

capacity, the virtues and the vices, and the follies of mankind, but they should be informed also, or at least should be taught to observe more particularly what are the peculiar tempers, appetites, passions, powers, good and evil qualities of the persons with whom they have most to do in the world; that they may learn to behave wisely with regard to others, and thus you may make a proper improvement of all the brighter and darker characters which they observe amongst men, both for their own advantage, and for the benefit of their fellow-creatures. This may have a happy influence to lead them to avoid the vices and follies which have plunged others into mischief, to imitate the virtues of those who have behaved well in life, and to secure themselves from any dangers and miseries, as well as to pity the weaknesses and sorrows of mankind, and afford them a willing and cheerful relief.

3. The knowledge of the things of the world, and the various affairs of human life, must be included as one of the chief foundations of prudence. It would be endless to run over particulars of this kind; but in a special manner young persons should apply themselves to know those things which most nearly concern them, and which have the most immediate relation to their own business and duty, to their own interest and welfare; and it is a valuable part of wisdom to neglect other things, and not to waste our time and spirits in them, when they stand in any competition with our proper and most important work, whether we consider ourselves as men or as Christians.

Solomon tells us, Eccles. iii. 1. 17. and viii. 5, 6. There is both time and judgment for every work, and for every purpose under the heaven; and that a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment: that is, he judgeth well concerning what is to be done, and the time when to do it; and therefore the misery of man is great upon him, because he knows not this time and judgment, he doth neither discern what is proper to be done, nor the proper season of doing it. Prudence consists in judging well what is to be said, and what is to be done, on every new occasion; when to lie still, and when to be active; when to keep silence, and when to speak; what to avoid, and what to pursue; how to act in every difficulty; what means to make use of to compass such an end; how to behave in every circumstance of life, and in all companies: how to gain the favour of mankind in order to promote our happiness, and to do the most service to God and the most good to men, according to that station we possess, and those opportunities which we enjoy.

For this purpose there is no book better than the Proverbs of Solomon. Several of the first chapters seem to be written for young men, under the name of Solomon's son; and all the rest of them should be made familiar to youth by their frequent converse with them, and treasuring them up in their head and heart.

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE; AN ALLEGORY.

'Life,' says Seneca, 'is a voyage, in the progress of which we are perpetually changing our scenes: we first leave childhood behind us, then youth, then the years of ripened manhood, then the better or more pleasing part of old age.'—The perusal of this passage having excited in me a train of reflections on the state of man, the incessant fluctuation of his wishes, the gradual change of his disposition to all external objects, and the thoughtlessness with which he floats along the stream of time, I sunk into a slumber amidst my meditations, and, on a sudden, found my ears filled with the tumult of labor, the shouts of alacrity, the shrieks of alarm, the whistle of winds, and the dash of waters.

My astonishment for a time repressed my curiosity; but soon recovering myself so far as to inquire whether we were going, and what was the cause of such clamour and confusion; I was told that we were launching out into the ocean of Life; that we had already passed the straits of Infancy, in which multitudes had perished, some by the weakness and fragility of their vessels, and more by the folly, perverseness, or negligence of those who undertook to steer them; and that we were now on the main sea, abandoned to the winds and billows, without any other means of security than the care of the pilot, whom it was always in our power to choose, among great numbers that offered their direction and assistance.

I then looked round with anxious eagerness; and, first turning my eyes behind me, saw a stream flowing through flowery islands, which every one that sailed along seemed to behold with pleasure; but no sooner touched, than the current, which, though not noisy or turbulent, was yet irresistible, bore him away. Beyond these islands, all was darkness; nor could any of the passengers describe the shore at which he first embarked.

Before me, and on either side, was an expanse of waters violently agitated, and covered with so thick a mist, that the most perspicacious eyes could see but a little way. It appeared to be full of rocks and whirlpools, for many sunk unexpectedly while they were courting the gale with full sails, and insulting those whom they had left behind. So numerous, indeed, were the dangers, and so thick the darkness, that no caution could confer security. Yet there were many, who, by false intelligence, betrayed their followers into whirlpools, or by violence pushed those whom they found in their way against the rocks.

The current was invariable and insurmountable; but though it was impossible to sail against it, or to return to the place that was once passed, yet it was not so violent as to allow no opportunities for dexterity or courage, since, though none could retreat back from danger, yet they might often avoid it by an oblique direction.

It was, however, not very common to steer with much care or prudence, for, by some universal infatuation, every man appeared to think himself safe, though he saw his consorts every moment sinking round him; and no sooner had the waves closed over them, than their fate and their misconduct were forgotten; the voyage was pursued with the same jocund confidence; every man congratulating himself on the soundness of his vessel, and believed himself able to stem the whirlpool in which his friend was swallowed, or glide over the rocks on which he was dashed; nor was it often observed that the sight of a wreck made any man change his course; if he turned aside for a moment, he soon forgot the rudder, and left himself again to the disposal of chance.

