

relatives." "But, my good sir," replied the gentleman, "several of the most distinguished characters expect your company, and will be very glad to see you." Racine showed him the card, saying, "Here, sir, is our little meal—then say, having provided such a treat for me, what apology can I make for not dining with my children? Neither they nor my wife could have any pleasure in eating a bit of it without me; than pray be so obliging as to mention my excuse to the Prince of Conde, and my other illustrious friends." The gentleman did so—and not only his serene highness, but all the company present, professed themselves more delighted with this proof of the poet's faithful tenderness as a husband and a father, than they possibly could have been with his charming conversation.

It must be confessed, that harmony, peace, and pleasure, are not found in any families where they might naturally be expected. Various causes will account for this. Education is conducted in so preposterous a mode, that it should almost seem domestic happiness formed no part of the ultimate design. The marriage union, too, is the result of subtle intrigue or sordid interest, rather than a virtuous attachment originating in mutual sympathy and congeniality. Sometimes pomp and parade destroy the skill and taste, has expatiated on this topic, and presented a fine contrast in the characters of Aurelia and Fulvia.

We meet with persons who display much vivacity and politeness in mixed company abroad, but at home they are sullen, unsociable, irritable, and captious. Their good honour and good manners are reserved, like their best apparel, for holiday visits, and are put away the moment they enter their own residences, as if too precious for everyday use.

To secure fireside comfort and homeborn happiness something more is necessary than a neat snug mansion, surrounded with gardens and lawns, where flowers and shrubs, and shady walks, are kept in the nicest order. Family bickerings and strife would turn an Eden itself into a desert. It is of little avail to furnish the house, and cultivate the ground in the best style, if the minds of the inhabitants are vacant, and uncultivated. Nor will a few bright insulated maxims, and soft soothing sentiments from the pages of fiction and poetry, have the desired end. The play-

& movement of kindly feeling must be kept up by an unrelenting interchange of these little winning attentions which are required to sweeten all human society. Yet tenderness, though full and overflowing, will not suffice, unless accompanied by a dignity and decorum which command esteem and respect. Those who would enjoy domestic delight ought to be reminded that they will be more likely to gain their point by studying to pass their time usefully, than by making it over in regular distributed portions to ease and pleasure. Many persons wonder that the enchantments which bards have sung should be wanting in the retreat to which they have long fondly looked. But man cannot be happy in any situation without an expansion of mind, a brisk flow of ideas and spirits, and a lively sense of the worth and importance of those talents which are given by the great Creator to be occupied and improved. It is evident that where present ease and gratification are exclusively sought, the domestic circle must first be invaded by weariness and apathy and afterwards by chagrin and disgust—but the pursuit and communication of knowledge, the culture of friendship, the exercise of charity and faith—in a word, the assiduous discharge of personal and relative duties, and the proper use of every advantage which Providence hath bestowed, fail to give a wholesome currency and purity to the thoughts, and a brightly cheerfulness to the feelings of the heart.

The house which is dedicated as a temple to God becomes the mansion of peace and concord, love and joy. Religion sheds a hallowed influence over the most endearing relations of life, corrects acerbity of temper, purifies the springs of sympathy, and enlivens the present life by the glowing prospects of futurity. Nor is the man a blank in the world whose lot is comparatively obscure, provided piety and virtue prompt his actions and pervade his comforts and his cares. "He," says an able writer, "who praises God on a ten-stringed instrument, whose authority extends no farther than his own family, nor his example beyond his own neighbourhood, may have as thankful a heart here, and as high a place in the celestial choir hereafter, as the greatest monarch who praises God on an instrument of ten thousand strings, and upon the loud sounding organ, having as many millions of pipes as there are subjects in his empire."