

PRECEPTS INVITING AND IMPORTANT.

Time is the only gift or commodity, of which every man who lives, has just the same share. The passing day is exactly of the same dimensions to each of us, and by no contrivance can any one of us extend its duration by so much as a minute or a second. It is not like a sum of money, which we can employ in trade, or put out at interest, and thereby add to, or multiply its amount. Its amount is unalterable. We cannot even keep it by us. Whether we will or no, we must spend it; and all our power over it, therefore, consists in the manner in which it is spent. Part with it we must; but we may give it either for something or for nothing. Its mode of escaping from us, however, being very subtle and silent, we are exceedingly apt, because we do not feel it passing out of our hand like so much told coin, to forget that we are parting with it at all; and thus, from mere heedlessness, the precious possession is allowed to flow away, as if it were a thing of no value. The first and principal rule, therefore, in regard to the economizing and right employment of time, is to habituate ourselves to watch it.

"The hours are viewless angels,
That still go gliding by,
And bear each minute's record up
To Him who sits on high.

And we who walk among them,
As one by one departs,
See not that they are hovering,
For ever round our hearts.

Like summer-bees, that hover
Around the idle flowers,
They gather every act and thought,
Those viewless angel hours. * * *

But still they steal the record,
And bear it far away;
Their mission flight, by day by night,
No magic power can stay.

And as we spend each minute,
Which God to us hath given,
The deeds are known before his throne,
The tale is told in heaven.

Those bee-like hours we see not,
Nor hear their noiseless wings;
We only feel too oft when flown,
That they have left their stings.

So teach me, Heavenly Father,
To meet each flying hour,
That as they go, they may not show,
My heart a poison-flower.

So, when death brings its shadows,
The hours that linger last,
Shall bear my hopes on angel's wings,
Unfettered by the past."

"It was the boast of Cicero that his philosophical studies had never interfered with the services he owed the republic; and that he had only dedicated to them the hours which others gave to their walks, their repasts, and their pleasures. Looking on his voluminous labors, we are surprised at this observation; how honorable it is to him, that his various philosophical works bear the titles of the different villas he possessed; which shows they were composed in their respective retirements. Cicero must have been an early riser, and must have practised that magic art of employing his time so as to multiply his days."

"Knowledge, while it is essentially power, is indirectly virtue, and can hardly be acquired without the exertion of several high moral qualities. Some distinguished scholars have no doubt been bad men, but we do not know how much worse they might have been, but for their love of learning, which to the extent it did operate upon their characters, must have been beneficial. A genuine relish for intellectual enjoyments is naturally as inconsistent with a devotion to the coarser gratifications of sense, as the habit of assiduous study is to that dissipation of time and thought and faculty, which a life of vicious pleasure implies.

Knowledge is also happiness. And were its pursuit nothing better than mere amusement, it would deserve the preference over all other amusements, on many accounts. Of these, the chief is, that it must become something better than an amusement, must invigorate the mind, and refine, and elevate the character. So far from losing any part of its zest with time, the longer it is known, the better it is loved. It may be resorted to by all, in all circumstances; by both sexes; by the young and the old; in town or in the country; by him who has only his stolen half-hour to give to it, and by him who