The difference between ancient and modern Greek consists principally in the loss of inflection : an ancient Greek verb, with its participles, consists of eleven hundred terminations : a modern Greek verb has not more than an Italian one.

We are also indebted to the Greek, the

French, the Hebrew, and others for a multitude of radical and adopted words. A language thus derived must have many peculiarities ; some incorporated with the phrases it has imported, and others arising from such an heterogeneous combination. These peculiarities cannot be appreciated by the knowledge of Latin only, or of any other language. It is the idiom, which in fact constitutes the greatest difficulty in the attainment of different tongues. The idiom of our native language is indeed acquired by habit. The boy who learns Latin, or the girl who learns French, obtains the theory of grammar, but custom renders familiar the practical part of the vernacular tongue : it becomes indeed so familiar, that to many, the study of it appears superfluous. It appears to be more readily caught by the ear than taught by rule : a shrewd boy or a well bred woman, is sometimes struck more forcibly by an impropriety in their own language, than a scholar. But it hardly seems to result from these observations, that a knowledge of the accurate dependency of words will be obtained, without a careful regard to the reason and circumstances, which constitute the difference between correct and ungrammatical diction.

A faculty acquired by use, conducted by habit, and tried by the ear, carries us on without the labour of reflection ; we meet with no obstacles in our progress, or we do not perceive them : we find ourselves able to proceed without rules, and we do not suspect that they may be of use. Hence, a grammatical study

of our own language, until lately, formed no part of the ordinary course of instruction. It is however a defect which no other advantages can supply. Much practice in the polite world, and a general acquaintance with the best authors, must undoubtedly be considered as excellent helps; but even these will hardly be sufficient. A critical knowledge of ancient languages will be found still less adequate to the purpose. Dr. Bentley, the greatest critic and most able grammarian of the age in which he lived, was notoriously deficient in the knowledge of his native tongue; and he is not a solitary instance; grammatical errors are plentifully scattered over the pages of many others of our eminent writers. Whoever, therefore, wishes to write and speak English with elegance and accuracy, must study the grammar of this language, as he would that of any other with which he desires to be acquainted.

I hope this digression will be pardoned: but the subject of it appeared to me to be too important to be disregarded, when it could be introduced without any great impropriety.

The second part of the discipline necessary to acquire English composition, it is the object of this work to explain and illustrate.

The word logic is formidable to young and uninformed minds, yet it must be the foundation of such a treatise as this. No one can arrange his thoughts upon any subject without the use of reason; and logic is nothing more than the art of reasoning.

The judicious and ingenious Dr. Watts, has

indeed been eminently successful in the clear analyzation of this science: and the following pages are formed upon the suggestions of his introduction.

Those who undertake to write upon any subject ought necessarily to understand it: they ought also to be able to appreciate whatever they mean to discuss—this is called perception. As soon as the subject is understood, an opinion is formed upon it, which is termed the judgment. The considerations which produce that judgment are designated arguments, and there is wanting only the method of arranging those arguments with perspicuity, to render complete the ability for mental discussion.

But these are not sufficient for any one who is desirous of excelling in English composition. Great effect arises from the choice of language, and the harmony in which words may be arranged. There is sometimes an affectation of treating a polished style with contempt, but it is indeed affectation. Instruction is more successful when administered in a pleasing form—discussion is more interesting if clothed with elegance. The lofty mountain is an object of solemn contemplation; but the flowers with which it is adorned, add to the sublime the charms of beauty.

In pursuance of this general outline, the present work is divided into three parts. The first consists of the perception formed on each proposed subject; the second includes the perception and judgment; and the third contains

the perception, judgment, and argumentation, arranged in the form of correct themes.

Considerable recourse has been had to the works of distinguished writers ; and the author acknowledges aid from the labours of Addison, Johnson, Blair, Watts, and others. Selections from these have been introduced, as models of reasoning and composition far more likely to be useful than any which the weakness of an author's self-partiality could be induced to offer. Yet he has published some of his own effusions ; not only that he may approve himself somewhat competent in the art which he professes to teach, but also that he may by his own composition, be the more conveniently enabled to illustrate the principles which he has laid down for the practice of others.

Great care has been taken to render this treatise suitable to the capacity of youthful intellect ; and eligible for the important object which it proposes to attain : yet the author is sensible that this production may derive improvement from the suggestions of others, and he will therefore gratefully attend to the admonitions of enlightened criticism.

But after every exertion to familiarize the art of English composition, it would be vain to hope that youth will be taught by books only, however intelligibly they may be written. Works of this description must be useful to such persons as feel their own deficiency, and are desirous of obtaining the assistance which such publications profess to give. They will

also be of use to teachers. Elementary books are employed in the various branches of literary education ; and every one who knows any thing of the laborious avocations of an instructor, is aware, that although youth are taught by the oral repetition of rule upon rule, yet that the drudgery of teaching is greatly diminished by the aid of perspicuous treatises.

Before this introduction be closed, perhaps it will not be unbecoming to offer some considerations on the education of youth.

The classics, mathematics, and the use of the native language are the chief studies in the preparation for enlightened manhood ; and of these, the classics certainly claim distinguished preference. For a long time after education became an object of general solicitude, the latter two of these pursuits obtained little regard in systems of instruction. They are, however, gradually acquiring the importance which they merit ; and I hope and believe, they will soon be admitted to that rank, which their utility seems to deserve.

But as to the mode in which youth should be trained to knowledge—I must own, that regarding the value of appointed discipline, scholastic emulation, and of that instruction which is administered by men, whose ability and attainments have been tried and approved I give unhesitating preference to the public schools. It cannot be disputed that there are many eminent scholars and excellent teachers in private seminaries. But I am pleased in observing, that notwithstanding the strictures which

have been made on the public seminaries of learning ; yet the partiality and veneration which have been entertained toward them by illustrious rank, parental solicitude, and sound discrimination, seem in no wise to be diminished.

Of the few things which perhaps remain to be wished in the economy of public schools, probably we should desire more particular regard to the cultivation of English literature. But even such an expectation is suspended by a momentary consideration.

The unremitting assiduity which is required to form a good classical scholar, leaves but little time for other pursuits. An acquaintance with the works of antiquity, is the first requisite of a gentleman's education, and an indispensable qualification for the study of the learned professions. All other acquirements are subordinate to this ; and when this is once attained, other pursuits become familiar. It is therefore by no means exceptionable that the first and chief care of national scholastic establishments, should be directed to this great attainment. Let it not however be imagined that the art of English composition is disregarded. The discipline of Westminster school—beneath whose sacred shade some of the brightest ornaments of Great Britain have been formed—requires the exertions of its students to be employed in English composition once in every week.

But there is another and a far more powerful recommendation of the regimen of West-

minster school to be found in its solicitous inculcation of religious worship. On every Sabbath day, on every Saturday, and on every day appointed by the church to be kept holy, the Westminster scholars are required to attend divine service. Nor is this all—they are enjoined to exercises upon the scriptures once in every week, and Grotius de veritate Religionis Christianæ, is one of their appointed readings. These circumstances confer on public education the highest eulogium.

In these days, wherein systematic infidelity is so industriously insinuated, no Christian can withhold from public schools the tribute of cordial admiration.

After the sincere opinion which the author has thus expressed of education in public schools, he entertains an earnest hope that his work will not be considered as an attempt to interfere with the economy of those respected establishments. He is rather inclined to encourage an humble expectation that his work will not be deemed unworthy of their service, nor inconsistent with their established regulations.*

*I beg leave to say, that although I have selected Westminster school as the more peculiar object of my humble praise, it has not been with the most remote intention of inculcating a disparagement of the other similar establishments. But having been engaged in the extra tuition of some students in that school, I felt myself more competent to speak of that, than of other national academies.

The introduction is now concluded; and the work goes into the world with the author's most ardent wishes, that it may be acceptable to those who teach, and to those who study the art of English composition.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THE notice which this little book has obtained, gives me an assurance that the wishes I entertained for its success and utility have not been disappointed. I cannot better express the grateful sentiments which this public patronage has excited, than by rendering to the present edition every improvement I can bestow.

The book will be found considerably enlarged by additional examples illustrative of the rules it formerly contained. A list of subjects has also been added, for the exercise of students, in the first three parts of the work. But the chief peculiarity of this edition consists in the fourth part of the work, the whole of which is an increase to the former impression.

The object of this portion of the volume, is to discipline the mind into the practice of discovering and producing its own resources. The rules contained in the former divisions, teach the art of discussing subjects by three operations, those of definition judgment, and argumentation. According to this mode, the stu-

dent has to define the subject proposed, to form an opinion on it, and to state the reasons upon which that opinion was obtained. But it will occur to many persons, that it is not so easy, as it may at first seem, for a young person to ascertain and express the considerations from which his conclusion or judgment has proceeded. The object, therefore, of the additional part, has been to furnish rules which will probably remove the apparent difficulty.

I will not solicit indulgence to this attempt: because those who are aware of the inconveniences in framing such precepts as will expand the youthful intellect, will make sufficient allowance.

THEMES

EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED.

A theme is only the miniature of a declamation, essay, oration, or sermon. In each of these species of composition a subject is proposed, an inference drawn; and arguments adduced to support and authorise that conclusion. If no more be indispensable in these extended writings, neither can any thing further be necessary to constitute a theme.

The commencement in the art of literary composition, requires nothing more than a gentle exercise of reason. No one attempting this accomplishment, can hope to arrive at immediate perfection: the gradations of art are always laborious. The theory and idiom of the language must be first attained; for who can express his ideas by words the relative dependency of which he has not ascertained. The habit of considering various subjects, and of arranging the thoughts which they suggest, is the next step: and the acquisition of a clear and elegant habit of expression, is the last requisite for just and graceful composition.

The first of these qualifications may be obtained by diligent application to the rules of grammar: the second by frequent exercise: and the last by careful perusal of the best authors.

These suggestions may seem of little value in the initiation of youth. But to those of more mature years, who may feel the propriety of consulting this work, the observations will not be useless. Instructors know, also, that books are seldom employed by youth but from necessity: and all that the author of such a publication as this can hope to do for young persons, is to point out to teachers some mode by which the improvement of their pupils may be facilitated. The remarks which I shall advance will, I trust, be equally acceptable to other readers.

If, when a subject, is proposed to a student, it were to be accompanied by the question to him, "what do you understand by the subject given to you?" His answer would form the definition, or first part of the theme. If "temperance" were the proposition, the pupil's perception of it might be, "the restraint of passion."

That young persons may not be precipitated into the arrangement of their own confused ideas, the plan of this work requires that they should be familiarized in the practice of defining whatever is offered to their attention. It is also probable that such a habit may be of use to them, in many future concerns of life. Besides, scarcely any thing can be more evi-

dent, than the absurdity of expecting a good essay upon a subject which the writer does not clearly understand.

When the student is capable of making further progress, his own definition may be returned to him, with another question, "What opinion do you entertain upon the subject?" If it were "temperance," which it has been assumed he would define to be "the restraint of passion," his answer to the second question would perhaps be, "that it leads to happiness." This answer would, in technical language, be termed the judgment.

If the pupil have been familiarized with the former question, he will have little difficulty with this one; and may therefore, with less delay, be forwarded to the third part of the work.

It is hardly necessary to observe, that the respective answers of the students should be made in writing; and that as they advance, the same questions which had been proposed to them in the first and second stages of their progress, should be continued in the third.

The only remaining question to be given to the scholar will be put when his definition and opinion are returned to him; it is this: "What are the reasons which have induced you to form that opinion?" To this question he may be imagined to answer, "that as uncontrolled passions lead us to wickedness and turbulence, so temperance conducts us to worth and tranquillity: that even in worldly affairs, it is found to be a guide to health

“and riches ; for it forbids indulgence in en-
 “ervating luxuries, and inculcates economy
 “in all the departments of life. That it has
 “been so generally esteemed, as to rank as a
 “virtue in every system of morality ; and that
 “reason and observation bear testimony, that
 “it is a quality essential to good conduct and
 “happiness.”

If the judgment he had formed of temperance were now to be placed at the end of this answer, and thus to appear as the result of the arguments or considerations from which it is presumed to have proceeded, there would be a perfect theme.

In the present edition however I have not concluded here ; but have added, in the fourth part, some rules by which I hope the student may be enabled to discover what were the considerations which passed through his mind between the definition and judgment—but which his inexperience in the art of thinking, had been unable to recollect. Every one who has attended to the progress of youthful thought must have observed, how frequently a young mind will form a just conclusion, and yet be unable to explain the principles upon which it has proceeded. A boy will confidently pronounce honor to be indispensable to a respectable character ; and his assertion will have arisen, not from the mere authority of others : but from reflections which have passed through his own mind. Yet when required to support his opinion by argument, he will be able to communicate scarcely a single idea.

Now if he had been taught that on such occasions, he should think of a man who is eminently endowed with this quality, and see in what respect he differs from other men : or if he had been taught to think of a man who is void of this endowment, and to mark in what respect he also differs from others, the boy would have no difficulty to explain himself ; he would state these distinctions and scarcely any other argument would be wanting.

Comparison and contrast are indeed the chief operations of the mind in every species of investigation, and if gently inculcated into those who are commencing the art of arranging their thoughts, it does not seem extravagant to believe that they will produce the most useful effects.

I have also introduced another exercise toward accelerating the progress of students in the art of composition : it is that of analyzing short essays, and selecting the definitions, judgments and arguments. The utility of such a practice needs little illustration. But to make this part of the discipline perfectly intelligible and somewhat more easy, I have given examples of its practice.

With respect to the embellishments of similes and authorities, they are not indispensable to any common species of composition. They are not always to be found without difficulty, and seldom without some portion of genius and information : when they are obtained they require to be introduced with considerable care. Is it necessary to make a boy at-

tempt all this? If he ever should have a taste for good authors, and a genius for elegant writing, these things will come of themselves in due time.

I subscribe to the well known opinion of Quintilian, that youthful fervor should be cherished, rather than repressed. The efforts of juvenile fancy hold out the promise of future talent: they also are proofs of a boy's desire to do his best: and such a desire should be encouraged.

But it does not follow that there is any prudence in teaching youth, that a simile is a necessary part of a new composition which consists altogether only of a few lines. If the style of Mr. Addison be a just criterion, chastity is preferable to luxuriance.

Rules for writing with elegance are numerous; but few of them are reducible to practice. The careful reading of approved authors, and cautious attempts at imitation, afford, I believe, the best instructions. Dr. Blair on Rhetoric is a work which should be read by all persons who desire to understand the use of figures. Mr. Lindley Murray may also be safely consulted, not only on the mere grammatical dependency of words, but also on the means of attaining perspicuity and elegance in writing.

The object of this work is to point out the mode by which the art of arranging ideas may be easily obtained. That elegance in the practice of this art may be inculcated at the same time, the choicest examples have been

selected for the imitation of students: and surely these must be equivalent to a host of rules. I have also introduced some passages in the end of the work, which could not be used as models of themes. I had two objects in doing so: one was, that students may have specimens of the style which celebrated writers have employed under such circumstances as a theme could not include; the other was, that the volume may be used as a reading book, as well as for its professed purpose. After all that can be written on the subject of this treatise a great deal must be left to the skill and discretion of teachers. And if this work shall be of use to instructors or students, the Author will obtain the gratification of which he is desirous.

PART THE FIRST.

DEFINITIONS.

*** **T**HE teacher is again reminded, that he should ask the pupil what he understands by the subjects proposed to him : for instance, if "procrastination" be given to him, the definition under it will be an answer to the question.

But for the better assistance of the students and instructors, I will here add some instructions of Dr. Watts for obtaining a definition. Indeed the whole of that great and good man's treatises on Logic and the Improvement of the Mind, should be given and explained to youth, as soon as the mind is capable of comprehending them. The trouble of the parent or teacher will be amply recompensed, by the improvement of the young heart and understanding. Scarcely any works are more likely to make those who study them truly good, and "wise even unto salvation."

"First, compare the thing to be defined with other things that are most like to itself, and see wherein its essence or nature agrees with

them ; and this is called the the general nature or genus in a definition : so if you would define what wine is, first compare it with other things like itself, as cyder, perry, &c. and you will find it agrees essentially with them in this, that it is a sort of juice.

"Secondly, consider the most remarkable and primary attribute, property, or idea wherein this thing differs from those other things that are most like it ; and that is, its essential or specific difference : so wine differs from cyder and perry, and all other juices, in that it is pressed from a grape. This may be called its special nature, which distinguishes it from other juices.

"Thirdly, join the general and special nature together, or (which is all one) the genus and the difference, and these make up a definition. So the juice of a grape, or juice pressed from grapes, is the definition of wine.

"So if I would define what winter is, I consider first wherein it agrees with other things which are most like it, (viz.) summer, spring, autumn, and I find they are all seasons of the year ; therefore a season of the year is the genus. Then I observe wherein it differs from these, and that is in the shortness of the days ; for it is this which does primarily distinguish it from other seasons ; therefore this may be called its special nature of its difference. Then by joining these together I make a definition. Winter is that season of the year wherein the days are shortest. I confess indeed this is but a ruder definition of it : for to define it, as a

accurate astronomer, I must limit the days, hours and minutes.

“ After the same manner if we would explain or define what the picture of a man is, we consider first the genus or general nature of it, which is a representation; and herein it agrees with many other things, as a statue, a shadow, a print, a verbal description of a man, &c. Then we consider wherein it differs from these, and we find it differs from a verbal description in that it is a representation to the eye and not to the ear: it differs from a statue in that it is a representation upon a flat surface, and not in a solid figure: it differs from a shadow, in that it is an abiding representation and not a fleeting one: it differs from a print or draught because it represents the colours by paint as well as the shape of the object by delineation. Now so many or rather so few of these ideas put together, as are just sufficient to distinguish a picture from all other representations, make up its essential difference or its special nature; and all these are included in its being painted on a plain surface. Then join this to the genus, which is a representation; and thus you have the complete definition of the picture of a man. (viz.) it is the representation of a man in paint upon a surface (or a plane).”

PROCRASTINATION.

Definition. The delaying of that which we know cannot be finally escaped.

FLATTERY.

Def. False praise.

INDUSTRY.

Def. The instrument of improvement, and the foundation of pleasure.

SWIFTNESS OF TIME.

Def. The day and the night succeed each other; the rotation of seasons diversifies the year; the sun rises, attains the meridian, declines and sets; and the moon every night changes its form.

TEMPERANCE.

Def. The restraint of passion.

RESENTMENT.

Def. Anger and revenge.

PIETY.

Def. Reverence of God.

ANGER.

Def. The great disturber of human life: the chief enemy both of public happiness and private tranquility.

POETRY.

Def. An effort of genius and art; producing an association of exalted and brilliant ideas in language harmoniously arranged.

THE DISPENSATIONS OF PROVIDENCE TO MAN.

Def. Providence interposes for the relief of man, supplying his wants in a thousand extraordinary ways.

ENVY.

Def. A vice practicable at all times, and in every place : the only passion which can never lie quiet for want of irritation.

VIRTUE.

Def. The foundation of honor and esteem ; and the source of all beauty, order, and happiness in nature.

FRIENDSHIP.

Def. A general coincident feeling between two persons.

THE VICE OF LYING.

Def. A vice which proceeds from folly, meanness, and wickedness.

CLEANLINESS.

Def. A habit which may be defined to be the emblem of purity of mind.

SLOTH.

Def. Habitual inactivity of mind and body.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

Def. A disposition amongst religious parties and sects, arising from an opinion of their own infallibility,

CHARITY.

Def. The chief characteristic of a virtuous and liberal mind. It combines almost every good quality which can adorn the human heart ; and excludes the vices and failings which are inseparable from an unkind disposition.

YOUTH AND AGE.

Def. Youth is the state in which life commonly appears a shining and flowery spring. Age is the period at which youthful strength and beauty are frequently exchanged for feebleness and deformity.

THE DUTY OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

Def. The first exercise of pious gratitude.

COMMON HONESTY.

Def. A quality which pervades every part of human life, and tends immediately to render it secure, comfortable, and honourable.

MODESTY AND ASSURANCE.

Def. Modesty is the reflection of an ingenuous mind, when a man has committed an action for which he either censures himself, or fancies that he is exposed to the censure of others. Assurance is the faculty of saying and doing indifferent things without any uneasiness or emotion in the mind.

CONTENTMENT.

Def. That tranquil state of mind, in which the agitations of anxiety and disappointment are no longer felt.

COURAGE.

Def. That state of mind which suffers no dismay from danger.

ON OUR KNOWLEDGE OF A FUTURE STATE.

Def. Our knowledge of a future world is very imperfect ; our ideas of it are faint and confused.

HOPE.

Def. The chief source of human happiness.

THE DANGER OF KEEPING BAD COMPANY.

Def. The danger of keeping bad company, consists in our aptness to imitate and catch the manners and sentiments of others.

DEATH.

Def. The dissolution of corporal existence.

ON THE NEGLECT OF EARLY IMPROVEMENT.

Def. The neglect of early improvement is that great inlet to misery and vices of all kinds, the not knowing how to pass our vacant hours.

PERSEVERANCE.

Def. The resolution to persist in any undertaking which has been commenced.

CONSCIENCE.

Def. The delegate of an invisible ruler ; both anticipating his sentence, and foreboding its execution.

ON THE ADVANTAGES ARISING FROM LITERARY EDUCATION.

Def. The mind naturally limited by its weakness, becomes endowed by literature with the wisdom of preceding ages.

THE VARIETY OF NATURE.

Def. The offspring, not of confusion but of order.

NIGHT.

Def. The time after sunset.

GOOD DISPOSITIONS PREVALENT AMONGST MANKIND.

Def. Goodness is universally approved.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

Def. God is every where present.

GOOD HUMOUR.

Def. A habit of being pleased.

TRUTH AND SINCERITY.

Def. The union of appearance and reality.

THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE.

Def. A language rich, melodious and elegant ; spoken for many ages by the greatest princes in the politest courts of Asia ; and in which a number of admirable works have been written by historians, philosophers and poets.

GOOD PRINCIPLES IN EARLY LIFE.

Def. A full conviction in youth of the obligations of morality and religion.

The author begs to submit the following subjects which may be given to students, for practice, according to the rules contained in this work. He has also arranged them in

such manner that pupils may proceed gradually through various forms of discussion, according to their respective experience and skill.

SIMPLE SUBJECTS.

