

and in the case of man, of rational intercourse. We have seen how remarkably the air is fitted for this office; the construction of the organs of articulation, by which they are enabled to perform their part of the work, is, as is well known, a most exquisite system of contrivances. But, though living in an atmosphere capable of transmitting articulate sound, and though provided with organs fitted to articulate, man would never attain to the use of language, if he were not also endowed with another set of faculties;—the powers of abstraction and generalization, memory and reason, the tendencies which occasion the inflections and combinations of words, are all necessary to the formation and use of language. Are not those parts of the same scheme, of which the bodily faculties, by which we are able to speak, are another part? Has man his mental powers independently of the Creator of his bodily frame? To what purpose then, or by what cause, was the curious and complex machinery of the tongue, the glottis, the larynx produced? These are useful for speech, and full of contrivances, which suggest such a use as the end for which those organs were constructed. But speech appears to have been no less contemplated in the intellectual structure of man. The processes of which we have spoken, generalization, abstraction, reasoning, have a close dependence on the use of speech. These faculties are presupposed in the formation of a language, but they are developed and perfected by the use of language. The mind of man then, with all its intellectual endowments, is the work of the same Artist by whose hands his bodily frame was fashioned; as his bodily faculties again are evidently constructed by the maker of those elements on which their action depends. The Creator of the atmosphere and of the material universe is the Creator of the human mind, and the Author of those wonderful powers of thinking, judging, inferring, discovering, by which we are able to reason concerning the world in which we are placed, and which aid us in lifting our thoughts to the Source of our being himself.—*Whewell's Bridgewater Treatise.*

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SMALL SINS.

"Some sins," says that venerable and invaluable digest of scriptural truth, the General Assembly's Shorter Catechism, with which Presbyterians are familiar from their earliest years—"Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others." But while our attention is thus directed, and very properly directed, to the grosser turpitude, the deeper malignity, or the more impious daring of particular offences, and to the mode in which these, or other transgressions of the divine law, are aggravated, by the time, the place or the manner in which they are committed; by the more extensive knowledge, the more splendid talents, the ampler means, and the more frequent opportunities of doing good afforded to the sinner; we are too apt to forget the important fact that no man becomes at once an entire reprobate—that those beginnings of evil from which the depths of iniquity are gradually reached, and the pre-eminence in impiety, step by step attained, are generally what are denominated "Small Sins" as the river which, in its sea-ward course, sweeps before it whatever would obstruct its progress, is, at its source, a trickling rill, over which an infant may step.

We shall not, at least for the present, offer any remarks upon that perversion of the reasoning powers by which men contrive to extenuate to themselves their besetting sin, whatever it may be, and to say of it, "Is it not a little one?" but shall proceed at once to mention a few of those that are generally regarded as venial transgressions, or little sins, and to consider briefly the consequences to which they lead.

The first of these which we shall mention, is Telling lies in jest. The obvious tendency of this practice, let men disguise it under the name of quizzing, hoaxing, or whatever other term they will, is to deaden the moral sensibility, to break down the barriers between truth and falsehood; and by a very natural process of induction to lead to the belief, that if, for our amusement, we may violate truth, the harm cannot be much greater to wrest it for our convenience or interest, as, in the course of business, we find is done, without compunction, every day.

"This," says one, "is but a trifle; indeed it, and the owner will never miss it. He has no occasion for it—will never feel the want of it." The article thus coveted, is appropriated. The same apology is ready for appropriating in like manner something of still higher value, and so on progressively, till the unfortunate individual becomes an habitual thief, and perhaps ends his days on a gibbet, or in ignominious exile in a foreign land.

"My labours," says another, "occupy me incessantly during the week. I have no time for recreation, no leisure to visit a friend, or to enjoy myself, except on the Sabbath." The plea is admitted; for the judge who was to pronounce the verdict has himself suggested the defence. Absence from the house of God thus becomes first occasional, then habitual, finally total; and the wretched self-deceiver terminates his days a practical atheist.

"There is no harm," says a third, "in taking an occasional glass; nay, even—getting a little exhilarated," (in plain terms intoxicated,) "now and then, is only convivial festivity, the promoting of good fellowship;" and by thus promoting conviviality—good fellowship, the unsuspecting victim of such sophistry, becomes—alas too often—a wretched, despised, besotted drunkard—in this life an outcast; and, in the world to come, an heir of condemnation, for "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

"It is true I am passionate," is the admission of a fourth, "my temper is warm, and I dare say a little irritable, but I cannot help it; I do not, at any rate, cherish hatred, and am at least better than those who will brood over their enmity for years, until they find an opportunity of revenge." But "who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" What thy neighbour may be, to thee, in this respect, is nothing: what thou thyself art, in the sight of God, to thee is every thing. And one of those works of the flesh, of which it is declared "that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," is "wrath." You say you cannot help this infirmity of your temper. But have you ever fairly, and seriously, and resolutely made the attempt? Have you by earnest and oft repeated prayer to the God of all grace, besought him to enable you to subdue it? Be assured, that unless you keep this irritability of temper under, and bring it into subjection, it will increase in violence till it make you a torment to yourself, and an annoyance to all who are connected with you; nay it may urge you to deeds of violence, or even, in some paroxysm of infuriated anger, to imbrue your hands in blood.