This negligence did not proceed from indifference or from weariness of their present condition; for not one of those who thus rushed upon destruction failed, when he was sinking, to call loudly upon his associates for that help which could not now be given him: and many spent their last moments in cautioning others against the folly by which they were intercepted in the midst of their course. Their benevolence was sometimes praised, but their admonitions were unregarded.

The vessels in which we had embarked, being confessedly unequal to the turbulence of the stream of life, were visibly impaired in the course of the voyage, so that every passenger was certain, how long soever he might, by favorable accidents, or by incessant vigilance, be preserved, he must sink at last.

This necessity of perishing might have been expected to sadden the gay, and intimidate the daring, at least to keep the melancholy and timorous, in perpetual torments, and hinder them from any enjoyment of the varieties and gratifications which nature offered them as the solace of their labors; yet in effect none seemed less to expect destruction than those to whom it was most dreadful; they all had the art of concealing their danger from themselves; and those who knew their inability to bear the sight of the terrors that embarrassed their way, took care never to look forward, but found some amusement of the present moment, and generally entertained themselves by playing with Hope, who was the constant associate of the Voyage of Life.

Yet all that Hope ventured to promise, even to those whom she favored most, was, not that they should escape, but that they should sink last: and with this promise every one was satisfied, though he laughed at the rest for seeming to believe it. Hope, indeed, apparently mocked the credulity of her companions; for, in proportion as their vessels grew leaky, she redoubled her assurances of safety; and none were more busy in making provisions for a long voyage, than they whom all but themselves saw likely to perish soon by irreparable decay.

In the midst of the current of Life, was the gulph of INTemperance, a dreadful whirlpool, interspersed with rocks, of which the pointed crags were concealed under water, and the tops covered with

herbage, on which Ease spread couches of repose; and with shades, where Pleasure warbled the song of invitation. Within the sight of these rocks, all who sailed on the ocean of Life must necessarily pass. Reason indeed was always at hand to steer the passengers through a narrow outlet, by which they might escape: but very few could, by her entreaties or remonstrances, be induced to put the rudder into her hand, without stipulating that she should approach so near the rocks of Pleasure, that they might solace themselves with a short enjoyment of that delicious region, after which they always determined to pursue their course without any other deviation.

Reason was too often prevailed upon so far by these promises, as to venture her charge within the eddy of the gulph of Intemperance, where, indeed, the circumvolution was weak, but yet interrupted the course of the vessel, and drew it, by insensible rotations, towards the centre. She then repented her temerity, and with all her force endeavoured to retreat; but the draught of the gulph was generally too strong to be overcome; and the passenger, having danced in circles with a pleasing and giddy velocity, was at last overwhelmed and lost. Those few whom Reason was able to extricate, generally suffered so many shocks upon the points which shot out from the rocks of Pleasure, that they were unable to continue their course with the same strength and facility as before, but floated along timorously and feebly, endangered by every breeze, and shattered by every ruffle of the water, till they sunk, by slow degrees, after long struggles, and innumerable expedients, always repining at their own folly, and warning others against the first approach of the gulph of Intemperance.

There were artists who professed to repair the breaches and stop the leaks of the vessels which had been shattered on the rocks of Pleasure. Many appeared to have great confidence in their skill, and some, indeed, were preserved by it from sinking, who had received only a single blow; but I remarked, that few vessels lasted long which had been much repaired, nor was it found that the artists themselves continued afloat longer than those who had least of their assistance.

The only advantage which, in the Voyage of Life, the cautious had above the negligent, was, that they sunk later, and more suddenly; for they passed forward till they had sometimes seen all those in whose company they issued from the straits of Infancy, perish in the way, and at last were overtaken by a cross breeze, without the toil of resistance, or the anguish of expectation. But such as had often fallen against the rocks of Pleasure, commonly subsided by sensible degrees, contended long with the encroaching waters, and harassed themselves by labors that scarce Hope herself could flatter with success.

As I was looking upon the various fate of the multitude about me, I was suddenly alarmed with an admonition from some unknown power, 'Gaze not idly upon others when thou thyself art sinking. Whence is this thoughtless tranquility, when thou and they are equally endangered?' I looked, and seeing the gulph of Intemperance before me, started and awaked.

RAMBLER.

A REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF HONOUR AND GENEROSITY.

A poor man, who was door keeper to a house in Milan, found a purse which contained two hundred crowns. The man who had lost it, informed by a public advertisement, came to the house, and giving sufficient proof that the purse belonged to him, the door-keeper restored it. Full of joy and gratitude, the owner offered his benefactor twenty crowns, which he absolutely refused. Ten were then proposed, and afterwards five; but the door-keeper still continued inexorable; the man threw his purse upon the ground, and, in an angry tone, cried, "I have lost nothing, nothing at all, if you thus refuse to accept of my gratuity." The door-keeper then consented to receive five crowns, which he immediately distributed amongst the poor.

MARRIAGE.—The custom of wearing wedding-rings originated with the Romans, who uniformly placed it on the fourth finger of the left hand of the bride, at their nuptial ceremonies, because they believed that a nerve reached from thence to the heart.