

by and the miserable, the healthy and the sick, in short, all descriptions of persons, whatever may be their stations or their circumstances in this life, with experience infinite advantage in a retirement from the world. Solitude, when it has ripened and preserved the tender and humane feelings of the heart, and created in the mind a salutary distrust of our vain reason and boasted abilities, may be considered to have brought us nearer to God. Humility is the first lesson we learn from reflection, and self-distrust the first proof we give of having obtained a knowledge of ourselves. The wisdom that teaches us to avoid the snares of the world, is not to be acquired by the incessant pursuit of entertainments ; by flying without reflection from one party to another ; by continual conversation on low and trifling subjects ; by undertaking every thing and doing nothing.

A pursuit after happiness almost entirely engrosses the attention of man in his social state ; and though his visionary fancy may place her at a distance, yet, like the ignis fatuus to the benighted and bewildered traveller, she will constantly recede from the grasp in proportion to the pursuit, till death puts an end to our career. The contending passions of man render the acquirement of true happiness in a state of society abortive ; but the recluse, retiring from the caprice of a vain world, by reflecting on the beauties of nature, and the bounties of nature's God, enjoys a tranquillity which the social world cannot bestow.

That man is capable in private of an intercourse with his Maker, there are many living witnesses to prove, without having recourse to the visions of fanatics or the dreams of enthusiasts ; it may be proved to spring from natural or philosophical causes. God is a spirit ; so is the mind ; bodies can have intercourse, so can souls ; when minds are in an assimilating state of purity, they have union with their Maker. Thus disposed, the Creator communicates himself to the soul, in a manner which is insensible to the natural eye as are the falling dews. Enthusiasm has swelled with unnatural conceptions, and obtruded a spurious offspring on the world, instead of the engaging child of reason and truth ; whilst the lukewarm have rested in a few vain and outward duties, which have had no vigor, and, as they spring not from the heart, never enter the temple of the Most High. Real piety is of a very different and of a much more animated nature,