Justice.	Slander.	Affectation.	Pleasure.
Adversity.	Mercy.	Loquacity.	Gaming.
Pride.	Wealth.	Wisdom.	Religion.
Compassion.	Prudence.	Luxury.	Study.
Avarice.	Gratitude.	Health.	Experience

SIMPLE SUBJECTS AND THEIR CONTRASTS.

Peace and War.
 Want and Plenty.
 Ignorance and Learning.
 Happiness and Misery.
 Virtue and Vice.
 Parsimony and Prodigality.
 Hope and Fear.
 Reward and Punishment.
 Beauty and Deformity.
 Affection and Hatred.
 Arrogance and Humility.
 Order and Confusion.
 Carelessness and Caution.
 Contentment and Dissatisfaction.
 Emulation and Sloth.

According to a very common acceptance of themes, I should now introduce propositions for the discussion of students. Thus many of the publications on themes speak of no other subjects for this exercise than those of gen-

eral and acknowledged positions, which the pupil is to amplify and illustrate. "Death is common to all mankind," is of this description. I have two objections to this sort of practice: in the first place its difficulty; and secondly the tendency it must have to give to young minds an incorrect habit of thinking.

The difficulty is indeed sufficiently apparent without much examination; because the proposition is evidently a judgment or conclusion which has already been obtained from consideration to which the student has been no party. The youthful mind when employed in the discussion of such a subject, must therefore reason backward, or as logicians say, a-posteriori to discover the arguments upon which other minds have arrived at the proposition before him. It is true that such sentences are generally an assertion, which even the infant mind recognizes and knows to be indubitable. But this certainty creates a real difficulty; it seems absurd to youthful intellect to prove what no one has doubted, and the pupil therefore without any exercise of reason, without any consciousness of demonstration, writes, because he must write something, whatever comes into his head, which in any manner appears to be related to the subject before him, without however having his capacity enlarged or invigorated. But besides these considerations, may it not reasonably be enquired, whether the mind which has been accustomed to take propositions for granted, will not be in danger of acquiring

habits of credulity, inactivity of thought, or precipitancy in judgment? If we compare the probable effect of proceeding by connected argument from the consideration of simple subjects, to some clear result which that consideration has produced; with the habit of accepting without hesitation, the conclusion of others and amplifying or illustrative of those conclusions, can there be a doubt which practice is the more likely to be useful, and which may be the more reasonably expected to produce a correct mode of thinking?

PART THE SECOND.

DEFINITIONS AND JUDGMENTS.

*** In this stage of the pupil's progress, the teacher will probably find it of advantage, to give the student the subjects in the order in which he received them in the foregoing part of the work, together with the definitions, and ask him what opinion he entertains of each subject. Thus of "procrastination," which has been defined to be, "the delaying that which we know cannot be finally escaped," the opinion or judgment is hereunder given in these words, "the certainty that life cannot be long, ought to awaken every man to the active prosecution of whatever he is desirous to perform." This judgment is an answer to the question, which it is advised to propose to the pupil in this place.

PROCRASTINATION.

Def. The delaying that which we know cannot be finally escaped.

Judg. The certainty that life cannot be long,

ought to awaken every man to the active prosecution of whatever he is desirous to perform.

FLATTERY.

Def. False praise.

Judg. The proverbial admonition "beware of flattery," although applicable to every age and rank of life, is more particularly suitable to those who are entering on the scenes of the world, and should hope to gain the praises of the virtuous and wise, only by good conduct and real excellence.

INDUSTRY.

Def. The instrument of improvement, and the foundation of pleasure.

Judg. No affluence of fortune, or elevation of rank, exempts the possessor from the duties of application and industry: for industry is the law of our being; it is the demand of nature, of reason and of God.

SWIFTNESS OF TIME.

Def. The day and the night succeed each other; the rotation of seasons diversifies the year; the sun rises, attains the meridian, declines and sets; and the moon every night changes its form.

Judg. Let him who desires to see others happy, make haste to give while his gift can be enjoyed; and let him who seeks his own happiness, reflect, that while he forms his purpose, the day rolls on, and

the "night comes, when no man can work."

TEMPERANCE.

Def. The restraint of passion.

Judg. No one who is convinced that it leads to bliss, can hesitate on adhering to it through life.

RESENTMENT.

Def. Anger and revenge.

Judg. It is necessary to habituate ourselves to useful reflections, till they rise spontaneously in our minds when they are wanted, that is, instantly upon the receipt of an injury or affront; and with such force and colouring as both mitigate the paroxysms of our anger at the time, and at length to produce an alteration in the temper and disposition itself.

PIETY.

Def. Reverence of God.

Judg. It connects preparation for heaven, with an honourable discharge of the duties of active life.

ANGER.

Def. The great disturber of human life: the chief enemy both of public happiness and private tranquillity.

Judg. A passionate man spends his time in outrage and acknowledgment, in injury and reparation

POETRY.

Def. An effort of genius and art ; producing an association of exalted and brilliant ideas in language harmoniously arranged.

Judg. As it engages attention to subjects deserving of regard, it must always be esteemed one of the most fortunate endowments with which the human mind can be invested.

THE DISPENSATIONS OF PROVIDENCE TO MAN.

Def. Providence interposes for the relief of man, supplying his wants in a thousand extraordinary ways.

Judg. The preservation, the enjoyments and the empire of man demonstrate, that at all times a beneficent God has been the friend and the protector of human life.

ENVY.

Def. A vice practicable at all times, and in every place : the only passion which can never lie quiet for want of irritation.

Judg. To avoid depravity like this, it is not necessary that any one should aspire to heroism or sanctity ; but only that he should resolve not to quit the rank which nature assigns, and wish to maintain the dignity of a human being.

THE

Def. The foundation of honor and esteem ; and the source of all beauty, order, and happiness in nature.

Judg. One virtuous disposition of soul, is pre-

ferable to the greatest natural accomplishments and abilities ; and of more value than all the treasures of the world.

FRIENDSHIP.

Def. A general coincident feeling between two persons.

Judg. It should be the care of every one, to be faithful in a well formed attachment ; but not to be precipitate in selecting a friend.

THE VICE OF LYING.

Def. A vice that proceeds from folly, meanness, and wickedness.

Judg. Truth is the great bond of society : and if there be no mutual trust, there is an end of all intercourse.

CLEANLINESS.

Def. A habit which may be defined to be the emblem of purity of mind.

Judg. It renders us agreeable to others and easy to ourselves : it is an excellent preservative of health ; and is inconsistent with several vices of mind and body.

SLOTH.

Def. Habitual inactivity of mind and body.

Judg. Man is made for action ; and his faculties, like metallic instruments, if they be not polished with using, will be consumed with the rust of indolence.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

Def. A disposition amongst religious parties

and sects, arising from an opinion of their own infallibility.

Judg. Men ought not lightly to condemn each other. We shall be judged by a God of love : he will judge us according to the faithfulness and sincerity with which we serve him.

CHARITY.

Def. The chief characteristic of a virtuous and liberal mind. It combines almost every good quality which can adorn the human heart ; and excludes the vices and failings which are inseparable from an unkind disposition.

Judg. Blessed and happy is he who is successful in the amiable ambition of inheriting this quality.

YOUTH AND AGE.

Def. Youth is the state in which life commonly appears a shining and flowery spring. Age is the period at which youthful strength and beauty are frequently exchanged for feebleness and deformity.

Judg. The former of these views of life is too gay ; and the latter too gloomy. This world is neither a paradise of flowers nor a wilderness of thorns.

THE DUTY OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

Def. A debt and law of nature.

Judg. There is not a more active principle than gratitude in the mind of man ; and surely that which deserves its utmost

force is God—the great and universal benefactor.

COMMON HONESTY.

Def. A quality which pervades every part of human life, and tends immediately to render it secure, comfortable and honourable.

Judg. If it could be introduced into all the employments of life, the golden age would be restored.

MODESTY AND ASSURANCE.

Def. Modesty is the reflection of an ingenuous mind, when a man has committed an action for which he either censures himself, or fancies that he is exposed to the censure of others. Assurance is the faculty of saying and doing indifferent things without any uneasiness or emotion in the mind.

Judg. Modesty and assurance are both amiable qualities, and may very well meet in the same person. But it is also possible for the same person to be both impudent and bashful. We have frequent instances of this strange mixture in people of depraved minds and mean education ; who, though they are not able to meet a man's eyes, or pronounce a sentence without confusion ; can voluntarily commit the greatest villainies or the most indecent actions.

CONTENTMENT.

Def. That tranquil state of mind, in which the

agitations of anxiety and disappointment are no longer felt.

Judg. Could we but consider that after we have overcome the imaginary obstacles to our repose of mind, we should still find some fresh source of discontent; prudence and reason would enjoin us to be content.

COURAGE.

Def. That state of mind which suffers no dismay from danger.

Judg. It may be employed either as a most useful, or a most disgraceful qualification.

ON OUR KNOWLEDGE OF A FUTURE STATE.

Def. Our knowledge of a future state is very imperfect; our ideas of it are faint and confused.

Judg. If the discovery were more imperfect, it would excite no desire of immortality; if it were more full and striking, it would render us careless of life.

HOPE.

Def. The chief source of human happiness.

Judg. It carries us forward through life; and guides us at last to an halcyon haven.

THE DANGER OF KEEPING BAD COMPANY.

Def. The danger of keeping bad company, consists in an aptness to imitate and catch the manners and sentiments of others.

Judg. He who at first was shocked even at the appearance of vice, is formed by custom, into a profligate leader of vicious pleasures.

DEATH.

Def. The dissolution of corporal existence.

Judg. Since the hour in which it may come upon us is uncertain, there is an indispensable necessity upon all mankind, to be prepared for it by virtuous and pious living.

ON THE NEGLECT OF EARLY IMPROVEMENT.

Def. The neglect of early improvement is that great inlet to misery and vices of all kinds, the not knowing how to pass our vacant hours.

Judg. A soul distempered with insensibility of rational satisfaction, darkens and discolors every object.

PERSEVERANCE.

Def. The resolution to persist in any undertaking which has been commenced.

Judg. It not only goes far to insure success; also obtains honor for those, who although the least fortunate, have been the most diligent.

CONSCIENCE.

Def. The delegate of an invisible ruler; both anticipating his sentence, and foreboding its execution.

Judg. When an awakened conscience places before the sinner the just vengeance of the Almighty, the prospect is confounding, because the danger is boundless.

ON THE ADVANTAGES ARISING FROM LITERARY EDUCATION.

Def. The mind naturally limited by its weakness, becomes endowed by literature with the wisdom of preceding ages.

Judg. Poets, orators, historians, and philosophers, all the great masters of thinking and writing, become incorporated with the mental energies of him, who has obtained, by education, the keys of knowledge.

THE VARIETY OF NATURE.

Def. The offspring, not of confusion but of order.

Judg. The three comprehensive divisions under which all the bodies which belong to this earth are commonly arranged, are, animals, vegetables, and minerals.

NIGHT.

Def. The time after sun set.

Judg. As the affectionate mother stills every little noise that her infant may not be disturbed ; as she draws the curtains around its bed, and shuts out the light from its tender eyes ; so God draws the curtains of darkness around us ; so He makes all things to be hushed and still, that his large family may sleep in peace.

GOOD DISPOSITIONS PREVALENT AMONGST MANKIND.

Def. Goodness is universally approved.

Judg. It hath ever been, and it is still in the world, that instances are not wanting of

constancy, of friendship, of fidelity, of gratitude, of compassion, of integrity ; many of which escape the notice of the public ; and are perhaps only observed by God and good angels.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

Def. God is every where present.

Judg. If we walk with God in all his ways, as he walks with us in all ours, we shall find perpetual reasons to enable us to keep that rule of us, " Rejoice in the Lord always."

GOOD HUMOUR.

Def. A habit of being pleased.

Judg. Good humour boasts no faculties which every one does not believe in his own power, and pleases principally by not offending.

TRUTH AND SINCERITY.

Def. The union of appearance and reality.

Judg. When a man has once forfeited the reputation of his integrity, he is set fast ; and nothing will then serve his turn, neither truth nor falsehood.

THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE.

Def. A language rich, melodious and elegant : spoken for many ages by the greatest princes in the politest courts of Asia ; and in which a number of admirable works have been written by historians, philosophers and poets.

Judg. It cannot fail of delighting those who love to view the great picture of the universe, or to learn by what degrees the most obscure states have risen to glory, and the most flourishing kingdoms have sunk to decay. The philosopher will consider these works it contains, as highly valuable, by which he may trace the human mind in all its appearances, from the rudest to the most cultivated state; and the man of taste will undoubtedly be pleased to unlock the stores of native genius, and to gather the flowers of unrestrained and luxuriant fancy.

GOOD PRINCIPLES IN EARLY LIFE.

Def. A full conviction in youth of the obligations of morality and religion.

Judg. He who has adopted them will go on his way rejoicing; and will experience the path of the just to be, "as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

PART THE THIRD.

DEFINITIONS, JUDGMENTS, & ARGUMENTS.

***THE pupil having acquired the art of explaining or defining the subjects proposed to him; and of forming and expressing his opinion or judgment of them; he will now be asked "what are the reasons which induced him to form that judgment?" Those reasons when written between the definition and judgment, will complete the theme.

In the following examples, the instructor will have an opportunity of showing that in all the instances which are adduced, these three constituents are to be found: but that the definition and judgment are frequently blended with the arguments, to conceal the mechanical structure of the composition. The elegancies of thought and language, the teacher can more readily and clearly point out, than any rules can be expected to do. To discriminate the energy and the order of argumentation, and to suggest the peculiarities of style, must be done by oral tuition. The attempt to do so by spe-

ific rules, would only swell the book with precepts, which would not assist tutors, and would be useless to those, who persevering to obtain elegance and facility of composition, devote their attention to good models of writing.

ON PROCRASTINATION.

The folly of allowing ourselves to delay what we know cannot be finally escaped, is one of the general weaknesses which prevail to a greater or less degree in almost every mind.

It is, indeed, natural to have a particular regard to the time present and to be most solicitous for that which is by its nearness, enabled to make the strongest impressions. When, therefore, any sharp pain is to be suffered, or any formidable danger to be incurred, we can scarcely exempt ourselves wholly from the seducement of imagination : we readily believe that another day will bring some support or advantage which we now want; and are easily persuaded that the moment of necessity, which we desire never to arrive, is at a great distance from us.

When evils cannot be avoided, it is wise to contract the interval of expectation ; to meet the mischiefs which will overtake us if we fly; and suffer only their real malignity without the conflicts of doubt, and anguish of anticipation.

To act is far easier than to suffer : yet we every day see the progress of life retarded by the mere repugnance to exertion, and find multitudes repining at the want of that, which nothing but idleness hinders them from enjoy-

ing. Laziness is commonly associated with timidity. Either fear originally prohibits endeavours, by infusing despair of success ; or the frequent failure of irresolute struggles, and the constant desire of avoiding labor, impress by degrees false terrors on the mind.

Among all who sacrifice future advantage to present inclination, scarcely any gain so little as those that suffer themselves to freeze in idleness. Others are corrupted by some enjoyment of more or less power to gratify the passions : but to neglect our duties, merely to avoid the labor of performing them (a labor which is always punctually rewarded) is surely to sink under weak temptations. Idleness never can secure tranquillity : the call of reason and of conscience will pierce the closest pavilion of the sluggard ; and, though it may not have force to drive him from his down, will be loud enough to hinder him from sleep. Those moments which he cannot resolve to make useful by devoting them to the great business of his being, will still be usurped by powers that will not leave them to his disposal : remorse and vexation will sieze upon them, and forbid him to enjoy what he is so desirous to appropriate.

The certainty that life cannot be long, ought to awaken every man to the active prosecution of whatever he is desirous to perform. It is true that death may intercept the swiftest career ; but he who is cut off in the execution of an honest undertaking, has at least the honour of falling in his rank, and has fought the battle, though he missed the victory. JOHNSON.

FLATTERY.

Flattery is false praise : and is either offered to those by whom it is altogether unmerited ; or is given to an extent beyond that which truth can authorise. In either case, reprehension is due to those by whom it is administered, and contempt to those by whom it is received.

Interest is generally the motive of a flatterer, and weakness is the most charitable opinion which can be entertained of that mind, by whom the sycophant is encouraged or endured. In the former there is a wanton violation of truth which can hardly be practised without some incentive : in the latter there is a foolish self-partiality which is ready to accept the glitter of undeserved applause.

The mischief of flattery, falls on the individual by whom it is received : who, like the unwary Indian, heedlessly reposes on the verdure beneath which the reptile lies concealed. It retards improvement, paralyzes emulation, and extinguishes every motive toward laudable exertion.

To youth, therefore, it is particularly dangerous ; and the proverbial admonition “beware of flattery,” although applicable to every age and rank of life, is more particularly suitable to those, who are entering on the scenes of the world, and should hope to gain the praises of the virtuous and wise, only by good conduct and real excellence. RIPPINGHAM.

INDUSTRY.

Industry is not only the instrument of improvement, but the foundation of pleasure ; for nothing is so opposite to the true enjoyment of life, as the relaxed and feeble state of an indolent mind.

He who is a stranger to industry may possess, but he cannot enjoy. It is labor only that gives a relish to pleasure. It is the indispensable condition of our possessing a sound mind in a sound body. Idleness is so inconsistent with both, that it is hard to determine, whether it be a greater foe to virtue, or to health and happiness. Inactive as it is in itself, its effects are fatally powerful. Though it appears a slowly-flowing stream, yet it undermines all that is stable and flourishing. It is like water, which first putrefies by stagnation, and then sends up noxious vapours filling the atmosphere with death.

No affluence of fortune, or elevation of rank, exempts the possessor from the duties of application and industry : for industry is the law of our being : it is the demand of nature, of reason, and of God. Flee therefore from idleness, as the certain parent both of guilt and of ruin. And under idleness may be included not merely inaction, but all that circle of trifling and frivolous occupations, in which too many saunter away their youth. Youth requires amusements : it would be vain, it would be cruel to prohibit them. But though allowable as the relaxation, they are highly culpable as the business, of the young : for they

then become the gulf of time, and the poison of the mind : they foment bad passions, they weaken the manly powers, and sink the native vigour of youth into contemptible effeminacy.

HUGH BLAIR.

SWIFTNESS OF TIME.

The day and the night succeed each other ; the rotation of seasons diversifies the year ; the sun rises, attains the meridian, declines and sets ; and the moon every night changes its form.

If the wheel of life, which rolls thus silently along, pass on through undistinguishable uniformity, we should never mark its approaches to the end of its course. If one hour were like another, if the passage of the sun did not shew that the day is wasting ; if the change of seasons did not impress upon us the flight of the year, if the parts of time were not variously coloured, we should never discern their departure or succession, but should live thoughtless of the past and careless of the future,—without will, and perhaps without power, to compute the periods of life, or to compare the time which is already lost with that which may probably remain. But the course of time is so visibly marked, that it is even observed by nations who have raised their minds very little above animal instinct : there are human beings whose language does not supply them with words by which they can number five ; but we know of none who have not names for day and night, for summer and winter.

Yet these admonitions of nature, however forcible, however importunate, are too often vain ; and many who mark with accuracy the lapse of time, appear to have little sensibility of the decline of life. Every man has something to do, which he procrastinates ; every man has faults to conquer, which he delays to combat. From this inattention, so general and so mischievous, let it be every man's study to exempt himself. Let him who desires to see others happy, make haste to give while his gift can be enjoyed ; and let him who seeks his own happiness, reflect that while he forms his purpose, the day rolls on, and the " night comes, when no man can work."

JOHNSON.

TEMPERANCE.

Temperance may be defined to be the restraint of passion. That it is a quality essential to good conduct and happiness, reason and observation bear ample testimony. So highly indeed, has it always been esteemed, that it ranks as a virtue in every system of morality. For as uncontrolled passions lead us to wickedness and turbulence ; so temperance conducts us to worth and tranquillity. Even in worldly affairs it is found to be a guide to health and riches ; for it forbids indulgence in enervating luxuries, and inculcates economy in all the departments of life.

Its best recommendation is to be found in its effects ; and no one who is convinced that

erance leads to bliss, can hesitate on ad-
ing to it through life. RIPPINGHAM.

RESENTMENT.

Resentment may be distinguished into *anger* and *revenge*. *Anger* is the pain we suffer upon the receipt of an injury or affront, with the usual effects of that pain upon ourselves. *Revenge* is the inflicting of pain upon the person who has injured or offended us, further than the just ends of punishment or reparation require.

Reflections proper for this purpose are the following: the possibility of mistaking the motives from which the conduct that offends us proceeded: how often our own offences have been the effect of inadvertence, when they were construed into indications of malice; the inducement which prompted our adversary to act as he did, and how powerfully the same inducement has at one time or other operated upon ourselves; that he is suffering perhaps under a contrition which he is ashamed, or wants opportunity, to confess; and how ungenerous it is to triumph by coldness or insult, over a spirit already humbled in secret; that the returns of kindness are sweet, and that there is neither honour, nor virtue, nor utility, in resisting them. To this we should particularly advert; for too many think themselves bound to keep alive their indignation, when they find it dying away of itself.

We should remember, that others have their passions, their prejudices, their favorite aims,

their fears, their cautions, their interests, their sudden impulses, and their varieties of apprehensions, as well as ourselves. We may recollect what has sometimes passed in our minds, when we have been on the wrong side of a quarrel; and imagine the same to be passing in our adversary's mind now: when we became sensible of our misbehaviour, what palliations we perceived in it, and expected others to perceive; how we were affected by the kindness and felt the superiority, of a generous reception and ready forgiveness; how persecution revived our spirit with our enmity, and seemed to justify that conduct in ourselves, which we before blamed.

Add to this the indecency of anger; how it renders us, while it lasts, the scorn and sport of all about us; the inconveniencies, and irretrievable misconduct, into which our irascibility has sometimes betrayed us; the friendships it has lost us; and the sore repentance, which on one account or other, it always costs us.

It is necessary, therefore, to habituate ourselves to these reflections, till they arise spontaneously in our minds when they are wanted, that is, instantly upon the receipt of an injury or affront; and with such force and coloring, as both to mitigate the paroxysms of our anger at the time, and at length to produce an alteration in the temper and disposition itself.

PALEY.

