

FILIAL AFFECTION.

The long reign of Winter was past, and a milder sun had revisited the earth. The scene was inviting, and I quit for an hour the bustle of a town, to admire the beautiful works of God as unfolded in the volume of nature. Having escaped from the hum of business in which I was accustomed to act, I ascended a little eminence, that I might gain a fairer view of the scenery around. The earth was clothed with beauty, the air filled with the music of happy beings, and the ocean bore upon its bosom the treasures of successful commerce. All things seemed to speak the beneficence of a Supreme Being, and I wondered if with such innumerable proofs of his goodness, above, around, beneath and within them, any of his children could violate his commands.

At that moment my attention was arrested by observing two men at a distance, the one apparently lifeless upon the ground, and the other endeavoring in vain to convey him to a dwelling not far remote. He raised the powerless body from the earth, removed it a few paces toward the dwelling, but could proceed no farther. He placed it again upon the ground, and seated himself by its side, as if determined not to forsake it. With mingled emotions of sympathy and curiosity I hastened to the spot. Judge what was my surprise and pity and disgust, when I found a man in the vigor of life, waylaid and spoiled by that treacherous assassin, Intemperance, and a mere youth at his side, attempting in vain to screen his infamy from the eye of the world. I asked the lad—for his countenance beamed with intelligence—what motives induced him to manifest such kindness to one who had well nigh forfeited his claim to our compassion. 'Alas,' said he, 'it is my father;' and the tear rolled down his cheeks. I now perceived I had expressed myself incautiously, and endeavored to heal the wound which I seemed to have inflicted. 'I know,' said the youth, 'he has forfeited his claim to the compassion of others, but not to mine. He has ruined his reputation, his family, and I fear his never-dying soul; but how can I surrender the strong ties of nature? How can I forget the author of my being, and the protector of my infant years?' I commended the warmth of his affection, and secretly admired that it should continue unabated, when the object on which it rested was become so woefully changed. 'Sir,' said the youth, as if discovering the tenor of my thoughts, 'have you a father?' I replied that I had. 'Forgive me if I make the supposition, that in the solemn providence of God you were called to look upon his lifeless clay. Suppose even that his death was hastened by crime. Would you on that account refuse him the last acts of kindness?' I answered that every feeling of my nature would revolt at the thought of it. 'Then,' said he, 'you are prepared to appreciate the motives which actuate me. I look upon my father as dead. True, he breathes, and the blood circulates in his veins; but is this all that constitutes human life? Where is the eye that once beamed so affectionately upon me? It is closed. Where are the strength and activity of manhood? They are fled. Address him—he hears not, answers not. Handle him—he perceives it not. But for me the vulture might feed on his mangled limbs, and the swine trample on the image of God.'—'And yet,' I replied, 'the death of which you speak is not like the dissolution of soul and body, final and irrevocable. He will soon revive.'—'Alas,' exclaimed the youth, 'had you once seen him returning into life, covered with the horrors of his own corruption—had you heard his midnight groans, and witnessed the gnawings of remorse within him—had you seen him struggling to reform, and at last seizing the oblivious cup as the only refuge from despair, you would not, you could not have mentioned this frightful reanimation, as an alleviation of his condition. It is this very state from which he shrinks as an insupportable burden. No; it is nothing to be laid quietly in the grave with the common guilt of men, compared with the endless succession of assassinations which he inflicts upon his own body, and the final catastrophe to which they inevitably lead. He dies a thousand deaths. O, my father! my father!' The scene had now become painful to my feelings, and I wished to retire. But how could I forsake this affectionate youth,

while discharging with such emotion the duties of filial piety? I offered him my assistance, and we conveyed the miserable victim of intemperance to his dwelling. And here the fountains of my compassion were opened anew. An interesting group of children and a disconsolate wife mourned over their sorrows with all the emphasis of grief, and refused to be comforted. I wished to administer the consolations afforded by the gospel to those who innocently suffer, but my sympathies were overpowered, and I withdrew, overwhelmed with a sense of the cruelty, the guilt, the deadly and irreparable mischief of Intemperance.

SUCCESS IN LIFE.

Few persons conversant with the world have failed to remark that, in the race of life, men of moderate means and attainments frequently outstrip competitors, endowed equally by the smiles of fortune and the gifts of genius. It is told of Chancellor Thurlow, on being consulted by a parent as to the best means his son could adopt to secure success at the bar, that he thus addressed him—"Let your son spend his own fortune, marry, and spend his wife's, and then go to the bar; there will be little fear of his failure." Whence this recommendation? The man of certain independent means, Thurlow's observation had taught him, does not lay his shoulder to the wheel as he who is urged on by the "*res augusta domi*," and hence, as the simple result, he is distanced. The illustration of this truth may be observed every day, particularly in the learned professions. It should be ever borne in mind, that success in life is not regarded by the wise man as an *end*, but as a *mean* of happiness. The greatest and most continued favours of fortune cannot, in themselves, make an individual happy; nor can the deprivation of them render altogether miserable the possessor of a clear conscience and well-constituted mind. The sum of human enjoyment is not, cannot be, derivable from one source; many circumstances must contribute to it. "One principal reason," remarks Bentham, "why our existence has so much less of happiness crowded into it than is accessible to us, is, that we neglect to gather up those minute particles of pleasure which every moment offers to our acceptance. In striving after a sum total, we forget the ciphers of which it is composed; struggling against inevitable results which we cannot control, too often man is heedless of those accessible pleasures, whose amount is by no means inconsiderable when collected together. Stretching out his hand to catch the stars, he forgets the flowers at his feet, so beautiful, so fragrant, so various, so multitudinous." In conclusion, another most fertile source of human disappointment arises from having entertained views of life altogether incompatible with the imperfect character of human nature, or the declared end of our probationary residence on this earthly planet. "What is it," inquires Goethe, "that keeps men in continual discontent and agitation? It is, that they cannot make realities correspond with their conceptions—that enjoyment steals away from their hands—that the wished-for comes too late—and nothing reached or acquired produces on the heart the effect which their longing for at a distance led them to anticipate."

