

POETRY.

CHARITY.

Sweet Charity, thou of the kindest voice,
Of lightest hand, of softest, meekest eye,
And gentlest footstep, making but the noise
Of a good angel's pinions floating by,
Go to the rich, the gay and the secure,
Bald be thy step, and heavy be thy hand,
Knock loud, and long, at Fashion's partial door,
And swell thy voice to terror's bold command;
And he, who builds upon extortion's sand,
He of the purple and the linen fine,
Owner of widow's stock and orphan's land,
Shall shuddering turn from his untasted wine,
And feel, that to do well, his all he should resign.
Go to the lovely, not in sighing smiles,
At which the thoughtless fool might smiling sigh,
Scatter her freaks, her follies and her wiles,
With the stern beauty of religion's eye;
Teach her the tear of grief, of shame to dry,
To drop on frailty, or meek compassion's balm,
To do aright—to feel aright—to try
Her envious hateful passions first to calm;
Then shed upon her soul, not on her face thy
charm.

How blest are thy feet! Thy footsteps stray
From open paths, and seek a grassgrown track
Through shades impervious to the gaze of day;
Onward flies light, a form that turns not back
As sight of chasm, or torrent never slack;
Quiet and bold and sure the errand, speeds,
Nor doth the kindly deed a blessing lack—
To sorrow, joy—to anguish, peace succeeds,
The eye no longer weeps, the heart no longer
bleeds.

ON TIME, CONSIDERED AS A TALENT
(From Mrs. H. More's Christian Morals.)

Concluded.

Considerable evil, with respect to the economy of time, arises from an error which infects some minds of a superior cast—a notion that contempt of order and custom are indications of genius; that great minds cannot be tied to times nor enslaved by seasons. They value themselves on being systematic only in their disdain of method, on being regular in nothing but irregularity; with them accident gives the law to action. They pride themselves not in despatching business, but postponing it; and this in order to show with what ability they can retrieve time, to which they are always in arrears. From this vanity of intimating that they can execute in hours what costs slower souls days or weeks, the most pressing business is deferred to some indefinite period, and duties thus postponed are not seldom omitted.

The same confidence in his own powers, which leads a young man of genius to believe he can catch knowledge by intuition, see every thing at a glance, and comprehend every thing in a moment, tempts him to put off that moment. But if such wonders are really to be achieved without the old ingredients, time and study, what might he not expect would be accomplished with their assistance? Those who are now marvels would then be miracles! The too common consequence of this impatience of application, is to affect to despise whatever knowledge requires time to attain, and to consider whatever demands industry to acquire, as not worth acquiring.

Nor is this error monopolized by talents. We have known some, who having no other evidence of genius to produce, never failed to be unpunctual. It is a wonder that the more intellectual, seeing their province thus invaded by dunces, do not become regular through mere contempt of their imitators, and abandon the abuse of time to those who know not how to spend it wisely.

Christianity is a social principle. He who has discovered the use of time, and consequently the value of eternity, cannot but be solicitous for the spiritual good of his fellow-creatures. The one, indeed, is indicative of the other. But this good, like every other, is not without its dangers. We cannot essentially benefit people without associating with them, without rendering ourselves agreeable to them. But in so doing we should ever recollect that we may seek

to please, till we forget to serve them; we may soften strong truths, to render them more palatable, till we come gradually less to recommend them than ourselves. In the spirit of friendly accommodation we may insensibly lower the standard of religion, with a view to make ourselves more agreeable; and may deceive in order to conciliate.

Or we may fall into another error. We may begin at the wrong end. We may censure the wrong practice without any reference to the principle; or we may suit our counsels, not to the want, but to the taste of our friend. In our endeavours to promote the good of others, we should be careful to find out the point in which they are most deficient. If their error be ignorance of Scripture, if worldliness, if prejudice, if a general disinclination to seriousness, if a blind respect for religion, joined to an unacquaintedness with its doctrines; in each case, a very different mode of conduct will be requisite. In each in all, we should, indeed, with the utmost fairness, lay open the whole scheme of Christianity; neither concealing its difficulties, its humbling requisitions, nor the self-denials it imposes. But, at the same time, if we suspect any one truth to be particularly revolting to them, it will be more prudent to approach this truth gradually through others, from which they are less averse, than by forcing its introduction at the outset, shut up the way to farther progress. Every doctrine should be unfolded gradually, judiciously, temperately; not insisting on any points that are not clearly scriptural, nor on any that admit of doubtful disputation, nor on many points at a time; and above all, on none unseasonably, or unceasingly.

This habit of turning time to account, by endeavouring to be useful to others, will, if conducted with mildness, and exercised with Christian humility, be eminently beneficial to ourselves. It will set us on a closer examination of the truths we suggest; and, in contending with blindness and self-sufficiency, we shall find a wholesome exercise for our own patience and moderation. It may remind us that we were once, perhaps, in the same state. Above all, it will put us on a more strict watchfulness over our own hearts and lives, lest we should be adopting one set of principles for our conversation and another for our conduct. It will induce the necessity of a more exact consistency, as they, to whom we are counsellors, will not be backward, if we furnish them with the least ground, to be our censurers.

And here I would affectionately suggest to my numerous amiable young friends, the benefit to be derived to their own minds from turning a certain portion of their time to the personal instruction of the poor; for which so wide a field is now providentially opened. In communicating the elements of religious knowledge—in numberless repetitions of the same plain truths—in being obliged to begin the simple document which they fancied they had long ago impressed—in the humbling necessity of lowering their ideas, and debasing their language, in order to make themselves intelligible—in the forbearance which dulness of intellect, perverseness of temper, and ingratitude demand, they may gain some proficiency themselves, even where their success with others is encouraging.