Reverence of God is the foundation of good morals, and a disposition particularly graceful and becoming in youth. To be void of it argues a cold heart, destitute of some of the best affections which belong to that age. Youth is the season of warm and generous emotions. The heart should then spontaneously rise in the admiration of what is great, glow with the love of what is fair and excellent, and melt at the discovery of tenderness and goodness.

Where can any object be found so proper to kindle these affections, as the Father of the Universe, and the Author of all felicity? Unmoved by veneration, can you contemplate that grandeur and majesty which his works every where display? Untouched by gratitude, can you view that profusion of good, which, in this pleasing season of life, his beneficent hand pours around you? Happy in the love and affection of those with whom you are connected, look up to the Supreme Being as the inspirer of all the friendship that has ever been shewn you by others; himself your best and first friend; formerly the support of your infancy and the guide of your childhood; now the guardian of your youth, and the hope of your coming years. View religious homage as a natural expression of gratitude to him for all his goodness. Consider it as the service of the God of your fathers; of him to whom your parents devoted you; of him whom in former ages your ancestors honoured, and by

whom they are now rewarded and blessed in heaven.

Impress your minds with reverence for every thing that is sacred. Let no wantonness of youthful spirits, no compliance with the intemperate mirth of others, ever betray you into profane sallies. Beside the guilt which is thereby incurred, nothing gives a more odious appearance of petulance and presumption to youth, than the affectation of treating religion with levity. Instead of being an evidence of superior understanding, it discovers a pert and shallow mind, which, vain of the first smatterings of knowledge, presumes to make light of what the rest of mankind revere.

At the same time, you are not to imagine, that when exhorted to be religious, you are called upon to become more formal and solemn in your manners, than others of the same years, or to erect yourselves into supercilious reprovers of those around you. The spirit of true religion breathes gentleness and affability. It gives a native unaffected ease to the behavior. It is social, kind and cheerful; far removed from that gloomy and illiberal superstition, which clouds the brow, sharpens the temper, dejects the spirit, and teaches men to fit themselves for another world by neglecting the concerns of this. It connects preparation for heaven with an honourable discharge of the duties of active life. Of such religion discover on every proper occasion, that you are not ashamed; but avoid making any unnecessary ostentation of it before the world. BLAIR.

Anger is the great disturber of human life ; the chief enemy both of public happiness and private tranquillity.

Pride is undoubtedly the origin of anger ; but pride, like every other passion, if it once break loose from reason, counteracts its own purposes. A passionate man, upon the review of his day, will have very few gratifications to offer to his pride, when he has considered how his outrages were borne, and in what they are likely to end at last.

These sudden bursts of rage generally break out upon small occasions : for life, unhappy as it is, cannot supply great evils as frequently as the man of fire thinks fit to be enraged ; therefore reflection upon his violence must shew him that he is mean enough to be driven from his post by every petty incident, that he is the mere slave of casualty, and that his reason and virtue are in the power of the wind.

One motive there is of these loud extravagancies, which a man is careful to conceal from others, and does not always discover to himself. He that finds his knowledge narrow, and his arguments weak, is sometimes in hope of gaining that attention by his clamors which he cannot otherwise obtain, and is pleased with remembering, that at least, he made himself heard, that he had the power to interrupt those whom he could not confute, and suspend the decision which he could not guide.

But it does not appear that a man can by uproar and tumult alter any one's opinion of his understanding, or gain influence, except over those whom fortune or nature has made his dependents. He may affright his children, or harass his servants, but the rest of the world will look on and laugh ; and he will at length perceive that he lives only to raise contempt and hatred, and that he has given up the felicity of being loved, without gaining the honor of being revered.

When a man has once suffered his mind to be thus vitiated, he becomes one of the most hateful and unhappy of beings. He can give no security to himself, that he shall not, at the next interview, alienate, by some sudden transport, his dearest friend ; or break out, upon some slight contradiction, into such terms of rudeness as can never be perfectly forgotten. Whoever converses with him, lives with the suspicion and solicitude of a man who plays with a tame tiger, always under a necessity of watching the moment in which the capricious savage shall begin to growl.

It is related by Prior, of the duke of Dorset, that his servants used to put themselves in his way when he was angry, because he was sure to recompense them for any indignities which he made them suffer. This is the round of a passionate man's life ; he contracts debts when he is furious, which his virtue, if he has any, obliges him to discharge at the return of reason. He spends his time in outrage and acknowledgment ; in injury and reparation.

Nothing is more miserable or despicable than the old age of a passionate man : his rage sinks, by decay of strength, into habitual peevishness ; the world falls off from around him, and he is left to prey upon his own heart in solitude and contempt. JOHNSON.

POETRY.

Poetry is an effort of genius and art ; producing an association of exalted and brilliant ideas, in language harmoniously arranged.

The productions of poetical talent have always been regarded with reverence and delight. It is in this region of literature that the human mind displays the extent and variety of its powers. It gives beauty and energy to pious, moral, and heroic sentiments. The works of Homer, Virgil, Milton, and, still more, the effusions of the sacred writers, bear ample testimony of its powers. Poetry generally improves with the progress of civilization ; and in proportion to the refinement of manners, even subjects of less interest obtain new charms by the embellishments of tasteful composition. But the admiration which is bestowed on the fascinations of this endowment, is increased by the consideration of its utility : for inasmuch as it engages attention to subjects deserving of the highest regard, it must be esteemed one of the most fortunate endowments with which the human mind can be invested.

RIPPINGHAM.

THE DISPENSATIONS OF PROVIDENCE TO MAN.

Providence interposes for the relief of man, supplying his wants in a thousand extraordinary ways. What would have become of him in the earliest ages, had he been abandoned to his own reason still unaided by experience ? Where found he corn, which at this day constitutes a principal part of the food of so many nations ? Who taught him agriculture, an art so simple, that the most stupid of mankind is capable of learning it ; and yet so sublime, that the most intelligent of animals never can pretend to practise it ? There is scarcely an animal that supports its life by vegetables, which has not daily experience of their reproduction, and which does not employ in quest of those that suit it, many more combinations than would have been necessary for resowing them.

If Providence had abandoned man to himself, on proceeding from the hand of the Creator, what would have become of him ? Who could have subjected to his authority so many animals which stood in no need of him, which surpassed him in cunning, in speed, in strength ; unless the hand which, notwithstanding the fall, destined him still to empire, had humbled their heads to obedience to his will ? The preservation, the enjoyments, and the empire of man demonstrate, that at all times a beneficent God has been the friend and protector of human life.

ST. PIERRE.

Envy is almost the only vice which is practicable at all times, and in every place : the only passion which can never lie quiet for want of irritation. Its effects, therefore, are every where discoverable, and its attempts always to be dreaded.

The frequency of envy makes it so familiar that it escapes our notice ; nor do we often reflect upon its turpitude or malignity, till we happen to feel its influence. When he that has given no provocation to malice, but by attempting to excel in some useful art, finds himself pursued by multitudes, whom he never saw, with implacability of personal resentment ; when he perceives clamor and malice let loose upon him as a public enemy, and incited by every stratagem of defamation ; when he hears the misfortunes of his family, or the follies of his youth, exposed to the world ; and every failure of conduct, or defect of nature, aggravated and ridiculed ; he then learns to abhor those artifices at which he only laughed before ; and discovers how much the happiness of life would be advanced by the eradication of envy from the human heart.

Envy is, indeed, a stubborn weed of the mind, and seldom yields to the culture of philosophy. There are, however, considerations which, if carefully implanted and diligently propagated, might in time overpower and repress it ; since no one can nurse it for the sake of pleasure, as its effects are only shame, anguish, and perturbation.

It is, above all other vices, inconsistent with the character of a social being, because it sacrifices truth and kindness to very weak temptations. He that plunders a wealthy neighbour gains as much as he takes away, and improves his own condition in the same proportion as he impairs another's : but he that blasts a flourishing reputation must be content with a small dividend of additional fame ; so small as can afford very little consolation, to balance the guilt with which it is obtained.

It is no slight aggravation of the injuries which envy incites, that they are committed against those who have given no intentional provocation ; and that the sufferer is marked out for ruin, not because he has failed in any duty, but because he has dared to do more than was required.

Almost every other crime is practised by the help of some quality which might have produced esteem or love, if it had been well employed : but envy is a more unmixed and genuine evil ; it pursues a hateful end by despicable means, and desires not so much its own happiness as another's misery. To avoid depravity like this, it is not necessary that any one should aspire to heroism or sanctity : but only that he should resolve not to quit the rank which nature assigns, and that he should wish to maintain the dignity of a human being.

JOHNSON.

VIRTUE.

Virtue is the foundation of honour and esteem, and the source of all beauty, order, and happiness, in nature. It is what confers value on all the other endowments and qualities of a reasonable being : to which they ought to be absolutely subservient ; and without which, the more eminent they are, the more hideous deformities and the greater curses they become.

Many of the endowments and talents we now possess, and of which we are too apt to be proud, will cease entirely with the present state ; but virtue will be our ornament and dignity in every future state to which we may be removed. Beauty and wit will die, learning will vanish away, and all the arts of life be soon forgotten ; but virtue will remain forever. This unites us to the whole rational creation, and fits us for conversing with any order of superior natures, and for a place in any part of God's works.

Virtue procures us the love of all wise and good beings, and renders them our allies and friends. But what is of unspeakably greater consequence is, that it makes God our friend, assimilates and unites our mind to his, and engages his Almighty power in our defence.

Superior beings of all ranks are bound by virtue no less than ourselves. It has the same authority in all worlds that it has in this. The further any being is advanced in excellence and perfection: the greater is his attachment to

it, and the more he is under its influence. It is the law of the whole universe ; it stands first in the estimation of the Deity ; its origin is His nature ; and it is the very object that makes Him lovely.

Such is the importance of virtue. Of how much consequence it is, therefore, to practise it ! There is no argument or motive that is at all fitted to influence a reasonable mind, which does not call us to this. One virtuous disposition of soul is preferable to the greatest natural accomplishments and abilities, and of more value than all the treasures of the world.

PRICE.

FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship is a general coincident feeling between two persons. As man is a social being, it is no wonder he should be disposed to attach himself to that person, whose sentiments are most congenial with his own. Such attachment produces reciprocal kindness ; and kindness begets its mutual friendship.

Writers on morality and philosophy abound with encomiums on friendship : and historians as well as poets present the brightest examples of this amiable quality. The instances of David and Jonathan, of Damon and Pythias, and of Achilles and Patroclus, bear testimony of the ardent friendship which may exist between persons of the same sex ; and to what enthusiasm that attachment is sometimes carried. In the common concerns of life, every one knows how much he needs the

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aid and counsels of some one in whom he may confide : and feels how much his sorrows are alleviated by the participation of a sincere friend.

But all these considerations of incitement and approbation toward this amiable disposition, must be accompanied by those suggestions of prudence, which inculcate caution in the choice of confidants : and point out the dangers of yielding implicit trust in those whose sincerity has not been ascertained.— To the admonitions of prudence, history adds testimony of the many tragical events which have followed too easy confidence in pretended friendship. Be it therefore the care of every one, to be faithful in a well-formed attachment ; but never to be precipitate in selecting a friend.

RIPPINGHAM.

THE VICE OF LYING.

To warn us from lying, we should do well to consider the folly, the meanness and the wickedness of it.

The folly of lying consists in its defeating its own purpose. A habit of lying is generally detected in the end ; and after detection, the liar, instead of deceiving, will not even be believed when he happens to speak the truth. Nay, every single lie is attended with such a variety of circumstances which lead to a detection, that it is often discovered. The use generally made of a lie is, to cover a fault ; but as this end is seldom answered, we only aggravate what we wish to conceal. In point

even of prudence, an honest confession would serve us better.

The meanness of lying arises from the cowardice which it implies. We dare not boldly and nobly speak the truth, but have recourse to low subterfuges, which always show a sordid and disingenuous mind. Hence it is, that in the fashionable world the word *liar* is always considered as a term of peculiar reproach.

The wickedness of lying consists in its perverting one of the greatest blessings of God, the use of speech, in making that a mischief to mankind which was intended for a benefit. Truth is the greatest bond of society ; if one man lies, why may not another ? And if there is no mutual trust, there is an end of all intercourse.

An equivocation is nearly related to a lie. It is an intention to deceive under words of a double meaning, or words which, literally speaking, are true ; and is equally criminal with the most downright breach of truth. A nod, or sign, may convey a lie as effectually as the most deceitful language.

Under the head of lying may be mentioned a breach of promise. Every engagement, though only of the lightest kind, should be punctually observed : and he who does not think himself bound by such an obligation, has little pretension to the character of an honest man.

GILPIN.

CLEANLINESS.

Cleanliness may be defined to be the emblem of purity of mind, and may be recommended under the three following heads : as it is a mark of politeness ; as it produces affection ; and as it bears analogy to chastity of sentiment.

First, It is a mark of *politeness* ; for it is universally agreed upon, that no one unadorned with this virtue can go into company without giving a manifest offence. The different nations of the world are as much distinguished by their cleanliness, as by their arts and sciences. The more they are advanced in civilization, the more they consult this part of politeness.

Secondly, Cleanliness may be said to be the foster-mother of *affection*. Beauty commonly produces love, but cleanliness preserves it. Age itself is not unamiable while it is preserved clean and unsullied : like a piece of metal constantly kept smooth and bright, we look on it with more pleasure than on a new vessel that is cankered with rust.

I might further observe, that as cleanliness renders us agreeable to others, it makes us easy to ourselves ; that it is an excellent preservative of health ; and that several vices destructive both to mind and body, are inconsistent with the habit of it.

In the third place, it bears a great analogy with chastity of sentiment, and naturally inspires refined feelings and passions. We find

from experience, that through the prevalence of custom the most vicious actions lose their horror by being made familiar to us. On the contrary, those who live in the neighborhood of good examples, fly from the first appearance of what is shocking ; and thus pure and unsullied thoughts are naturally suggested to the mind by those objects that perpetually encompass us, when they are beautiful and elegant in their kind.

In the East, where the warmth of the climate makes cleanliness more immediately necessary than in colder countries, it is a part of religion : the Jewish law (as well as the Mahometan, which in some things copies after it) is filled with bathings, purifications, and other rites of the like nature ; and we read several injunctions of this kind in the book of Deuteronomy.

ADDISON.

SLOTH.

The whole structure of our nature, and the whole condition of our being, prove that our Maker intended us not for a life of indolence, but of active exertion. All the organs of the body, and all the faculties of the mind, are instruments of action, and are to be employed in the vigorous pursuit of happiness. It is only by constant exercise that these powers can be preserved in a sound and healthful state. If the body be suffered to remain long inactive, it will lose its strength, and become a prey to disease ; at the same time the mental faculties will be gradually enfeebled, and the whole fa-

bric of human happiness be undermined by fretfulness and spleen. It is, on the contrary, a matter of constant experience, that a regular course of bodily exercise is conducive to health, exhilarates the spirits, and contributes to the easy and successful employment of the intellectual powers.

The frequent application of the mind to study, establishes a habit of thinking, which renders it easy and pleasant to engage in any kind of scientific or literary pursuit; whereas a mind which remains long unemployed, loses its capacity and vigour, and sinks into languor and stupidity. As the earth, if it be industriously cultivated, will produce fruits in rich abundance, but, if it be suffered to lie long untilled, will be over-run with weeds, which will be rank in proportion to the richness of the soil; so the human mind, if cultivated with great assiduity, will yield a plentiful harvest of knowledge and wisdom; but if neglected, will soon be overspread with the weeds of error and folly: and the poisonous weeds will spring up in the greatest abundance in those minds which are by nature capable of producing the most excellent fruits.

To a mind thus corrupted by indolence the words of Solomon may be applied: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding, and lo! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof." The unquestionable truth is, that man is made for action; and his faculties, like metallic instruments, if

they be not polished with using, will be consumed with the rust of indolence.

ENFIELD.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

All religious parties and sects are persuaded of their own infallibility. Each cherishes the unhappy opinion, that among the many religious professions, there is only one which possesses theological truths in all their purity; each despises and abhors the rest, and accuses them of obstinacy, blindness, obduracy, and deceit. Each sect imagines itself to be in the right way, and all the others in error. Every man of a shallow mind is proud of his intolerance, and regards every thing that does not correspond with his tenets, as detestable and impure. It is too often the case that the enemies of a religion hate it because they are not acquainted with it. They ascribe to their opponents principles which they abhor, and tenets which never entered into their imaginations. They propagate the most ridiculous calumnies against the professors of the obnoxious religion. A Franconian Catholic of high rank, in the true spirit of religious intolerance, gave this caution to his son when setting out on his travels: "My son," said the illustrious bigot, "avoid the society of the Protestant Ecclesiastics, for they are all addicted to abominable crimes."

In the eye of the Turks all infidels are dogs, whose presence alone is sufficient to pollute an orthodox Mussulman. For this reason no

Christians were permitted to reside in a large portion of Arabia, because the cities of Mecca and Medina formed a part of it. Neither Jews nor Christians are allowed to be present in Egypt, at the opening of the canals of the Nile, lest by their impurity, they should prevent the overflowing of its waters.

The Mohammedans are unjust towards the Christians, and the Christians towards the Mohammedans. No Turk ever entertained the least doubt concerning the unity of the Godhead; and yet they have been accused of worshipping the stars, and in many Christian books they are termed Pagans.

Thus mankind, more or less, shun and despise, ridicule and condemn, one another, because each professes the only saving religion. Thus the crusades swept away two millions of combatants; and they were undertaken in the true spirit of intolerance, for the extermination of infidels, and for a confirmation and extension of the true faith. Thus have princes been stimulated to convert the world into a hell, and in the name of a God of mercy to persecute and torment those whom they ought to have treated with love and compassion. Whoever imagines that another cannot possibly be a virtuous man who does not believe all that he believes; whoever condemns all those whose way of thinking in religious matters, does not correspond with his, will naturally be an enemy to the greatest part of his species.

Men ought not thus lightly to condemn each

other. We shall be judged by a God of love; he will judge us according to the faithfulness and sincerity with which we serve him. The hope of salvation is not grounded on a man's faith, but on his sincerity; not on his opinions and knowledge, but on the worthiness, purity, and integrity of his heart and life.

ZIMMERMANN.

CHARITY.

Charity is the chief characteristic of a virtuous and liberal mind. It combines almost every good quality which can adorn the human heart, and excludes the vices and failings which are inseparable from an unkind disposition.

The relief of want and wretchedness, although in itself meritorious, yet forms only a small part of this excellent attribute. Neither envy, pride, anger, or falsehood, can exist in the same breast with charity: but forbearance, humility, mildness and truth, are amongst its necessary constituents. Every character which is admired for the practice of those virtues which make individuals amiable and interesting, teaches the value and excellence of this transcendent quality. The good Samaritan is the subject of universal praise; and the spontaneous good nature which he displayed toward the victim of cruelty is enhanced by contrast with the unfeeling indifference of the pharisee and levite. But the forgiving temper, the generous affection, the rigid fidelity, and patient sufferings of Joseph; exhibit charity

in the extensive and affecting views which every good man is anxious to attain.

Blessed and happy is he, who is successful in the amiable ambition of inheriting that quality, which, to use the beautiful language of Prior,

“Opens in each heart a little heav’n.”

He is like the meandering stream, tranquil in itself; and diffusing health and fertility whithersoever it flows.

RIPPLEHAM.

YOUTH AND AGE.

To young persons life commonly appears a shining and flowery spring, which yields a thousand present delights, and promises a summer richly laden with precious fruits. They have heard, indeed, that it sometimes happens that storms and tempests rise to darken the brightest sky; and they are told that the summer and autumn of mature life must be at length succeeded by the gloomy winter of age: but they think it wholly unnecessary to damp the ardour of their present pursuits by turning their attention to events apparently so remote.

From these and other causes, young people enter upon life with the most sanguine expectations of finding in every event an inexhaustible fund of delight, and of seeing all their schemes and enterprises crowned with success. They behold Fame standing ready to sound the praise of their talents and merit, and Fortune waiting to reward their industry. Thus delighted with themselves and their prospects,

they contemplate human life as an enchanting scene, inviting to action, pregnant with pleasure, and rich in hope; and they wonder at the peevishness and perverseness of those who can find in the world nothing but causes of vexation and complaint.

Such is human life in *prospect*. Let us now for a moment consider how it appears to those who view it in *retrospect*.

The gay illusions of youthful fancy are now all vanished. Through life they have met with many disappointments, perhaps with many heavy calamities. Plans which promised great things have failed. Those in whom they confided have deserted them. With this appearance of the uncertainty and vanity of all earthly possessions, they are at length arrived at the period when youthful strength and beauty are exchanged for feebleness and deformity—when the senses are benumbed, and desire fails.

The companions of their youth having dropped, one after another, into the grave, what wonder if at four score they ask—Where is the world into which we were born? What wonder if, with all their own experience of misfortune, and with their long observation of the ills of life, the world should appear to them a dreary wilderness?

If the former of these views of life be too gay, the latter is certainly too gloomy. The true medium is the aspect under which life is seen at the middle station, in passing from youth to age. By the help of long experience

and cool reflection, it is clearly ascertained that this world is neither a paradise of flowers nor a wilderness of thorns; that though trouble and sorrow are the common lot of mortals, this sad account is, through the bounty of Divine Providence, commonly far overbalanced by enjoyments and gratifications of various kinds, animal, social, and intellectual. ENFIELD.

THE DUTY OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

The duty of praise and thanksgiving is a debt and law of our nature. We had such faculties bestowed on us by our Creator, as made us capable of satisfying this debt and obeying this law; and they never, therefore, are employed more naturally than in this occupation. When God had finished that goodly frame of things which we call *the world*, and put together the several parts of it according to his infinite wisdom, there was still wanting a creature in these lower regions, that could apprehend the beauty, order and exquisite contrivance of it: that, from contemplating the gift might be able to raise itself to the great Giver, and do honour to all His attributes.

Every thing, indeed, that God made, did in some sense glorify its author, inasmuch, as it carried upon it the plain mark and impress of the Deity, and was an effect worthy of that First Cause from which it flowed; and thus might the heavens be said, at the first moment in which they stood forth, to "declare his glory, and the firmament to show his handy work."

But this was an imperfect and defective glory; the sign could be no signification here below, while there was no one to take notice of it. Man therefore was formed to supply this want; endued with powers to find out and to acknowledge these unlimited perfections: and then put into this temple of God, this lower world, as the priest of nature, to offer up the incense of thanks and praise for the mute and insensible part of the creation.

