

HUMAN NATURE UNCHANGING.

WHAT a stable thing human nature is after all. Men still make love, still hate, still lie and cheat, still deceive themselves and others, and finally die, as did their ancestors centuries ago. Two selections from the works of Joseph Hall, an eminent English divine, contemporary with Shakespere and Bacon, so well illustrate this fact that we cannot resist the temptation of quoting them. They describe,—and in a manner worthy Shakespere himself,—the character of the Hypocrite and Busy-body.

THE HYPOCRITE.

“A hypocrite is the worst kind of player, by so much that he acts the better part; which hath always two faces, oftentimes two hearts: that can compose his forehead to sadness and gravity, while he bids his heart be wanton and careless within, and in the meantime, laughs within himself to think how smoothly he hath cozened the beholder. In whose silent face are written the characters of religion, which his tongue and gestures pronounce, but his hands recant. That hath a clean face and garment, with a foul soul; whose mouth belies his heart, and his fingers belie his mouth. Walking early up into the city, he turns into the great church, and salutes one of the pillars on one knee, worshipping that God which at home he cares not for, while his eye is fixed on some window or some passenger, and his heart knows not whither his lips go.

He rises, and looking about with admiration, complains of our frozen charity and commends the ancient. At church he will ever sit where he may be seen best, and in the midst of the sermon pulls out his tables in haste, as if he feared to lose that note; while he writes either his forgotten errand or nothing. Then he turns his Bible with a noise, to seek an omitted quotation, and folds the leaf as if he had found it, and asks aloud the name of the preacher, whom he publicly salutes, thanks and praises in an honest mouth. He can command tears when he speaks of his youth, indeed, because it is past, not because it was sinful; himself is now better but the times are worse. All other sins he reckons up with detestation, while he loves and hides his darling one in his bosom; all his speech returns to himself, and every occurrence draws in a story to his own praise. When he should give he looks about him, and says, Who sees me? No alms nor prayers fall from him without a witness; belike lest God should deny that He hath received them; and when he hath done, lest the world should not know it, his own mouth is his trumpet to proclaim it. In brief, he is the stranger's saint, the neighbor's disease, the blot of goodness, a rotten stick in a dark night, the poppy in a cornfield, an ill-