

their reward along with them; for conscience, that never-failing friendly monitor, imparts to the mind those self-approving sensations, which may be justly termed the reward of benevolence.

Compassion towards our fellow-creatures is as strongly inculcated by the great Teacher of Christianity, as gratitude and piety towards the Creator of the universe; and the alarming denunciation against those who are deficient in the practice of benevolence cannot be too deeply impressed upon our hearts:—"I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." And when the appalled sinner tremblingly inquired when these circumstances had happened? the Saviour of mankind answered, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me."

Though to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, taken in a literal sense, can only be performed by a small portion of individuals, yet, in the sublime and figurative style of the sacred Writings, more is frequently meant than is actually expressed; and we are not to suppose that our Saviour intended to condemn those persons, whose situation in life prevented the display of benevolence. Though we may neither be able to clothe the indigent, nor feed the hungry, from the want of means to do it, yet if we cannot render them some trifling assistance, at any rate we possess the power of displaying sympathy, and performing acts of kindness. Where much has been given, much will be required from us; and we are repeatedly told in that sacred volume, where every pious and moral duty is so strikingly inculcated, that even a cup of cold water, if bestowed with unfeigned charity, shall not go unrewarded.

Lazarus and Dives, the Priest, the Levite, and the good Samaritan, are all recorded as impressive examples; and if a sparrow falls not to the ground without the knowledge of its Creator, can we for a moment suppose that he is unacquainted with our most secret actions?

"I leave you a new commandment, that ye love one another;" said that exalted Being, who sacrificed his life to evince his affection and procure our salvation. And shall we presume to call ourselves his disciples, and become indifferent to the happiness of our fellow-creatures? It is not, however, by the performance of our individual duty that we must expect to obtain the approbation of our God; or indulge the hope of receiving that crown of glory, which he has promised to them who obey his laws. If whilst we feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, we forget the hand which has poured down riches upon us; or if in our hearts we say, this is Babylon, which my power and authority built up; benevolence, instead of classing as a virtue, is converted into arrogance and presumption. If on the other hand, we gratefully acknowledge the goodness of the Almighty, in abundantly supplying us with those comforts of which thousands of our fellow-creatures are in want, yet at the same time take advantage of the unsuspecting, and increase our own wealth at the expense of their fortunes, we may be convinced that neither benevolence nor gratitude will be of any avail to us, at the great day of retribution; for we must do justice, as well as love mercy, before we can properly be said to walk humbly with our God.

To love mercy, is, in other terms, to view the imperfections of human nature in the most favourable point of perception; and never to behold the mote in the eye of another until the beam which obscures our own has been obliterated. There are failings to which we are prone, that, in a certain degree, might be considered as peculiarly attached to my own sex; and the eagerness with which they too often listen to a tale of detraction, may have given rise to the assertion, that they take particular pleasure in it. For the honor of womankind, however, I will hope, that this is merely an assertion, unsubstantiated by positive evidence: and in justice to my sex, I must avow, that I have seen many instances to the actual contrariety of it. There are, I am ready to allow, many frivolous females, in whose mind there are such a vacuum of ideas, that they appear delighted whilst they listen to any little tittle-tattling subject; and who, from the desire of having something new to impart to their acquaintance, repeat, with a degree of certainty, what has merely been conjectural.—Persons of this description do not act from a malicious propensity, but from the desire of proving entertaining to their as-

sociates, whilst others derive equal satisfaction from confiding to their intimates, what they term a secret, with the trite precaution, that it must not even be hinted; though perhaps the very same secret has been imparted to every individual acquaintance.

Characters of this description are little aware of the misery they may produce in society; and still less so, of the breach they make in the performance of their moral duties; and how repeatedly are we warned against this too prevailing practice by the wise king of Israel! No man was ever so completely acquainted with the varying imperfections of human nature, as the sagacious son of David; and how repeatedly does he caution us, in his extensive writings, to keep a guard upon our lips!

"Frailty," says one of our admired theatrical writers, "thy name is Woman." Yet if the frailties to which those of each sex are prone, were fairly calculated, I am of opinion, the charge might be extended to human nature: and with this liability to err, instead of blazing forth, ought we not to conceal, the failings of each other? In a religious point of view, this mode of conduct becomes an actual duty. Can we love each other, and derive pleasure from the exposure of imperfection? What a lesson did the Saviour of mankind hold up for our imitation, when he said, "Let him throw the first stone, whose conscience accuses him of no sin!"

As every human being, except the hardened and impenitent, must sensibly feel the force of this monitor within, in the strongest manner, I would implore my readers to be directed by its approving voice, and its salutary warnings; for with such a friend to guide, and such a monitor to instruct them, though they may deviate from the strict path of duty, they will easily be led into it again.