This duty of thanksgiving takes the surer hold of us by that strong bent towards gratitude which the Author of our nature has implanted in it. There is not a more active principle than this in the mind of man; and surely that which deserves its utmost force is God, the great and universal benefactor, from whom alone we received whatever we either have or are, and to whom we can repay nothing but our praises and thanksgiving: to whom therefore be glory and praise for ever!

ATTERBURY.

COMMON HONESTY.

It cannot surely be denied, that the quality which pervades every part of human life, and tends immediately to render it secure, comfortable, and honourable, is itself one of the most honourable which can be possessed by a human creature: and such is that uncelebrated virtue, plain unassuming moral honesty. Without it, society is a den of thieves, and men are to each other wolves and foxes.

Every day's experience evinces the justness

of that representation in the Scriptures, in which it is said, that the heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it? In the most trifling intercourse, where neither pleasure nor profit are in view, the propensity to deceit appears in the little promises, professions, compliments, which are mutually made, usually without any sincerity of regard and often with real and inveterate aversion. But where interest is in view, the machinations made use of for the accomplishment of mean and mercenary purposes are often such as might characterise an infernal agent. Plausibility is, at the same time, worn as a cloak; and he who has a design on your purse, your life, or your country, will assume all the appearance of cordial friendship and unpolluted honour. It is well known, that the graces, the agreeable qualities, as they are called, and the appearance of the most amiable virtues, have been possessed in perfection by men who finished their lives with ignominy as victims of the law.

Indeed, this common honesty, as it is named, is far less common than our pride is willing to suppose: but if it could be introduced in all the employments of life, the golden age would be restored.

Early and late, by night and by day, in season and out of season, as the Scripture strongly expresses it. I would inculcate the just remark of the moral poet, that an honest man is the noblest work of God,

KNOX.

MODESTY AND ASSURANCE.

I know no two words that have been more abused by the different and wrong interpretations put upon them, than these two, Modesty and Assurance; and shall therefore endeavor to restore them to their true meaning, to prevent the idea of modesty from being confounded with that of sheepishness, and to hinder impudence from passing for assurance.

I define modesty to be the reflection of an ingenuous mind, when a man has committed an action for which he either censures himself, or fancies that he is exposed to the censure of others. For this reason, a man truly modest is as much so when he is alone as in company; and as subject to a blush in his closet, as when the eyes of multitudes are upon him.

I take assurance to be the faculty of a man's possessing himself, or of saying and doing in different things without any uneasiness or emotion in the mind. That which generally gives a man assurance, is a moderate knowledge of the world; but above all, a mind fixed and determined in itself to do nothing against the rules of honour and decency.

An open and assured behaviour is the natural consequence of such a resolution. A man thus armed, if his words or actions be at any time misrepresented, retires within himself, and from a consciousness of his own integrity, assumes force enough to despise the little censures of ignorance or malice.

Every one ought to encourage in himself the modesty and assurance which I have here mentioned. A man without this assurance, is liable to be made uneasy by the folly or ill nature of every one he converses with ; a man without modesty is lost to all sense of honor and virtue.

From what has been said, it is plain that modesty and assurance are both amiable qualities, and may very well meet in the same person. When they are thus mixed and blended together, they compose what we endeavour to express when we say a modest assurance ; by which we understand the just meaning between bashfulness and impudence.

I shall conclude with observing, that as the same man may be both modest and assured, so it is also possible for the same person to be both impudent and bashful. We have frequent instances of this strange mixture in people of depraved minds and mean education ; who, though they are not able to meet a man's eyes, or pronounce a sentence without confusion, can voluntarily commit the greatest villainies, or the most indecent actions.

ADDISON.

CONTENTMENT.

The object of all human exertions is contentment—that tranquil state of mind in which the agitations of anxiety and disappointment are no longer felt.

The life of man is generally a series of conflict and uneasiness, and there are but few in-

tervals from the cradle to the grave in which fears and mortifications are not to be found. It is therefore no wonder, that contentment should be the halcyon haven of every pursuit. The history of the world, in presenting the struggles of competition, only displays the eagerness and resolution with which mankind have sought to overcome the obstacles to tranquillity. And although the philosophers of every age inculcate, that this state of mind is within the reach of all, yet in every condition of existence we find it is, or is thought to be, a fleeting form never to be attained. Yet surely some useful suggestions may be made by comparison with the state of others. Why will not envy and ambition be satisfied with competence ? Why does the poor man repine when he perceives the still poorer than him ? Why do objects disturb us to which we might be indifferent without injury or danger ? We make ourselves miserable by trifles, and though surrounded by all the ingredients to comfort, exclaim in the like spirit of Haman, “ yet all this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew at the King's gate.” Could we but consider, that after we have overcome the imaginary obstacles to our repose of mind, we should still find some fresh source of discontent ; prudence and reason would enjoin us to be content. We should then taste the pleasures which our circumstances, whatever they may be, can afford ; and with hearts affected by piety and resignation, address ourselves, under every calamity, to the Author of exist-

ence, in those words equally sacred and suitable, "thy will be done."

RIPPINGHAM.

COURAGE.

Courage is that habit of mind which suffers no dismay amidst danger.

This quality obtains general admiration : not only because it is the source of heroism ; but also as it is the characteristic of those who guard the community from foreign hostility. Perhaps there is no other endowment which more immediately leads to honorable distinction than this. The names of conquerors stand first in the memory of mankind : their fame is at least coeval with that of their country. In England, we venerate the names of Milton and Shakespeare, of Newton and Locke ; but to the remains and memory of Nelson, veneration is lost in general enthusiastic devotion.

But there are nevertheless some circumstances, to which, in considering this subject, a dispassionate mind cannot be insensible.—The first is, that as courage is a natural endowment, and cannot be acquired : so no degradation should be attached to those who cannot boast that they possess it. It may also be observed, that though courage is an useful quality, it is not of itself either virtuous or amiable : and though it may lead to glory, and contribute to national security : yet it may also be employed in the vilest occupations—in those disgraceful habits, which reduce man to a condition of brutal ferocity.

These reflections teach us, that the excellence of courage is relative. That the want of it does not indicate a bad heart, or a weak understanding ; and that it may be employed either as a most useful, or a most disgraceful qualification.

RIPPINGHAM.

ON OUR KNOWLEDGE OF A FUTURE STATE.

Our knowledge of a future world is very imperfect ; our ideas of it are faint and confused. Happy moments indeed there sometimes are in the lives of pious men, when, sequestered from worldly cares, and borne up on the wings of divine contemplation, they rise to a near and transporting view of immortal glory. But such efforts of the mind are rare, and cannot long be supported. When the spirit of meditation subsides, this lively sense of a future state decays ; and though the general belief of it remain, yet even good men, when they return to the ordinary business and cares of life, seem to rejoin the multitude, and to re-assume the same hopes, and fears, and interests, which influence the rest of the world.

Under the care of the Almighty, our education is now going on, from a mortal to an immortal state. As much light is let in upon us, as we can bear without injury. When the objects become too splendid and dazzling for our sight, the curtain is drawn.

The great design of all the knowledge and in particular of the religious knowledge which God hath afforded us, is, to fit us for discharging the duties of life. If the discovery were

more imperfect, it would excite no desire of immortality ; if it were more full and striking, it would render us careless of life.

BLAIR.

HOPE.

Hope, even though unsupported by probability is the chief source of human happiness. In the days of adversity it sheds a benignant light to dissipate despondency : in prosperity, it points to some unseen sphere, in which prosperity itself shines yet more brightly.

There is a pleasure in anticipation, which often surpasses that of possession : for it is unalloyed by the satiety and disappointments which often accompany the completion of our wishes. In the affairs of life, perseverance is supported by the expectation of success. The cares of parental solicitude are beguiled by the prospect of the infant's future years. Even the wandering medicant, when he beholds comforts which he cannot partake feels some consolation in the thought, that he may yet be as blessed as others.

But in those awful conditions when the world ceases to amuse or flatter ; when all sublunary bliss, fades even to expectation, Hope attends the couch of death, and points to "another and a better world." Like the breeze which wafts the gliding vessel, it carries us forward through life ; and guides us at last to an halcyon haven.

RIPPINGHAM.

THE DANGER OF KEEPING BAD COMPANY.

The danger of keeping bad company arises principally from our aptness to imitate and catch the manners and sentiments of others. In our earliest youth the contagion of manners is observable. In the boy yet incapable of having any learning instilled into him, we easily discover from his first actions, and rude attempts at language, the kind of persons with whom he has been brought up : we see the early spring of a civilized education, or the first wild shoots of rusticity.

As he enters further into life, his behaviour, manners, and conversation, all take their cast from the company he keeps. Observe the peasant, and the man of education : the difference is striking. And yet God has bestowed equal talents on each : the only difference is, they have been thrown into different scenes of life, and have had commerce with persons of different stations.

Nor are manners and behaviour more easily caught, than opinions and principles. In childhood and youth we naturally adopt the sentiments of those about us ; and as we advance in life, how few of us think for ourselves ! how many of us are satisfied with taking our opinions at second hand.

The great power of custom forms another argument against keeping bad company. However shocked we may be at the first approaches

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of vice, this shocking appearance goes off upon an intimacy with it. Custom will soon render the most disgusting object familiar to our view; and this is indeed a kind provision of Nature, to render labour, and toil, and danger, which are the lot of a man more easy to him. The raw soldier, who trembles at the first encounter, becomes a hardy veteran in a few campaigns. Habit renders danger familiar, and of course indifferent to him.

But habit, which is intended for our good, may, like other kind appointments of Nature, be converted into a mischief. The well-disposed youth, entering first into bad company, is shocked at what he sees and what he hears. The good principles which he had imbibed ring in his ears an alarming lesson against the wickedness of his companions. But, alas! this sensibility is only of a day's continuance. The next jovial meeting makes the horrid picture of yesterday more easily endured. Virtue is soon thought a severe rule; an inconvenient restraint; a few pangs of conscience now and then whisper to him, that he once had better thoughts: but even these by degrees die away, and he who at first was shocked even at the appearance of vice, is formed by custom into a profligate leader of vicious pleasures. So carefully should we oppose the first approaches of sin! so vigilant should we be against so insidious an enemy!

GILPIN.

DEATH.

The dissolution of corporal existence, is a subject of instructive consideration. As it is an inevitable event it claims the most serious contemplation; so that its approach may be felt with resignation, and its summons obeyed with cheerful hope.

This attention is the more prudent, since it is universally known that the visitation of death is received with feelings widely different. When it is the close of a life which has been employed in virtue and beneficence, it is distinguished by tranquillity: but when it is the termination of a career of vice, it is embittered by the painful suggestions of remorse—by reflections of a misspent, unprofitable, and disgraceful existence. The death bed of expiring worth is consecrated by the tears of filial piety; of conjugal affection; and friendship's solicitude. But such endearments seldom attend, and never can ameliorate the last moments of vice. The retrospect of life is blackened with guilt; the prospect of futurity is shadowed with fears. Conscience is armed with terrors: and the appalled victim of self-iniquity yields the tribute of nature in the horrors of convulsive agony.

Yet far more formidable is the consideration of death if viewed as the commencement of a new state of existence, in which the tenor of mortal life is to be the criterion of future misery or happiness. Yet such is the mode in

which Christianity requires that human dissolution should be regarded.

For this awful event it behoves every one to be ready : and since the hour in which it may come upon us is uncertain, there is an indispensable necessity upon all mankind to be prepared for it by virtuous and pious living.

RIPPINGHAM.

ON THE NEGLECT OF EARLY IMPROVEMENT.

There is not a greater inlet to misery and vices of all kinds, than the not knowing how to pass our vacant hours. For what remains to be done, when the first part of the lives of those who are not brought up to any manual employment, has slipped away without an acquired relish for reading, or taste for other rational satisfactions ?—That they should pursue their pleasures ?—But, religion apart, common prudence will warn them to tie up the wheel as they begin to go down the hill of life.

Shall they then apply themselves to their studies ? Alas ! the seed-time is already past ; the enterprising and spirited ardour of youth being over, without having been applied to those valuable purposes for which it was given, all ambition of excelling upon generous and laudable schemes quite stagnates. If they have not some poor expedient to deceive the time, or, to speak more properly, to deceive themselves, the length of a day will seem tedious to those who perhaps have the unreason-

ableness to complain of the shortness of life in general.

When the former part of our life has been nothing but vanity the latter end of it can be nothing but vexation. In short, we must be miserable without some employment to fix, or some amusement to dissipate our thoughts. And as we can neither command amusement in all places, nor relish it at all times, there is an absolute necessity for employment. We may pursue this or that new pleasure ; we may be fond for a while of a new acquisition ; but when the graces of novelty are worn off, and the briskness of our first desire is over, the transition is very quick and sudden, from an eager fondness to a cool indifference.—Hence there is a restless agitation in our minds, still craving something new, still unsatisfied with it when possessed ; till melancholy increases, as we advance in years, like shadows lengthening toward the close of day.

Hence it is, that men of this stamp are continually complaining that the times are altered for the worse ; because the sprightliness of youth represented every thing in the most engaging light. When men are in high good humour with themselves, they are apt to be so with all around them ; the face of nature brightens up, and the sun shines with a more agreeable lustre : but when old age has cut them off from the enjoyment of false pleasures, and habitual vice has given them a distaste for the only true and lasting delights ; when a retrospect of their past lives presents nothing to view but one

• wide tract of uncultivated ground ; a soul dis-tempered with spleen, remorse, and insensibility of each rational satisfaction, darkens and discolours every object. The change is not in the times, but in them who have been forsaken by those gratifications which they would not forsake.

How much otherwise is it with those who have treasured up an inexhaustible fund of knowledge ! When a man has been laying out that time in the pursuit of some great and important truth, which others waste in a circle of gay follies, he is conscious of having acted up to the dignity of his nature ; and from that consciousness there results a serene complacency, which, though not so violent is much preferable to the pleasures of animal life. He can travel on from strength to strength ; for, in literature as in war, each new conquest he gains impowers him to push his conquests still further, and to enlarge the empire of reason. Thus he is ever in a progressive state, still making new acquirements, still animated with hopes of future discoveries.

SEED.

PERSEVERANCE.

If the commencement of any undertaking be laudable, the resolution to persist in it must still be more meritorious. Little can be done without determination ; and certainly no great acquirement can be made without patient and steady application. The stupendous works of art with which the world abounds ; and the great resources which some men accumulate in

their minds, exhibit at once the efficacy of perseverance. Mountains have been levelled, and vast aqueducts have been made, by repeated strokes of the pick-axe and spade ; yet if the single operation of either instrument be compared with the effect which perseverance has made them accomplish, a mixture of wonder and emulation must ensue. Such examples teach despair how much may be overcome by resolution ; and that even in competitions, the weaker and less eligible may, like the tortoise, whose perseverance surpassed the swiftness of the hare, conquer the apparent advantages by which they may be opposed. There is another consideration to which no one should be insensible ; it is this, that perseverance not only goes far to insure success, but also obtains honour for those, who although the least fortunate, have been the most diligent.

RIPPINGHAM.

CONSCIENCE.

Conscience is the delegate of an invisible ruler ; both anticipating his sentence, and foreboding its execution.

Hence arise the terrors, which so often haunt guilt, and rise in proportion to its atrocity. In the history of all nations, the tyrant and the oppressor, the bloody and the flagitious, have been ever pointed out, as fearful, unquiet, and restless ; subject to alarms and apprehensions of an unaccountable kind. And surely, to live under such disquietude, from the dread of merited punishment, is al-

ready to undergo one of the most severe punishments which human nature can suffer. When the world threatens us with any of its evils, we know the extent and discern the limits of the danger. We see the quarter, on which we are exposed to its attack. We measure our own strength with that of our adversary; and can take precautions, either for making resistance, or for contriving escape. But when an awakened conscience places before the sinner the just vengeance of the Almighty, the prospect is confounding, because the danger is boundless. It is a dark unknown which threatens him. The arm that is stretched over him, he can neither see nor resist. On every side he dreads it; and on every object which surrounds him, he looks with terror, because he is conscious that every object can be employed against him as an instrument of wrath.

BLAIR.

ON THE ADVANTAGES ARISING FROM LITERARY EDUCATION.

Of the advantages arising from literary education, common observation affords ample proof. The mind, naturally limited by its weakness, becomes endowed by literature with the wisdom of preceding ages: and thus emerges from its own little sphere, into the expansive regions of genius and science. But it is not in the mere conscious superiority which literary education confers, that its advantages consist: the addition which it makes to knowledge and happiness; the means which it provides for acting wisely with regard to the fu-

ture, from the admonitions of the past; the consolation which it yields to adversity, and the recreation which it affords to virtuous prosperity, are among the blessings which arise from a literary education. Religion, philosophy, every great subject on which the reason of man is employed, and in which his interests are involved, obtain illustration by this fortunate endowment. Poets, orators, historians, and philosophers—all the great masters of thinking and writing, become incorporated with the mental energies of him who has obtained by education the key of knowledge. Happy in himself, he like the amiable and transcendent scholar* of our age and country, may diffuse instruction and delight to mankind, and be rewarded, like him, with the applauses of the virtuous and wise.

RLEPPINGHAM.

THE VARIETY OF NATURE.

The variety which appears in nature, is the offspring not of confusion, but of order. Though the forms of individual beings are finely diversified, so that it is perhaps impossible to find, in the whole compass of nature, two organized bodies perfectly alike: yet amidst this boundless variety we may observe the most perfect regularity. This regularity is of two kinds, that of gradation, and that of arrangement. That of gradation chiefly appears in animated nature, where beings possess different powers and faculties, through a long succession, each

*Sir William Jones.

holding his proper place in the scale of excellence. That of arrangement prevails through the whole visible world ; each individual possessing some qualities or characters, in common with some others, which enable the spectator to consider them as belonging to the same species or kind ; and each species partaking with some others of common appearances, by means of which they may be classed under some general description ; till at length we arrive at the three comprehensive divisions, under which all the bodies which belong to this earth are commonly arranged—animals, vegetables, and minerals.

ENFIELD.

NIGHT.

The sun has set ; the night dews fall ; and the air, which was sultry and oppressive, becomes cool. The flowers of the garden, closing their coloured leaves, fold themselves up and hang their heads on the slender stalk, waiting the return of day.

The birds of the grove have ceased their warblings ; they sleep on the boughs of trees. There is no murmur of bees around the hive, or amongst the honeyed woodbines ; they have finished their work, and now lie close in their waxen cells.

The sheep rest in the fields upon their soft fleeces, and their loud bleating no longer resounds from the hills. There is no sound of the voices of the busy multitude, or of children at play, or the trampling of feet and of crowds hurrying to and fro. The smith's hammer is

not heard upon the anvil ; nor the harsh saw of the carpenter. All men are stretched upon their quiet beds ; and the infant reposes in peace and security on the bosom of its mother. Darkness is spread over the skies, and darkness is upon the ground : every eye is shut, and every hand is still.

Who takes care of all people when they are sunk in sleep ; when they cannot defend themselves, nor see if danger approaches ? There is an eye that never sleeps ; there is an eye that sees in the darkness of night as well as in the brightest sun shine. When there is no light of the sun, nor of the moon ; when there is no lamp in the house, nor any star twinkling through the thick clouds ; that eye sees every where, in all places, and watches continually over all the families of the earth.

The eye that sleeps not is God's ; his hand is always stretched out over us. He made sleep, to refresh us when we are weary : he made night that we might sleep in quiet. As the affectionate mother stills every little noise, that her infant be not disturbed ; as she draws the curtains around its bed, and shuts out the light from its tender eyes ; so God draws the curtains of darkness around us ; so he makes all things to be hushed and still that his large family may sleep in peace.

When the darkness has passed away, and the beams of the morning sun strike through your eye-lids, begin the day with praising God, who has taken care of you through the night. Flowers, when you open again, spread your

leaves and smell sweet to his praise. Birds, when you awake, warble your thanks amongst the green boughs ! Let his praise be in our hearts when we lie down ; let his praise be on our lips when we awake. **BARBAULD.**

GOOD DISPOSITIONS PREVALENT AMONGST MANKIND.

Goodness is universally approved ; justice, equity, truth, sincerity, candour, beneficence, mercy, ever have passed, and ever will pass, for virtues.

There is no man who does not desire that others would exercise them towards him ; even they who are deficient in the practice of them, yet pay them the decent respect to think and speak well of them.

There is no man who does not condemn fraud, malice, cruelty, treachery, ingratitude, injustice, especially when he is made to experience the ill effects of them.

No man ever acted uprightly and honorably, who did not feel a calm serenity, a complacency, and satisfaction : none ever pursued wicked courses without some degree of shame and regret, and self condemnation, and some struggles of expiring virtue.

None, except here and there a brute, ever received great favours and benefits, who had not, out of mere natural ingenuousness a grateful sense of them ; and an intention to testify it, and to make somewhat of a return.

No man, except hardened by a long course of villany, ever saw others in great pain, and want, and sorrow, and distress, and found not

a disposition to commiserate and assist them, though he could expect from them no other return than thanks.

History abounds with examples of men who through natural inclination, through generosity and nobleness of mind, have done great services to their friends, to their country, to strangers, to foreigners, to mankind in general ; who, to accomplish these ends, have denied themselves many advantages and pleasures, have encountered many inconveniences, hardships and dangers, and have even lost their lives, without a view to any worldly recompense, except perhaps that they hoped and expected to be honored, living or dead, by those whom they had obliged, and by judicious and worthy persons. And this surely cannot greatly derogate from their virtuous deeds ; it only shews that, besides a natural sweetness of temper and greatness of soul, they had also some regard to reputation, and a desire to stand fair in the opinion of the public ; and to receive what they justly deserved, the love and the esteem of their fellow-creatures. — And why not ? since God himself requires our acknowledgments and our affections for his loving kindness. Thus it hath ever been, and thus it is still, in the world ; instances are not wanting of constancy, of friendship, of fidelity, of gratitude, of compassion, of integrity, many of which escape the notice of the public ; and are perhaps only observed of God and good angels, being seldom transacted in high life, and under splendid roofs and palaces.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

Consider that God is every where present, and then you will study to be every where holy.

God is every where present by his power. He rolls the orbs of heaven with his hand, he fixes the earth with his foot, he guides all the creatures with his eye, and refreshes them with his influence; and makes the powers of hell to shake with his terrors. There is not one hollowness in the bottom of the sea, but he shows himself to be Lord of it, by sustaining there the creatures that come to dwell in it: and in the wilderness, the bittern and the stork, the lion and the elephant, live upon his provisions, and feel the force of his almightiness.

