

shall at once be both supple and proud, haughty and creeping; shall exact all homage within his own house, and descend to every baseness abroad? An imperious master, assuming supreme majesty among his inferiors and dependents, a timid and complying slave where his fortunes can be advanced; who will play every personage, take and lay down every form, adore with profoundest abasement the patron he would propitiate, prevent his desires, sacrifice to his caprices, constrain his own inclinations, applaud what he secretly despises, caress what he cordially detests, shut up in his heart all his pleasures and his pains; in a word, shall neither think nor act, or speak or be silent, or love or hate, but as he is moved and impelled by a vile consideration of personal interest!

And what is his object? Merely to secure the means of a little luxury, to eat and drink in splendor, to drown for a moment the consciousness of his servility and degradation. Oh, if man can so utterly renounce himself, why is it not for God! The greatness of the Master would enable the service; but to offer up so noble a victim as the dignity of the human character to so contemptible a divinity as the world, to make such sacrifices for a fugitive and unsubstantial object, more capable, on experiment, of irritating his desires than of satisfying them, to be obliged to despise himself, and not always even to be rewarded for the humiliation! "No," says the prophet Isaiah; "there is no judgment in his ways." Fortune, if I may use the expression, places a bandage over his eyes; he certainly must not see the greatness of his destination, and the nobility of his origin. Imagination, that flattering impostor, hurries him in search of happiness from chimeras to chimeras: the experience of every instant should cure his delusion; his delusion remains in spite of experience: born to the lofty ambition of an infinite good, his fears and hopes, his views and designs, his profoundest meditations are still obstinately inclosed within the little spot that intervenes between his cradle and his grave! his days are all passed amid humiliation and care, only to die overwhelmed with riches and surrounded with splendor! Truly hath the prophet spoken, "The way of peace they know not, and there is no judgment in their goings; they have made themselves crooked paths, whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace."

But whatever may be the folly and turpitude of these sacrifices that are made for a perishable interest, my object is, more properly, to evince the too universal prevalence of selfishness over the feelings of humanity. Great God! were I to draw a comparison between the sums that are daily lavished in frivolous and degrading gratifications, and the trifle occasionally, perhaps annually, consecrated to the finest of all human affections—were I to say that the passions and vices

of the day are unfathomable gulfs into which money is poured without decency or limitation—that the great object of contention among the rich is, who shall manifest the happiest invention of expensive follies—that play alone swallows up more resources than would educate and feed all the orphans of the nation, who could fairly or honestly accuse me of misrepresentation?

And who that studies and contemplates the deplorable increase of misery in these times, but must shudder at such a misapplication of God's bounty? Where, let me conjure you to reflect, is the gratitude we owe to Him? What have we that we have not received? Is it to indulge this abominable prodigality that He has mercifully distinguished us from those multitudes that suffer all the excesses of human misery? Which of us can look round at the spectacles which everywhere present themselves, without feeling the most ardent acknowledgments to Heaven for the blessings he enjoys? There is not probably one man in this vast congregation, who commands not even some of the superfluities of life; not one, at least, without a sufficiency of its common comforts; but how many has a gracious Providence endowed with large hereditary fortunes? how many with the most abundant mediocrity? how many enriched by successful industry? how many conducted by the hand to lucrative employments? how many, almost fatigued, if I may say so, with increasing prosperity?—and shall it be possible that the objects of such tender and special predilection can prove eminently unworthy of it?

Nor is the unexampled, and, I may say, cruel dissipation of money, in such times as the present, confined to the upper order of society alone. No; the example has descended, and there exists in the middle orders of life a melancholy proof how ruinous example is when it beams from a height. The lustre of station, attracting every eye, brings its habits in contact with the whole body of the community. The manners of the great are a volume of established precedents, which their inferiors consult to fortify themselves with a case in point for every possible trespass against virtue and economy: hence the industrious are led to copy an expensive mode of living, which ultimately leads to bankruptcy and ruin; and hence it follows, irresistibly, that, if the higher orders of the community are desirous any longer of being distinguished from those whom they are pleased to consider as beneath them, the only way I can perceive they have left, is a prompt return to a system of Christian frugality and moderation.

But I may be told, that notwithstanding the excesses I complain of, mercy is often remembered. Yes, I confess it: and how should it not be remembered? All human beings occasionally remember mercy—the miser alone excepted. It is the doctrine of all ages and people: in the darkest periods