

One evening the elder called and found the unbeliever in his house or office, walking the room with a dejected look, his mind apparently absorbed in thought. He continued not noticing that any one had come in, busily to trace and retrace his steps. The elder at length spoke:—"You seem, sir, said he, 'to be in a brown study. Of what are you thinking?'"

"I have been reading," replied the infidel, 'the moral law.'

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked the elder.

"I will tell you what I *used* to think," answered the infidel. "I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of banditti; that having a strong mind, he acquired great influence over a superstitious people; and that on Mount Sinai, he played off some sort of fire works, to the amazement of his ignorant followers, who imagined, in their fearful fear and superstition, that the exhibition was supernatural."

"But what do you think now?" interposed the elder.

"I have been looking," said the infidel, 'into the nature of the law. I have been trying to see whether I can add anything to it, or take anything from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I cannot. It is perfect.'

"The first commandment," continued he, 'directs us to make the Creator the object of our supreme love and reverence. That is right. If he be our Creator, Preserver, and Supreme Benefactor, we ought to treat him, and *none other*, as such.—The second forbids idolatry. That certainly is right. The third forbids profaneness. The fourth fixes a time for religious worship. If there be a God, he ought surely to be worshipped. It is suitable that there should be an outward homage significant of our inward regard. If God be worshipped, it is proper that some time should be set apart for that purpose, when all may worship him harmoniously, and without interruption.—One day in seven is certainly not too much; and I do not know that it is too little. The fifth defines the peculiar duties arising from the family relations. Injuries to our neighbor are then classified by the moral law. They are divided into offences against life, chastity, property, and character. And,' said he, 'I notice that the greatest offence in each class is expressly forbidden. Thus the greatest injury to life is murder; to chastity, adultery; to property, theft; to character, perjury. Now the greater offence must include the less of the same kind. Murder must include every injury to life; adultery every injury to purity, and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed and perfected, by a command forbidding every improper desire in regard to our neighbour.'

"I have been thinking," he proceeded, 'where did Moses get that law?' I have read history; the Egyptians and the adja-

cent nations, were idolaters; so were the Greeks and Romans; and the wisest and best Greeks or Romans never gave a code of morals like this. Where did Moses get this law, which surpasses the wisdom and philosophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous, but he has given a law, in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent time can detect no flaw. Where did he get it? He could not have soared so far above his age, as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it. It came down from heaven. I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible."

The infidel—infidel no longer—remained to his death a firm believer in the truth of Christianity. He lived several years after this conversation; about three, I believe. He continued to pursue the study of the Bible, his views of the Christian religion expanding and growing correct. Profaneness was abandoned. An oath was now as offensive to him as it was familiar before. When his former gay companions used one, he habitually reproved them, he remonstrated with them upon its folly and want of meaning, and said that he could never imagine before, how painful profane language must be to a christian. But did he become a sincere disciple of Christ? He always expressed great doubt upon that point. He could hope for nothing from the world, and he was afraid that he might choose other pleasures from that circumstance, without a radical change of feeling.

I learned these particulars a few years since, from one of the parties. The lapse of time may have caused some immaterial variation, but I believe no other. I have endeavoured to be more than substantially correct, and have therefore left many important ideas unexpanded, as I understood them to occur, in the actual conversation.

Let the reader meditate on this history, for it is believed to be rich in practical instruction. The main thought is this, that the moral law is a monument, a sublime monument—of the great moral transaction at Sinai, at the delivery of the ten commandments. But let him mark also the species of unbelief, the practical temper inspired by disease, the lingering nature of the complaint, the judicious advice and kind attention of the christian elder, the beautiful arrangement of Providence by which these concurred, the excellence of the moral law as explained and felt, and the glorious reforming power of the Bible. —*Religious Magazine.*

POPPING THE QUESTION.

There is no more delicate step in life than the operation designated by the elegant phrase I have selected for the title of my present lucubration. Much winding, and

caution, and previous sounding, is necessary when you have got a favor to ask of a great man. It is ten chances to one that he takes it into his head to consider your request exorbitant, and to make this the pretext for shaking off what he naturally considers a cumbersome appendage to his stake—a man who has a claim upon his good offices. But this hazard is nothing in comparison with the risk you run in laying yourself at the mercy of a young gypsy, fonder of fun and frolic than any thing in life. Even though she loved you with the whole of her heart, she possesses a flow of spirits, and woman's ready knack of preserving appearances; and though her bosom may heave responsive to your stammering tale, she will lure you on with kind, complacent looks, until you have told 'your pitiful story,' and then laugh in your face for your pains!

The desperate struggles and floundering by which some endeavor to get out of their embarrassments, are amusing enough. We remember to have been much delighted the first time we heard the history of the wooing of a noble lord, now no more, related. His lordship was a man of talents and enterprise, of stainless pedigree, and a fair rent-roll, but the veriest slave of bashfulness. Like all timid and quiet men, he was very constant, as long as he was in the habit of seeing the object of his affections daily. He chanced, at the beginning of an Edinburgh winter, to loose his heart to Miss——; and as their families were in habits of intimacy, he had frequent opportunities of meeting with her. He gazed and sighed incessantly—a very dumbiedike, but that he had a larger allowance of brain—he followed every where; he felt jealous uncomfortable, savage if she looked even civilly at another and yet notwithstanding the encouragement afforded him by the lady a woman of sense, who saw what his lordship would be at, esteemed his character was superior to girlish affection and made every advance consistent with woman's delicacy—the winter was fast fading into spring, and he had not yet got his mouth opened! Mamma at last lost all patience, and one day when his lordship was taking his usual lounge in the drawing room, silent, or uttering an occasional monosyllable, the good lady abruptly left the room and locked the pair in alone. When his lordship, on essaying to take his leave, discovered the predicament in which he stood, a desperate fit of resolution seized him. Miss——sat bending most assiduously over her needle, a deep blush on her cheek. His lordship advanced toward her but losing heart by the way, passed on in silence to the other end of the room. He returned to the charge, but again without effect. At last, nerving himself like one about to spring a powder mine, he stopped short before her—"Miss——, will you marry me?"—With the greatest pleas-