

Memory consented reluctantly, and they went their way together.

The first person they met was a schoolboy, lounging lazily along, and stopping every moment to gaze around, as if unwilling to proceed on his way. By and by, he sat down and burst into tears.

"Whither so fast, my good lad," asked Hope, jeeringly.

"I am going to school," replied the lad, "to study, when I had rather a thousand times be at play; and sit on a bench with a book in my hand, while I long to be sporting in the fields. But never mind, I shall be a man soon, and then I shall be free as the air." Saying this, he skipped away merrily, in the hope of soon being a man.

"It is thus you play upon the inexperience of youth," said Memory, reproachfully.

Passing onward, they met a beautiful girl, pacing slow and melancholy behind a party of gay young men and maidens, who walked arm in arm with each other, and were flirting and exchanging all those little harmless courtesies which nature prompts on such occasions. They were all gaily dressed in silks and ribbons; but the little girl had on a simple frock, a homely apron, and clumsy thick-soled shoes.

"Why don't you join yonder group," asked Hope, "and partake in their gaiety, my pretty little girl?"

"Alas!" replied she, "they take no notice of me. They call me a child. But I shall soon be a woman, and then I shall be so happy!"

Inspired by this hope, she quickened her pace, and soon was seen dancing along merrily with the rest.

In this manner they wended their way from nation to nation, and clime to clime, until they had made the circuit of the universe. Wherever they came, they found the human race, which at this time was all young—it being not many years since the first creation of mankind—reining at the present, and looking forward to a riper age for happiness. All anticipated some future good, and Memory had scarce any thing to do but cast looks of reproach at her young companion. "Let us return home," said she, "to that delightful spot where I first drew my breath. I long to repose among its beautiful bowers: to listen to the brooks that murmured a thousand times sweeter; and to the echoes that were softer than any I have since heard. Ah! there is nothing on earth so enchanting as the scenes of my earliest youth."

Hope indulged himself in a sly, significant smile, and they proceeded on their return home. As they journeyed but slowly, many years elapsed ere they approached the spot whence they had departed. It so happened, one day, they met an old man, bending under the weight of years, and walking with trembling steps, leaning on his staff. Memory at once recognized him as the youth they had seen going to school, on their first outset in the tour of the world. As they came nearer, the old man reclined on his staff, and looking at Hope, who, being immortal, was still a blithe young boy, sighed as if his heart was breaking.

"What aileth thee, old man?" asked the youth.

"What aileth me," he replied, in a feeble, faltering voice—"what should ail me, but old age? I have outlived my health and strength; I have survived all that was near and dear; I have seen all I loved, and that loved me, struck down to the earth like dead leaves in autumn, and now I stand like an old tree, withering alone in the world, without roots, without branches, and without verdure. I have only just enough of sensation to know that I am miserable, and the recollection of the happiness of my youthful days, when, careless and full of blissful anticipations, I was a laughing, merry boy, only adds to the miseries I now endure."

"Behold!" said Memory, "the consequence of thy deceptions," and she looked reproachfully at her companion.

"Behold!" replied Hope, "the deception practiced by thyself. Thou persuadest him that he was happy in his

youth. Dost thou remember the boy we met when we first set out together, who was weeping on his way to school, and sighing to be a man?"

Memory cast down her eyes and was silent.

A little way onward, they came to a miserable cottage, at the door of which was an aged woman, meanly clad, and shaking with palsy. She sat alone, her head resting on her bosom, and, as the pair approached, vainly tried to raise it up to look at them.

"Good morrow, old lady, and all happiness to you," cried Hope, gaily, and the old woman thought it was a long time since she had heard such a cheering salutation.

"Happiness!" said she, in a voice that quivered with weakness and infirmity.—"Happiness? I have not known it since I was a little girl, without care or sorrow. O, I remember these delightful days, when I thought of nothing but the present moment, nor cared for the future or past. When I laughed, and played, and sung from morning till night, and envied no one, nor wished to be any other than I was. But those happy times are past, never to return. O, if I could only once more return to the days of my childhood!"

The old woman sunk back on her seat, and the tears flowed from her hollow eyes.

Memory again reproached her companion, but he only asked her if she recollected the little girl they had met a long time ago, who was so miserable because she was so young? Memory knew it well enough, and said not another word.

They now approached their home, and Memory was on tiptoe with the thought of once more enjoying the unequalled beauties of those scenes from which she had been so long separated. But, somehow or other, it seemed they were sadly changed. Neither the grass was so green, the flowers so sweet and lovely, nor did the brooks murmur, the echoes answer, or the birds sing half so enchantingly, as she remembered them in time long past.

"Alas!" she exclaimed, "how changed is everything! I alone am the same."

"Everything is the same, and thou, alone, art changed," answered Hope. Thou hast deceived thyself in the past just as much as I deceive others in the future."

"What is it you are disputing about?" asked an old man, whom they had not observed before, though he was standing close by them. "I have lived almost four score and ten years, and my experience may, perhaps, enable me to decide between you."

They told him the occasion of their disagreement, and related the history of their journey round the earth. The old man smiled, and for a few moments sat buried in thought. He then said to them:

"I, too, have lived to see all the hopes of my youth turn into shadows, clouds, and darkness, and vanish into nothing. I, too, have survived my fortune, my friends, my children—the hilarity of youth, and the blessing of health."

"And dost thou not despair?" said Memory.

"No, I have still one hope left me."

"And what is that?"

"The hope of Heaven!"

Memory turned towards Hope, threw herself into his arms, which opened to receive her, and burst into tears, exclaiming—

"Forgive me, I have done thee injustice. Let us never again separate from each other."

"With all my heart," said Hope, and they continued for ever after to travel together hand and hand through the world.

A lady beating a tune on a table, as destitute of harmony as time, asked another, if she knew what she played? "I do," answered she; "you play the fool."