

body, and being resolved, as it were, into pure intellect, is proud, metaphysical, unmeaning jargon : but to abstract ourselves from the prejudices and habits, and pleasures and business of the world, is no more than many are, though all are not capable of doing ; they, who can do this, who can become weaned from the world, and content themselves to spend a portion of their lives in solitude, may in their retreat elevate their souls to a higher station, and may thence take such a view of the world as the second Scipio took in his dream from the seats of the blessed, when the whole earth appeared so little to him that he could scarcely discern that speck of dirt, the Roman Empire. Such a view as this will increase our knowledge by showing us our ignorance, and will teach us to establish our peace of mind where alone it can rest securely in resignation. Such a view will render life more agreeable, and death less terrible. The idea of God, and the precepts of his holy religion (says a celebrated writer,) are never so little remembered as in the ordinary intercourse of society. Engaged in a multitude of absurd pursuits, intranced in the delirium of gaiety, inflamed by the continual ebriety which raises the passions and stimulates the desires, every connection between God and man is dissolved, the bright and noble faculty of reason obscured, and even the great and important duties of religion, the only source of true felicity, totally obliterated from the mind or remembered only with levity. On the contrary, he who, entering into a serious self-examination, elevates his thoughts in silence towards his God.

In the last moments of this life, it is certain that we all wish we had passed our days in great privacy and solitude, in stricter intimacy with ourselves, and in closer communion with God. Pressed by the recollections of our errors, we then clearly perceive that they were occasioned by not having shunned the snares of the world, and by not having watched with sufficient care over the inclinations of our hearts. Oppose the sentiments of a solitary man, who has passed his life in pious conference with God, to those which occupy a worldly mind, forgetful of its Creator, and sacrificing its dearest interests to the enjoyment of the moment : compare the character of a wise man, who reflects in silence on the importance of eternity, with that of a fashionable being, who consumes his time in the idle amusements of the world ;