Let every thing you see represent to your spirit the presence, the excellency, and the power of God. In the face of the sun you may see God's beauty; in the fire you may feel his heat warming; in the water his gentleness to refresh you: it is the dew of heaven that makes your field give you bread; in all things it is the bounty of God that ministers to your necessities.

This consideration of the Divine presence is apt to produce joy and rejoicing in God: we delight in being of the same household with God; he is with us in our natural actions to preserve us, in our recreations to restrain us, in our public actions to applaud or approve us, in our private actions to observe us, in our

sleep to guard us, in our watching to refresh us, and if we walk with God in all his ways, as he walks with us in all ours, we shall find perpetual reasons to enable us to keep that rule of his, "Rejoice in the Lord always!"

GOOD HUMOUR.

Good humour may be defined a habit of being pleased; a constant and perennial softness of manner, easiness of approach, and suavity of disposition; like that which every man perceives in himself, when the first transports of new felicity have subsided, and his thoughts are only kept in motion by a slow succession of soft impulses. Good-humour is a state between gaiety and unconcern; the act or emanation of a mind at leisure to regard the gratification of another.

It is imagined by many, that whenever they aspire to please, they are required to be merry, and to shew the gladness of their souls by flights of pleasantry, and bursts of laughter. But though these men may be for a time heard with applause and admiration, they seldom delight us long. We enjoy them a little, and then retire to easiness and good-humour, as the eye gazes a while on eminences glittering with the sun, but soon turns aching away to verdure and to flowers.

Gaiety is to good-humour as animal perfumes to vegetable fragrance; the one overpowers weak spirits, and the other recreates and revives them. Gaiety seldom fails to give some pain; the hearers either strain their

faculties to accompany its towerings, or are left behind in envy and despair. Good-humour boasts no faculties which every one does not believe in his own power, and pleases principally by not offending.

JOHNSON.

TRUTH AND SINCERITY.

Truth and sincerity have all the advantages of appearance, and reality. If the show of any thing be good, I am sure sincerity is better : for why does any man dissemble, or seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have such a quality as he pretends to ? for to counterfeit and dissemble is to put on the appearance of some real excellency. Now the best way for a man to seem to be any thing, is really to be what we would seem to be.

It is hard to personate and act a part long ; for where truth is not at the bottom, nature will always be endeavoring to return, and will peep out and betray herself one time or other. Therefore, if any man think it convenient to seem good, let him be so indeed, and then his goodness will appear to every body's satisfaction ; so that, upon all accounts, sincerity is true wisdom.

Particularly as to the affairs of this world, integrity has many advantages over all the fine and artificial ways of dissimulation and deceit ; it is much the plainer and easier, much the safer and more secure way of dealing ; it has less of trouble and difficulty, of

entanglement and perplexity, of danger and hazard in it ; it is the shortest and nearest way to our end, carrying us thither in a straight line, and will hold out and last longest.

The arts of deceit and cunning continually grow weaker and less effectual to them that use them ; while integrity gains strength by use ; and the more and longer any man practises it, the greater service it does him, by confirming his reputation, and encouraging others to repose the greatest truth and confidence in him ; which is an unspeakable advantage in the business and affairs of life.

Truth is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out : it is always near at hand, sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware : a lie is troublesome, and sets a man's invention upon the rack, and one trick needs a great many more to make it good. It is like a building upon a false foundation, which continually stands in need of props to shore it up, and proves at last more chargeable, than to have raised a substantial building at first upon a true and solid foundation. Sincerity is firm and substantial ; there is nothing hollow or unsound in it ; and, because it is plain and open, it fears no discovery. Of this the crafty man is always in danger, and when he thinks he walks in the dark, all his pretences are so transparent, that he that runs may read them ; he is the last man that finds himself to be found out ; while he takes it for granted

that he makes fools of others, he renders himself ridiculous.

Add to all this, sincerity is the most compendious wisdom, and an excellent instrument for the speedy dispatch of business ; by creating confidence in those we have to deal with, it saves the labour of many inquiries, and brings things to an issue in few words ; it is like travelling in a plain beaten road, which commonly brings a man sooner to his journey's end than by-ways, in which men often lose themselves. In a word, whatever convenience may be thought to be in falsehood and dissimulation, it is soon over ; but their inconvenience is perpetual, because they bring a man under an everlasting jealousy and suspicion, so that he is not believed when he speaks truth, or trusted perhaps when he means honestly. When a man has once forfeited the reputation of his integrity, he is set fast, and nothing will then serve his turn ; neither truth nor falsehood. TILLOTSON.

THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE.

The Persian language is rich, melodious, and elegant. It has been spoken for many ages by the greatest princes in the politest courts of Asia ; and a number of admirable works have been written in it by historians, philosophers, and poets, who found it capable of expressing with equal advantage the most beautiful and the most elevated sentiments.

Since the literature of Asia was so much neglected, and the causes of that neglect were

so various, we could not have expected that any slight power would rouse the nations of Europe from their inattention to it ; and they would, perhaps have persisted in despising it, if they had not been animated by the most powerful incentive that can influence the mind of man : interest was the magic wand which brought them all within one circle ; interest was the charm which gave the languages of the East a real and solid importance. By one of those revolutions which no human prudence could have foreseen, the Persian language found its way into India ; that rich and celebrated empire, which, by the flourishing state of our commerce, has been the source of incredible wealth to the merchants of Europe. A variety of causes, which need not be mentioned here, gave the English nation a most extensive power in that kingdom : our India company began to take under their protection the princes of the country, by whose protection they gained their first settlement : a number of important affairs were to be transacted in peace and war between nations equally jealous of one another, who had not the common instrument of conveying their sentiments ; the servants of the company received letters which they could not read, and were ambitious of gaining titles of which they could not comprehend the meaning ; it was found highly dangerous to employ the natives as interpreters, upon whose fidelity they could not depend ; and it was at last discovered, that they must apply themselves to the study of the

Persian language in which all the letters from the Indian princes were written. A few men of parts and taste, who resided in Bengal, have since amused themselves with the literature of the East, and have spent their leisure in reading the poems and histories of Persia. The languages of Asia will now, perhaps be studied with uncommon ardor. They are known to be useful, and will soon be found instructive and entertaining. The valuable manuscripts that enrich our public libraries, will be, in a few years, elegantly printed: the manners and sentiments of the eastern nations will be perfectly known; and the limits of our knowledge will be no less extended than the bounds of our empire.

A knowledge of this language, and of its companion, the Arabic, will be attended with a variety of advantages to those who acquire it; the Hebrew, Chaldaic, Syriac, and Ethiopian tongues are dialects of the Arabic, and bear as near a resemblance to it as the Ionic to the Attic Greek; the jargon of Indostan, very improperly called the language of the Moors, contains so great a number of Persian words, that I was able, with very little difficulty, to read the fables of Pilpai which are translated into that idiom; the Turkish contains ten Arabic or Persian words for one originally Scythian, by which it has been so refined, that the modern kings of Persia were fond of speaking it in their courts: in short, there is scarce a country in Asia or Africa, from the source of the Nile to the wall of China, in which a man

who understands Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, may not travel with satisfaction, or transact the most important affairs with advantage and security.

As to the literature of Asia, it will not, perhaps, be essentially useful to the greater part of mankind, who have neither leisure nor inclination to cultivate so extensive a branch of learning; but the civil and natural history of such mighty empires as India, Persia, Arabia, and Tartary, cannot fail of delighting those who love to view the great picture of the universe, or to learn by what degrees the most obscure states have risen to glory, and the most flourishing kingdoms have sunk to decay; the philosopher will consider those works as highly valuable, by which he may trace the human mind in all its various appearances, from the rudest to the most cultivated state: and the man of taste will undoubtedly be pleased to unlock the stores of native genius, and to gather the flowers of unrestrained and luxuriant fancy.

SIR WILLIAM JONES.

GOOD PRINCIPLES IN EARLY LIFE.

To enable a young man to form a plan of conduct to which he may safely adhere thro' the whole course of life, two things are requisite: First, that he acquire a clear idea of the nature, and establish a *full conviction of the obligations of morality and religion*; secondly, that he study his own particular capacity, temper, relations, and condition in life.

With these let every young person make his entrance into the world—with deliberate meditations on the scene which lies before him ; with serious reflections on the importance of human life ; with rational principles of morals and religion ; with a prudent and well digested plan of life ; and with determined resolution to adhere to that path which his reason and judgment have led him to choose, as the path of safety and happiness. He will then pursue his journey through life in a steady course of manly virtue, unseduced by the allurements which may assault him on the right hand and on the left. In the midst of the applauses of the wise and good among his fellow-creatures, surrounded with the fruits of his early virtues, and triumphing in the consciousness of having made a wise and happy choice, he will go on his way rejoicing, and will experience the path of the just to be “ as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

ENFIELD.

PART THE FOURTH.

ARGUMENTS PRODUCED BY COMPARISON AND CONTRAST.

AFTER the youthful student shall have acquired the habit of defining and forming judgments upon subjects proposed to him, he may be at some little difficulty in ascertaining or analyzing the reasons from which his conclusions have been formed ; and which, although he is conscious of possessing, he is nevertheless unable to express. To assist such noviciates in the art, I have added this fourth part ; the object of which is to shew the manner in which good writers frequently argue by the comparison and contrast of characters and objects. This mode will give the pupil a habit of great value in all discussions, and will, I hope, without multiplying rules upon him, initiate him into the practice of looking into his own mind for thoughts and facility in producing them for the contemplation of others.

The examples need not be very numerous, as the attentive mind will soon acquire the habit, to inculcate which is particularly the object

of this part of the work. It may not, however, be amiss to suggest to instructors, that after they have obtained from their pupils, the definition and judgment upon any subject, particularly those connected with the human character, they will assist the student's view by asking him "what is the difference between a person who has this quality, and one who has not?" the answer given in writing will exhibit the arguments which comparison can furnish.

TRUST IN GOD.

The natural homage which such a creature as man owes to an infinitely wise and good Being, is a firm reliance on him for the blessings and conveniences of life; and an habitual trust in him, for deliverance out of all such dangers and difficulties as may befall us.

The man who always lives in this disposition of mind, has not the same dark and melancholy views of human nature, as he who considers himself abstractedly from this relation to the Supreme Being. At the same time that he reflects upon his own weakness and imperfection, he comforts himself with the contemplation of those divine attributes, which are employed for his safety and his welfare. He finds his want of foresight made up, by the omniscience of him who is his support. He is not sensible of his own want of strength, when he knows that his helper is almighty. In short, the person who has a firm trust in the Supreme Being, is powerful in his power,

wise by his wisdom, happy by his happiness. He reaps the benefit of every divine attribute: and loses his own insufficiency in the fulness of infinite perfection. To make our lives more easy to us, we are commanded to put our trust in him, who is thus able to relieve and succour us; the Divine goodness having made such a reliance a duty, notwithstanding we should have been miserable, had it been forbidden us.

Among several motives which might be made use of to recommend this duty to us, I shall only take notice of those that follow.

The first and strongest is, that we are promised, he will not fail those that put their trust in him.

But without considering the supernatural blessing which accompanies this duty, we may observe, that it has a natural tendency to its own reward; or, in other words, that this firm trust and confidence in the great Disposer of all things, contribute very much to the getting clear of any affliction, or to the bearing of it manfully. A person who believes he has his succour at hand, and that he acts in the sight of his friend, often exerts himself beyond his abilities; and does wonders that are not to be matched by one who is not animated with such a confidence of success. Trust in the assistance of an Almighty Being, naturally produces patience, hope, cheerfulness, and all other dispositions of mind, which alleviate those calamities that we are not able to remove.

The practice of this virtue administers great comfort to the mind of man, in times of poverty and affliction ; but most of all, in the hour of death. When the soul is hovering, in the last moments of its separation ; when it is just entering on another state of existence, to converse with scenes, and objects, and companions, that are altogether new ; what can support her under such tremblings of thought, such fear, such anxiety, such apprehensions, but the casting of all her cares upon HIM, who first gave her being ; who has conducted her through one stage of it ; and who will always be present, to guide and comfort her in her progress through eternity ? ADDISON.

THE PLEASURES RESULTING FROM A PROPER USE OF OUR FACULTIES.

Happy that man, who, unembarrassed by vulgar cares, master of himself, his time, and fortune, spends his time in making himself wiser ; and his fortune, in making others (and therefore himself) happier ; who, as the will and understanding are the two ennobling faculties of the soul, thinks himself not complete, till his understanding is beautified with the valuable furniture of knowledge, as well as his will enriched with every virtue ; who has furnished himself with all the advantages to relish solitude and enliven conversation ; who when serious, is not sullen ; and when cheerful, not indiscreetly gay ; whose ambition is, not to be admired for a false glare of greatness, but to be beloved for the gentle and so-

ber lustre of his wisdom and goodness. The greatest minister of state has not more business to do, in a public capacity, than he, and indeed every other man, may find in the retired and still scenes of life. Even in his private walks, every thing that is visible convinces him there is present a Being invisible. Aided by natural philosophy, he reads plain legible traces of the Divinity, in every thing he meets : he sees the Deity in every tree, as well as Moses did in the burning bush, though not in so glaring a manner : and when he sees him, he adores him with the tribute of a grateful heart. SEED.

CANDOUR.

True candour is altogether different from that guarded inoffensive language, and that studied openness of behaviour, which we so frequently meet with among men of the world. Smiling, very often, is the aspect, and smooth are the words, of those who inwardly are the most ready to think evil of others. That candour which is a christian virtue, consists, not in the fairness of speech, but in fairness of heart. It may want the blandishment of external courtesy, but supplies its place with humane and generous liberality of sentiment. Its manners are unassuming, and its professions cordial. Exempt, on one hand, from the dark jealousy of a suspicious mind, it is no less removed, on the other, from that easy credulity which is imposed on by every specious pretence. It is perfectly consistent with

extensive knowledge of the world, and with due attention to our own safety. In that various intercourse, which we are obliged to carry on with persons of every different character, suspicion, to a certain degree, is a necessary guard. It is only when it exceeds the bounds of prudent caution, that it degenerates into vice. There is a proper mean between undistinguished credulity, and universal jealousy, which a sound understanding discerns, and which the man of candour studies to preserve.

He makes allowance for the mixture of evil with good, which is to be found in every human character. He expects none to be faultless ; and he is unwilling to believe that there is any without some commendable qualities. In the midst of many defects, he can discover a virtue. Under the influence of personal resentment, he can be just to the merit of an enemy. He never lends an open ear to those defamatory reports and dark suggestions, which, among the tribes of the censorious, circulate with so much rapidity, and meet with so ready acceptance. He is not hasty to judge ; and he requires full evidence before he will condemn. As long as an action can be ascribed to different motives, he holds it as no mark of sagacity to impute it always to the worst. Where there is just ground for doubt, he keeps his judgment undecided ; and during the period of suspense, leans to the most charitable construction which an action can bear. When he must condemn, he condemns with regret ; and without those aggravations which

the severity of others adds to the crime. He listens calmly to the apology of the offender, and readily admits every extenuating circumstance which equity can suggest. How much soever he may blame the principles of any sect or party, he never confounds, under one general censure, all who belong to that party or sect. He charges them not with such consequences of their tenets, as they refuse and disavow. From one wrong opinion, he does not infer the subversion of all sound principles ; nor from one bad action, conclude that all regard to conscience is overthrown. When he " beholds the mote in his brother's eye," he remembers " the beam in his own." He commiserates human frailty ; and judges of others according to the principles, by which he would think it reasonable that they should judge of him. In a word, he views men and actions in the clear sunshine of charity and good-nature ; and not in that dark and sullen shade, which jealousy and party-spirit throw over all characters.

BLAIR.

MODESTY.

Who art thou, O man, that presumest on thine own wisdom ? or why dost thou vaunt thyself on thine own acquirements ? The first step towards being wise, is to know that thou art ignorant ; and if thou wouldst not be esteemed foolish, in the judgment of others, cast off the folly of being wise in thine own conceit.

As a plain garment best adorneth a beauti-

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ful woman, so a decent behaviour is the greatest ornament of wisdom.

The speech of a modest man giveth lustre to truth, and the diffidence of his words absolveth his error.

He relieth not on his own wisdom ; he weigheth the counsels of a friend, and receiveth the benefit thereof.

He turneth away his ear from his own praise, and believeth it not ; he is the last in discovering his own perfections.

Yet, as a veil addeth to beauty, so are his virtues set off by the shade which his modesty casteth upon them.

But behold the vain man, and observe the arrogant ; he clotheth himself in rich attire, he walketh in the public street, he casteth round his eyes, and courteth observation.

He tosseth up his head, and overlooketh the poor ; he treateth his inferiors with insolence, and his superiors in return look down on his pride and folly with laughter.

He despiseth the judgment of others, he relieth on his own opinion, and is confounded.

He is puffed up with the vanity of his imagination ; his delight is to hear and to speak of himself all the day long.

He swalloweth with greediness his own praise, and the flatterer in return eateth him up.

ECONOMY OF HUMAN LIFE.

APPLICATION.

Since the days that are past are gone forever, and those that are to come, may not come to thee, it behoveth thee, O man, to employ the present time, without regretting the loss of that which is past, or too much depending on that which is to come.

This instant is thine, the next is in the womb of futurity, and thou knowest not what it may bring forth.

Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly ; defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.

Idleness is the parent of want and of pain ; but the labour of virtue bringeth forth pleasure.

The hand of diligence defeateth want ; prosperity and success are the industrious man's attendants.

Who is he that hath acquired wealth, that hath risen to power, that hath clothed himself with honour, that is spoken of in the city with praise, and that standeth before the king in his council ? Even he that hath shut out Idleness from his house ; and hath said unto Sloth, Thou art mine enemy.

He riseth up early, and lieth down late ; he exerciseth his mind with contemplation, and his body with action, and preserveth the health of both.

The slothful man is a burden to himself, his hours hang heavy on his head ; he loitereth about, and knoweth not what he would do.

His days pass away like the shadow of a cloud, and he leaveth behind him no mark for remembrance.

His body is diseased for want of exercise ; he wisheth for action, but hath not power to move ; his mind is in darkness ; his thoughts are confused ; he longeth for knowledge, but hath no application. He would eat of the almond, but hateth the trouble of breaking its shell.

His house is in disorder, his servants are wasteful and riotous, and he runneth on towards ruin : he seeth it with his eyes, he hear-eth it with his ears, he shaketh his head and wisheth, but hath no resolution ; till ruin cometh upon him like a whirlwind, and shame and repentance descend with him to the grave.

ECONOMY OF HUMAN LIFE.

DISCRETION.

There are many more shining qualities in the mind of man, but there is none so useful as discretion. It is this, indeed, which gives a value to all the rest ; which sets them at work in their proper times and places ; and turns them to the advantage of the person who is possessed of them. Without it, learning is pedantry, and wit impertinence ; virtue itself looks like weakness ; the best parts only qualify a man to be more sprightly in errors, and active to his own prejudice.

Discretion does not only make a man the master of his own parts, but of other men's. The discreet man finds out the talents of those

he converses with ; and knows how to apply them to proper uses. Accordingly, if we look into particular communities and divisions of men, we may observe, that it is the discreet man, not the witty, nor the learned, nor the brave, who guides the conversation, and gives measures to society. A man with great talents, but void of discretion, is like Polyphemus in the fable, strong and blind ; endued with an irresistible force, which, for want of sight, is of no use to him.

Though a man has all other perfections, yet if he wants discretion, he will be of no great consequence in the world ; on the contrary, if he has this single talent in perfection, and but a common share of others, he may do what he pleases in his particular station of life.

At the same time that I think discretion the most useful talent a man can be master of, I look upon cunning to be the accomplishment of little, mean, ungenerous minds. Discretion points out the noblest ends to us ; and pursues the most proper and laudable methods of attaining them : cunning has only private selfish aims ; and sticks at nothing which may make them succeed. Discretion has large and extended views ; and, like a well-formed eye, commands a whole horizon : cunning is a kind of short-sightedness, that discovers the minutest objects which are near at hand, but is not able to discern things at a distance. Descretion, the more it is discovered, gives a greater authority to the person who possesses it ; cunning, when once it is detected, loses its force,

and makes a man incapable of bringing about even those events which he might have done, had he passed only for a plain man. Discretion is the perfection of reason ; and a guide to us in all the duties of life : cunning is a kind of instinct, that only looks out after our immediate interest and welfare. Discretion is only found in men of strong sense and good understandings : cunning is often to be met with in brutes themselves ; and in persons who are but the fewest removes from them. In short cunning is only the mimic of discretion ; and it may pass upon weak men, in the same manner as vivacity is often mistaken for wit, and gravity for wisdom.

ADDISON.

CHRISTIANITY.

The religion of Christ not only arms us with fortitude against the approach of evil ; but supposing evils to fall upon us with their heaviest pressure, it lightens the load by many consolations to which others are strangers. While bad men trace, in the calamities with which they are visited, the hand of an offended sovereign, Christians are taught to view them as the well-intended chastisements of a merciful Father. They hear amidst them, that still voice which a good conscience brings to their ear : " Fear not for I am with thee ; be not dismayed for I am thy God." They apply to themselves the comfortable promises with which the gospel abounds. They discover in these the happy issue decreed to their troubles ; and wait with patience till Providence shall

have accomplished its great and good designs. In the mean time, Devotion opens to them its blessed and holy sanctuary : that sanctuary in which the wounded heart is healed, and the weary mind is at rest ; where the cares of the world are forgotten, where its tumults are hushed, and its miseries disappear ; where greater objects open to our view than any which the world presents ; where a more serene sky shines, and a sweeter and calmer light beams on the afflicted heart. In those moments of devotion, a pious man, pouring out his wants and sorrows to an Almighty Supporter, feels that he is not left solitary, and forsaken in a vale of wo. God is with him ; Christ and the holy Spirit are with him ; and though he should be bereaved of every friend on earth, he can look up in heaven to a Friend that will never desert him.

BLAIR.

SUSPICION.