But to whatever account we turn our time with respect to others, the first object of its right employment is with ourselves; and this not only in discharging those exercises of piety and virtue which are too obvious and generally acknowledged to require to be specified; but in attending

to the secret disposition of mind, in order to ascertain its real character. We do not mean to imply that we can judge of its state by the thoughts which are necessarily suggested by any actual business, or any pressing object; such thoughts being the proper demand of the occasion, and not any certain indication of our abiding state and habitual temper. But, by watching the nature and tendency of our spontaneous thoughts, we may, in a great measure, determine on the character of our minds; their voluntary thoughts and unprompted feelings being the streams which indicate the fountain whence they flow. The heart is that perennial spring; for, whether grace or nature supply the current, the fountain is inexhaustible. In either case, the more abundantly it flows, the more constantly its waste is fed by fresh supplies; expence, instead of exhausting, augments the stream, whether the source from earth supply worldly thoughts, or that from above such as are heavenly. Thoughts determine on the character; as the man thinketh, so is he.

What a scene will open upon us, when, from our eternal state, we shall look back on the use we have made of time! What a revolution will be wrought in our opinions! What a contrast will be exhibited, when we shall take a clear retrospect of all we have done, and all we ought to have done! And shall we, then, put off the inspection to an uncertain period, to a period when we can neither repent to any purpose for what was wrong, nor begin to do what we shall then perceive would have been right? Let these frequent meditations on death lead us to reflect what the feelings of a dying bed will be. Let us think now what will then be the review of riches mis-spent, of talents neglected or perverted, of influence abused, of learning misapplied, of time misemployed! To entertain serious thoughts of death now, is the most likely method for rectifying tempers, for conquering propensities, for establishing principles, for confirming habits, of which we shall then feel the consequence; for relinquishing enterprises and pursuits, for the success of which we may then be as much afflicted, as we should now be at their defeat.

He who cannot find time to consult his Bible, will find, one day, that he has time to be sick; he who has no time to pray, must find time to die. He who can find no time to reflect is most likely to find time to sin; he who cannot find time for repentance will find an eternity in which repentance will be of no avail. Let us, then, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, seriously reflect under what law we came into the world: "it is appointed for all men once to die, and after death, the JUDGMENT." Is it not obvious, then, that the design of life is to prepare for judgment; and that in proportion as we employ time well, we make immortality happy?

A Miser.—The following is a more extravagant instance of niggardliness than any recorded of Dancer or Elwes. It is related in "The Chronicles of London Bridge," of one John Overs, who had the ferry of the Thames, and who was immensely rich by means of his gains and his penury together:—

"To save the expense of one day's food in his family, he formed a scheme to feign himself dead for twenty-four hours, in the vain expectation that his servants would, out of propriety, fast until after his funeral. Having procured his daughter to consent to this plan, even against her better nature, he was put into a sheet, and stretched out in his chamber, having one taper burning at his head, and another at his feet, according to the

custom of the time. When, however, his servants were informed of his decease, instead of lamenting, they were overjoyed; and, having danced round the body, they broke open his larder, and fell to banqueting. The ferry-man bore all this as long, and as much like a dead man, as he was able; but, when he could endure it no longer, says the tract, "stirring and struggling in his sheet like a ghost, with a candle in each hand, he purposed to rise up, and rate 'em for their sauciness and boldness: when one of them thinking that the devil was about to rise in his likeness, being in a great amazement, caught hold of the butt-end of a broken oar, which was in the chamber, and, being a sturdy knave, thinking to kill the devil at the first blow, actually struck out his barins. It is stated that the servant was acquitted, and the ferry-man made accessory and cause of his own death."

The fable of the Algamation Fox.—A fox who had been out upon a hen-roosting expedition, happened, by the sudden springing of a Trap, to loose his tail. By good good luck, and a sudden spring, he saved his neck, but came off with the loss of his tail. Being rather ashamed of the sorry figure which he cut, he bethought himself of a scheme to save himself from disgrace. So he called together an assembly of the foxes, and made a great speech, in which he told them that all differences between the foxes who had, and those who had not lost their tails, should now cease; that tails were of no use, and advised them, "one and all," "magnanimously," to cut off their tails—their whole tails—and nothing but their tails. When he had finished, one of the other foxes said, that it was true the speech was "splendid, superhuman—was god-like;" but before he consented to have his tail cut off, he wished the immortal orator would just turn round, and let the assembly see—how he looked behind.

The learned and venerable Dr. L. after breakfasting one morning with a gentleman of some consideration in the North rode out with him and some other friends in his carriage. The conversation turning upon religion, the gentleman (who was said to be somewhat sceptical) remarked, that highly as he esteemed his worthy friend Dr. L. sundry points in his religious creed did not at all square with his ideas of orthodoxy: to instance but one—for his own part, he could not imagine a Heaven from which such men as Plato and Socrates had a chance of being excluded. "Sir," said the Doctor, "I shall indeed, be very happy to behold those worthies of antiquity in that abode of purity and bliss; but I do not meet them there, there will be some satisfactory reason for it."

A Clergyman, being indisposed, and confined to his bed, sent his servant to see what hour it was by a sun dial, which was fastened to a post in his garden. The servant went there, but being at a loss how to find it out, thought that the shortest way was to pluck up the post; which he accordingly did, and carried it to his master with the sun dial; saying to him, "bless me, Sir, look at it yourself, it is indeed a mystery to me."

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