





1750

J. B. Smith, Sculp.

It is also the general belief that the person who is accused of the crime will not be found guilty unless the evidence is so strong that it leaves no doubt in the mind of the jury.

*W. C. Lewis*

WY SOLY'S

BOOK



NEW YORK

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M Y S O N ' S

B O O K .

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MY DAUGHTER'S MANUAL"

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## PREFACE.

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WHEN a son is about to leave the paternal roof, for the purpose of completing his studies, learning his trade or profession, or entering upon the arduous duties of life, it is natural that the parent should desire to place in his hand some compendious volume of advice, respecting the principles which should guide him in his conduct. All these principles are embodied in that best of books, the Bible; and it is taken for granted that the parent, who is anxious for the eternal as well as temporal welfare of a son, should place that volume in his hands first, and commend him to a constant and unre-mitted attention to its doctrines and precepts, containing, as they do, the word of

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eternal life. This should be his chief guide, his consolation in adversity, his monitor in prosperity, and his adviser in every circumstance of interest.

Still it is desirable that he should have another, and more brief and compendious summary of moral and social duties, conforming to the great principles of the sacred volume; and it has been the endeavour of the writer, in preparing the following pages, to supply such a summary. He has drawn, from various sources, a great variety of precepts relating to manners, and conduct. He has digested them into order, and has endeavoured carefully to exclude whatever might seem of dangerous or doubtful tendency.

The principles which are requisite for the safe and correct transaction of business, are laid down with precision. Those which should govern the young man, in the courtesies of life, are also expounded with re-

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ference to his intercourse with the different classes of society. The rules of self-government, and those which relate to the economy of time and money, and the proper disposition of those moments, which may be lawfully devoted to relaxation and social enjoyment, are explained from the best authorities. Nor has it been forgotten to urge the great principles of religion and morality, on which are anchored the best hopes and dearest expectations of young and old—all who seek for more than a transient happiness and a perishing name.

The young man who shall receive this volume as a present from his parent, is entreated to read it carefully; to consider its precepts and principles deliberately, in the hour of calm retirement, when the voice of passion is hushed, and the seductions of pleasure are unfelt. Let him bind its precepts and those of that better and more authoritative volume to which we have already



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*referred, to his heart. Let him resolve that whatever others may do, he will devote himself to a virtuous, honourable, and useful course of life. So shall he bring joy and consolation to the declining years of his parent:—"the ear that hears him shall bless him, the eye that sees him shall bear witness to him;" and the happiness that is in store for the righteous and obedient, shall crown him for ever.*

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## MY SON'S BOOK.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### QUALITIES MOST BECOMING A YOUTH.

As soon as you are capable of reflection, you must perceive that there is a right and wrong in human actions. You see that those who are born with the same advantages of fortune, are not all equally prosperous in the course of life. While some of them, by wise and steady conduct, attain distinction in the world, and pass their days with comfort and honour; others of the same rank, by mean and vicious behaviour, forfeit the advantages of their birth, involve themselves in much misery, and end in being a disgrace to their friends, and a burden on society. Early, then, you may learn that it is not on the external condition in which you find yourselves placed, but on the part which you are to act, that your welfare or unhappiness, your honour or infamy, depend. Now, when beginning to act that part, what can be of greater moment than to regulate your plan

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of conduct with the most serious attention, before you have yet committed any fatal or irretrievable errors? If, instead of exerting reflection for this valuable purpose, you deliver yourselves up, at so critical a time, to sloth and pleasure; if you refuse to listen to any counsellor but humour, or to attend to any pursuit except that of amusement; if you allow yourselves to float loose and careless on the tide of life, ready to receive any direction which the current of fashion may chance to give you; what can you expect to follow from such beginnings? While so many around you are undergoing the sad consequences of a like indiscretion, for what reason shall not these consequences extend to you? Shall you only attain success without that preparation, and escape dangers without that precaution, which is required of others? Shall happiness grow up to you of its own accord, and solicit your acceptance, when, to the rest of mankind, it is the fruit of long cultivation, and the acquisition of labour and care!—Deceive not yourselves with such arrogant hopes. Whatever be your rank, Providence will not, for your sake, reverse its established order. By listening to wise admonitions, and tempering the vivacity of youth, with a proper mixture of serious thought, you may ensure cheerfulness for the

## QUALITIES BECOMING YOUTH

rest of your life ; but by delivering yourselves up at present to giddiness and levity, you lay the foundation of lasting heaviness of heart.

Let not the season of youth be barren of improvements, so essential to your felicity and honour. Your character is now of your own forming: your fate is in some measure put into your own hands. Your nature is as yet pliant and soft. Habits have not established their dominion. Prejudices have not pre-occupied your understanding. The world has not had time to contract and debase your affections. All your powers are more vigorous, disembarrassed, and free, than they will be at any future period. Whatever impulse you now give to your desires and passions, the direction is likely to continue. It will form the channel in which your life is to run ; nay, it may determine an everlasting issue. Consider then the employment of this important period as the highest trust which shall ever be committed to you ; as, in a great measure, decisive of your happiness, in time and in eternity. As in the succession of the seasons, each, by the invariable laws of nature, affects the production of what is next in course ; so, in human life, every period of our age, according as it is well or ill spent, influences the happiness of that which is to fol-

#### QUALITIES BECOMING YOUTH

low. Virtuous youth gradually brings forward accomplished and flourishing manhood; and such manhood passes of itself, without uneasiness, into respectable and tranquil old age. But when nature is turned out of its regular course, disorder takes place in the moral, just as in the vegetable world. If the spring put forth no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit; so, if youth be trifled away without improvement, manhood will be contemptible, and old age miserable.

Among the qualities most becoming in youth, what I shall first recommend is piety to God. With this I begin, both as the foundation of good morals, and as a disposition particularly graceful and becoming in youth. To be void of it, argues a cold heart, destitute of some of the best affections which belong to that age. Youth is the season of warm and generous emotions. The heart should then spontaneously rise into the admiration of what is great; glow with the love of what is fair and excellent; and melt at the discovery of tenderness and goodness. Where can any object be found, so proper to kindle those affections, as the Father of the universe, and the Author of all felicity! Unmoved by veneration, can you contemplate that grandeur and majesty

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which his works everywhere display! Untouched by gratitude, can you view that profusion of good, which, in this pleasing season of life, his beneficent hand pours around you! Happy in the love and affection of those with whom you are connected, look up to the Supreme Being, as the inspirer of all the friendship which has ever been shown you by others; himself your best and your first friend; formerly, the supporter of your infancy, and the guide of your childhood; now, the guardian of your youth, and the hope of your coming years. View religious homage as a natural expression of gratitude to him for all his goodness. Consider it as the service of the God of your fathers; of him to whom your parents devoted you; of him whom in former ages your ancestors honoured; and by whom they are now rewarded and blessed in Heaven. Connected with so many tender sensibilities of soul, let religion be with you, not the cold and barren offspring of speculation, but the warm and vigorous dictate of the heart.

To piety join modesty and docility, reverence of your parents, and submission to those who are your superiors in knowledge, in station, and in years. Dependence and obedience belong to youth. Modesty is one of its chief ornaments;



#### QUALITIES BECOMING YOUTH.

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and has ever been esteemed a presage of rising merit. When entering on the career of life, it is your part, not to assume the reins as yet in your hands; but to commit yourselves to the guidance of the more experienced, and to become wise by the wisdom of those who have gone before you. Of all the follies incident to youth, there are none which either deform its present appearance, or blast the prospects of its future prosperity, more than self-conceit, presumption, and obstinacy. By checking its natural progress in improvement, they fix it in long immaturity; and frequently produce mischiefs which can never be repaired. Yet these are vices too commonly found among the young. Big with enterprise, and elated by hope, they resolve to trust for success to none but themselves. Full of their own abilities, they deride the admonitions which are given them by their friends, as the timorous suggestions of age. Too wise to learn, too impatient to deliberate, too forward to be restrained, they plunge, with precipitant indiscretion, in the midst of all the dangers with which life abounds.

Youth is the proper season of cultivating the benevolent and humane affections. As a great part of your happiness is to depend on the connexions which you form with others, it is of high

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importance that you acquire betimes the temper and the manners which will render such connexions comfortable. Let a sense of justice be the foundation of all your social qualities. In your most early intercourse with the world, and even in your youthful amusements, let no unfairness be found.