As a suspicious spirit is the source of many crimes and calamities in the world, so it is the spring of certain misery to the person who indulges it. His friends will be few ; and small will be his comfort in those whom he possesses. Believing others to be his enemies, he will of course make them such. Let his caution be ever so great, the asperity of his thoughts will often break out in his behaviour ; and in return for suspecting and hating, he will incur suspicion and hatred. Besides the external evils which he draws upon himself, arising from alienated friendship, broken con-

fidence, and open enmity, the suspicious temper itself is one of the worst evils which any man can suffer. If, "in all fear, there is torment," how miserable must be his state, who by living in perpetual jealousy, lives in perpetual dread! Looking upon himself to be surrounded with spies, enemies, and designing men, he is a stranger to reliance and trust. He knows not to whom to open himself. He dresses his countenance in forced smiles, while his heart throbs within from apprehensions of secret treachery. Hence fretfulness and ill-humor, disgust at the world, and all the painful sensations of an irritated and embittered mind.

The suspicious man, having his imagination filled with all the shocking forms of human falsehood, deceit, and treachery, resembles the traveller in the wilderness, who discerns no objects around him but such as are either dreary or terrible; caverns that open, serpents that hiss, and beasts of prey that howl.

BLAIR.

FORTITUDE.

Perils, and misfortunes, and want, and pain, and injury, are more or less the certain lot of every man that cometh into the world.

It behoveth thee, therefore, O child of calamity! early to fortify thy mind with courage and patience, that thou mayest support with a becoming resolution, thy allotted portion of human evil.

As the camel beareth labour, and heat, and

hunger, and thirst, through deserts of sand, and fainteth not; so the fortitude of a man shall sustain him through all perils.

A man of a noble spirit disdaineth the malice of fortune; his greatness of soul is not to be cast down.

He hath not suffered his happiness to depend on her smiles, and therefore with her frowns he shall not be dismayed.

As a rock on the sea shore, he standeth firm, and the dashing of the waves disturbeth him not.

He raiseth his head like a tower on a hill, and the arrows of fortune drop at his feet.

In the instant of danger the courage of his heart sustaineth him; and the steadiness of his mind beareth him out.

He meeteth the evils of life as a man that goeth forth into battle, and returneth with victory in his hand.

Under the pressure of misfortunes, his calmness alleviates their weight, and his constancy shall surmount them.

But the dastardly spirit of a timorous man betrayeth him to shame.

As a reed is shaken with a breath of air, so the shadow of evil maketh him tremble.

In the hour of danger he is embarrassed and confounded; in the day of misfortune he sinketh, and despair overwhelmeth his soul.

ECONOMY OF HUMAN LIFE.

FORGIVENESS.

The most plain and natural sentiments of equity concur with divine authority, to enforce the duty of forgiveness, for of all the passions which invade the human breast, revenge is the most direful. When allowed to reign with full dominion, it is more than sufficient to poison the few pleasures which remain to man in his present state. How much soever a person may suffer from injustice, he is always in hazard of suffering more from the prosecution of revenge. The violence of an enemy cannot inflict what is equal to the torment he creates to himself, by means of the fierce and desperate passions which he allows to rage in his soul.

Those evil spirits who inhabit the regions of misery, are represented as delighting in revenge and cruelty. But all that is great and good in the universe, is on the side of clemency and mercy. The Almighty Ruler of the world, though for ages offended by the unrighteousness, and insulted by the impiety of men, is "long suffering and slow to anger." His Son, when he appeared in our nature, exhibited, both in his life and his death, the most illustrious example of forgiveness which the world ever beheld. If we look into the history of mankind, we shall find that, in every age, they who have been respected as worthy, or admired as great, have been distinguished for this virtue. Revenge dwells in little minds. A noble and magnanimous spirit is

always superior to it. This spirit suffers not from the injuries of men those severe shocks which others feel. Collected within itself, it stands unmoved by their impotent assaults; and with generous pity, rather than with anger, looks down on their unworthy conduct.-- It has been truly said, that the greatest man on earth can no sooner commit an injury, than a good man can make himself greater by forgiving it.

BLAIR.

PART THE FIFTH.

THE student is now presented with a few short Essays, by eminent writers, to be analyzed according to the arrangement exhibited in the first three parts of this work. In each of the following compositions, there are a definition, judgment, and arguments, which the pupil will select and write separately. He should also carefully examine the connection by which all the parts are holden together, and may, by degrees, endeavor to transpose the order of the reasoning. He will thus discover either the imperfections of the form in which they now appear, or he will observe the strength they possess from a judicious mode of disposition.

THE SEASONS.

Among the great blessings and wonders of the creation, may be classed the regularities of times and seasons. Immediately after the flood, the sacred promise was made to man, that seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, should continue to the very end of all things. Accordingly, in obedience to that promise, the

rotation is constantly presenting us with some useful and agreeable alteration ; and all the pleasing novelty of life rises from these natural changes ; nor are we less indebted to them for many of its solid comforts. It has been frequently the task of the moralist and poet, to mark in polished periods, the particular charms and conveniences of every change : and, indeed, such discriminate observations upon natural variety, cannot be undelightful ; since the blessing which every month brings along with it, is a fresh instance of the wisdom and bounty of that Providence, which regulates the glories of the year. We glow as we contemplate ; we feel a propensity to adore, whilst we enjoy. In the time of seed sowing, it is the season of *confidence* : the grain which the husbandman trusts to the bosom of the earth shall, haply, yield it seven fold rewards. Spring presents us with a scene of lively *expectation*. That which was before sown, begins now to discover signs of successful vegetation. The labourer observes the change, and anticipates the harvest ; he watches the progress of nature, and smiles at her influence : while the man of contemplation walks forth with the evening, amidst the fragrance of flowers, and promises of plenty ; nor returns to his cottage till darkness closes the scene upon his eye. Then cometh the harvest, when the large wish is satisfied, and the granaries of nature are loaded with the means of life, even to a luxury of abundance. The powers of language are unequal to the description of this

happy season. It is the carnival of nature: sun and shade, coolness and quietude, cheerfulness and melody, love and gratitude, unite to render every scene of summer delightful. The division of light and darkness, is one of the kindest efforts of Omnipotent Wisdom. Day and night yield us contrary blessings, and at the same time assist each other, by giving fresh lustre to the delights of both. Amidst the glare of day, and bustle of life, how could we sleep? Amidst the gloom of darkness, how could we labour?

How wise, how benignant, then, is the proper division? The hours of light are adapted to activity; and those of darkness, to rest. Ere the day is passed, exercise and nature prepare us for the pillow; and by the time that morning returns, we are again able to meet it with a smile. Thus, every season has a charm peculiar to itself; and every moment affords some interesting innovation.

THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The great laws of morality are written in our hearts, and may be discovered by reason; but our reason is of slow growth, and very unequally dispensed to different persons, liable to error, and confined within very narrow limits in all. If, therefore, God have vouchsafed to grant a particular revelation of his will, it becomes us to receive his precepts with the deepest reverence; to love and prize them above all things; and to study them constantly, with an earnest desire to conform our thoughts, words, and actions to them.

As you advance in years and understanding you will be able to examine for yourself the evidences of the Christian religion, and be convinced, on rational grounds, of its divine authority. At present such inquiries would demand more study, and greater powers of reasoning, than your age admits. It is your part, therefore, till you are capable of understanding the proofs, to believe your parents and teachers, that the holy scriptures contain a true history of facts, a true recital of the laws given by God to Moses, and of the precepts of our blessed Lord and Saviour, delivered from his own mouth to his disciples, and repeated and enlarged upon in the edifying epistles of his apostles.

This sacred volume must be the rule of your life. In it you will find all truths necessary to be believed; and plain and easy directions for the practice of every duty. Your Bible must be your chief study and delight.

YOUTH

Youth is the season to form religious habits; the earliest principles are generally the most lasting; and those of a religious cast are seldom wholly lost. Though the temptations of the world may now and then draw the well-principled youth aside: yet, his principles being continually at war with his practice, there is hope, that in the end the better part may overcome the worse, and bring on a reformation: whereas he who has suffered habits of vice to get possession of his youth, has

little chance of being brought back to a sense of religion. Some calamity must rouse him. He must be awakened by a storm, or sleep for ever. How much better it is, then, to make that easy to us which we know is best! and to form those habits now, which hereafter we shall wish we had formed!

Youth is introductory to manhood, to which it is, properly speaking, a state of preparation. During this season we must qualify ourselves for the parts we are to act hereafter. In manhood we bear the fruit which has in youth been planted. If we have sauntered away our youth, we must expect to be ignorant men. If indolence and inattention have taken an early possession of us, they will probably increase as we advance in life, and make us a burden to ourselves, and useless to society. If, again, we suffer ourselves to be misled by vicious inclinations they will daily get new strength, and end in dissolute lives.

But if we cultivate our minds in youth, and attain habits of attention and industry, of virtue and sobriety, we shall find ourselves well prepared to act our future parts in life: and what above all things ought to be our care, by gaining this command over ourselves, we shall be more able, as we get forward in the world, to resist every new temptation as soon as it appears.

GILPIN.

FILIAL AFFECTION.

We may venture to assert, that if a man has any well-wishers, any benefactors on earth to

whom he is bound by indissoluble ties of gratitude, his parents are the persons.

Indeed one is willing to think that many of those young people, whose behaviour is so blameable, are not sensible of the uneasiness it occasions, nor at all aware how much anguish is endured on their account.

They run heedlessly forward in the broad and open path, and have no thought but of the pleasure they are pursuing.

Yet stop, young man, we beg, a little, to look towards thy poor parents. Think it not too much to bestow a moment's reflection upon those who never forget thee. Recollect what they have done for thee. Remember all—all indeed thou canst not; alas! ill had been thy lot, had not their care of thee begun before thou couldst remember, or know any thing.

Now so proud, self-willed, inexorable, thou couldst then only ask by wailing, and move them with thy tears. And they were moved; their hearts were touched with thy distress: they relieved and watched thy wants, before thou knewest thine own necessities or their kindness; they clothed thee; thou knewest not that thou wast naked; thou askedst not for bread; but they fed thee. And ever since, in short, (for the particulars are too many to be recounted, and too many surely to be all utterly forgotten,) it has been the very principal endeavour, employment, and study of their lives, to do service to thee.

And remember, for this too is of moment, it is all out of pure, unfeigned affection. Other

friends mostly expect their civilities to be repaid, and their kind offices returned with interest : but parents have no thoughts like these. They seek not thine, but thee. Their regard is real, and hearty, and undesigning. They have no reflex views upon themselves ; no oblique glances towards their own interest. If by all their endeavours they can obtain their child's welfare, they arrive at the full accomplishment of their wishes. They have no higher object of their ambition. Be thou but happy and they are so.

And now tell me : is not something to be done, I do not now say for thyself, but for them ? If it be too much to desire of thee to be good, and wise, and virtuous, and happy, for thy own sake ; yet be happy for theirs. Think that a sober, upright, and let me add, a religious life, besides the blessings it will bring upon thy own head, will be a fountain of unfailing comfort to thy declining parents, and make the heart of the aged sing for joy.

What shall we say ? Which of these is happier ; the son that maketh a glad father, or the father blessed with such a son ?

Fortunate young man ! who hast an heart open so early to virtuous delights : and canst find thy own happiness, in returning thy father's blessing upon his own head.

And happy father ! whose years have been prolonged, (not as it often happens) to see his comforts fall from him one after another, and to become at once old and destitute ; but to taste a new pleasure, not to be found among the

pleasures of youth, reserved for his age ; to reap the harvest of all his cares and labours, in the duty, affection, and felicity of his dear child. His very look bespeaks the inward satisfaction of his heart. The infirmities of age sit light on him. He feels not the troubles of life : he smiles at the approach of death ; sees himself still living and honoured in the memory and the person of his son, his other, dearer self ; and passes down to the receptacle of all the living, in the fulness of content and joy.

OGDEN.

THE HARMONY OF NATURE.

Throughout the universe there is a wonderful proportioning of one thing to another. The size of animals, of man especially, when considered with respect to other animals, or to the plants which grow around him, is such as a regard to his conveniency would have pointed out. A giant or a pigmy could not have milked goats, reaped corn, or mowed grass : a giant could not have rode a horse, trained a vine, or shorn a sheep, with the same bodily ease as we do, if at all. A pigmy would have been lost amongst rushes or carried off by birds of prey.

It may be observed, likewise, that, the model and the materials of the human body being what they are, a much greater bulk would have broken down by its own weight. The persons of men who much exceed the ordinary stature betray this tendency.

How close is the suitableness of the earth

and sea to their several inhabitants ; and of these inhabitants, to the places of their appointed residence !

Take the earth as it is ; and consider the correspondency of the powers of its inhabitants, with the properties and condition of the soil which they tread. Take the inhabitants as they are ; and consider the substances which the earth yields for their use. They can open its surface ; and its surface supplies all which they want. Such is the length of their faculties, and such the constitution of the globe, that this is sufficient for all their occasions.

When we pass from the earth to the sea, from land to water, we pass through a great change ; but an adequate change accompanies us of animal forms and functions, of animal capacities and wants. The earth in its nature is very different from the sea, and the sea from the earth ; but one accords with its inhabitants as exactly as the other : and the correspondency instituted by Divine Wisdom pervades and harmonizes the whole.

PALEY.

ADVERSITY.

In every age, adversity has been respected as the school of virtue. There the world is unmasked : there the voice of conscience is heard : and the claims of futurity are felt. There, if any where, we are taught humility : the tear of penitence begins to flow : the soul is attuned to sympathy : fortitude and self-

command are called forth : resignation bows submissive to the decree of Providence ; while faith and hope lift our views and desires to heaven.

From the vale of sorrow, how changed, how refined, do we return to the active and pleasurable scenes of life ! As the verdure and fragrance succeeding to a summer's shower ; so pure and serene, so rich in virtue, so flourishing in every generous sentiment and endearing quality, is the mind which affliction has impregnated with the seed of celestial happiness !

Cease then, O man, to arraign the wisdom and goodness of thy maker : and rather learn to follow the example of his Providence, by extracting from the most bitter plants their concealed virtues. With a heart full of grateful adoration, look up to him, both when he pours upon thee the bright beams of joy, and when, with the same benevolent design, he raises the cloud of sorrow.

HOUGHTON.

DIFFIDENCE OF OUR ABILITIES, A MARK OF WISDOM.

As an absolute perfection of understanding, is impossible : he makes the nearest approaches to it, who has the sense to discern, and the humility to acknowledge, its imperfections.—Modesty always sits gracefully upon youth ; it covers a multitude of faults, and doubles the lustre of every virtue which it seems to hide : the perfections of men being like those flowers which appear more beautiful when their leaves are a little contracted and folded up, than

when they are full blown, and display themselves, without any reserve, to the view.

We are some of us very fond of knowledge, and apt to value ourselves upon any proficiency in the sciences. One science, however, there is, worth more than all the rest, and that is the science of living well ; which shall remain, when "tongues shall cease," and "knowledge shall vanish away." As to new notions, and new doctrines, of which this age is very fruitful, the time will come, when we shall have no pleasure in them : nay, the time shall come, when they shall be exploded, and would have been forgotten, if they had not been preserved in those excellent books which contain a confutation of them ; like insects preserved for ages in amber, which otherwise would soon have returned to the common mass of things. But a firm belief of Christianity, and a practice suitable to it, will support and invigorate the mind to the last ; and most of all, at last, at that important hour, which must decide our hopes and apprehensions : and the wisdom, which, like our Saviour, cometh from above, will, through his merits, bring us thither. All our other studies and pursuits, however different, ought to be subservient to, and centre in, this grand point, the pursuit of eternal happiness, by being good in ourselves, and useful to the world.

SEED.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF OUR TIME.

That portion of time which God has allotted to us, is intended partly for the concerns of

this world, partly for those of the next. Let each of these occupy, in the distribution of our time, that space which properly belongs to it. Let not the hours of hospitality and pleasure interfere with the discharge of our necessary affairs ; and let not what we call necessary affairs, encroach upon the time which is due to devotion. To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven. If we delay till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day, we overcharge the morrow with a burthen which belongs not to it. We load the wheels of time, and prevent them from carrying us along smoothly. He who every morning plans the transactions of the day, and follows out that plan, carries on a thread which will guide him through the labyrinth of the most busy life. The orderly arrangement of his time is like a ray of light, which darts itself through all his affairs. But where no plan is laid, where the disposal of time is surrendered merely to the chance of incidents, all things lie huddled together in one chaos, which admits neither of distribution nor review.

BLAIR.

HUMAN LIFE.

Human life is as the journey of a day. We rise in the morning of youth, full of vigor, and full of expectation ; we set forward with spirit and hope, with gaiety and with diligence, and travel on awhile in the direct road of piety, towards the mansions of rest. In a short time, we remit our fervour, and endeavour to find

some mitigation of our duty, and some more easy means of obtaining the same end. We then relax our vigour, and resolve no longer to be terrified with crimes at a distance ; but rely upon our own constancy, and venture to approach what we resolve never to touch. We thus enter the bowers of ease, and repose in the shades of security. Here the heart softens, and vigilance subsides ; we are then willing to enquire whether another advance can not be made, and whether we may not, at least, turn our eyes upon the gardens of pleasure. We approach them with scruple and hesitation ; we enter them, but enter timorous and trembling ; and always hope to pass through them without losing the road of virtue, which, for a while, we keep in our sight, and to which we purpose to return. But temptation succeeds temptation, and one compliance prepares us for another ; we in time lose the happiness of innocence, and solace our disquiet with sensual gratifications. By degrees, we let fall the remembrance of our original intention, and quit the only adequate object of rational desire. We entangle ourselves in business, immerse ourselves in luxury, and rove through the labyrinths of inconstancy ; till the darkness of old age begins to invade us, and disease and anxiety obstruct our way. We then look back upon our lives with horror, with sorrow, with repentance ; and wish, but too often vainly wish, that we had not forsaken the ways of virtue. Happy are they, my son, who shall learn from thy example, not to de-

spair ; but shall remember, that, though the day is past, and their strength is wasted, there yet remains one effort to be made : that reformation is never hopeless, nor sincere endeavours ever unassisted ; that the wanderer may at length return after all his errors ; and that he who implores strength and courage from above, shall find danger and difficulty give way before him.

DR. JOHNSON.

M2

APPENDIX.

THERE are several specimens of composition, which, from their nature cannot be reduced to the structure of a theme. Narratives, descriptions, and familiar letters, are of this character. There are also many choice specimens of writing, which, although of a class that generally admits such an arrangement; yet have the distinct parts so ingeniously interwoven as to render the separation of them from each other very difficult.

That students and tutors may have an opportunity of examining such instances of composition, this appendix is made.

I know it has been said that narrative is the easiest mode of writing. I am not anxious to conceal that my opinion is directly otherwise; and as I have never seen any practicable rule for commencing a narrative, I am the more inclined to continue my opinion. In subjects for discussion there is always a distinct point upon which the mind is immediately fixed; and clear and practical precepts, if precepts

were necessary, would direct the understanding to that point. But in the beginning of a narrative it is extremely difficult to determine at which of the circumstances that form the account, the interest and perspicuity of the relation commences. I think, however, it is a very good practice for young persons, to take the out line of a story, and put it into their own language; and they should afterwards compare their composition with the same story as told by an approved writer. It is unnecessary to name suitable subjects. The discretion of teachers can best determine the examples which are adapted to the capacities of their scholars.

MAN.

Man, considered in himself, is a very helpless and a very wretched being. He is subject every moment to the greatest calamities and misfortunes. He is beset with dangers on all sides, and may become unhappy by numberless casualties, which he could not foresee, nor have prevented, had he foreseen them.

It is our comfort, while we are obnoxious to so many accidents, that we are under the care of one who directs contingencies, and has in his hands the management of every thing that is capable of annoying or offending us; who knows the assistance we stand in need of, and is always ready to bestow it on those who ask it of him.

The natural homage, which such a creature bears to so infinitely wise and good a being, is

a firm reliance on him for the blessings and conveniences of life, and an habitual trust in him for deliverance out of all such dangers and difficulties as may befall us. ADDISON.

ACCOUNT OF THE EXECUTION OF KING CHARLES THE FIRST.

The street before Whitehall was the place destined for the execution : for it was intended, by choosing that very place, in sight of his own palace, to display more evidently the triumph of popular justice over royal majesty. When the king came upon the scaffold, he found it so surrounded with soldiers, that he could not expect to be heard by any of the people : he addressed, therefore his discourse to the few persons who were about him ; particularly Colonel Tomlinson, to whose care he had lately been committed, and upon whom, as upon many others, his amiable deportment had wrought an entire conversion. He justified his own innocence in the late fatal wars, and observed that he had not taken arms till after the parliament had enlisted forces ; nor had he any other object in his warlike operations, than to preserve that authority entire, which his predecessors had transmitted to him. He threw not, however, the blame upon the parliament ; but was more inclined to think that ill instruments had interposed, and raised in them fears and jealousies with regard to his intentions. Though innocent towards his people, he acknowledged the equity of his execution in the eyes of his Maker ; and ob-

served that an unjust sentence, which he had suffered to take effect, was now punished by an unjust sentence upon himself. He forgave all his enemies, even the chief instruments of his death : but exhorted them and the whole nation to return to the ways of peace, by paying obedience to their lawful sovereign his son and successor.—At one blow was his head severed from his body. A man in a vizor performed the office of executioner : another, in a like disguise, held up to the spectators the head streaming with blood, and cried aloud, *This is the head of a traitor.*

It is impossible to describe the grief, indignation, and astonishment, which took place, not only among the spectators, who were overwhelmed with a flood of sorrow, but throughout the whole nation, as soon as the report of this fatal execution was conveyed to them. Never monarch, in the full triumph of success and victory, was more dear to his people, than his misfortunes and magnanimity, his patience and piety, had rendered this unhappy prince. In proportion to their former delusions, which had animated them against him, was the violence of their return to duty and affection ; while each reproached himself, either with active disloyalty towards him, or with too indolent defence of his oppressed cause. On weaker minds, the effect of these complicated passions was prodigious. Women are said to have cast forth the untimely fruit of their womb ; others fell into convulsions, or sunk into such a melancholy as attended them to

their grave : nay, some, unmindful of themselves, as though they could not, or would not, survive their beloved prince, it is reported suddenly fell down dead. The very pulpits were bedewed with unsuborned tears ; those pulpits which had formerly thundered out the most violent imprecations and anathemas against him. And all men united in their detestation of those hypocritical parricides, who, by sanctified pretences, had so long disguised their treasons, and in this last act of iniquity, had thrown an indelible stain upon the nation.