Religion and morality are, in fact, so intimately connected, that it would be difficult for the most able casuist to separate them; still I do not mean to insinuate, that there are no moral characters who are deficient in the performance of their religious duties: yet I will venture to assert, that there never was a truly pious Christian, who neglected what may be termed Christianity's minor duties. By the term pious Christian, I do not mean those who are scrupulously attentive to the formalities of their religion; but those who, with purity of heart, and integrity of conduct, endeavour implicitly to follow the rules prescribed in the Gospel; who, fully aware of the imperfection of human nature, make every possible allowance for its deviation from righteousness; and who, thoroughly convinced of their own frailty, do not expect to find their fellow-creatures better than themselves.



A MOTHER'S PORTRAIT.

Sketched soon after her Decease, for the Study of her Children.

BY THEIR SURVIVING PARENT.

We have examined this "Portrait" with attention, and been delighted with the manner of its execution. Although affection has guided the pencil, the drawing is correct and faithful, and the colouring laid on with chasteness and delicacy.

The portrait is that of a Christian mother, and is distinguished by one or two features which we hold to be very necessary ingredients in that character, though not always to be met with in those who lay claim to it. The subject of this sketch prized her home and family above all other earthly blessings; disliked frequent visiting; had an invincible antipathy to gossiping; and would rather offend a whole circle of friends than neglect her domestic and private duties.

"The Apostle's injunction to Christian females, to be keepers at home, had deeply impressed her heart sometime before she became a mother or a wife. Her introduction to those important relations greatly strengthened her sense of the duty; while the interesting and increasing inducements they furnished to the performance of that duty, soon raised it to one of her highest privileges. At an early period, in her native town, she had known some mothers, whose abodes and families were wretchedly neglected, while they were attending public worship with excessive frequency, wandering up and down after every new and popular preacher, resorting to all religious services within their reach, and spending nearly their whole remaining time in visiting or receiving visits from each other. She

saw temptations to this indecorous and unprofitable conduct multiplying in number and force on every hand. Institutions of religion and charity had then begun the increase which has since been so rapid and astonishing; and strong intimations were then giving of the plan upon which most of them now proceed—rendering their operations more extensive and efficient, by the agency and influence of Christian women. Apprehensive that this course of things might too much interfere with domestic order and happiness, if it did not in time deprive the British Christian female of 'modesty, her loveliest bloom,' M—, resolved, perhaps rather too strictly, to reprove as well as refuse every solicitation to publicity, even in doing good."

Some other peculiarities this worthy lady possessed, which are not less to our taste. No person could live more in communion with her Maker than she appears to have done; and yet of her experience (to use the phrase best known, though not by us approved), she neither liked to talk nor write. In a letter to her husband, she thus rationally expresses her sentiments on the subject—

"Mr. A— of W—, who called a few days after you left home, asked me if I kept a journal of my experience. I told him I did not, and that I had no intention of keeping one. He seemed surprised, and advised me to think of the matter more seriously. I cannot, however, think of it more seriously than I thought of it some years ago, when I began a journal, which I continued only a few weeks, and have never since taken up again. I wish to forget instead of remember the greater part of my feelings; and those which are worth remembering, I am sure not to forget, because they are so often repeated. The only things which I need write down are the numerous mercies I receive from my compassionate and bountiful Father who is in heaven. But how can I write down one hundredth—one thousandth part of these! how can I write one of them down in suitable words! I had rather be left to feel the weight of them all, though I am in danger of sinking under it, than attempt to relieve my heart of the burthen of gratitude and duty by writing down the smallest of them in my poor weak language, which can only disgrace the subject!"

One more trait, and we shall conclude—

"She had no facility in recollecting words and sentences. Even poetry, which is learned with so much eagerness, and remembered with so much ease, she could seldom quote. But she had no trouble in remembering important things; she readily called to recollection her various interesting duties; she always reminded herself of relative and religious obligations, without reluctance and without difficulty."

The author has an illustrative note on this passage, which is worth adding—

"Several years ago," he says, "I spent two or three days in the house of one who passed for a learned as well as a Christian lady. I was pestered the whole of the time with the names of celebrated authors, and with popular quotations from their works; but this was nothing to the deafening voices of her squalling, quarrelsome children, and especially to—"

We must leave our readers to imagine the rest; for it is not just so delicately expressed as we could have wished it to have been. It is but justice to the author, however, to observe that it is the only sin of the kind throughout the volume, which is in general written with great elegance and purity. The picture which he presents of a blue stocking mother is, we regret to say, but too common among ladies of this class. We ascribe the fault, not either to the gifts or acquirements they possess, but to an ill-regulated use of them. We can see no necessary connexion between learning and slovenliness, between the glories of mind and the abominations of matter; and could appeal to more than one instance within the sphere of our friendships, where, as in the portrait before us, both learning and genius are combined with a most exemplary performance of every maternal duty.

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BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY.

[CONCLUDED.]

Captain Irving said he had great pleasure in seconding the Resolution.