

Society. Those who are not insensible to the strong and repeatedly enforced precepts of the gospel on the subject of this duty need only to be reminded that thus it is commanded—Cavils that are raised on false assumptions deserve no answer—Where they proceed from unintentional mistake, the error however unpremeditated must yet arise from ignorance of the nature and system of the society; and to such objectors, it is but fair to say, “come along with us and judge for yourselves, before you propagate opinions unfavourable to an association that in many thousand instances annually mitigates the sufferings of your fellow creatures”

But after all, if there be not among us a pulse ready to beat, and to beat high, at the voice of philanthropy, it would be a vain attempt and far beyond human power now to awaken it. Every charitable Institution like the present must proceed on the supposition of a large amount of private generosity in the community; and taking this ground on the present occasion, the arguments the Committee adopt would chiefly be calculated to shew each benevolent individual that here is a method of employing a small means to a more extensive advantage than can often lie within the compass of private ability.

Few members of the community have leisure enough to inquire into the actual condition of the wretched objects that daily urge claims on their bounty; and without such inquiry, it must be evident, that both private and public charity is in danger of being misapplied; and by presenting an encouragement to idleness, perhaps encrease the evil it was intended to alleviate.—By the constitution of this society, that particular information is obtained respecting the character and wants of every object of its charitable assistance which is so indispensable to a judicious distribution; and this being effected by the labour of a few individuals, in visiting regularly the habitations of the indigent, means are thus obtained, at comparatively a small expense of time and trouble, to lay out the whole funds of the institution with judgment and discrimination. Another obvious benefit accruing from this system is the restraint it imposes on the extravagance and vices of the poor. There is generally a sense of decorum among them which will induce them to seek the approbation of their wealthy visitors; and it soothes the asperities of poverty, and reconciles the poor man to his condition, when he finds that prosperity does not quench the fire of sympathy, nor silence the language of commiseration.

To those who delight in smoothing the rugged inequalities of fortune, but whose means are unequal to their generous inclinations, it must be gratifying to be connected with an association which will at once give them the command of a considerable fund for any purpose of judicious relief, for the purse of the society is never closed against the supplications of unpretended misery.

And although the committee abstain from every attempt at moving the feelings of their townsmen by those ordinary topics which they conceive would gain no additional force from any remarks they could offer, yet in a young and growing colony, gradually rising into importance in the western world, it may be not improper to hold up the value and dignity of national character as an inducement to the sup-

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