Engrave on your mind that sacred rule of 'doing in all things to others, according as you wish that they should do unto you.' For this end impress yourselves with a deep sense of the original and natural equality of men. Whatever advantages of birth or fortune you possess, never display them with an ostentatious superiority. Leave the subordinations of rank to regulate the intercourse of more advanced years. At present it becomes you to act among your companions, as with a man. Remember how unknown to you are the vicissitudes of the world; and how often they, on whom ignorant and contemptuous young men once looked down with scorn, have risen to be their superiors in future years. Compassion is an emotion of which you never ought to be ashamed. Graceful in youth is the tear of sympathy, and the heart that melts at the tale of woe. Let not ease and indulgence contract your affections, and wrap you up in selfish enjoyment. Ac-

#### QUALITIES BECOMING YOUTH.

custom yourselves to think of the distresses of human life; of the solitary cottage, the dying parent, and the weeping orphan. Never sport with pain and distress, in any of your amusements; nor treat even the meanest insect with wanton cruelty.

When you look forward to those plans of life, which either your circumstances have suggested, or your friends have proposed, you will not hesitate to acknowledge, that in order to pursue them with advantage, some previous discipline is requisite. Be assured, that whatever is to be your profession, no education is more necessary to your success, than the acquirement of virtuous dispositions and habits. This is the universal preparation for every character, and every station in life. *Bad as the world is, respect is always paid to virtue.* In the usual course of human affairs it will be found, that a plain understanding, joined with acknowledged worth, contributes more to prosperity, than the brightest parts without probity or honour. Whether science, or business, or public life, be your aim, virtue still enters, for a principal share, into all those great departments of society. It is connected with eminence, in every liberal art; with reputation, in every branch of fair and useful business; with distinction, in

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every public station. The vigour which it gives the mind, and the weight which it adds to character; the *generous sentiments* which it breathes; the undaunted spirit which it inspires; the ardour of religion which it quickens; the freedom which it procures from pernicious and dishonourable avocations, are the foundations of all that is high in fame or great in success among men. Whatever ornamental or engaging endowments you now possess, virtue is a necessary requisite, in order to their shining with proper lustre. Feeble are the attractions of the fairest form, if it be suspected that nothing within corresponds to the pleasing appearance without. Short are the triumphs of wit, when it is supposed to be the *vehicle of malice*. By whatever arts you may at first attract the attention, you can hold the esteem and secure the hearts of others only by amiable dispositions and the accomplishments of the mind. These are the qualities whose influence will last, when the lustre of all that once sparkled and dazzled has passed away.

## CHAPTER II.

### INTEGRITY.

EVERY one, who has begun his progress in the world, will be sensible, that to conduct himself in human affairs, with wisdom and propriety, is often a matter of no small difficulty. Amidst that variety of characters, of jarring dispositions, and of interfering interests, which take place among those with whom we have intercourse, we are frequently at a stand, as to the part most prudent for us to choose.

Ignorant of what is passing in the breasts of those around us, we can form only doubtful conjectures concerning the events that are likely to happen. They may take some turn altogether different from the course in which we had imagined they were to run, and according to which we had formed our plans. The slightest incident often shoots out into important consequences, of which we were not aware. The most sagacious finds himself embarrassed, and at a loss how to act.

In public and in private life, in managing our own concerns, and in directing those of others, the doubt started by the wise man frequently occurs; "Who knoweth what is good for man in

### INTEGRITY.

this life !” While thus fatigued with conjecture, we remain perplexed and undetermined in our choice ; we are at the same time pulled to different sides. On one hand, pleasure allures us to what is agreeable ; on the other, interest draws us towards what seems gainful. Honour attracts us towards what is splendid ; and indolence inclines us to what is easy. In the consultations which we hold concerning our conduct, how often are we divided within ourselves ; puzzled by the uncertainty of future events, and distracted by the contest of different inclinations !

It is in such situations as these, that the principle of integrity gives us light and direction. While worldly men fluctuate in the midst of perplexities, the virtuous man consults his conscience. He listens to the voice of God. Were it only on a few occasions that this oracle could be consulted, its value would be less. But it is a mistake to imagine, that its responses are seldom given. Hardly is there any material transaction whatever in human life, any important question, that holds us in suspense as to practice, but the difference between right and wrong will show itself ; and the principle of integrity will, if we listen to it impartially, give a clear decision.

## INTEGRITY.

Whenever the mind is divided within itself, conscience is seldom or never neutral. There is always one side or other to which it leans. There is always one scale of the balance, into which it throws the weight of "some virtue," or "some praise;" of something that is "just and true, lovely, honest, and of good report." These are the forms, which rise to the observation of the upright man. By others they may be unseen, or overlooked; but in his eye, the lustre of virtue outshines all other brightness. Wherever this pole-star directs him, he steadily holds his course. Let the issue of that course be ever so uncertain; let his friends differ from him in opinion; let his enemies clamour; he is not moved; his purpose is fixed. He asks but one question of his heart, What is the most worthy and honourable part; What is the part most becoming his station, the character which he wishes to bear, the expectations which good men entertain of him? Being once decided as to this, he hesitates no more. He shuts his ears against every solicitation. He pursues the direct line of integrity, without "turning either to the right hand or to the left." "It is the Lord who calleth Him. I follow. Let him order what seemeth good in his sight." It

## SINCERITY AND TRUTH.

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is in this manner that the "integrity of the upright" acts "as their guide."

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## CHAPTER III.

### SINCERITY AND TRUTH.

It is necessary to recommend to you sincerity and truth. This is the basis of every virtue. That darkness of character where we can see no heart; those foldings of art, through which no native affection is allowed to penetrate, present an object, unamiable in every season of life, but particularly odious in youth. If, at an age when the heart is warm, when the emotions are strong, and when nature is expected to show herself free and open, you can already smile and deceive, what are we to look for, when you shall be longer hackneyed in the ways of men; when interest shall have completed the obduration of your heart, and experience shall have improved you in all the arts of guile! Dissimulation in youth is the forerunner of perfidy in old age. Its first appearance is the fatal omen of growing depravity and future shame. It degrades parts and learning; obscures the lustre of every accomplishment; and sinks you into contempt with



#### SINCERITY AND TRUTH.

God and man. As you value, therefore, the approbation of *Heaven*, or the esteem of the world, cultivate the love of truth. In all your proceedings, be direct and consistent. Ingenuousness and candour, in word and deed, possess the most powerful charm; they bespeak universal favour, and carry an apology for almost every failing. The path of truth is a plain and safe path; that of falsehood is a perplexing maze. After the first departure from sincerity, it is not in your power to stop. One artifice unavoidably leads on to another; till, as the intricacy of the labyrinth increases, you are left entangled in your own snare. Deceit discovers a little mind, which stops at temporary expedients, without rising to comprehensive views of conduct. It betrays, at the same time, a dastardly spirit. It is the resource of one who wants courage to avow his designs, or to rest upon himself. Whereas, openness of character displays that generous boldness which ought to distinguish youth. To set out in the world with no other principle than a crafty attention to interest, betokens one who is destined for creeping through the inferior walks of life: but to give an early preference to honour above gain, when they stand in competition; to despise every advantage which cannot

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES A LIE.

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be attained without dishonest arts; to brook no meanness, and to stoop to no dissimulation; are the indications of a great mind, the presages of future eminence and distinction in life. At the same time this virtuous sincerity is perfectly consistent with the most prudent vigilance and caution. It is opposed to cunning, not to true wisdom. It is not the simplicity of a weak and improvident, but the candour of an enlarged and noble mind; of one who scorns deceit, because he accounts it both base and unprofitable; and who seeks no disguise, because he needs none to hide him.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### WHAT CONSTITUTES A LIE.

A LIE is a breach of promise; for whoever seriously addresses his discourse to another, tacitly promises to speak the truth, because he knows the truth is expected. Or the obligation of veracity may be made out from the direct ill consequences of lying to social happiness. Which consequences consist either in some specific injury to particular individuals, or in the destruction of that confidence, which is essential

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES A LIE.

to the intercourse of human life; for which latter reason a lie may be pernicious in its general tendency, and therefore criminal, though it produce no particular or visible mischief to any one.