HUME.

PITY.

As blossoms and flowers are strewed upon earth by the hand of spring, as the kindness of summer produceth in perfection the bounties of harvest ; so the smiles of pity shed blessings on the children of misfortune.

He who pitieth another recommendeth himself ; but he who is without compassion deserveth it not.

The butcher relenteth not at the bleating of the lamb ; neither is the heart of the cruel moved with distress.

But the tears of the compassionate are sweeter than dew-drops falling from roses on the bosom of the spring.

Shut not thine ear therefore against the cries of the poor ; neither harden thy heart against the calamities of the innocent.

When the fartheless call upon thee, when the widow's heart is sunk, and she imploreth thy

assistance with tears of sorrow ; O pity her affliction, and extend thy hand to those who have none to help them.

When thou seest the naked wanderer of the street shivering with cold, and destitute of habitation ; let bounty open thine heart, let the wings of charity shelter him from death, that thine own soul may live.

Whilst the poor man groaneth on the bed of sickness, whilst the unfortunate languish in the horrors of a dungeon, or the hoary head of age lifts up a feeble eye to thee for pity ; O how canst thou riot in superfluous enjoyments, regardless of their wants, unfeeling of their woes !

ECONOMY OF HUMAN LIFE.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.

Deeply impress your mind with the vast importance of a sound judgment, and the rich and inestimable advantage of right reasoning. Review the instances of your own misconduct in life, and observe how many follies and sorrows you had escaped, if from your early years you had taken due pains to judge aright concerning persons, times, and things. This will awaken you to the work of improving your reasoning powers, and of seizing every opportunity and advantage for this end.

Read the accounts of those vast treasures of knowledge which some of the dead have possessed, and some of the living do possess, and be astonished at the almost incredible advances that have been made in science. Acquaint yourself with some persons of great learning,

that, by comparing yourself with them, you may acquire a just opinion of your own attainments, and be animated with a generous and laudable emulation to equal or exceed them. But remember, if upon a few superficial acquirements you value and exalt yourself, as though you were already learned, you are thereby erecting an impassable barrier against all improvement.

Presume not too much upon a bright genius, a ready wit, and good parts; for these without labour and study will never make a man of knowledge and wisdom. Persons of a gay and vigorous fancy have often fallen into this mistake. They have been acknowledged to shine in an assembly, and sparkle in a discourse upon common topics, and thence have resolved to abandon reading and study: but when they had lost their vivacity of animal nature and youth, they became stupid and sottish, even to contempt and ridicule. It is meditation, and studious thought, that gives good sense even to the best genius.

Exercise your reason and judgment upon all you read, for, if your learning be a mere accumulation of what others have written, without a due penetration into the meaning, and a judicious choice and determination of your own sentiments, your head has little better title to true knowledge than the shelves of your library.

Do not hover always on the surfaces of things, or take up suddenly with mere appearances, for this will fill the mind with errors

and prejudices, and give it an ill habit of thinking: but penetrate into the depth of matters as far as your time and circumstances will allow.

Once a day, especially in the early years of life and study, examine what new ideas you have gained, and what advances you have made in any part of knowledge, and let no day if possible pass away without some intellectual gain. It was a sacred rule among the Pythagoreans, that they should every evening run thrice over the actions and affairs of the day, and examine what their conduct had been, what they had done, and what they had neglected: assured that by this method, they would make a rapid progress in the path of knowledge and virtue.

WATTS.

ACCOUNT OF THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON*

Virtue, says Virgil, is better accepted when it comes in a pleasing form. The person of Crichton was eminently beautiful; but his beauty was consistent with such activity and strength, that in fencing he would spring at one bound upon his antagonist; and he used the sword in either hand with such force and dexterity, that scarce any one had courage to engage him.

Having studied at St. Andrews, in Scotland, he went to Paris in his twenty-first year and affixed on the gate of the college of Navarre, a kind of challenge to the learned of that uni-

*This youthful prodigy, according to the best authorities, lived from about 1560 to 1582.

versity, to dispute with them on a certain day; offering to his opponents the choice of ten languages, and of all the faculties and sciences. On the day appointed, three thousand auditors assembled, when four doctors of the church and fifty ministers appeared against him: and one of his antagonists confesses that the doctors were defeated; that he gave proofs of knowledge beyond the reach of man, and that a hundred years passed without food or sleep would not be sufficient for the attainment of his learning. After a disputation of nine hours, he was presented by the president and professors with a diamond and a purse of gold, and dismissed with repeated acclamations.

From Paris he went to Rome, where he made the same challenge, and had, in the presence of the pope and cardinals, the same success. He then visited Padua, where he engaged in another public disputation, beginning his performance with an extempore poem in praise of the city and the assembly present, and concluding with an oration equally unpremeditated in commendation of ignorance.

These acquisitions of learning, however stupendous, were not gained by the omission of any accomplishment in which it becomes a gentleman to excel. He practised, in great perfection, the arts of drawing and painting; he was an eminent performer in both vocal and instrumental music; he danced with uncommon gracefulness; and on the day after his disputation at Paris, exhibited his skill in

horsemanship, before the court of France, where, at a public match of tilting, he bore away the ring upon his lance fifteen times together. He excelled likewise in domestic games of less dignity and reputation; and in the interval between his challenge and disputation at Paris, he spent so much of his time at cards, dice, and tennis, that a lampoon was fixed upon the gate of the Sorbonne, directing those who would see this monster of erudition, to look for him at the tavern.

So extensive was his acquaintance with life and manners, that in an Italian comedy composed by himself, and exhibited before the court of Mantua, he is said to have personated fifteen different characters. His memory was so retentive, that, hearing an oration of an hour, he would repeat it exactly, and in the recital follow the speaker through all the variety of tone and gesticulation.

Nor was his skill in arms less than in learning, or his courage inferior to his skill. There was a prize-fighter at Mantua, who had defeated the most celebrated masters in many parts of Europe; and in Mantua had killed three who had appeared against him. Crichton, looking on his sanguinary success with indignation, offered to stake fifteen hundred pistoles, and mount the stage against him. The duke of Mantua with some reluctance consented; and on the day fixed the combatants appeared. The prize-fighter advanced with great violence and fierceness, while Crichton contented himself calmly to ward

his passes, and suffer him to waste his vigour by his own fury. Crichton then pressed upon him with such force and agility, that he thrust him thrice through the body, and saw him expire. He then divided the prize he had won among the widows whose husbands had been killed.

The duke of Mantua having received such proofs of his various merit, made him tutor to his son Vincentio di Gonzaga, a prince of loose manners and a turbulent disposition. But his honour was of short duration; for, as he was one night, in the time of Carnival, rambling about the streets with his guitar in his hand, he was attacked by six men, masked, and opposed them with such vigour and address, that he dispersed them, and disarmed their leader, who, throwing off his mask, discovered himself to be the prince his pupil. Crichton falling on his knees, presented his own sword to the prince, who seized it, and instigated, as some say by jealousy, according to others only by drunken fury, thrust him through the heart.

The court of Mantua testified their esteem for the memory of Crichton by a public mourning, and the palaces of Italy were adorned with pictures, representing him on horseback with a lance in one hand, and a book in the other.

ADVENTURER.

THE GROTTTO OF ANTIPAROS.

Of all the subterraneous caverns now known, the grotto of Antiparos, an inconsiderable isl-

and in the Archipelago, is the most remarkable, as well for its extent as for the beauty of its sparry incrustations. This celebrated cavern was first explored by one Magni, an Italian traveller, in the seventeenth century.

"Having been informed," says he, "by the natives of Paros, that in the little island of Antiparos, which lies about two miles from the former, a gigantic statue was to be seen at the mouth of the cavern, the French consul and myself resolved to pay it a visit.

"After we had landed on the island, and walked about four miles through the midst of beautiful plains and sloping woodlands, we at length came to a little hill on the side of which yawned a horrible cavern, that by its gloom struck us with terror, and almost repressed curiosity. Recovering the first surprise, however, we entered boldly; and had not proceeded above twenty paces, when the supposed statue of the giant presented itself to our view. We quickly perceived, that what the ignorant natives had been terrified at as a giant, was nothing more than a sparry concretion formed by the water dropping from the roof of the cave, and by degrees hardening into a figure which their fears had transformed into a monster.

"Incited by this extraordinary appearance, we were induced to proceed still further into this subterranean abode. As we proceeded, new wonders offered themselves; the spars, formed into trees and shrubs, presented a kind of petrified grove; some white, some green, and

all receding in due perspective. They struck us with the more amazement, as we knew them to be mere productions of Nature, who, hitherto in solitude, had in her playful moments dressed the scene as if for her own amusement.

"We had yet seen but a few of the wonders of the place and were introduced only into the portico of this amazing temple. In one corner of this half-illuminated recess, there appeared an opening about three feet wide, which seemed to lead to a place totally dark, and which one of the natives assured us contained nothing more than a reservoir of water. Upon this information, we made an experiment by throwing down some stones, which rumbling along the side of the decent for some time, the sound seemed at last quashed in a bed of water.

"In order, however, to be more certain, we sent in a Levantine mariner, who, on the promise of a good reward, ventured with a flambeau in his hand into this narrow aperture. After continuing within it for about a quarter of an hour, he returned, bearing in his hand some beautiful pieces of white spar, which art could neither equal or imitate. Upon being informed by him that the place was full of those beautiful incrustations, I ventured in with him about fifty paces, anxiously and cautiously descending by a steep and dangerous way. Finding however, that we came to a precipice, which led into a spacious amphitheatre, if I may so call it, still

deeper than any other part, we returned ; and being provided with a ladder, torch and other things to expedite our decent, our whole company, one by one, ventured into the same opening ; and descending one after another, we at last saw ourselves all together, in the most magnificent part of the cavern.

"Our candles being now all lighted up, and the whole place completely illuminated, never could the eye be presented with a more glittering or a more magnificent scene. The whole roof hung with solid icicles, transparent as glass, yet hard as marble. The eye could scarcely reach the lofty and noble ceiling ; the sides were regularly formed of spars, and the whole presented the idea of a superb theatre, illuminated by an immense profusion of lights. The floor consisted of solid marble, and in several places magnificent columns, thrones, altars, and other objects, appeared as if nature had designed to mock the curious productions of art. Our voices upon speaking or singing, were redoubled to an astonishing loudness ; and upon the firing of a gun, the noise and reverberations were almost deafening.

"In the midst of this grand amphitheatre rose a concretion about fifteen feet high, that in some measure resembled an altar ; and we caused mass to be celebrated there. The beautiful columns that shot up round the altar appeared like candlesticks ; and many other natural objects represented the customary ornaments of this rite.

"Below even this spacious grotto there

seemed another cavern, down which I ventured with my former mariner, and descended about fifty paces by means of a rope. I at last arrived at a small spot of level ground, where the bottom appeared different from that of the amphitheatre, being composed of some clay, yielding to the pressure, and into which I thrust a stick to the depth of six feet. In this, however, as above, numbers of the most beautiful crystals were formed; one of which particularly resembled a table.

“Upon our egress from this amazing cavern, we perceived a Greek inscription upon a rock at the mouth, but so obliterated by time that we could not read it distinctly. It seemed to import, that one Antipater had come hither; but whether he penetrated into the depths of the cavern he does not think fit to inform us.” This account of so beautiful and striking a scene may serve to give us some idea of the subterranean wonders of nature.

GOLDSMITH.

DIFFERENT METHODS OF IMPROVING IN KNOWLEDGE.

There are five eminent means, or methods, whereby the mind is improved in knowledge; and these are, Observation Reading, Instruction by Lectures, Conversation, and Meditation; the last of which is in a more peculiar manner called Study.

Observation is the notice that we take of all occurrences in human life, whether they be sensible or intellectual: whether relating to persons or things, to ourselves or to others. It

is this that furnishes us even from our infancy with a rich variety of ideas, propositions, words and phrases. It is by this we know that fire will burn, that the sun gives light, that a horse eats grass, that an acorn produces an oak, that man is a being capable of reasoning and discourse, that our bodies die and are carried to the grave, and that one generation succeeds another. All those things which we see, which we hear or feel, which we perceive by sense or consciousness, or which we know in a direct manner with scarcely any exercise of our reflecting faculties or our reasoning powers, may be included under the general name of observation.

Reading is that method whereby we acquaint ourselves with what other men have published to the world in their compositions. The arts of reading and writing are of infinite advantage; for by them we are made partakers of the sentiments, observations, reasonings and improvements, of all the learned world, in the most remote nations, and in former ages, almost from the beginning of mankind.

Public or private lectures are such verbal instructions as are given by a teacher, while the learners attend in silence. We learn in this manner religion from the pulpit; philosophy or theology from the professor's chair; and mathematics, by a teacher showing us various theorems and problems; that is, speculations or practices, by demonstration and operation, with all the instruments of art necessary to those operations.

Conversation is another method of improving our minds, wherein, by mutual discourse and inquiry, we learn the sentiments of others, as well as communicate our sentiments to others in the same manner. Sometimes, indeed, the advantage is only on one side ; as when a teacher and a learner meet and discourse together ; but frequently the profit is mutual. Under the head of conversation we rank disputations of various kinds.

Meditation, or study, includes those exercises of the mind, whereby we render all the former methods useful for our increase in true knowledge and wisdom. It is by meditation we confirm our remembrance of things, of our own experience, and of the observations we make. It is by meditation that we draw various inferences, and establish in our minds general principles of knowledge. It is by meditation, that we fix in our memory whatever we learn, and form our own judgment of the truth or falsehood, the strength or weakness, of what others speak or write. It is meditation, or study, that draws out long chains of argument, and searches and finds deep and difficult truths, which before lay concealed in darkness.

Each of these five methods has its peculiar advantages, by which it materially assists the others ; and its peculiar defects, which need to be supplied by the assistance of the rest.

WATTS.

RULES FOR IMPROVING THE MIND.

Let the enlargement of your knowledge be one constant view and design in life : since there is no time or place, no transaction, occurrence, or engagement, which excludes us from this method of improving the mind.

When we are in the house or in the city, wherever we turn our eyes we see the works of men ; when we are in the country we behold more of the works of God. The skies, the ground above and beneath us, and the animal and vegetable world round about us, may entertain our observation with ten thousand varieties.

From observation of the day and the night, the hours and the flying minutes, learn a wise improvement of time, and be watchful to sieze every opportunity to increase in knowledge.

From the vices and follies of others, observe what is hateful in them ; consider how such a practice looks in another person, and remember, that it looks as ill or worse in yourself. From their virtues learn something worthy of your imitation.

From your natural powers, sensation, judgment, memory, hands, feet, &c. make this inference ; that they were not given you for nothing, but for some useful employment for the good of your fellow creatures, your own best interest and final happiness.

Thus from every appearance in nature, and from every occurrence of life, you may derive natural, moral and religious observations to

entertain your minds, as well as rules of conduct in the affairs relating to this life, and that which is to come.

Let the circumstances or situations of life be what they will, a man should never neglect the improvement that is to be derived from observation. Let him travel into the East or West Indies, and fulfil the duties of the military or mercantile life there; let him rove through the earth or the seas for his own humour, as a traveller, or pursue his diversions in what part of the world he pleases as a gentleman; let prosperous or adverse fortune call him to the most distant parts of the globe; still let him carry on his knowledge, and the improvement of his faculties, by wise observations. By these means he may render himself some way useful to mankind:

But in making your observations on persons take care of indulging that busy curiosity, which is ever inquiring into private and domestic affairs, with an endless itch of learning the secret histories of families. Such curiosity begets suspicions and jealousies, and furnishes matter for the evil passions of the mind, and the impertinences of discourse.

Be not also too hasty to erect general theories from a few particular observations, appearances, or experiments. This is what the logicians call a false induction. A hasty determination of some universal principles, without a due survey of all the particular cases which may be included in them, is the way to lay a trap for our own understandings in their

investigation of any subject, and we shall often be taken captives by mistake and falsehood.

WATTS.

ADVANTAGES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Independent of the peculiar object of public religious assemblies, many collateral advantages are derived from them which the liberal thinker will by no means despise. The recurrence of appointed days of rest and leisure, which, but for this purpose, would never have been appointed, divides the weary months of labour and servitude with a separating line of a brighter colour. The church is a centre of union for neighbors, friends, and townsmen; and it is a reasonable and a pleasing ground of preference in our attachments, that we have "walked to the house of God in company." Even the common greetings that pass between those who meet there, are hallowed by the occasion of the meeting, and the spirit of civic urbanity is mingled with a still sweeter infusion of Christian courtesy. By the recurrence of this intercourse, feuds and animosities are composed, which interrupted the harmony of friends and acquaintance; and those who avoided to meet, because they could not forgive, are led to forgive, being obliged to meet. Its effect in humanizing the lower orders of society, and fashioning their manners to the order and decorum of civil life, is apparent to every reflecting mind. The poor who have not formed a habit of attending here, remain from week to week in their sordid cells, or in-

sue thence to places of licentiousness more sordid ; while those who assemble with the other inhabitants of the place, are brought into the frequent view of their superiors ; their persons are known, their appearance is noted ; the inquiring eye of benevolence pursues them to their humble cottages, and they are not unfrequently led home from social worship to the social meal. If the rich and poor were but thus brought together regularly and universally, that single circumstance would be found sufficient to remove the spualidness of misery, and the bitterness of want ; and poverty would exist only as a sober shade in the picture of life, on which the benevolent eye might rest with a degree of complacency when fatigued with the more gaudy colouring of luxury and show.

BARBAULD.

CAUTIONS AGAINST ILL CONDUCT IN COMPANY.

Carry with you into company all the gaiety and spirits, but as little of the giddiness of youth as you can. The former will charm ; but the latter will often, though innocently, implacably offend.

Inform yourself of the characters and situations of the company, before you give way to what your imagination may prompt you to say. There are in all companies more wrong heads than right ones, and many more who deserve than who like censure. Should you, therefore, loudly expatiate in praise of a good quality, which some one in the company notoriously wants, or declaim against any ill one

with which others are notoriously infected, your reflections, however, general and unapplied, will be thought personal, and levelled at those people.

Cautiously avoid talking of the domestic affairs either of yourself or of other people. Yours are nothing to them but tedious gossip : theirs are nothing to you.

Remember that the wit, humour, and jests, of most mixed companies are local. They may thrive very well in that particular soil, but will very seldom bear transplanting. Every company is differently circumstanced, and has its particular cant and jargon : which may give occasion to wit and mirth within that circle, but would seem flat and insipid in any other, and therefore will not bear repeating.

Take great care never to repeat in one company what you hear in another. Things seemingly indifferent may by circulation have much graver consequences than you would imagine. Besides there is a general tacit trust in conversation, by which a man is obliged not to report any thing out of it, though he is not immediately enjoined secrecy.

Not to perceive the little weakness, and the idle but innocent affectations of the company, may be allowable as a sort of polite duty. The company will be pleased with you if you do this, and most probably will not be reformed by you if you do not.

CHESTERFIELD.

Omar, the son of Hussan, had passed seventy-five years in honor and prosperity. The favour of three successive califfs filled his house with gold and silver ; and whenever he appeared, the benedictions of the people proclaimed his passage.

Terrestrial happiness is of short continuance. The brightness of the flame is wasting its fuel ; the fragrant flower is passing away in its own odours. The vigour of Omar began to fail, the curls of beauty fell from his head, strength departed from his hands, and agility from his feet. He gave back to the califf the keys of trust and the seals of secresy ; and sought no other pleasure for the remains of life, than the converse of the wise, and the gratitude of the good.

The powers of his mind were yet unimpaired. His chamber was filled by visitants, eager to catch the dictates of experience, and officious to pay the tribute of admiration. Caled, the son of the viceroy of Egypt, entered every day early and retired late. He was beautiful and eloquent ; Omar admired his wit, and loved his docility. Tell me, said Caled, thou to whose voice nations have listened, and whose wisdom is known to the extremities of Asia, tell me how I may resemble Omar the prudent. The arts by which you have gained power and preserved it, are to you no longer necessary or useful ; impart to me the secret of your conduct, and teach me the plan upon which your wisdom has built your fortune.

Young man said Omar, it is of little use to form plans of life. When I took my first survey of the world in my twentieth year, having considered the various conditions of mankind, in the hour of solitude I said thus to myself, leaning against a cedar which spread its branches over my head : seventy years are allowed to man ; I have yet fifty remaining : ten years I will allot to the attainment of knowledge, and ten I will pass in foreign countries : I shall be learned, and therefore shall be honoured ; every city will shout at my arrival, and every student will solicit my friendship. Twenty years thus passed will store my mind with images which I shall be busy the rest of my life in combining and comparing. I shall revel in inexhaustible accumulations of intellectual riches ; I shall find new pleasures for every moment, and shall never more be weary of myself. I will, however, not deviate too far from the beaten track of life, but will try what can be found in female delicacy. I will marry a wife beautiful as the Houries ; and wise as Zobeide ; with her I will live twenty years within the suburbs of Bagdat, in every pleasure that wealth can purchase, and fancy can invent. I will then retire to a rural dwelling, pass my last days in obscurity and contemplation, and lie silently down on the bed of death. Through my life it shall be my settled resolution, that I will never depend upon the smile of princes ; that I will never stand exposed to the artifices of courts, I will never pant for public honours, nor disturb my quiet

with affairs of state. Such was my scheme of life, which I impressed insensibly upon my memory.

The first part of my ensuing time was to be spent in search of knowledge ; and I know not how I was diverted from my design. I had no visible impediments without, nor any ungovernable passions within. I regarded knowledge as the highest honour, and the most engaging pleasure ; yet day stole upon day, and month glided after month, till I found that seven years of the first ten had vanished, and left nothing behind them. I now postponed my purpose of travelling ; for why should I go abroad while so much remained to be learned at home ? I immured myself for four years, and studied the laws of the empire. The fame of my skill reached the judges ; I was found able to speak upon doubtful questions, and was commanded to stand at the foot-stool of the califf. I was heard with attention, I was consulted with confidence, and the love of praise fastened on my heart.

I still wished to see distant countries, listened with rapture to the relations of travellers, and resolved some time to ask my dismissal, that I might feast my soul with novelty ; but my presence was always necessary, and the stream of business hurried me along. Sometimes I was afraid lest I should be charged with ingratitude ; but I still proposed to travel, and therefore would not confine myself by marriage.