CHRISTIANITY.

Philosophy can only heave a sigh, a longing sigh, after immortality. Eternity is to her an unknown vast, over which she soars on conjecture's trembling wing. Above, beneath, around, is an unfathomable void, and doubt, uncertainty or despair is the result of all her inquiries.

Christianity, on the other hand, having furnished all necessary information concerning life, with firm and undaunted step crosses death's narrow isthmus, and boldly launches forth into that dread futurity which borders on it. Her path is marked with glory. The once dark, dreary region brightens as she approaches it, and benignly smiles as she passes over it. Faith follows where she advances, till, reaching the summit of the everlasting hills, an unknown scene, in endless varieties of loveliness and beauty, presents itself, over which the ravished eye wanders, without a cloud to dim or a limit to obstruct its sight.

In the midst of this scene, rendered luminous by the glory which covers it, the city, the palace, the throne of God, appears. Trees of life wave their ambrosial tops around it—rivers of salvation issue from beneath it. Before the angels touch their harps of living melody, and saints in sweet response breathe forth to the listening heavens their grateful songs. The breezes of Paradise waft the symphony, and the bending sky directs it to the earth. The redeemed of the Lord catch the distant sound, and feel a sudden rapture. 'Tis the voice of departed friendship—friendship, the loss of which they mourn upon the earth, but which they are now assured will be restored in the heavens; from whence a voice is heard to say, 'Fear not ye; death cannot injure you; the grave cannot confine you. Through its chill mansion Grace will conduct you up to glory. We wait your arrival. Haste, therefore—come away.' All this Christianity will do for you. It will do more than this. It consecrates the sepulchre into which your bodies, already touched by death, will presently descend. There, mouldered into dust, your flesh shall rest in hope. Nor will the season of its humiliation last for ever. Christianity, faithful to her trust, appears for its redemption. She approaches and stands before the tomb. She stretches out her sceptre and smites the sepulchre. Its moss-grown covering rends asunder. She cries to the silent inhabitants within it. Her energizing voice echoes along the cold, damp vaults of death, renewing skin and bones and dust and corruption, and mortal puts on immortality. Her former habitation, thus refined and sublimated by the resurrection, the exulting soul re-enters, and henceforth the measure of her joy is full.

WOMAN.—Woman! truly she is a miracle. Place her amid flowers, foster her as a tender plant, and she is a thing of fancy, of waywardness, and sometimes of folly; annoyed by a dew drop, fretted by the touch of a butterfly's wing, ready to faint at the rustle of a beetle. The zephyrs are too rough, the showers too heavy, and she is overpowered by the perfume of a rosebud. But let real calamity come—rouse her affections, enkindle the fires of her heart, and mark her then. How her heart strengthens itself—how strong is her purpose! Place her in the heat of battle—give her a child, a bird, any thing she loves or pities, to protect, and see her, as in related instances, raising her white arms as a shield, and as her own blood crimson her upturned forehead, praying for life to protect the helpless. Transplant her into the dark places of the earth, awaken her energies into action, and her breath becomes a healing, her presence a blessing. She disputes inch by inch the stride of the stalking pestilence, when man, the strong and the brave, shrinks away, pale and affrighted. Misfortune daunts her not; she wears away a life of silent endurance, or goes forward to the scaffold with less timidity than to her bridal. In prosperity she is a bud full of imprisoned odors, waiting but for the winds of adversity to scatter them abroad—pure gold, valuable, but untried in the furnace. In short, woman is a mystery, a miracle.

Providence has gifted man with reason; to his reason, therefore, is left the choice of his food and drink, and not to instinct, as among the lower animals; it thus becomes his duty to apply his reason to the regulation of his diet; to shun excess in quantity, and what is noxious in quality; to adhere, in short, to the simple and the natural; among which the bounty of his Maker has afforded him an ample selection: and beyond which, if he deviates, sooner or later, he will suffer the penalty.—**PROVER.**

FAME.—'Tis not the good, the wise, the brave,
That surest shine, or highest rise;
The feather sports upon the wave—
The pearl in ocean's cavern lies.

AVARICE.—To spare's the wish of little souls,
The great but gather to bestow:
You current down the mountain rolls,
And stagnates in the swamp below.

Where secrecy or mystery begins, vice or roguery is not far off.—**DR. JOHNSON.**