There are falsehoods which are not lies; that is, which are not criminal; as 1. Where no one is deceived; which is the case in parables, fables, novels, jests, tales to create mirth, ludicrous embellishments of a story, where the declared design of the speaker is not to inform but to divert; compliments in the subscription of a letter; a servant's denying his master; a prisoner's pleading not guilty; an advocate asserting the justice, or his belief of the justice of his client's cause. In such instances no confidence is destroyed, because none was reposed; no promise to speak the truth is violated, because none was given or understood to be given. 2. When the person to whom you speak has no right to know the truth, or, more properly, where little or no inconvenience results from the want of confidence in such cases; as where you tell a falsehood to a madman for his own advantage; to a robber to conceal your property; to an assassin, to defeat or divert him from his purpose. The particular consequence is by the supposition bene-

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES A LIE.

ficial; and as to the general consequence, the worst that can happen is, that the madman, the robber, the assassin, will not trust you again; which is sufficiently compensated by the immediate benefit which you propose by the falsehood.

It is upon this principle, that, by the laws of war, it is allowed to deceive an enemy by feints, false colours, spies, false intelligence, or the like; but by no means in treaties, truces, signals of capitulation or surrender; and the difference is, that the former supposes hostilities to *continue*; but the latter are calculated to *terminate* or suspend them. In the conduct of war, there is no place for confidence between the contending parties; but in whatever relates to the termination of war, the most religious fidelity is expected, because without it wars could not cease, nor the victors be secure but by the destruction of the vanquished.

Many people indulge in serious discourse, a habit of fiction and exaggeration, in the accounts they give of themselves, of their acquaintance, or of the extraordinary things which they have seen or heard; and so long as the facts they relate are indifferent, and their narratives, though false, are inoffensive, it may seem a superstitious

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES A LIE.

regard for truth to censure them merely for truth's sake.

But this liberty in conversation defeats its own end. Much of the pleasure and all the benefit of conversation depend upon our own opinion of the speaker's veracity, for which this rule leaves no foundation. The faith indeed of a hearer must be extremely perplexed, who considers the speaker, or believes that the speaker considers himself, as under no obligation to adhere to truth, but according to the particular importance of what he relates.

But beside, and above both these reasons, *white* lies always introduce others of a darker complexion. I have seldom known any one who deserted truth in trifles, that could be trusted in matters of importance. Nice distinctions are out of the question, upon occasions, like those of speech, which return every hour.

The habit therefore of lying, when once formed, is easily extended to serve the designs of malice or interest; like all habits, it spreads indeed of itself. As there may be falsehoods which are not lies, so there may be lies without literal or direct falsehood; as when the literal and grammatical signification of a sentence is different from the popular and customary meaning. It is

the wilful deceit that makes the lie; and we wilfully deceive when our expressions are not true in the sense in which we believe the hearer to apprehend them: besides that, it is absurd to contend for any sense of words in opposition to usage; for all senses of words are founded upon usage, and upon nothing else. Or a man may act a lie, as by pointing his finger in a wrong direction when a traveller inquires of him his road; or when a tradesman shuts up his window to induce his creditors to believe that he is abroad; for to all moral purposes, and therefore as to veracity, speech and action are the same; speech being only a mode of action.

Or, lastly, there may be lies of *omission*. A writer of English history, who, in his account of the reign of Charles the First, should wilfully suppress any evidence of that prince's despotic measures and designs, might be said to be a liar; for by entitling his book a History of England, he engages to tell the whole truth of the history, or at least all that he knows of it.

## CHAPTER V.

### SELF-DENIAL.

THERE are duties which every man can fulfil, without doing any considerable violence to his natural temper; and many would seek to compensate, by their earnestness in some departments of duty, for their want of fidelity in others; but it is impossible not to perceive, that the duties which they neglect are precisely those, to which they are under the strongest obligations to apply. They are those which are chiefly resisted by their predominant propensities; and are, for this reason, the chief duties by which they can prove their personal fidelity, or effectually "work out their own salvation."

It is obvious, that there cannot be such personal virtue, and that there is no self-denial, in good works, which neither contradict our peculiar tempers, nor make any sensible encroachment on our interests in the present life. It is self-denial, in the sense of the text, to apply steadily and earnestly to duties to which we have strong inclinations opposed, because we are conscious of their indispensable obligation. It is self-denial to persevere in them, when we have both a severe and a continued struggle to main-

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tain with ourselves; because we believe, "that, unto every one that hath, shall be given," and that habit and practice will at last reconcile our minds to them.

The most faithful men will sometimes be sensible, that there are certain duties which they are apt to contemplate with reluctance, or which they cannot fulfil without sacrificing either their wishes, or their apparent interests in this world. The self-denial of the gospel, supposes them to be even more ardent or solicitous, to discharge with fidelity, these difficult duties, than those which are easier in practice, or which are less contrary to their natural inclinations. Christianity requires them to "esteem all God's commandments, concerning all things, to be right;" but it specially enjoins them to be prepared to make every personal sacrifice, which can be requisite, in any circumstances, to render their fidelity complete, or to give them the testimony of their own minds, that "they have pleased God."

The self-denial which our Lord enjoins, consists in the firm and habitual resolution of the mind, by which his disciples are determined to subdue every private inclination, inconsistent with their fidelity to him, and to apply steadily



#### SELF-DENIAL.

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to every department of their personal duties, according to their best conviction of their obligation. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." A good man feels, besides, that he must be perpetually on his guard against every species of self-deceit, which would prefer the easy to the difficult service; which would lead him to mistake the conduct to which his inclinations prompt him, for that which he ought to do; or which would conceal from his view, his neglect of known and essential duties.

The self-denial, which is of most importance to every individual man, is evidently that by which he ought to resist his strongest temptations; those temptations which are in a peculiar manner adapted to the inclinations of his heart, or to his ruling passions; from which he has most danger to apprehend, and which it requires the greatest vigilance to avoid, or the greatest strength of resolution to overcome.

This is a branch of self-denial to which men will ever be most unwilling to direct their efforts. Self-deceit is never more agreeable to us, and is never more successful in perverting our conduct, than when it either represents the sins to which we are most inclined in a favourable light, as offences which may be soon com-

### SELF-DENIAL.

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pensated, or leads us to consider the struggle against them as an unnecessary severity, which religion does not strictly enjoin, or as a useless encroachment on satisfactions, which we are unwilling to relinquish. Men persist in sins which gratify their private inclinations, and persuade themselves, that their fidelity, or their self-denial in other points, will outweigh this circumstance when their characters shall be tried.

On the other hand, they are not entirely ignorant of the deception which they practise on their own minds; and are far from being able to reconcile their consciences to their conduct. They have a consciousness of their guilt, even at the moment when they are labouring to palliate, or to disguise it; and it frequently happens, that, in opposition to their practice, they are compelled to form strong and repeated resolutions to renounce the pursuits, from which they find it impossible to separate the impressions of guilt. But neither their convictions, nor their best resolutions avail them, when their peculiar temptations return. The present temptations are always as fascinating and as irresistible as those which preceded them. The struggle with themselves becomes gradually less. As they advance in life, their habits are confirmed; and till they are so, the

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sins, into which they are successively betrayed, meet every day with less resistance from the temper of their minds.

Every man, who attends to the state of his own mind, knows minutely the sins, with regard to which he feels himself least disposed to practise self-denial; the sins into which he is most frequently betrayed, contrary to his deliberate convictions of duty, and in opposition to his best resolutions. He knows, with how much industry he labours to reconcile his conscience to his peculiar vices; and how often he endeavours to persuade himself, that if he shall only practise self-denial in other points, his want of it in these instances will not be ultimately charged to his account.

I beseech those, who are conscious that this is truly their state of mind, to consider deliberately what our Lord has said to them all: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." Did he mean that we are only to practise self-denial in the cases in which we have no strong inclinations to subdue? Or did he intend to say, that self-denial, in other instances, would be a sufficient test of our fidelity to him, although we should allow ourselves the indulgence of "the sins which most easily beset us!" Let us read

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what he has expressly said, to ascertain his meaning precisely. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." The self-denial which our Lord urges on our consciences, is self-denial in the situations where it is most difficult to practise it; because these are the situations in which it is of most importance to the purity and to the fidelity of his disciples.

It requires a perpetual discipline, or self-denial, to the end of our lives, to be able to resist effectually "the sins which most easily beset us;" but we shall never regret either the struggles or the sacrifices to which our fidelity subjects us; and the victory over ourselves, be it in articles greater or less, will be a source of permanent satisfaction, beyond all that we can receive from the pleasures of this world.

