

improved by virtue and knowledge, it will be governed and debased by the passions and appetites, or employed in planning and executing that which destroys happiness and prevents improvement.

How far human suffering may be attributed to ignorance, or how many of the evils which have and do exist among the inhabitants of this earth originated from ignorance would be difficult to ascertain; but we do see and know enough to say, that the amount of suffering from ignorance is immeasurable, and that the evils are innumerable. Ignorance has not only multiplied evils, by misapplying what is good, but has given an imaginary existence to many of the most fearful nature, which have long distressed and enslaved the human race.

While ignorant of the laws of nature, man has connected with some of her most beautiful and benevolent operations, false and imaginary terrors. Before the sun of knowledge has poured light upon the mental darkness of a tribe or nation, an eclipse of the sun in the heavens is viewed by the terrified and trembling beholders with the utmost dismay and consternation. The ignorant have supposed the moon while in an eclipse, or, what is the same thing while passing through the shadow of the earth, was sickening or dying through the influence of enchanters. To appease the enemies of their evening luminary, they have practised the most torturing and irrational ceremonies, and submitted themselves to the most excruciating pain. Many tribes and nations are still enslaved by these foolish notions and cruel customs. The appearance of comets, too, is still regarded as a forerunner of earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and the most dreadful calamities. They know not that comets are regular bodies belonging to our system, and appear and disappear at stated periods of time. After a slight knowledge of the heavenly bodies, the appearance of a comet excites as little fear as the appearance of the sun.

On the earth, ignorance has seen innumerable objects which have bewildered and distracted the timid and credulous. The will-o'-the-wisps are regarded as malicious spirits, sent to lead the traveller astray, and, in the end, conduct him to the place of torment. A little knowledge would enable any one to see that these meteors are nothing more than harmless lights, formed by the burning of a certain gas or vapour, which naturally rises from the moist soil over which they are always seen.

Ignorance has created distressing fears from the ticking noise of an insect, heard during the stillness of night—from the scream of a bird—from the howl of a dog—from the fall of a chimney—from an accidental noise in an unoccupied apartment of a suspected dwelling—from an immediate return after something that had been forgotten—from having put on a garment

wrong side out—from having set out on a journey, or undertaking some employment on Friday—from an unusual noise in a boiling tea kettle—from a ringing in the ear—from ominous dreams, especially such as have the confirmation of a repetition—from meeting with a snake lying in the road—from upsetting the salt dish—from the sudden and accidental striking of a silent clock—from breaking a looking glass—from seeing the new moon over the left shoulder—from not having uncovered the head while a funeral procession passed—from missing the mouth while taking food—from being presented with a knife or any cutting instrument—and from its raining into the grave of a friend before it was closed. All of these whims, and thousands of others of a similar nature, have been regarded with apprehensions of terror, the forerunners of impending disasters, or of approaching death! Such is the slavery and misery of ignorance, continually filling the ideal world with objects which vassal the mind, and preventing those feelings of gratitude and veneration which are due to the wise Creator and Governor of the universe.

Besides the ideal things and agencies which are for ever present with the ignorant to terrify and distress, there are also a great many foolish and erroneous opinions which pass current for genuine truths among the uninformed part of mankind. These apothegms, or trite sayings, have a wonderful practical influence; they are at once the philosophy and the guide of the vulgar or the uneducated. The world is full of these proverbs or maxims, and it is to be lamented that many of them are false, that the ignorant are not able to discriminate and judge for themselves, but are so frequently rendered foolish; and led astray by them.

Ignorance and error have always led to the commission of deeds of cruelty and rank injustice. Both in heathen and Christian countries, how many millions of lives have been poured out, and how much pain and agony from bodily torture, through intolerance of the true nature and worship of God! Through ignorance and error, how merciless and bloody have been the thousands of persecutions which have filled the earth with violence, and covered it with blood! On whatever portion of the world or period of time we place the eye, we shall see that ignorance, vice, and misery, have been and are inseparable.

But there are other evils arising from ignorance, equally distressing to the mind, and destructive to the body, as any we have described or enumerated. They are those which the ignorant bring upon themselves by not perceiving and conforming to the natural relations which exist between themselves and the objects around them—relations which must at all times be our law and our rule of action, if we are kept in the path of true happiness; but these relations are not

known and obeyed by the illiterate, for they are ignorant of themselves and the qualities of natural objects. They have never looked upon themselves as animal, intellectual, and moral beings, and learned that happiness cannot be found and possessed, except the intellectual and moral faculties have the supremacy or the controul over the animal nature. Not having their moral and intellectual nature developed, or put in exercise by mental and moral instruction, they are ignorant of any other happiness but that derived from the gratification of their lowest natures—their animal appetites and passions. In this they are disappointed; for when the animal nature is properly gratified, its pleasures are not sufficient to satisfy a being who has an intellectual and moral nature. This kind of gratification may satisfy brutes, for they do not possess consciousness or reflection.

One great office of the mind is to keep the body from excesses and injury, but it never performs this office unless it is illuminated by truth and knowledge. While the mind remains ignorant, and the affections of the heart unlawfully placed, there is no government over the appetites and passions, and their unrestrained gratification soon brings misery and destruction. There is a vice coming from every individual in the long catalogue of the human family, telling us that men need knowledge to over-power their passions, to master their prejudices and to render them happy.

#### INFLUENCE OF KINDNESS.

In Philadelphia there is a physician, belonging to the Society of Friends, who is very benevolent, and much beloved by the poor. One day, this good doctor, attempting to ride through a narrow and crowded street, was stopped by a dray, which stood in such a manner that he could not possibly get along. He asked the driver if he would be good enough to move a little out of the way; but the man was ill-natured, and he answered, in very violent language, that he would not stir an inch till he thought proper. The physician replied, with the utmost gentleness, "Well, friend, thou wilt not move to oblige me; but if thou shouldst be ill, or any of thy family in distress, send for Dr. P. and I will come and do all I can to assist thee." This mild answer gained the drayman's heart, and made him thoroughly ashamed of his bad temper. He asked pardon for the language he had used, and immediately made room for the doctor to pass.

There is hardly any body in the world, so rough and violent as to resist, for any length of time, the soothing influence of kindness. Even the most ferocious animals are tamed by it.—Those who acquire great command over horses, dogs, and other brute creatures, always do it by means of affectionate and gentle treatment. In this way, a man by