

The state of mind which immediately ensues from the loss of a friend or endeared relative, has never perhaps been fully estimated either in the pulpit or in the study. One mistake prevails universally—a supposition that it is for our own loss and damage that we shed these burning tears. “Consider,” cry those who mean to console us, “that you have many blessings left behind, which ought to make this bereavement seem of the less account.” Alas, it is not for ourselves that we grieve—it is for the dead. Absurd as the feeling may be, we melt in overpowering sympathy with those who are now beyond all pain and sorrow—we compassionate them for the awful calamity which has befallen them—we grudge to see ourselves so happy as still to possess life and health, and the power of enjoying this too dear world, while they have been so signally unfortunate as to lose all—and, though religion may busy itself to point out the probability of an improvement in their state, still it is for the disaster of death, which we have seen our friend encounter, with all its harrowing circumstances, that we chiefly weep. Perfect reason may condemn this conduct; but it is so natural, and at the same time connected with so many of the better affections, and so useful, we are persuaded, in palliating the horrors of death, that we cannot wish it to be otherwise. The expectation that our decease will be beheld with a kind sympathy by some who are destined to survive us, is not what ought to be our chief support against the terrors of that crisis; but it may tend materially to soothe life in its decline, and eventually to cheer the gloomy hour itself—and who, since such is the case, could wish it to be precluded?

Of this feeling of sympathy for the deceased, the tender recollection of them at a later period is just a continuation. We cease to regret so deeply the actual calamity of death; the agonising distresses of the scene revisit us less frequently in our sleeping and waking hours; the fierce and raging grief fades gradually away. Then, however, dawns the moonlight of a gentler sorrow. We start in the midst of a cheering domestic scene, and regret that *he* is not here to participate in it. The thought suddenly strikes us, in the busy marts of the world, that all this is what *he* once formed a part of, but will mingle in no more—it is still the same, but that *he* is not of it. We sit in the solitude of twilight chambers, and, looking forth upon the stars, as they one by one step out upon the threshold of night, reflect that he but as yesterday could behold them, and speculate upon their nature and purposes, as we do now—but since then has been huddled away into oblivion, while *they* continue shining on and on with the majestic continuity of inanimate existences. The idea of his re-appearing as usual before our eyes, will for months—perhaps, in some cases, for years—intrude at times upon the imagination; and still, when reason comes in to dash the vision, the regretful feeling will arise—he comes not, he cannot come again. This habit, however, lingers long, and is loath to part. Even after it has been banished from our daily thoughts, it will cling to the dreams of night—and thus, as it were by a refractive power of the intellect, is the image of the departed kept up before us. We see him enter, and take his usual place; we hear him speak; we address him, and are replied to; we do not remember that he is dead, but yet there is something not earthly about him—the glimmering pallor of a dream—and his speech and deportment are not like those which characterised him in life. The vision at length departs, and, though it leaves tears and terror behind, how fondly do we wish that it had staid! Often in this manner does the bereaved mother strain her lost child once more to her beating bosom. Nature in this case finds unusual difficulty in forgetting the lost one. The infant is a part of the mother's very existence—is connected by ties which none but herself can feel or comprehend; and when she sends it away to the grave, she does something which her reason will hardly convince her to be a reality. One who had suffered this dreadful calamity,

and just at that period in the life of the infant when in general it is most endeared to the parents, used to relate that for a long period she saw her child once more almost every night. Sometimes the endeared vision was presented to her in one way, and sometimes in another; but on all occasions the infant appeared to be alive. In one particular instance, she conceived that she was led to see the grave in a lonely churchyard. It was one of many such little mounds which filled the place, and beside which stood many other mothers, in the same situation with herself. Presently, the graves were all opened, and the children came forth to play. She and the other mothers surveyed the scene with pleasure inexpressible; but yet, in all their sports, the infants did not appear to be naturally alive, nor did the mothers seem to understand that life was there, or that they had regained their lost treasures. It was only a pageant, vouchsafed to satisfy so far the yearnings of affection; the scene was still a churchyard, and in the same place they knew it would end. Accordingly, when the proper time had come, each mother took her own child, wrapped it tenderly in its sepulchral attire, and with her own hands replaced it in the grave; after which, they all slowly and mournfully withdrew. The dreamer then awoke, as she usually did after such visions, in tears.

The preservation of the memories of lost friends is not only a good exercise for the affections, and the source of a pleasing hope to all who are yet to die, but it is calculated to have a soothing and refining effect upon those who reasonably indulge it. Our departed friends always appear to us in the light of beings removed to a purer existence and a higher state of intelligence, so as to be enabled to see and judge correctly of all our thoughts and actions. If we bear them any respect, we will hesitate, under this ideal censorship, to do things which are unworthy of us, and for which, perhaps, the present world has no punishment. We will try, on the contrary, to be as pure in thought and deed as possible, in order that we may be the more pleasing to those who, we conceive, are altogether pure, and whose esteem we naturally desire to conciliate. In the midst, too, of the bustle and shock of the present life, when little interests and petty jealousies are rearing themselves like serpents in our hearts, how salutary to reflect that all the advantages we can now seek either to gain or to defend, are but trash and dross in the estimation of these from whom we lately parted, and in no long time will be the same in our own. Are we provided with a large share of such goods as this world has to give, then will we controul our appreciation of them, by reflecting of how little account they will be when we have rejoined those friends in another world. Are we poor, and injured, and friendless, then will the recollection of our departed friends tend to cheer us, by presenting the idea of their superiority to all such evils—a superiority soon to be our own.

EDUCATION.

A child is born—now take the germ, and make it
A bud of moral beauty. Let the dew
Of knowledge, and the light of virtue, wake it
In richest fragrance and in purest hues;
When passion's gust, and sorrow's tempest shake it,
The shelter of affection ne'er refuse,
For soon the gathering hand of death will break it
From its weak stem of life—and it shall lose
All power to charm; but if that lovely flower
Hath swell'd one pleasure, or subdued one pain,
O who shall say that it has lived in vain,
However fugitive its breathing hour?
For virtue leaves its sweets wherever tasted,
And scattered truth is never, never wasted.