On the other hand, we are certain that "if any man will not deny himself," in such situations as those which I have represented, no degree of

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ansterity in other points, can at all avail him. His deficiency in the self-command which Christianity enjoins, will be as ruinous to his happiness in the present life, as it is fatal to his interests in the world to come.

It is impossible not to perceive, that to guard ourselves effectually from the pollutions of the world, and to preserve to religion such a power over our affections, as is essential to its influence on our conduct, we are under an indispensable obligation to relinquish and to avoid many things, which are by themselves no direct violations of our positive obligations; but which we know from experience, to have a tendency to betray us into sins, or to render us unfit for discharging our personal duties, or to deprive us of the means by which our duties ought to be fulfilled.

I shall mention a few examples to illustrate this assertion; though every individual man is best qualified to suggest the illustrations of it which are of most importance to himself, from his intimate knowledge of his own life.

Men of strong animal spirits, who have that kind of intercourse with the world which is suited to their peculiar temper, must be conscious of the errors into which their love of

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*gaiety often betrays them, of the dangerous situations to which it introduces them, of the temptations for which it prepares them, and of its perpetual tendency to dissipate and interrupt the serious or deliberate reflections, which are essential to the steadfastness, and to the uniform tenor of all good conduct.*

If they have ever experienced any considerable impressions of religion, they are too often led *on from one indulgence to another, unfriendly to their progress in practical duties, till the influence of religion on their minds, becomes at last so weak, as to be incapable of resisting any strong temptation.* Their original temper, and the society in which they live, betray them into so many things in succession, which Christianity condemns, that they find it necessary at last to relieve themselves from their own reproach, by *endeavouring to reconcile their consciences to their conduct.* They overcome one religious restraint after another; and though they are far from being satisfied with themselves, their animal spirits support them, even after they have lost their internal tranquillity.

It is certain that religion does not require us to relinquish gaiety of temper, in which one man so often surpasses another, and which so well

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enables those who possess it in a superior degree, both to enjoy and to embellish the conditions of this life. On the contrary, the religion which is pure, affords us better reasons to be cheerful, than can be derived from any other source, and to enjoy the society of cheerful men.

But, on the other hand, religion prescribes to us that kind of self-denial, which sets a watch around the heart and mind, against the temptations, of which this general temper so often becomes the instrument. We are under an indispensable obligation to restrain ourselves, when we are sensible that our love of gaiety would lead us farther than we ought to go; when it is in danger of connecting us with those, whose society we ought not to cultivate; when it would bring us into an intercourse with the world, inconsistent with our essential duties; when we perceive that it encroaches on the habits which we have learnt from the gospel; or when, by dissipating our minds, it is in danger of withdrawing us from the discipline, or disqualifying us for the duties, of religion. Those who are governed more by inclination than by principle, are seldom disposed to allow the danger of an indulgence, from which they receive much private satisfaction. Because that which they are ad-

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monished to avoid, is not positively unlawful, and becomes pernicious only from its excess, or from its consequences, they defend their practice, by *denying* that their gaiety is carried to excess, and are not willing, in the mean time, to examine its moral effects minutely.

*On this point, it is sufficient to say, that both the excess and the effects may be safely appealed to their own consciences, and to their deliberate reflections. It is impossible to deny, that every man "professing godliness," is as really under an obligation to relinquish that, which he has found from experience to be pernicious to the general influence of religion on the mind, or to his fidelity in particular duties; or which he knows to have exposed him to dangerous temptations; as he can be bound to practise self-denial in any other instance which can be mentioned. We may disguise the matter to ourselves as long as the strength of our animal spirits is entire. But there is a time approaching, when the sentence we shall pronounce on our conduct will be equally dispassionate and just. Our habits in the present life, and the innocence or the danger which ought to be ascribed to them, will then be estimated by their inseparable connexion with our final condition as immortal beings.*



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The self-command which enables a Christian to restrain the natural impetuosity of his mind, so as to render it uniformly or habitually subservient to his personal duties, is certainly a great attainment; without it, religion maintains no decided influence on human conduct; and though the best of us possess it in very different degrees, all our perseverance in it is accompanied with a proportional progress in the spirit of religion, and with an inward satisfaction which more than rewards us for every struggle which it requires.

Those who have from Nature a cool or a frigid temperament, have seldom a struggle to maintain, either with the gaiety, or with the impetuosity, of their minds. But they have to combat what it is perhaps more difficult to overcome; the languor of affections which are seldom roused, and which are never warm; or the cold insensibility of mind, which receives or retains no strong impressions. It is not without a struggle with themselves, that they enter deeply into any subject, or earnestly into any duty. It requires both great strength of principle, and much of the grace of God, who "quickeneth whomsoever he will," to keep their minds alive to the minute practice of religion; and it is still more difficult to influence their conduct by means of religious

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affections, or to bring them into the state of mind which the Apostle expresses, by "peace and joy in believing."

This idea suggests another. There is in all men a *tendency to sloth, more fatal to the influence of religion* than the effect of many temptations. Whatever our general resolutions are, if we are not constantly on our guard, there is an indolence which is apt to work itself into our habits by imperceptible degrees; soliciting us to neglect the discipline of our own minds; to neglect the exercises of devotion, on which so much of the spirit of religion depends; to neglect the duties which require from us any sensible exertion or self-denial; to suspend the vigilance by which we ought to arm ourselves against our peculiar temptations; to allow ourselves to be engrossed by the concerns of this transitory life; and to bestow but a small portion either of our thoughts, or of our time, on the permanent interests of the world to come.

To resist this tendency of the mind in its rise and its progress, there is a self-denial which, how different soever their peculiar tempers are, Christians must practise all their lives, and which is essential to their fidelity in every department of duty. A good man "commits the keeping of

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his soul to God," and expects from his influence and grace the salutary effects of his own vigilance. But, on the other hand, it must be evident, that he who will not "deny himself," so as to maintain an effectual struggle against the sloth, which strikes at the root of religion in his mind, and of all its practice in the world, cannot be the disciple of Christ.

I think it unnecessary to mention any other minute examples on this part of the subject, but it is of importance to add, that he who would possess or preserve the spirit of vital religion in his own life, is under an indispensable obligation to relinquish, with a firm and decided resolution, whatsoever he knows from his experience, to have a pernicious influence on the temper of his mind, on the turn of his thoughts, on the affections which he ought to cultivate, or on those which he is bound to subdue, on the faithful employment of his time, or on the vigorous exercise of his talents.

He whose faith in the Son of God has really taught him self-denial, "shall go from strength to strength." His struggles with himself become every day less, in proportion to his perseverance; and the farther he advances, the path of life is smoother before him.

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On the other hand it is certain, that no man becomes so perfect in this world, as to have no more struggles to maintain. Every successive period of human life brings forward new temptations, or new circumstances to convince us, that we have still inclinations which require to be watched, or to be subdued. Our warfare must, therefore, be firmly supported to the end of our probation; and "patience" must have "its perfect work," till we are "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

But let it not be imagined that this doctrine supposes Christianity in practice to require a severity of discipline, or a degree of patience, to which there is nothing analogous in the other pursuits of human life. To be satisfied on this subject, we have only to represent to ourselves the self-denial requisite, in order to acquire the qualifications necessary for any art or profession; the labour and patience inseparable from the exercise of every man's particular occupation; the many sacrifices which we are compelled to make of our inclinations, both to very distant expectations, and to the most uncertain prospects of success in life; the drudgery, the hardships, the self-government, to which men patiently submit in their worldly affairs, for the sake of what is at

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last but a transitory reward, even when they are permitted to attain it.

The happiness and prosperity of human life depend on the practice of self-denial in all these different instances. Christianity prescribes a discipline of much less severity. The reward which it annexes to our perseverance, in the mean time, is far greater. The ultimate result which it presents to our view, is incomparably more certain, and is beyond our highest hope. The perfection of our nature, and our happiness through eternal ages, are to compensate our fidelity during the period of a short probation. "Every man," says the Apostle, "that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things; now they do this to obtain a corruptible crown, but we to obtain an incorruptible."

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## CHAPTER VI.

### TEMPER.

PASSIONS are quick and strong emotions, which by degrees subside. Temper is the disposition which remains after these emotions are past, and which forms the habitual propensity of the soul.

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The passions are like the stream, when it is swollen by the torrent, and ruffled by the winds. The temper resembles it, when running with its natural velocity and force.

