

The next applicant appears with a frowning brow, and a discontented, clouded aspect; his temper is sullen and obstinate, or fretful and irritable: he wishes to know if any thing agreeable will ever befall him, for at present he has known only unhappiness. Alas! nothing but unhappiness can I predict to him. He may grow rich and prosper in the world, but he will ever "dwell in Meshech;" his family will dread, and his neighbours dislike him; and his gold, will never purchase that ease and content which is the reward of good nature only.

Another inquirer I shall suppose to be an undutiful son, who has ever rewarded his parent's care and kindness with neglect, disrespect and disobedience. Now, on this case, I can pronounce with a greater degree of certainty than on any of the preceding. Some faults never appear to meet their proper punishment in this world; but it is a common remark, founded on long observation, that unkindness to parents, above all other crimes, reaps its reward even here. This youth then, if he becomes a parent, will be taught by refractory, rebellious children, the anguish he has inflicted on his own parent. A rebellious son, an ungrateful daughter, must expect in due time to become an unhappy father, or despised mother.

Another informs me he has had a religious education, and that he is in a great degree aware of the importance of religion, and of the value of his soul; moreover, he intends before long to give it the attention it demands; but hitherto he has delayed to do so, from time to time, hoping it would be less difficult at some future period, than it appears now; so that, at present, he is as far from being truly religious, as he was when first he began to think upon the subject. Now, it requires little sagacity to foresee the probable consequences of this temper. I solemnly warn him that the same disposition that has hitherto prevailed, will, unless strongly counteracted, continue and increase; while he is intending and purposing, his heart will grow harder and harder, until it will finally be said of him, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"

I fear I shall be regarded as a gloomy prognosticator; but I dare not depart from the rules of my art, which are founded on universal experience, and on the established laws of cause and effect. However, lest I be thought too discouraging, I am happy to proclaim, that these destinies are, by no means, at present, to be considered as unchangeable. On the contrary, if the indolent should be roused by a dread of the consequences awaiting his disposition, to become active and industrious,—the extravagant, moderate and frugal,—the indulgent, self-denying and abstemious,—the ill-tempered, mild and amiable,—the undutiful, affectionate and tractable,—and if the

procrastinator resolve at once, that he will serve the Lord,—then it is obvious, that all my dark predictions will be immediately reversed.

For instance; let us suppose an inquirer of a different description to any of the foregoing. A modest ingenuous youth now approaches, wishing to know what encouragement he may expect in his exertions. He confesses that he is not gifted with superior talents, and therefore does not hope to arrive at any distinguished eminence. It appears however, that he early acquired habits of attention and industry; that he has courage and perseverance to press forward in his undertakings, in spite of difficulties, till he has conquered them; that although his real wants are amply supplied, he has been trained in frugality and self-denial; therefore his wishes are few and moderate, so that he has always his mite to spare for the poor and destitute. He cannot boast of rich or powerful patrons, but his temper is sweet, and his manners obliging, by which he obtains the good will of his neighbours; moreover, he is a good son and a kind brother: and having been taught that "the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord," he has already found "His ways to be pleasantness, and his paths peace." Now, without presuming to guess whether this will be a rich man, I hesitate not to pronounce him a happy one: he may encounter difficulties, and pass through trials, but "his bread will be given him, and his water will be sure;" especially "that bread which he casts upon the waters will return" to him, when it is wanted, though "after many days." It is besides this, more than probable, that he will eventually be successful even in his temporal affairs; that he will be "blessed in his basket and his store;" rear an affectionate family; be beloved by his friends, and respected by all; finally, he will die in peace, and at last "enter into the joy of his Lord."

It is not unusual for fortune-tellers to predict the day of death; and although, as I said, I make no such pretensions, it may yet be expected that I should not be totally silent on the subject. And while they who presume to do so are miserable deceivers, I can with the most absolute certainty foretell what is much more important to know, namely, that "it is appointed unto all men once to die;" the day and hour is indeed unknown: and yet each one may, for himself, look forward to a period not very distant, when he may be quite certain that he shall have reached his "long home." To know that we must die one day, is a far more interesting fact, than to know *what* day; and this is a circumstance which, surely, we may all foretell for ourselves.

Is it not strange, that the grandest event of our existence,—that part of our fortunes which it is of infinitely greater consequence we should foreknow than whether we are to

be princes or beggars,—we should so seldom inquire about, although it is more easily ascertained than any question respecting our temporal affairs?—I mean, whether we are going to heaven or hell! Now to know this, we have only to ask whether or not we are Christians: if conscience allows us humbly to hope that we are so, in the scriptural sense of the word, then we are sure that the Lord is gone "to prepare a place for us" among the "many mansions in his father's house." But if we know that we are not true Christians, nor earnestly striving to become such, then, the awful probability is, that we are doomed to the place "prepared for the devil and his angels."

A new year is now commencing, let every one inquire how they have begun it. Is it with a resolution to make renewed efforts to overcome their bad habits, and to improve their manners and characters? and have they actually begun to make such efforts? then I prophesy a happy new year to them; and that if they persevere in their resolutions it will be the happiest they have ever known; but if on the contrary they are beginning it in the old way,—not more attentive to business, nor watchful of their tempers and conduct, nor more concerned for their intellectual and religious improvement than heretofore; then, although they may very likely have had a merry Christmas, I cannot wish them a happy new year, because I know it would be in vain to do so. For the saying is as true as it is trite, that to be happy we must be good. The knowledge of this, is, in fact the grand secret of my art, and it is by consulting this simple rule, that every man may be his own fortune-teller.

NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

"A happy New-year to you, little Readers?"

Thank you, Sir!

Stop a little. I want to talk with you, about a few things of some importance. Now let me have your attention,—This is New-Year's Day—how many years have you passed already?

Six—Seven—Eight—Nine—Ten—Eleven—Twelve.

Well then, let me enquire what account you are prepared to give of time *past*? How have these years been spent?

Why do you hang down your heads, and why are you silent? can none of you give a good account of yourselves?

Still no answer.

Alas! alas! I must then suppose that you know you have not improved your past time as you ought. I trust, however, you are sorry for it; your silence seems to show that you feel shame, and if you think aright you will feel sorrow too. Now only look back and think of six—seven—eight—nine—ten—eleven—twelve years unimproved. Why, in a few years you will no longer be