

After hearing this several times, I directed my eyes toward the speaker, who was gaily dressed with a gold chain across, his bosom, and a showy ring on the little finger of each hand. "That's an excellent idea," said he again, just at the moment I lifted up my head, and I then felt a desire to catch one or two of the many "excellent ideas" that were falling around me.

What a poor, perishing world is this, whether we consider it an abiding place, or with respect to the fulfilment of those hopes which are continually rising in our restless hearts! Every day presents us with proofs that this is not "our rest," and every hour brings forth enough to convince us, that our earthly hopes, like bubbles on the running stream, only glitter one moment to burst into empty nothingness in the next. How often are we expecting much from sources that yield but little!

There may, or may not be wisdom in thus indulging in a passing reflection, when relating a common-place occurrence; but it is a habit of mine; and Old Humphrey cannot see, hear, read, write, or converse, without now and then throwing in a passing reflection.

Well, as I said, I was on the look out for "excellent ideas." These are not, certainly very often to be met with, and you may as well expect to see pine-apples on blackberry bushes, as to hear "excellent ideas" from the thoughtless and the vain: but the old proverb says, "It never rains but it pours;" and however scarce "excellent ideas" may be in general, yet if I might judge by the exclamations that reached me, I was in a fair way of falling in with a profession of them.

Though I appeared to pore over my book, my ears were wide open to what was going on at the other end of the room.

The conversation was on the subject of cigars, and one of the party thought it would be no bad thing to take one to church with him the next time he went there.

"That's an excellent idea!" exclaimed the one in the gold chain.

The excellency of this idea did not at all strike me; on the contrary, it seemed to me to be thoughtless, silly, and profane. I, however, still kept my ears open.

"Tom," said one of them soon after, "what do you think? in passing by the blind Scotchman at the Regent's Park, I dropped a pebble stone into his hat: 'Thank you,' said the old fellow, who thought he had got a capital catch."

"An excellent idea!" again cried out the one with the gold chain.

The excellency of this idea was quite as indistinct to me as the former one. I thought both the idea and the act were mean, wanton, and cruel; but the conversation changed.

"How did you manage, Ned, with your watch?" asked one.

"Oh," replied he who was addressed, "I persuaded the watch-maker that I had a gold key to it when I hid it with him, a keep-sake, that I would not have parted with for double its value; and so he was glad enough to get off without charging me any thing for the new spring."

"An excellent idea!" once more exclaimed the ornamented admirer of this fraudulent ingenuity.

Now, excellent as this was pronounced to be, it was nothing less than impudence, deceit, and dishonesty.

"Well," thinks I, "if Old Humphrey has not had quite enough 'excellent ideas' for one day it is a pity;" so drinking up the last drop that was left at the bottom of my coffee-cup, I closed my book, and walked away, musing on the weakness, the folly, the heartlessness, and immorality of the world.

When a man picks up stones in good earnest to throw at his neighbours' windows, he may very soon break a great many panes; and, in like manner, when he sets about finding fault with those around him, he is never at a loss for something to find fault with. I soon made out a long catalogue, not of "ideas" only, but of plans and undertakings, which, though considered "excellent" by thousands of people, are weak, worthless, and wicked. It was truly astonishing how clearly I saw the errors of others, how sagely I reflected on the merits, and how eloquently I reproved the follies and frailties of mankind.

At last it occurred to me, that it might not be amiss, after going abroad so much, to come a little nearer home; for perhaps I might find in my own head and heart some "excellent ideas," and admirable undertakings, not a whit more valuable than those of my neighbours.

What an ignorant, vain, presumptuous, and inconsistent being

is man! How much he knows of others, how little of himself! How quick is he to condemn the faults of his fellow sinners, and how slow to amend his own! I had worked myself up to a pitch of virtuous indignation; I had arraigned others of manifold misdemeanours, and performed the offices of jury and judge to my own satisfaction, disposing of every case as I thought proper. You may be sure that I felt a little high-minded; but when I brought up Old Humphrey himself to the bar, I was soon humbled even to the dust.

"It's bad enough," said I, "when the young act a foolish part, thinking that 'excellent,' which is unworthy, and pursuing folly instead of wisdom: but what excuse has he whose hairs are grey, who has had the experience of a lengthened life to assist him, and who has long taken upon him to instruct others in the way they should go? What excuse has such a one as Old Humphrey to offer, when the light, hollow, frothy things of time are estimated by him as 'very excellent,' and pursued with more ardour than the things of eternity?"

Of all ploughing and harrowing, the ploughing and harrowing of our own hearts is the hardest work, and I think I may add, it prepares for the richest harvest. I felt determined to give myself no quarter. I had been fierce as a lion in my attack, but was tame as a lamb when obliged to defend myself; and after half an hour's rigid examination of my own heart, you might have trodden on the toes of Old Humphrey without his reproaching you; so much was he humbled in his own estimation.

It may be that you also have been planning yourself on some "excellent ideas," which will no more bear the test of Christian consideration than some of mine. If it them so, try, at least avoid bitterness, and to manifest a forbear spirit towards an offending brother. If we have both erred, let us both try to amend together; for however "excellent" our "ideas" may be, one practical illustration of the Christian principle of forbearance and charity will be worth the all.

MOTHER'S DEPARTMENT.

A Nation's true glory.

"These are my jewels," said an illustrious lady of antiquity, pointing to her well-educated children. And could every mother with the Bible in her hand and her children before her realize that through its influence, these may be made jewels of the brightest luster, not merely to honor her who brought them to the light but to add to a nation's grandeur, and to a Savior's crown of glory, would she not prize the Bible and prize her children more than ever? A nation's highest glory is to be attained, not by wealth and outward splendor, not by an array of military power, but by the multiplication of immortal minds, properly enlightened, and transformed into the moral image of their Maker. It is this which constitutes the glory and the honor of "the nations of them that are saved." And what spectacles can imagination paint, more sublime, than that of a great nation, all instructed from childhood in the language and spirit of the Bible: all thought to reverence and obey its Divine Author, and to love their neighbor as themselves? And can he be a good citizen, who would in any way hinder such a result?—who would not inculcate upon the young and rising millions the precepts of the sacred volume? Infinite Wisdom has ordained, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way." "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life." And can he be a good subject of human government, who would despise or neglect this benevolent injunction of the King of kings? Infinite Intelligence has testified, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold." These divine sentiments are corroborated by the experience and testimony of enlightened millions in both worlds. Who, then, that loves his country, his children, or his Almighty Benefactor, would not, in every step of education, inculcate those everlasting truths, which thus impart light, freedom, purity and joy; which make good citizens both here and hereafter: and which, in the sight of Heaven, are more precious to man than mountains of gold?