The influence of temper is more silent and imperceptible than that of passion. It operates with a less degree of violence, but being constant, it produces effects no less considerable. Many place a good temper upon the same footing with a healthy constitution of body. They consider it as a natural felicity which some enjoy; but for the want of which, others are not morally culpable, nor accountable to God; and hence the opinion has sometimes prevailed, that a bad temper might be consistent with a state of grace.

If this were true, it would overturn that whole doctrine, of which the Gospel is so full, that regeneration, or change of nature, is the essential characteristic of a Christian. It would suppose that grace might dwell amidst malevolence and rancour, and that heaven might be enjoyed by such as are strangers to charity and love.

It will readily be admitted, that some, by the original frame of their mind, are more favourably inclined than others, towards certain good dispositions and habits. But this affords no jus-

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tification to those who neglect to oppose the corruptions to which they are prone.

Let no man imagine that the human heart is a soil altogether unsusceptible of culture; or that the worst temper may not be reformed by attention and discipline. Settled depravity of temper is always owing to our own indulgence. If, in place of checking, we nourish malignity of disposition, all the consequences will be placed to our account, and every excuse from natural constitution, be rejected at the tribunal of heaven.

The proper regulation of temper affects the character of man in every situation which he bears, and includes the whole circle of religious and moral duties.

With respect to God, he ought to cultivate a devout temper. This imports more than the care of performing the offices of religious worship. It denotes that sensibility of heart towards the Supreme Being, which springs from a deep impression of his perfections on the soul. It stands opposed, not only to that disregard of God which forms the description of the impious, but to that absence of religious affections, which sometimes prevails among those who are imperfectly good. They acknowledge, perhaps, the obligations of duty. They feel some concern

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to "work out their salvation." But they apply to their duty through mere constraint; and serve God without affection or complacency.

More liberal and generous sentiments animate the man who is of devout temper. God dwells upon his thoughts as a benefactor and a father, to whose voice he hearkens with joy. Amidst the occurrences of life, his mind naturally opens to the admiration of his wisdom, the reverence of his power, the love of his transcendent goodness. All nature appears to his view as stamped with the impress of these perfections. Habitual gratitude to his Maker for mercies past, and cheerful resignation to his will in all time to come, are the native effusions of his heart.

Such a temper as this deserves to be cultivated with the utmost attention; for it contributes, in a high degree, both to our improvement and our happiness. It refines, and it exalts human nature. It softens that hardness which our hearts are ready to contract from frequent intercourse with this rugged world. It facilitates the discharge of every duty towards God and man. At the same time, it is a temper peaceful and serene, elevated and rejoicing. It forces the current of our affections to flow in a placid tenor. It opens pleasing prospects to the mind.



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It banishes harsh and bitter passions; and places us above the reach of many of the annoyances of worldly life. When the temper is truly devout, "the peace of God, which passeth understanding," keepeth the heart and soul.

In considering the proper state of our temper with respect to one another, what first presents itself to be recommended is a peaceable temper; a disposition averse to give offence, and desirous of cultivating harmony, and amicable intercourse in society. This implies yielding and condescending manners, unwillingness to contend with others about trifles, and in contests that are unavoidable, proper moderation of spirit. Such a temper is the first principle of self-enjoyment. It is the basis of all order and happiness among mankind.

The positive and contentious, the rude and quarrelsome, are the bane of society. They seem destined to blast the small share of comfort which Nature has here allotted to man. But they cannot disturb the peace of others, more than they break their own. The hurricane rages first in their own bosom, before it is let forth upon the world. In the tempests which they raise, they are always tost; and frequently it is their lot to perish.

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A peaceable temper must be supported by a candid one, or a disposition to view the conduct of others with fairness and impartiality. This stands opposed to a jealous and suspicious temper, which ascribes every action to the worst motive, and throws a black shade over every character. As you would be happy in yourselves, or in your connexions with others, guard against this malignant spirit. Study that charity which "thinketh no evil;" that temper which, without degenerating into credulity, will dispose you to be just; and which can allow you to observe an error, without imputing it as a crime. Thus you will be kept free from that continual irritation which imaginary injuries raise in a suspicious breast; and will walk among men as your brethren, not your enemies.

But to be peaceable and to be candid, is not all that is required of a good man. He must cultivate a kind, generous, and sympathizing temper, which feels for distress wherever it is beheld; which enters into the concerns of his friends with ardour; and to all with whom he has intercourse, is gentle, obliging, and humane. How little does he know of the true happiness of life, who is a stranger to that intercourse of good offices and kind affections, which, by a

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pleasing charm, attach men to one another, and circulate joy from heart to heart!

You are not to imagine, that a benevolent temper finds exercise only when opportunities offer of performing actions of high generosity, or of extensive utility. These seldom occur. The condition of the greater part of mankind, in a good measure, precludes them. But in the ordinary round of human affairs, a thousand occasions daily present themselves of mitigating the vexations which others suffer, of soothing their minds, of aiding their interest, of promoting their cheerfulness or ease. Such occasions may relate to the smaller incidents of life. But it is of small incidents that human life is chiefly composed. The attentions which respect these, when suggested by real benignity of temper, are often more material to the happiness of those around us, than actions which carry the appearance of greater dignity and splendour.

No wise or good man ought to account any rules of behaviour as below his regard, which tend to cement the great brotherhood of mankind in comfortable union. In a more especial manner, amidst that familiar intercourse which belongs to domestic life, all the virtues of temper find their proper place. It is very unfortu-

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nate, that within that circle, men too often think themselves at liberty to give unrestrained vent to the caprice of passion or humour. Whereas there, on the contrary, more than anywhere, it concerns them to attend to the government of their heart; to check what is violent in their tempers, and to soften what is harsh in their manners. For there the temper is formed, and the real character displays itself. The forms of the world disguise men when abroad, but within his own family, every man is known to be what he truly is.

In all our intercourse, then, with others, particularly in that which is closest and most intimate, let us cultivate a peaceable, a candid, a gentle, and friendly temper. This is the temper to which, by repeated injunctions, our holy religion seeks to form us. This was the temper of Christ: this is the temper of heaven.

The basis of all good dispositions, as it respects the individual himself, is humility. Not that meanness of spirit which leads a man to undervalue himself, and to sink below his rank and character; but what the Scripture expresses with great propriety, when it exhorts "every man, not to think more highly of himself, than he ought to do, but to think soberly." He who adopts all the flat-

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tering suggestions of self-love, and forms claims upon the world, proportioned to the imaginary opinion which he has conceived of his merit, is preparing for himself a thousand mortifications. Whereas, by checking the risings of ill-founded vanity, and retreating within those bounds which a moderate estimation of our character prescribes, we escape the miseries which always pursue an arrogant mind, and recommend ourselves to the favour both of God and man.

Hence will naturally arise a contented temper, which is one of the greatest blessings that can be enjoyed by man, and one of the most material requisites to the proper discharge of the duties of every station. For a fretful and discontented temper renders one incapable of performing aright any part in life. It is unthankful and impious towards God; and towards man, provoking and unjust. It is a gangrene which preys on the vitals, and infects the whole constitution with disease and putrefaction.

Subdue pride and vanity, and you will take the most effectual method of eradicating this distemper. You will no longer behold the objects around you with jaundiced eyes. You will take in good part the blessings which Providence is pleased to bestow, and the degree of favour which

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your fellow-creatures are disposed to grant you. Viewing yourselves, with all your imperfections and failings, in a just light, you will rather be surprised at your enjoying so many good things, than discontented, because there are any which you want.

From an humble and contented temper, will spring a cheerful one. This, if not in itself a virtue, is at least the garb in which virtue should always be arrayed. Piety and goodness ought never to be marked with that dejection which sometimes takes rise from superstition, but which is the proper portion only of guilt.

At the same time, the cheerfulness belonging to virtue is to be carefully distinguished from that light and giddy temper which characterizes folly, and is so often found among the dissipated and vicious part of mankind. Their gaiety is owing to a total want of reflection; and brings with it the usual consequences of an unthinking habit, shame, remorse, and heaviness of heart, in the end. The cheerfulness of a well-regulated mind springs from a good conscience and the favour of heaven, and is bounded by temperance and reason. It makes a man happy in himself, and also promotes the happiness of all around him. It is the clear and calm sunshine

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of a mind illuminated by piety and virtue. It crowns all other dispositions, and comprehends the general effect which they ought to produce on the heart.

