

## THE PROCRASTINATOR.

Being overtaken by a shower in Kensington Gardens, I sought shelter in one of the alcoves near the palace. I was scarcely seated, when the storm burst with all its fury; and I observed an old fellow, who had been loitering till the hurricane whistled round his ears, making towards me, as rapidly as his apparently palsied limbs would permit. Upon his nearer approach, he appeared rather to have suffered from infirmity than from age. He wore a brownish black coat, or rather shell, which, from its dimensions, had never been intended for the wearer; and his features were truly inexpressible.--"So," said I, as he seated himself on the bench, and shook the rim from his old broad-brimmed hat, "you see, old boy, 'Procrastination is the thief of time,' the clouds give you a hint of what was coming, but you seemed not to take it." "It is," replied he eagerly. "Doctor Young is in the right. Procrastination has been my curse since I was in leading-strings. It has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. It has ever been my besetting sin, my companion in prosperity and adversity; I have slept upon it, like Samson on the lap of Delilah, till it has shorn my locks and deprived me of my strength. It has been to me a witch, a manslayer, and a murderer; when I would have shaken it off in youth and in disgust, I found I was no longer master of my own actions and my own house. It had brought around me a host of its blood-relations--its sisters and its cousins-german--to fatten on my weakness, to haunt me to the grave; so that when I attempted to free myself from the embrace of one, it was only to be intercepted by another. You are a young man, Sir, and a stranger to me, but its effects upon me, and my history--the history of a poor paralytic shoemaker--if you have patience to hear, may serve as a beacon to warn you in your voyage through life."

Upon expressing my assent to his proposal, I perceived the fluency and fervency of his manner; and had at once rivetted my attention, and excited curiosity--he continued:--"I was born without a fortune, as many of us are. When about five years of age I was sent to the parish school in Roxburgh, and procrastination went with me.--I was possessed of a tolerable memory, I was

not more deficient than my schoolfellows; but the task which they had studied the previous evening, was by me seldom looked at till the following morning; and my seat was the last to be occupied of any other on the form. My lessons were committed to memory by a few hurried glances, and repeated with a faltering rapidity, which not unfrequently puzzled the ear of the teacher to follow me. But what was thus hastily learned, was as suddenly forgotten. They were mere surface impressions, each obliterated by the succeeding. And though I had run over a tolerable general education, I left school but very little wiser than when I entered it.

"My parents--peace to their memory!"--here the old fellow looked most feelingly, and a tear of filial recollection glistened in his eyes; it added a dignity to the recital of his weakness, and I almost revered him--"My parents," continued he, "had no ambition to see me rise higher in society than an honest tradesman; and, at thirteen, I was bound apprentice to a shoemaker. Yes, Sir, I was--I am a shoemaker; and but for my curse--my malady--had been an ornament to my profession. I have measured the foot of a princess, Sir; I have made slippers to his Majesty!" Here his tongue acquired new vigour from the idea of his own importance. "Yes, Sir, I have made slippers to his Majesty--yet I am unlucky--I am bewitched--I am a ruined man. But to proceed with my history. During the first year of my apprenticeship, I acted in the capacity of errand boy; and, as such, had to run upon many an unpleasant message--sometimes to ask money, frequently to borrow it. Now, Sir, I am also a bashful man; and, as I was saying, Bashfulness is one of the blood relations which procrastination has fastened upon me. While acting in my last-mentioned capacity, I have gone to the house--I gazed at every window--passed it and re-passed it again--stood hesitating and consulting with myself--then resolved to defer it till the next day, and finally returned to my master, not with a direct lie, but a broad equivocation; and this was another of the cousins german which procrastination introduced to my acquaintance.

"In the third year of my servitude, I be-