

because it has not yet come to its age of discretion and choice. The weeds, you see, have taken the liberty to grow, and I thought it unfair to prejudice the soil towards roses or strawberries." ; the practical joke was more demonstrative than a score of arguments to the mind of the sophist.

So, then, thou art set as the guide and guardian to thy tender ones ; to plant, to prune, to water, and to weed. "For if the field be not tilled every day," said Bishop Hall, "it will run to thistles. This work must be continual, or it speedeth not." Then, as a landmark on a hill, they will observe and copy thee in all things. And of thee they must learn, even in their cradles, the duties of obedience, devotion, and belief. The seeds of first instructions are dropped into the deepest furrows ; therefore never let them recollect the time when good thoughts were strangers to their minds. It is an unfortunate feature of fallen humanity, that evil tendencies are the most active, and the most easily developed. The diviner parts of the character are easily subjugated by the vicious and the sensual ; therefore let not the observant and curious appetite of youth be fed on poison or on garbage, lest truth and virtue are banished from its presence. They will find apt scholars in the school of folly, or of vice ; and, hus- tling as may be the sentiment in the ears of philosophers and sentimentalists, it is too true, that early and evil habits soon cling and the willing-like captive, and clustering weeds impede the way of the virtues.

An affecting illustration of this aptitude to evil occurred some months since to the writer. Wishing to renew her acquaintance with an old schoolfellow who had lately come to reside in her neighborhood, she made her a morning visit. Her youthful friend had become a wife and a mother. Her children naturally became the objects of inquiry and interest ; and at the especial request of the visitor, they were brought from the nursery to the drawing-room. Dressed for their *debut*, they entered. Curled, combed, and equipped for conquest ; creatures so fairy-like and beautiful, that a mother's eye might well beam with pleasure as she looked on their infantine loveliness. So quiet, so gentle, and so tutored were they in their mien ; so soft the pale blue eye, and so glossy flaxen ringlets, that the timid hare would scarce have started at their approach, or the butterfly fled from their tiny reach. Let the reader imagine how admiration and affection were speedily exchanged for pity and sorrow, when the little