Such, on the whole, is the temper, or habitual frame of mind, in a good man: devout towards God; towards men, peaceable, candid, affectionate, and humane; within himself, humble, contented, and cheerful. When this temper is thoroughly formed within us, then may the heart be esteemed to have been "kept with all diligence."

That we may be thus enabled to keep it, for the sake both of present enjoyment, and of preparation for greater happiness, let us earnestly pray to Heaven. A greater blessing we cannot implore of the Almighty, than that he who made the human heart, and who knows its frailties, would assist us to subject it to that discipline which religion requires, which reason approves, but which his grace alone can enable us to maintain.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CHOICE OF COMPANY.

WHEN the utmost care has been taken to send a young man into the world well principled, and fully apprised of the reasonableness of a religious and virtuous life; he is, yet, far from being temptation proof—he even then may fall, may fall into the worst both of principles and practices; and he is very likely to do so, if he will associate with those who speak as freely as they act; and who seem to think, that their understanding would be less advantageously shown, were they not to use it in defence of their vices.

That we may be known by our company, is a truth become proverbial. The ends we have to serve may, indeed, occasion us to be often with the persons, whom we by no means resemble; or, *the place, in which we are settled, keeping us* at a great distance from others, if we will converse at all, it must be with some whose manners we least approve. But when we have our choice—when no valuable interest is promoted by associating with the corrupt—when, if we like the company of the wise and considerate, we may have it; that we then court the one, and



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shun the other, seems as full a proof, as we can well give, that, if we avoid vice, it is not from the sense we have of the amiableness of virtue.

Had I a large collection of books, and never *looked into any that treated on grave and useful subjects*, that would contribute to make me wiser or better; but took those frequently, and those only, into my hands, that would raise my laughter, or that would merely amuse me, or that would give me loose and impure ideas, or that inculcated atheistical and sceptical notions, or that were filled with scurrility and invective, and therefore could only serve to gratify my spleen and ill nature; they, who knew this to be my practice, must certainly form a very unfavourable opinion of my capacity, or of my morals. If *nature had given me a good understanding*, and much of my time passed in reading: were I to read nothing but what was trifling, it would spoil that understanding, it would make me a trifler: and though formed with commendable dispositions, or with none very blameable; yet if my *favourite authors were—such as encouraged me to make the most of the present hour; not to look beyond it, to taste every pleasure that offered itself, to forego no advantage that I could obtain—such as gave vice nothing to fear, nor*

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virtue any thing to hope, in a future state; you would not, I am sure, pronounce otherwise of those writers, than that they would hurt my natural disposition, and carry me *lengths of guilt*, which I should not have gone, without this encouragement to it.

Nor can it be allowed, that *reading* wrong things would thus affect me, but it must be admitted, that *hearing* them would not do it less. *Both* fall under the head of *Conversation*; we fitly apply that term alike to *both*; and we may be said, with equal propriety, to converse with books, and to converse with men. The impression, indeed, made on us by what we hear, is, usually, much stronger than that received by us from what we read. That which passes in our usual intercourse is listened to, without fatiguing us: each, then, taking his turn in speaking, our attention is kept awake: we mind throughout what is said, while we are at liberty to express our own sentiments of it; to conform it, or to improve upon it, or to object to it, or to hear any part of it repeated, or to ask what questions we please concerning it.

Discourse is an application to our eyes, as well as ears; and the one organ is here so far assistant to the other, that it greatly increases the

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force of what is transmitted to our minds by it. The air and action of the speaker give no small importance to his words: the very tone of his voice, adds weight to his reasoning; and occasions that to be attended to throughout, which, had it come to us from the pen or the press, we *should have been asleep, before we had read half of it.*

That bad companions will make us as bad as themselves, I do not affirm. When we are not kept from their vices by our principles, we may be so by our constitution; we may be less profligate than they are, by being more cowardly: but what I advance as *certain* is, that we cannot be safe among them—that they will, in some degree, and may in a very great one, hurt our morals. You may not, perhaps, be unwilling to have a distinct view of the reasons, upon which I assert this.

For many years of our life we are forming ourselves upon what we observe in those about us. We do not only learn their phrase, but their manners. You perceive among whom we were *educated, not more plainly by our idiom, than by our behaviour.* The cottage offers you a brood, with all the rusticity and savageness of its grown inhabitants. The civility and courtesy, which,

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in a well-ordered family, are constantly seen by its younger members, fail not to influence their deportment; and will, whatever their natural *brutality* may be, dispose them to check its appearance, and express an averseness from what is rude and disgusting. Let the descendant of the meanest be placed, from his infancy, where he perceives every one mindful of decorum; the marks of his *extraction* are soon obliterated.

Nor is the disposition to imitate confined to our childhood; when this is past, and the man is to show himself, he takes his colours, if I may so speak, from those he is near—he copies their appearance—he seldom is, what the use of his reason, or what his own inclinations, would make him.

Conversation, like marriage, must have consent of parties. There is no being intimate with him, who will not be so with you; and, in order to contract or support an intimacy, you must give the pleasure which you would receive. This is a truth, that every man's experience must force him to acknowledge: we are sure to seek in vain a familiarity with any, who have no interest to serve by us, if we disregard their humour.

Did you ever hear *Charles* tell a good story—make a shrewd observation—drop an expression, which bordered either on wit or humour?

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Yet he is welcome to all tables—he is much with those who have wit, who have humour, who are, really, men of abilities. Whence is this, but from the approbation he shows of whatever passes! A story he cannot *tell*, but he has a laugh in readiness for every one he *hears*: by his admiration of wit, he supplies the want of it; and they, who have *capacity*, find no objection to the meanness of *his*, whilst he appears always to think as they do. Few have their looks and tempers so much at command as this man; and few, therefore, are so happy in recommending themselves; but as in *his way* of doing it, there is, obviously, the greatest likelihood of success, we may be sure that it will be *the way* generally *taken*.

*Some*, I grant, you meet with, who by their endeavours, on all occasions, to show a superior discernment, may seem to think, that to gain the favour of any one, he must be brought to their sentiments, rather than they adopt his; but I fear these persons will be found only giving too clear a proof, either how absurdly self-conceit sometimes operates, or how much knowledge there may be, where there is very little common sense.

Did I, in describing the creature called MAN,

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represent him as having, in proportion to his bulk, more brains than any other animal we know of; I should not think this description false, though it could be proved that *some* of the species had scarce any brains at all.

Even where favour is not particularly sought, the very civility, in which he, who would be regarded as a well-bred man, is never wanting, must render him unwilling to avow the most just disapprobation of what his companions agree in acting, or commending. He is by no means to give disgust, and, therefore, when he hears the worst principles vindicated, and the best ridiculed; or when he sees what ought to be matter of the *greatest shame*, done without *any*; he is to acquiesce, he is to show no token, that what passes is at all offensive to him.

Consider yourself then in either of these situations—desirous to engage the favour of the bad man, into whose company you are admitted—or, only unwilling to be thought by him deficient in good manners; and, I think, you will plainly see the danger you should apprehend from him—the likelihood there is, that you should at length lose the *abhorence* of his crimes, which, when with him, you never express.

Will you ask me, why it is not as *probable*—

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that you should reform your vicious acquaintance, as that they should corrupt you? Or, why may I not as well suppose—that they will avoid speaking and acting what will give you offence, as that you will be averse from giving them any—that they will consult your inclinations, as that you will theirs!

To avoid the length, which will be equally disagreeable to both of us, I will only answer—Do you know any instance, which can induce you to think this *probable*? Are not you apprised of many instances, that greatly weaken the probability of it!

The vast disproportion, which there is between the numbers of the serious and the dissolute, is so notorious, as to render it unquestionable—that the influence of the latter far exceeds the influence of the former—that a vicious man is much more likely to corrupt a virtuous, than to be reformed by him.

I will close my remarks on this head, with a passage from a very good historian, which will show you the sense of one of the ablest of the ancient legislators on my present subject.

This writer mentioning the laws which *Charondas* gave the *Thurians*, says—“He enacted a law with reference to an *evil*, on which former

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lawgivers had not animadverted, that of keeping bad company. As he conceived that the morals of the good were sometimes quite ruined by their dissolute acquaintance—that vice was apt, like an infectious disease, to spread itself, and to extend its contagion even to the best disposed of our species. In order to prevent this mischief, he expressly enjoined, that none should engage in any intimacy or familiarity with immoral persons—he appointed that an accusation might be exhibited for keeping bad company, and laid a heavy fine on such as were convicted of it.”