In my fiftieth year I began to suspect that

the time of travelling was past, and thought it best to lay hold on the felicity yet in my power, and indulge myself in domestic pleasures. But at fifty no man easily finds a woman beautiful as the Houries, and wise as Zobeide. I enquired and rejected, consulted and deliberated, till the sixty second year made me ashamed of gazing upon girls. I had now nothing left but retirement, and for retirement I never found a time, till disease forced me from public employment.

Such was my scheme, and such has been its consequence. With an insatiable thirst for knowledge, I trifled away the years of improvement ; with a restless desire of seeing different countries, I have always resided in the same city ; with the highest expectation of connubial felicity, I have lived unmarried ; and with unalterable resolutions of contemplative retirement, I am going to die within the walls of Bagdat.

JOHNSON.

CHARACTER OF ALFRED, KING OF ENGLAND.

The merit of this prince, both in private and public life, may with advantage be set in opposition to that of any monarch, or citizen, which the annals of any age or any nation can present to us. He seems indeed to be the complete model of that perfect character, which, under the denomination of a sage or wise man, the philosophers have been fond of delineating, rather as a fiction of their imagination, than in hopes of ever seeing it reduced to practice ; so happily were all his virtues tempered togeth-

er, so justly were they blended, and so powerfully did each prevent the other from exceeding its proper bounds.

He knew how to conciliate the most enterprising spirit with the coolest moderation ; the most obstinate perseverance, with the easiest flexibility ; the most severe justice, with the greatest lenity ; the greatest vigour in command, with the greatest affability of deportment ; the highest capacity and inclination for science, with the most shining talents for action.

His civil and his military virtues are almost equally the objects of our admiration, excepting only, that the former, being more rare among princes, as well as more useful, seem chiefly to challenge our applause. Nature also, as if desirous that so bright a production of her skill should be set in the fairest light, had bestowed on him all bodily accomplishments ; vigour of limbs, dignity of shape and air, and a pleasant, engaging, and open countenance. Fortune alone, by throwing him into a barbarous age, deprived him of historians worthy to transmit his fame to posterity. Alfred died in the year 897, aged 52.

HUME.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VALLEY OF ABYSSINIA.

The place, which the wisdom or policy of antiquity had destined for the residence of the Abyssinian princes, was a spacious valley in the kingdom of Ambara, surrounded on every side by mountains, of which the summits over-

hang the middle part. The only passage by which it could be entered, was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it had long been disputed whether it was the work of nature or of human industry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth which opened into the valley was closed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massy that no man without the help of engines could open or shut them.

From the mountains on every side, rivulets descended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle, inhabited by fish of every species, and frequented by every fowl whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. The lake discharged its superfluities by a stream which entered a dark cleft of the mountain on the northern side, and fell with dreadful noise from precipice to precipice, till it was heard no more.

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers ; every blast shook spices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the grass, or browse the shrub, whether tame or wild, wandered in this extensive circuit, secured from beasts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the pastures, on another, all the beasts of chase frisking in the lawns ; the sprightly kid was bounding on the rocks, the subtle monkey frolicking in the trees, and

the solemn elephant reposing in the shade.—
All the diversions of the world were brought
together, the blessings of nature were collect-
ed, and its evils extracted and excluded.

JOHNSON.

CHARACTER OF GROTIUS.

If we fairly estimate both the endowments and the virtues of Grotius we may justly consider him as one of the most memorable men who have done honour to modern times. He combined the discharge of the most important duties of active and public life, with the attainment of that exact and various learning which is generally the portion only of the recluse student. He was distinguished as an advocate and magistrate, and he composed the most valuable work on the law of his own country : he was almost equally celebrated as an historian, a scholar, a poet and a divine : a disinterested statesman, a philosophical lawyer ; a patriot, who united moderation with firmness, and a theologian, who was taught candour by his learning. Unmerited exile did not damp his patriotism ; the bitterness of controversy did not extinguish his charity. The sagacity of his numerous and fierce adversaries could not discover a blot on his character ; and in the midst of all the hard trials and galling provocations of a turbulent political life, he never once deserted his friends when they were unfortunate, nor insulted his enemies when they were weak.

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

HAMAN ; OR, THE MISERY OF PRIDE.

Ahasuerus, who is supposed to be the prince known among the Greek historians by the name of Artaxerxes, had advanced to the chief dignity in his kingdom, Haman, an Amalekite, who inherited all the ancient enmity of his race to the Jewish nation. He appears, from what is recorded of him, to have been a very wicked minister. Raised to greatness without merit, he employed his power solely for the gratification of his passions. As the honours which he possessed were next to royal, his pride was every day fed with that servile homage, which is peculiar to Asiatic Courts ; and all the servants of the king prostrated themselves before him. In the midst of this general adulation, one person only stooped not to Haman. This was Mordecai the Jew ; who, knowing this Amalekite to be an enemy to the people of God ; and, with virtuous indignation, despising that insolence of prosperity with which he saw him lifted up ; “ bowed not, nor did him reverence.” On this appearance of disrespect from Mordecai, Haman “ was full of wrath : but he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone.” Personal revenge was not sufficient to satisfy him. So violent and black were his passions, that he resolved to exterminate the whole nation to which Mordecai belonged. Abusing, for his cruel purpose, the favour of his credulous sovereign, he obtained a decree to be sent forth, that against a certain day, all the Jews through-

out the Persian dominions should be put to the sword. Meanwhile, confident of success, and blind to approaching ruin, he continued exulting in his prosperity. Invited by Ahasuerus to a royal banquet, which Esther the queen had prepared, "he went forth that day joyful, and with a glad heart."

But behold how slight an incident was sufficient to poison his joy ! As he went forth, he saw Mordecai in the king's gate ; and observed, that he still refused to do him homage : " he stood not up, nor was moved for him ;" although he well knew the formidable designs, which Haman was preparing to execute. One private man, who despised his greatness, and disdained submission, while a whole kingdom trembled before him : one spirit which the utmost stretch of his power could neither subdue nor humble, blasted his triumphs. His whole soul was shaken with a storm of passion. Wrath, pride, and desire of revenge, rose into fury. With difficulty, he restrained himself in public ; but as soon as he came to his own house, he was forced to disclose the agony of his mind. He gathered together his friends and family, with Zerech his wife. " He told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and of all the things wherein the king had promoted him ; and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king." He said, moreover " Yea Esther the queen suffered no man to come in with the king, to the banquet that she had prepared, but myself ;

and to-morrow also am I invited to her with the king." After all this preamble, what is the conclusion ?—" Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

The sequel of Haman's history I shall not now pursue. It might afford matter for much instruction by the conspicuous justice of God in his fall and punishment. But contemplating only the singular situation, in which the expressions just quoted present him, and the violent agitation of his mind which they display, the following reflections naturally arise ; How miserable is vice, when one guilty passion creates so much torment ! how unavailing is prosperity, when in the height of it, a single disappointment can destroy the relish of all its pleasures ! how weak is human nature, which, in the absence of real, is thus prone to form to itself imaginary woes ! BLAIR.

TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF THE EARL OF STAFFORD.

The Earl of Stafford defended himself against the accusations of the house of Commons, with all the presence of mind, judgment, and sagacity, that could be expected from innocence and ability. His children were placed beside him, as he was thus defending his life, and the cause of his royal master. After he had, in a long and eloquent speech, delivered without premeditation, confuted all the accusations of his enemies, he thus drew to a conclusion. " But, my lords, I have troubled you too long : longer than I should have

done, but for the sake of these dear pledges, which a saint in heaven has left me."—Upon this he paused ; dropped a tear ; looked upon his children ; and proceeded—" What I forfeit for myself is a trifle : that my indiscretions should reach my posterity, wounds me to the heart. Pardon my infirmity : something I should have added, but I am not able ; and therefore I let it pass. And now, my lords, for myself. I have long been taught that the afflictions of this life are overpaid by that eternal weight of glory, which awaits the innocent. And so, my lords, even so, with the utmost tranquillity, I submit myself to your judgment, whether that judgment be life or death ; not my will, but thine, O God, be done !"

His eloquence and innocence induced those judges to pity, who were the most zealous to condemn him. The king himself went to the house of lords, and spoke for some time in his defence ; but the spirit of vengeance, which had been chained for eleven years, was now roused ; and nothing but his blood could give the people satisfaction. He was condemned by both houses of parliament ; and nothing remained but for the king to give his consent to the bill of attainder. But in the present commotions, the consent of the king would very easily be dispensed with ; and imminent danger might attend his refusal. Charles, however, who loved Stafford tenderly, hesitated, and seemed reluctant ; trying every expedient to put off so dreadful an office, as that of signing the warrant for his execution. While

he continued in this agitation of mind, and state of suspense, his doubts were at last silenced by an act of great magnanimity in the condemned lord. He received a letter from that unfortunate nobleman, desiring that his life might be made a sacrifice, to obtain reconciliation between the king and his people : adding that he was prepared to die ; and that to a willing mind there could be no injury. This instance of noble generosity was but ill repaid by his master, who complied with his request. He consented to sign the fatal bill by commission : and Stafford was beheaded on Tower-hill ; behaving with all that composed dignity of resolution, which was expected from his character.

GOLDSMITH.

CHARACTER OF JAMES I. KING OF ENGLAND.

No prince, so little enterprising and so inoffensive, was ever so much exposed to the opposite extremes of calumny and flattery, of satire and panegyric. And the factions which began in his time, being still continued, have made his character be as much disputed to this day, as is commonly that of princes who are our contemporaries. Many virtues, however, it must be owned, he was possessed of ; but not one of them pure, or free from the contagion of the neighboring vices. His generosity bordered on profusion, his learning on pedantry, his pacific disposition on pusillanimity, his wisdom on cunning, his friendship on light fancy and boyish fondness. While he imagined that he was only maintaining his own

authority, he may perhaps be suspected in some of his actions, and still more of his pretensions, to have encroached on the liberties of his people. While he endeavoured, by an exact neutrality, to acquire the good will of all his neighbors, he was able to preserve fully the esteem and regard of none. His capacity was considerable, but fitter to discourse on general maxims, than to conduct any intricate business.

His intentions were just, but more adapted to the conduct of private life, than to the government of kingdoms. Awkward in his person, and ungainly in his manners, he was ill qualified to command respect; partial and undiscerning in his affections, he was little fitted to acquire general love. Of a feeble temper, more than of a frugal judgment; exposed to our ridicule from his vanity, but exempt from our hatred by his freedom from pride and arrogance. And, upon the whole, it may be pronounced of his character, that all his qualities were sullied with weakness, and embellished by humanity. Political courage he was certainly devoid of; and thence chiefly is derived the strong prejudice, which prevails against his personal bravery; an inference, however, which must be owned, from general experience, to be extremely fallacious.

HUME.

THE CLOSE OF LIFE.

When we contemplate the close of life; the termination of man's designs and hopes: the silence that now reigns among those who,

a little while ago, were so busy, or so gay: who can avoid being touched with sensations at once awful and tender? What heart but then warms with the glow of humanity? In whose eye does not the tear gather, on revolving the fate of passing and short lived man?

Behold the poor man, who lays down at last the burden of his wearisome life. No more shall he groan under the load of poverty and toil. No more shall he hear the insolent calls of the master, from whom he received his scanty wages. No more shall he be raised from needful slumber on his bed of straw, nor be hurried away from his homely meal, to undergo the repeated labours of the day. While his humble grave is preparing, and a few poor and decayed neighbours are carrying him thither, it is good for us to think, that this man too was our brother; that for him the aged and destitute wife, and the needy children, now weep; that, neglected as he was by the world, he possessed, perhaps, both a sound understanding and a worthy heart; and is now carried by angels to rest in Abraham's bosom.— At no great distance from him, the grave is opened to receive the rich and proud man. For, as it is said with emphasis in the parable, "the rich man also died, and was buried." He also died. His riches prevented not his sharing the same fate with the poor man; perhaps through luxury they accelerated his doom. Then, indeed, "the mourners go about the streets;" and while, in all the pomp and magnificence of woe, his funeral is

preparing, his heirs, impatient to examine his will, are looking on one another with jealous eyes, and already beginning to dispute about the division of his substance.—One day, we see carried along the coffin of the smiling infant; the flower just nipped as it began to blossom in the parent's view: and the next day we behold the young man, or young woman, of blooming form and promising hopes, laid in an untimely grave. While the funeral is attended by a numerous unconcerned company, who are discoursing with one another about the news of the day, or the ordinary affairs of life, let our thoughts rather follow to the house of mourning, and represent to themselves what is passing there. There we should see a disconsolate family, sitting in silent grief, thinking of the sad breach that is made in their little society; and with tears in their eyes, looking to the chamber that is now left vacant, and to every memorial that presents itself of their departed friend. By such attention to the woes of others, the selfish hardness of our hearts will be gradually softened, and melted down into humanity.

THE PLANETARY AND TERRESTRIAL WORLDS COMPARATIVELY CONSIDERED.

To us who dwell on its surface, the earth is by far the most extensive orb that our eyes can any where behold: it is also clothed with verdure, distinguished by trees and adorned with a variety of beautiful decorations; whereas, to a spectator placed on one of the plan-

ets, it wears a uniform aspect: looks all luminous; and no larger than a spot. To beings who dwell at still greater distances, it entirely disappears. That which we call alternately the morning and the evening star, (as in one part of the orbit she rides foremost in the procession of night, in the other ushers in and anticipates the dawn,) is a planetary world. This planet, and the four others that so wonderfully vary their mystic dance, are in themselves dark bodies, and shine only by reflection; have fields, and seas and skies of their own; are furnished with all accommodations for animal subsistence, and are supposed to be the abodes of intellectual life; all which, together with our earthly habitation, are dependent on that grand dispenser of Divine munificence, the sun; receive their light from the distribution of his rays, and derive their comfort from his benign agency.

The sun, which seems to perform its daily stages through the sky, is in this respect fixed and immoveable: it is the great axle of heaven, about which the globe we inhabit, and other more spacious orbs, wheel their stated courses. The sun, though seemingly smaller than the dial it illuminates, is abundantly larger than this whole earth, on which so many lofty mountains rise, and such vast oceans roll. A line extending from side to side through the centre of that resplendent orb, would measure more than eight hundred thousand miles: a girdle formed to go round its circumference, would require a length of millions. Were its

solid contents to be estimated, the account would overwhelm our understanding, and be almost beyond the power of language to express. Are we startled at these reports of philosophy ! Are we ready to cry out in a transport of surprise, " How mighty is the being who kindled so prodigious a fire ; and keeps alive, from age to age, so enormous a mass of flame !" let us attend our philosophical guides, and we shall be brought acquainted with speculations more enlarged and more inflaming.

This sun, with all its attendant planets, is but a very little part of the grand machine of the universe : every star, though in appearance no bigger than the diamond that glitters upon a lady's ring, is really a vast globe, like the sun in size and glory ; no less spacious, no less luminous, than the radiant source of day. So that every star, is not barely a world, but the centre of a magnificent system ; has a retinue of words, irradiated by its beams, and revolving round its attractive influence, all which are lost to our sight in unmeasurable wilds of ether. That the stars appear like so many diminutive, and scarcely distinguishable points, is owing to their immense and inconceivable distance. Immense and inconceivable indeed it is, since a ball, shot from the loaded cannon, and flying with unabated rapidity, must travel, at this impetuous rate, almost seven hundred thousand years, before it could reach the nearest of these twinkling luminaries.

While, beholding this vast expanse, I learn my own extreme meanness, I would also dis-

cover the abject littleness of all terrestrial things. What is the earth with all her ostentatious scenes, compared with this astonishingly grand furniture of the skies ? What, but a dim speck, hardly perceivable in the map of the universe ? It is observed by a very judicious writer, that if the sun himself, which enlightens this part of the creation, were extinguished, and all the host of planetary worlds, which move about him, were annihilated, they would not be missed by an eye, that can take in the whole compass of nature, any more than a grain of sand upon the sea shore. The bulk of which they consist, and the space which they occupy, are so exceedingly little in comparison of the whole, that their loss would scarcely leave a blank in the immensity of God's works. If then, not our globe only, but this whole system, be so very diminutive, what is a kingdom or a country ? What are a few lordships, or the so much admired patrimonies of those who are styled wealthy ? When I measure them with my own little pittance, they swell into proud and bloated dimensions : but when I take the universe for my standard, how scanty is their size ! how contemptible their figure ! They shrink into pompous nothings.

ADDISON.

FINIS.

Just published and for sale at Potter's Bookstore, Poughkeepsie, (N. Y.) and at all the principal Bookstores in the United States,

AN EASY GRAMMAR OF GEOGRAPHY.

Accompanied with an Atlas of seven Maps.

By JACOB WILLETT'S.

The Geography and Atlas sell at the very moderate price of *Seven Dollars and Fifty Cents the Dozen*, and retail at *Seventy five Cents*.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORK.

MR. DANIEL H. BARNES, A. M. Principal of Dutchess County Academy, whose reputation as a public Teacher of Youth, stands as high as that of any man in the state, has politely communicated to us his opinion, in the following note—

Poughkeepsie, 2d June, 1814.

MR. POTTER,

I have received a copy of your "*Easy Grammar of Geography*," and in answer to the request therewith communicated, I am happy to inform you, that the book, as to its plan and arrangement, meets my *entire approbation*. The method of placing the *exercises* immediately after each principal division of the globe, and making them to include all the important facts previously laid down, appears to be admirably calculated to facilitate the rapid and correct progress of the students. The propriety of closing with astronomy is obvious. The maps are neatly executed, and being bound separately from the book, will be highly useful and convenient. I do not hesitate to say, that in my estimation, this compendium of Geography, is preferable as a first book, to any which I have seen. I shall adopt it immediately in my department, and recommend it to the associated masters in this institution.

Yours respectfully,

D. H. BARNES.

MR. Andrew Beers, from whom the following note has been received, is now engaged in the arduous and important undertaking of writing a Gazetteer of his native state, Connecticut, similar in plan to Spafford's.

DANBURY, 14th July, 1814.

MR. POTTER,

SIR—I have thoroughly examined Mr. Willett's "*Easy Grammar of Geography*" with the accompanying Atlas, published by you; and I might with much propriety (if needful) enter into the particulars of its high merits and great utility; but suffice it to say, that I have been an old teacher, in the usual mode of Geography and Astronomy, and I am now constrained to say, that I regret the many days,

months, and I may even say years, I have spent in teaching according to the usual Books, only for the want of just such a one as you have hit upon. For young pupils it certainly exceeds any thing of the kind I ever saw. To study Geography and Astronomy without *Maps, Figures, &c.* is as absurd as to teach a child to call over the Alphabet without seeing the shape of the letters. The convenience of having the Atlas by itself is obvious, as it must be constantly used in search for an answer to every question, which I readily conceive will be a kind of pleasing labour to the scholar, and soon make him a proficient in Geography.

Yours, &c.

ANDREW BEERS.

The following letter is from the author of the *Gazetteer of the State of New-York*.

Albany, 7th Mo. 4, 1814.

Esteemed Friend,

I have examined thy "*EASY GRAMMAR OF GEOGRAPHY*" and the '*ATLAS*,' with some care. For an elementary book, in common schools, the plan meets my entire approbation; and so far as I have been able to observe, it is very well executed. Being a cheap and useful book, it ought to, and probably will, find its way into every school in the state. I had been long since solicited, by several persons employed in the instruction of youth, to write a work of this kind, on the same plan, and am very happy to see that my prospective labor may be dispensed with. Wishing thee very great success in thy literary enterprise,

I remain thy friend,

HORATIO GATES SPAFFORD.

Paraclete. Potter.

MR. R. O. K. BENNETT, from whom the following letter has been received, is a teacher of the first standing and respectability, who has for many years been employed in the city of Albany.

ALBANY, June 24, 1814.

Dear Sir—Your "*Easy Grammar of Geography*," and accompanying Atlas, have been duly received. As an elementary book, it is justly entitled to a preference to any I have seen on the subject. It supplies what has long been wanting in common schools and academies, and what I have frequently heard called for—an easy epitome of Geography, at a moderate price, and on a plan calculated to exercise the ingenuity, as well as the memory of pupils. Thoroughly convinced of its utility, I shall lose no time in introducing it into my school; and shall be much rejoiced to find it soon in general use. The astonishing and truly gratifying changes which have taken place in the political aspect of Europe, will render it necessary for the compiler to make in a second edition (which I hope a discerning public will soon call for) some trifling alterations. Wishing you all the success to which the merits of this book justly entitle you, I remain,

Your obliged humble servant, R. O. K. BENNETT.

MR. P. POTTER.

Mr. John Griscom, a Teacher of the first respectability in the city of New-York, has favored us with the following note.

I have examined an "Easy Grammar of Geography" prepared by Jacob Willetts, and do not hesitate to say, that the author, in my opinion, has fully attained the object he had in view; viz. to improve the popular little work of Goldsmith, and especially to adapt it more completely to the youth of this country. Thus improved, I consider it as one of the best Geographical compends for the use of American Schools, which has yet been published.

JNO. GRISCOM.

New York, 7 mo. 9th, 1814.

The REV. JOHN REED, A. M. Rector of Christ's Church, in the village of Poughkeepsie, has favored us with his opinion as follows—

"I have examined Mr. Willetts' "EASY GRAMMAR OF GEOGRAPHY," together with the Maps accompanying it, and think it decidedly the best compendium of Geography for common schools yet presented to the public."



ALSO,

Just published by P. POTTER, and for sale at his Bookstore in Poughkeepsie, and at the principal Bookstores in the United States,

The Scholar's Arithmetic,

For the use of schools in the United States:—By Jacob Willetts, author of "An Easy Grammar of Geography," &c.

Extract from the Compiler's Preface.

After stating that some improvement has been attempted in arranging his work, and *simplifying* the Rules, the Compiler says, "But the improvement upon which the compiler places his principal reliance, as giving his work a decided superiority over any other work of the kind, is the questions which he has introduced on the different rules. These questions, if properly used, cannot fail to be of important service in giving the learner a perfect understanding of Arithmetic. Indeed it is believed that no method hitherto devised, is so effectual for making the scholar thoroughly master of his studies, as that of requiring him to answer questions, embracing all the important particulars of what he has been learning. Experience has proved the utility of this method in the study of Geography, and the compiler of the following work, is sanguine in the belief, that it will not only be found equally useful in conducting learners to a knowledge of Arithmetic, but that it may be advantageously introduced into most other studies."