

to heaven the impress of its purity. Whosoever complains of the *tedium* of life, that his days are monotonous and his actions without excitement, here is an object which will banish languor forever, before whose absorbing interests days will dwindle to hours, the vexations & time lose half their power to grieve—an object which, while it seems to contract existence into a term too brief for its accomplishment, invest it with inconceivable interest and importance.

Who does not sometimes lose himself in dreams of perfection—fancying his character adorned by virtues—ennobled by moral dignity; but here imagination stops—it is for reason to urge us, with energy, to embody the vision in our practice, that we may not be virtuous only in fancy, but cherish the instinct which weaves those dreams of excellence, not by its vain indulgence, but by exciting the best powers of the soul—to be, indeed, what we have only imagined ourselves. In the Grecian games, the crown for which the candidates contended was elevated to their view, to inspire elevation, and arouse the flagging hope; thus the improvement of our character, with its high rewards, its sustaining motives, are a prize held out to the mind, beside whose inestimable worth, the wreaths of fame, the diadems of honour, appear paltry as faded leaves and gilded tinsel.

But at the very first step we meet a serious difficulty; while we have been reposing in mental sloth, evil habits have been twining around us their strong though tiny cords, and it requires but little reflection to learn how even reason may be bribed when custom pleads. It were needless to speak of the force with which habit acts upon the character, and the vigilance with which we should guard against the formation of such as are prejudicial to the liberty of the soul. Every one knows and feels this, for there are few so blest as to be able to look upon the past, without deploring the deleterious influence of some wrong habit of thought or action. It is more important to observe that mighty as this power is, it can be successfully resisted and broken. A vicious bias may be fostered until it becomes as it were a law of our nature, till we seem to others, and to ourselves, its slave and victim; but we are only enthralled while we are willing slaves; the moment a desire to resist the tyrant enters our mind, one link of the fetter that bound us is severed. The faintest throb of the heart for freedom, even when entangled in the most degrading bonds, is a healthful pulse, and indicates returning strength. We should hail it as an angel appearing to unbar our prison doors, and cherish it, until ripened into resolution, it lent us energy to reassert our moral independence. No individual, however overpowered by the cruel mastery of pernicious habits, has a right to conclude that for him there is no hope;—heaven does not pass upon him this sentence, for it permits him to live. None have the hardihood to deny the physical ability of abstaining from evil. When Napoleon was asked if he deemed it possible to cure a long cherished habit, he replied, as easily as you can submit to the amputation of a limb,—a fine remark, which he drew perhaps unconsciously from very high authority. But while we save the frame, all are willing to part with one of its most useful members; few act on the same wise principle in mental diseases. Neither may such a person say that he has not the moral power to retrieve himself to virtue; while there remains one accusing thought, one desire of better things, all is not lost; unsettled as must be the state of a mind debased and crushed by lawless passions, hardened into habit, yet hope, which comes to all, may come to him. If the kindness of Heaven has not been withheld through a course of vicious perseverance, we may hope for its continuance and propitious regards, when with a vigorous effort we break through every difficulty and endeavour to retrace our erring steps. The spectacle of an immortal and once noble spirit, struggling to free itself from the toils of guilt, and escape the moral death of degradation, must be one which enlists the sympathies not only of benevolent

hearts on earth, but awakens the interests of those holy intelligences, who, we are taught, receive such occasions of joy at the return to happiness of the humblest child of earth.

While it is conceded that our way is environed by many dangers, and that solicitations to evil meet us at every turn of life, clothed in alluring forms, yet the inducements to virtuous practices and religious excellence are also strong and numerous. They call in him who, wandering from the path of rectitude, casts himself from even the sympathies of his kind, and bid him hope.—They urge those who, though preserving exterior propriety, are conscious that all is not peace within, to awake their powers and exert their strength in the noble controversy, and they propose no less a reward than the enjoyment of true pleasure. In the allegory of Socrates, pleasure and pain, though contrary in their nature, and though their faces look different ways, are supposed to be tied by Jupiter, together, so that he that lays hold of the one draws the other along with it. This may well apply to the mixed and fleeting joys of sense; but the happiness which we receive from virtue is pure and lasting as it is precious; she never was allied to suffering, and brings no sorrow in her train. Bosom peace, sustaining hope, benevolent wishes, regulated desires, placid tempers and pure thoughts—these are at once the motives and the rewards extended to man by that beneficent Power whose bounty crowns the effort which his goodness excited and sustained.

THE SWEDISH GIRL.

[Previous to the departure of Baron de Stael from Sweden, he was enamoured of his second cousin, a beautiful girl, whom he promised to marry; but after the offers received by him from the Neckar family, he wrote to inform her of the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, and that his union with a lady whom he did not love would be the means of raising his family from poverty and obscurity. His cousin, without any answer, returned him his marriage promise, stained with her tears, and in seven weeks she was a corpse.]

Even to pause on such a thought!
How could it cross his mind!
Vain honours traffick'd for and bought,
With happiness resigned!
And love like mine cast meekly by,
At cold ambition's call!
My heart, be calm!—why should I sigh?
Tears, tears, why will ye fall?
The Swedish girl should scorn to stand
'Tween him and his adopted land.

For him what could I not have borne,
What wo or poverty!
And rich in love, have smiled in scorn,
When heartless wealth rolled by.
I would have urged him up the steep,
Where hangs the noblest crown
Honour may gain, or virtue keep,
An honest man's renown;
Soothed him when yielding to his toils,
And brightened each success with smiles.

Yet why thus linger o'er a dream
That my fond spirit bound,
But lent my soul no cheering beam
To light the darkness round!
Well, be it so—I may not speak
What stirs within my heart;
The fetter'd spirit soon will break
Through all things, and depart—