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### CHAPTER VIII.

#### OCCUPATION NECESSARY TO HAPPINESS.

I AM far from recommending to any one that insipid indifference of mind which enjoys not pleasure, or that apathy which regards not pain; for this indolence of mind is happiness without enjoyment. I consider a certain keenness of disposition, prompting to the most active exertions, as the first ingredient in the happiness of man. Whoever possesses this sort of temper, I advise him to plant, to sow, to read, write, publish;—to build, hunt, angle, travel, or sail—in short, to do



any thing to keep his mind engaged; but never to hunt after happiness, or set the ardour of his mind upon that. In all the other pursuits he may find a share of happiness; but by herself she is not to be caught: as well may we loose a pack of hounds to hunt the eagle. But make the Lord your God. Bow to his will in all things, and take his word for the rule of your life, and you shall be happy.

Were I to give you a philosophical definition of the word happiness, I would say that it is the mind and the object in full possession of one another. A man's life will be always pleasant, if he enter with all his heart and soul into the concerns of it. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is neither knowledge nor device in the grave whither we are all hastening."

But remember this is the ardour of pursuit which I recommend, not the keenness of enjoyment. I only say, that in virtuous and active engagements you will find happiness where you never expected to find it. Almost without your knowledge, the means will be connected with the end, and you will gain the prize before you have reached your imaginary goal. Take an example from childhood, which is allowed by all to be the

happiest period of life. If this be true, it is merely on account that children find an object of pursuit in every thing that presents itself, and then they pursue it with such ardour! If men choose to take the same road, they will continue the happiness of childhood to their latest years, with the additional satisfaction which the choice of reason and the approbation of conscience will impart. But the minds of children are free and light as air, and with them no care obtrudes itself on an anxious heart; the pains of yesterday leave no impression, and to-morrow is an hundred years before. Did you ever hear of a man in a fox-chase thinking of yesterday or to-morrow? Let us, therefore, be engaged in the chase of wisdom and the chase of virtue. Let our duties, our actions, and our amusements, still be the objects of our eager pursuit; and, with the Lord for our God and guide, we shall never be unhappy.

There is a nice combination of activity and indifference, which, when acquired by due attention, or mixed up in the constitution, forms, perhaps, the very height of human felicity; at least, it contains the ingredients which, if well used, compose it. It consists of activity in the pursuit and indifference to the object. It gives the good

in hand without the danger of disappointment; and consists of *eagerness* and *ardour* without anxiety. This state of mind is the power of seizing the happy moment at once, without waiting till time shall wear away the traces of sorrow. This seeming contradiction is easy to him who suppresses vain hopes, and who derives from every duty and occupation of life the sum of what it can give.

It is a melancholy truth, that in our character, the fancy and imagination which painted the delights of the future scene embitter the present moment. *If we had not overlaid the picture with too much high colouring, we might have enjoyed life as it is.* We should have learned in this checkered scene to extract sweet from bitterness, instead of rejecting the cup, because the ingredients in it are not mingled to our taste; but energy in our pursuits destroys the illusions of imagination, and never fails to direct us at last to the right goal.

## CHAPTER IX.

### CLEANLINESS.

CLEANLINESS may be recommended under the three following heads: as it is a mark of politeness; as it produces love; and as it bears analogy to purity of mind.

First, it is a mark of *politeness*; for it is universally agreed upon, that no one unadorned with this virtue can go into company without giving a manifest offence. The different nations of the world are as much distinguished by their cleanliness, as by their arts and sciences. The more they are advanced in civilization, the more they consult this part of politeness.

Secondly, cleanliness may be said to be the foster-mother of *love*. Beauty commonly produces love, but cleanliness preserves it. Age itself is not unamiable while it is preserved clean and unsullied: like a piece of metal constantly kept smooth and bright, we look on it with more pleasure than on a new vessel that is cankered with rust.

I might further observe, that as cleanliness renders us agreeable to others, it makes us easy to ourselves; that it is an excellent preservative

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of health; and that several vices, destructive both to mind and body, are inconsistent with the habit of it.

In the third place, it bears a great analogy with *purity of mind*, and naturally inspires refined sentiments and passions. We find from experience, that, through the prevalence of custom, the most vicious actions lose their horror, by being made familiar to us: on the contrary, those who live in the neighbourhood of good examples, fly from the first appearance of what is shocking: and thus pure and unsullied thoughts are naturally suggested to the mind by those objects that perpetually encompass us, when they are beautiful and elegant in their kind.

In the East, where the warmth of the climate makes cleanliness more immediately necessary than in colder countries, it is a part of religion: the Jewish law (as well as the Mahometan, which in some things copies after it) is filled with bathings, purifications, and other rites of the like nature; and we read several injunctions of this kind in the book of Deuteronomy.

## CHAPTER X.

### EMPLOYMENT FOR TIME.

THE chief portions of our time must, of necessity, be given to the active business, and to the essential duties of human life; to the usefulness for which either our talents or our situations have qualified us; to the assistance which we can give to other men, by supplying their wants, or by relieving their infirmities, or by promoting their comfort or salvation; and to the opportunities afforded us of exerting the industry and labour, which our personal duties, or our several relations require.

To these indispensable objects of human life, the chief part of our time ought certainly to be devoted, whilst we keep our eyes fixed on the result of our probation, and "wait for the Son of God from heaven."

But it is a solemn consideration indeed, that all that portion of our time, which is not directed or remotely subservient to such ends as these; all that part of it, by which we do not sincerely endeavour to promote the glory of God, and our personal usefulness in the place assigned us, or which is not subservient to our progress in holi-

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ness, in fidelity to God, or in benevolence to men; is truly perverted from the ends for which it was given us, and is to be set down in our deliberate reflections, as time irrecoverably lost.

There is a certain portion of our time, which we necessarily require for relaxation from the more serious or severe employments of life. But it is most humbling to the best of us, to consider dispassionately how much time is lost in sloth, or spent in idleness; how much we might have reserved for duties which has left with us no memorial, but that it was spent in vain; how much we have given to acknowledged folly, or to trifles, or to vain glory, or to pride, or to envy, or to the useless pursuits or the unhallowed strifes of the world, which we ought to have given to the labour, or to the activity which our duties require, or to the good works which we know to be within our sphere.

It is impossible, without deep regret, to consider deliberately, how much we might have done more than we have ever been able to accomplish, if, without encroaching on the relaxations we required, we had faithfully employed the time we have lost, in our labours, or in our active pursuits, in the culture or in the discipline of our own minds, in the occupations which might

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have profited other men, or in the application of our talents to our permanent interests.

If we turn our thoughts to this subject with serious and undivided attention, we shall find good reason to ascribe a great part of our deficiencies in knowledge, in godliness, in good works, and in substantial virtues, to the carelessness or to the levity with which we have regarded the "fragments" of time, or to the listless negligence with which we have permitted them to be lost. We perceive not how precious our time has been, till we are deprived of the opportunities of employing it; nor, till it cannot be recalled, do we perceive that the time which we have deliberately squandered, leaves on the conscience the guilt of neglecting all that which ought to have been done, and the bitter reflection of having deservedly forfeited whatsoever might have been attained.

It is impossible to calculate how much might be done by means of "the fragments" of time which might be fairly saved from the sleep which we do not require; from the sloth which we indulge against our judgment; or from the frivolous occupations which add nothing to our happiness, and which are constantly encroaching both on our usefulness and on our duties. The time



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which might be redeemed from these sources, by almost any individual, if it were faithfully and religiously employed for the business of human life, and for the great purposes to which our understandings and our talents ought to be applied, would add much more than it is possible to state, both to the result of his labours, and to their effects on the probation appointed him. To a great multitude, it would add at least an equal proportion to the time which they can deliberately set down as employed for useful purposes, or as having been spent in fulfilling their real duties. It would do much more to some individuals, whose time has never been precious to them, and whose essential duties have never been the chief objects of their solicitude.

But it is most important to consider, that the time which every one of us has it still in his power to redeem, if it were faithfully employed, would be sufficient to lengthen the duration of our active labours to more than twice their usual term. Could we resolve, in earnest, to employ to the best advantage, the hours which have hitherto passed unheeded or unoccupied; and to watch, with sedulous anxiety, the moments which we are conscious might be rendered substantially useful in the business of human life; our activity

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would be extended far, indeed, beyond the ordinary limits, and its effects beyond our most sanguine computations.

