

DIARY OF CHAUBERT THE MISANTHROPE.

[From the Observer.]

AMONGST the variety of human events, which come under the observation of every man of common experience in life, many instances must occur to his memory of the false opinions he had formed of good and evil fortune: Things, which we lament as the most unhappy occurrences and the severest dispensations of providence, frequently turn out to have been vouchsafements of a contrary sort; whilst our prosperity and success, which for a time delight and dazzle us with gleams of pleasure, and visions of ambition, turn against us in the end of life, and sow the bed of death with thorns, that goad us in those awful moments, when the vanities of this world lose their value, and the mind of man being on its last departure, takes a melancholy review of time mispent and blessings misapplied.

Though it is part of every good man's religion to resign himself to God's will, yet a few reflections upon the worldly wisdom of that duty will be of use to every one, who falls under the immediate pressure of what is termed misfortune in life. By calling to mind the false estimates we have frequently made of worldly good and evil we shall get hope on our side, which though all friends else should fail us, will be a cheerful companion by the way: By a patient acquiescence under painful events for the present, we shall be sure to contract a tranquility of temper, that will stand us in future stead; and by keeping a fair face to the world we shall by degrees make an easy heart, and find innumerable resources of consolation, which a fretful spirit never can discover.

I wonder why I was so uneasy under my late loss of fortune, said a very worthy gentleman to me the other day, seeing it was not occasioned by my own misconduct; for the health and content I now enjoy in the humble station I have retired to, are the greatest blessings of my life, and I am devoutly thankful for the event, which I deplored.—How often do

we hear young unmarried people exclaim—*What an escape have I had from such a man, or such a woman!*—And yet perhaps they had not wisdom enough to suppose this might turn out to be the case at the time it happened; but complained, lamented and reviled, as if they were suffering persecution from a cruel and tyrannic being, who takes pleasure in tormenting his unoffending creatures.

An extraordinary example occurs to me of this criminal excess of sensibility in the person of a Frenchman named *Chaubert*, who happily lived long enough to repent of the extravagance of his misanthropy. *Chaubert* was born at Bourdeaux, and died there not many years ago in the Franciscan convent; I was in that city soon after this event, and my curiosity led me to collect several particulars relative to this extraordinary humourist. He inherited a good fortune from his parents, and in his youth was of a benevolent disposition, subject however to sudden caprices and extremes of love and hatred. Various causes are assigned for his misanthropy, but the principal disgust, which turned him furious against mankind, seems to have arisen from the treachery of a friend, who ran away with his mistress, just when *Chaubert* was on the point of marrying her; the ingratitude of this man was certainly of a very black nature, and the provocation heinous, for *Chaubert*, whose passions were always in extremes, had given a thousand instances of romantic generosity to this unworthy friend, and reposed an entire confidence in him in the matter of his mistress: He had even saved him from drowning one day at the imminent risque of his life, by leaping out of his own boat into the Garonne and swimming to the assistance of his, when it was sinking in the middle of the stream: His passion for his mistress was no less vehement; so that his disappointment had every aggravation possible, and operating

Q

But what can they do better from the time at which they are able to talk? For something they must do. Or why should we slight the gain, little as it is, which accrues before the age of seven? For certainly, however little that may be which the preceding age shall have contributed, yet the boy will be learning greater things in that very year, in which he would otherwise be learning smaller: This, extended to several years, amounts to a sum; and whatever is anticipated in infancy, is an acquisition to the period of youth.

Let us not then throw away even the very first period; and the less so, as the elements of learning require memory alone, which is not only found in little boys, but is very tenacious in them.

QUINTILIAN.