

ly amid his trials ; knowing them to be the hand of God, therewith he will be content, and scorning to repine will make himself happy.

The greatest cause of discontent is, that men have no definitive measures to their desires. It is not the supply of all their real wants that will satisfy them ; their appetites are precarious, they hunger not because they themselves are empty, but because others are full. Ahab, one would think, might well have been content with the kingdom of Israel, without Naboth's vineyard ; and Haman, with the obeisance of all the Persian court, without the additional bow of a poor Jew. A low condition in the world seems to all a terrible misfortune ; but how many are really poor amid their riches, and want in the midst of plenty.

The true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations ; to understand our duty towards God and man ; to enjoy the present, without any anxious dependence on the future. Not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears, but to rest satisfied with what we have, is abundantly sufficient : for he that is so, wants nothing. The greatest blessings of mankind are within us, and within our reach ; but we shut our eyes, and, like people in the dark, we fall foul upon the very thing that we are in search of without finding it.

One of the greatest secrets of life is that of knowing how to soften our uneasiness ; and if it be not in our power to disengage ourselves from the trouble, to weaken at least the impressions of it ; without this we must resolve frequently to be miserable, for, being exposed to numberless evils, hardly a day passes but we feel some new distress. Now I know of no remedy more effectual than pre-consideration ; and whoever has made an exact reflection upon the traverses of life, will find himself at least consolable in his misfortunes. I would have every one so far consider and expect all kinds of evils, as not to be surprised at any calamitous event. Let the happy courtier possess the favour of his sovereign, and enjoy to his wish the pleasures of his good fortune ; yet let the example of so many falls incline him to mistrust the security of his seat : let him not, although on the summit of the wheel, forever cast his eyes upward, but sometimes look down : let him view the place he began to rise from, let him consider the first degree of his advancement, as a precipice from which he may every minute be tumbled. Let not a prince be too fond of his empire ; let not the obeisance of such a world of people easily