These are a few examples, which might easily be multiplied, of what are called small sins, if indeed, some of them will be admitted, by many, to be sins at all, together with the consequences in which an indulgence in them too often results, and to which such indulgence naturally tends. Surely, then, if these things are so, and that they are, all past experience too plainly declares, then it must be admitted that small sins are not the insignificant trifles, they are so often represented to be, since they all tend to confirm the inspired declaration, that "the beginning of evil is like the letting out of waters."

Finally, let it be remembered that every sin which, known to be such, is wilfully and deliberately committed, whatever its rank in our own estimation, or in the code of the world, is, in the judgment of an enlightened conscience, and in the eye of the "Searcher of Hearts," a presumptuous and high handed transgression—one of those which the Psalmist deprecated when he prayed, and let us all join in the petition, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

SHELburnE.

The decline of Commonwealths and Cities, that once were flourishing, is a topic that peculiarly awakens our sympathies. It is singular with what keen inter-

est we peruse the narratives that describe to us the fallen condition of Troy or Babylon, of Nineveh or Tyre, of Jerusalem or Rome. If it happen to us actually to witness, with our own eyes, the ruins of such far famed capitals, we are overpowered by our emotions of wonder and awe, of joy and sorrow. Some of the most glowing descriptions of history, are those which bring before us scenes of this sort, and poetry is rarely sweeter, grander or more attractive, than when she transports us to Athens, Venice, Granada or Rome, and shows us, in vivid contrast, and high relief, the picture of their lofty and of their fallen fortunes. We are mistaken if we suppose such things are to be found, only in the pages of classical history. In very recent times, there have been towns, whose rise and fall were scarcely less remarkable. Fifty years ago, this town of Shelburne contained a population of 14,000 souls. The place sprung up, as if by the wand of an enchanter. The uncommon beauty and excellence of its harbour, drew to it a great multitude of the settlers, whom war had expelled from the State. They flocked thither by hundreds. They built themselves stately houses. They reared for themselves gardens and terraces along the winding shores. But they brought with them associates, which soon broke up their union, and squandered their resources—these were pride, intemperance and sloth. The place began to moulder away, and its fall was very nearly as rapid as its rise. Many fled from it, as from a city of destruction. Many were victims to the vice which corroded its vitals. Many repaired to adjoining settlements, to find in them the subsistence which this place refused them. In twenty years it was reduced to a hamlet of 200 inhabitants. Cattle were littered in what had been the saloons of wealth, and the "fox looked out at the windows," from which beauty and fashion once gazed. It has had a dark middle age of thirty years duration. But once more there are strong and pleasant symptoms of revival. The trade is widely increasing. The demand for labour much exceeds the supply. Old houses are repairing. New houses are shooting up. The rising generation is, with few exceptions, industrious and sober. The Temperance Society reckons 150 members. And the last, but not the least symptom of improvement is, the establishment of a superior school, in which all the branches of a solid education are about to be taught. In this seminary, it is proposed that the instruction should embrace all the usual subjects, from the first elements, up to Latin and the Mathematics. The teacher, a young gentleman from Edinburgh, is possessed of varied and liberal acquirements, and he applies himself to his vocation with assiduity and zeal. The situation is noted as the most healthy in the province. It has places of worship belonging to the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Methodist persuasions. It contains several respectable boarding houses, in which living is at once comfortable and economical. The above mentioned school will supply education, of a solid and practical sort at a very reasonable expence. Pleasant prospects for the youth of the district. And an admirable opportunity for parents, in other quarters, who may desire solid instruction and good superintendance for their sons. I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, yet, in the strength of that gospel faith which loves the light and hates the darkness, I venture to predict that the dark age of Shelburne is gone by, and that it is on the eve of rising to that prosperity which every place will attain to, that possesses within itself intelligence, true religion and great natural advantages.

April 8th, 1840.

W. T. W.

COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The Church and people of Scotland are under deep obligation to the members of the late Commission of the General Assembly, for the numbers, zeal, and alacrity with which they have repeatedly assembled for the discharge of its important duties. Time was, and that not very distant, when from General Assembly to Assembly there was no meeting of Commission; not that there was not important business which might have been brought before it, but that a sufficient number of members did not attend, and everything was crowded into the bustle of the