The imperfection of human nature does not permit us to believe, that this habit of the mind is either easily or often attained. Unless it has become strong indeed by long and steady cultivation, it is certain that our vigour, both of body and of mind, is exhausted much sooner than our time. There are, however, a sufficient number of examples to convince us, how much might certainly be done by means of "the fragments" of time, if we are heartily disposed to employ them. When we examine how much, beyond the ordinary rate of human attainments, those have done, who seem to have best understood the value of their time, we are astonished at the extent and at the result of their labours; we shrink within ourselves, as if we were conscious, that when compared with them, we have done scarcely any thing from our birth.

Even without such a comparison as this, which it will be always useful to consider, if the best of us shall deliberately examine their own lives, they will find so much of their time which has been lost, so much which has been squandered, so much which ought to have been better em-

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ployed, and so much for which they cannot answer to God or to themselves, that an admonition to persuade them to redeem "the fragments" of time, which are still in their power, must come home to their consciences, as relating to the most impressive and most forcible obligations.

How much time yet remains to any of us, while we continue in this world, is known only to God; but the imperfection of our personal attainments, and our probation, which is still incomplete, suggest a subject of the most awful consideration.

The least portion of time becomes incalculably precious, from the uncertainty of human life. He who may die to-morrow, has not to-day an hour to neglect or to lose. He who feels how much of his time has already been squandered, and how much is yet to be done within the narrow limits of his uncertain life, in order to fulfil his essential duties, or "to work out his salvation," can scarcely fail to regard the time which remains to him, both as the resource and the consolation of his heart.

If this should also be lost, nothing which he has left undone can ever be repaired. On the other hand, if God shall enable him to employ the time to come better, more faithfully, more

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earnestly, and more steadily, than he has employed that which he can never recall, something, at least, he may still attain, which may be accounted to him as gain "when the Lord shall come."

On this point I shall say nothing more, than that he who shall learn to estimate "the fragments" of time at their proper value in early life, shall raise his head above his brethren from youth to age; and that even those who know best the duties and the attainments of human beings, cannot adopt a rule which, under God, will render them more successful in both, or more respectable through life, than that which shall teach them to consider "the fragments" of time, as the objects of their uniform and sedulous attention. We cannot recover that which is spent; but every portion of our time to come is yet our own. Whatever part of it we shall employ in essential duties, or in labours really useful to ourselves or to the world, will neither be spent in vain, nor ever be remembered with regret.

## CHAPTER XL

### ECONOMY OF MONEY AND TIME.

A *DUTY* highly and peculiarly requisite for the young, is a *discreet* management of their expenses. Covetousness indeed, hateful and despicable as it is in the elder, would be somewhat worse in them; but all is not covetousness, that they are apt to call so; and extravagance is a mark only of folly, not of generosity or good-nature.

They who squander needlessly at some times, will be driven to spare improperly at others, when they should have been bountiful: and so will make a truly mean figure, because they must needs make a falsely great one. Then, if their profuseness rise to any height, it creates them great uneasiness with their parents and friends, whom it always fills with fears about them, and frequently straitens and distresses: then it occasions (as they must run in debt) difficulties and losses, oftentimes ruin, to those with whom they have dealings; and usually to such of them as deserve it least: they must bring themselves into continual perplexities; they will of course be tempted, either to drown the sense of them

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by intemperance, or to aim at getting out of them by dishonest arts and methods of one kind or another; yet probably in vain. And if they come to have families, they will, in all likelihood, utterly undo those who ought to have been the object of their tenderest love and care.

Remember therefore to set out cautiously; consider well, that to rise in your way of living is very easy, but to lower it, one of the hardest things in the world: and lay it down for a rule, that no income whatever can support negligence and expensiveness.

Another sort of economy which young people should mainly study, is to fix upon, and keep closely to, some fit manner of spending their time. For none of it is given us to be thrown away; and unless they apply early to what they ought, a habit of idleness will soon take firm possession of them.

To those of lower rank, necessity reads the daily lesson of industry; it will make their condition comfortable and reputable: and if they think of being maintained at their ease, they are infallibly ruined, body and soul.

But whatever rank we are of, without some employment, life must be tedious: and unless proper employment be chosen to fill up the

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empty spaces of it, gross imprudencies and sins will be crowding into them. Or if the idle could avoid these, yet surely it is bad enough, that they cannot avoid making a despicable figure in the world; that their inattention, which will gradually produce an incapacity of conducting their own affairs, must subject them to an absolute dependence upon others, who may impose upon them without fear, to their great prejudice, in more ways than one.

How painful will the reflection be to you, (if ever you have any reflection,) what happy circumstances you might have been in, what an honourable appearance you might have made, had it not been for this contemptible quality! But a still more alarming thought is, that those abilities and opportunities of improving yourself, and being useful to your fellow-creatures, which God hath bestowed on you, he will hereafter call you to answer for: and he hath warned you beforehand, that "the unprofitable and slothful servant, who hath hid his talents in the earth, shall be cast into outer darkness."

All people therefore, and the young especially, should keep themselves not only employed, but employed to good purpose. Both their friends and they should be very careful not to direct

their aim to a wrong point; for there are unhappy mistakes of this kind. Such things are frequently made the study and business of life, as those who employ themselves in them had much better know nothing of; at least, can be little the better for knowing ever so well. But they take up a groundless fancy of their own, or follow a weak judgment or silly example of another; set their whole hearts on gaining a reputation in some errant trifle; and so, with great pains, become very accomplished, and good for nothing.

Not that slighter accomplishments, if they be real and suitable to our station, are to be overlooked; or beginners in life to be severely blamed, if they do place a little higher value on such matters than they deserve. But much care should be taken by those about them, and still more by themselves, (for who is so nearly interested?) that occupations of mere amusement do not fill up too much of their thoughts or time. Perhaps they are very innocent, perhaps they are very elegant; and therefore even the well-disposed, amongst others, indulge their inclinations for them without scruple.

But still there is an essential difference between things of entertainment only, and things of use; and young people should be formed, as



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soon as possible, to attend to this difference; and should always remember, that the subjects for their minds to dwell upon, the employments for their days to be spent in, are partly the particular ones that belong to the several situations in which they are now, or probably will be placed; partly the general ones, of improving their understandings in proper knowledge, but above all, their hearts in the love of God and their duty; and to throw away life upon other pursuits, to the prejudice of these, is not only an imprudence, productive of great inconveniences in this world, but a sin, justly liable to punishment in another.

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CHAPTER XII.

PLEASURES AND FASHION.

THE first and chief thing in which young people are concerned to show sobriety of mind, is moderating their natural fondness for pleasure; and the two sorts of pleasure from which they are in danger, are sensual gratifications and gay amusements.

All ranks and both sexes are equally bound to avoid every thing likely to misguide their con-

duct, or to inflame their desires; and to employ their thoughts so constantly on what is good or lawful, as to exclude from them what is bad. For by such care early taken, the preservation of their innocence will be easy; which, for want of it, is falsely imagined impossible.

Sins of intemperance in drinking, or even eating, ought to be carefully shunned, as peculiarly *opposite to the character of sober-minded*, by young people; who of all others have the least need of such indulgences, and are the most hurt by them: subjected to painful and dangerous diseases, exposed to early distress in their circumstances, and besides, for the most part, either sunk into stupidity and insignificance, or raised into wildness and madness, frequently followed by proportionable dejection and melancholy. Therefore instead of such excess, they must, as *St. Paul farther directs*, "*keep under the body and bring it into subjection*;" not by hurtful or fanciful austerities, but by rational self-denial: remembering, that even in common exercises and contests of strength and activity, "*every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things.*"

The other sort of pleasures, especially dangerous to young people, are *gay amusements*. Un-

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doubtedly cheerfulness is as innocent as it is amiable; it may and should be expressed by those that have it, and allowed and encouraged by those who have it not: for it both gives delight and doeth good. The disposition to it was unquestionably planted in us by our Maker, with intent that it should be gratified; and youth is plainly the natural season for it. But still, all this by no means exempts it from discipline and government. Suppose a constitution or a temper by nature warm and choleric, should be industriously or negligently farther heated, instead of being watched and moderated, what would be the consequence!

Love of pleasure is undeniably one part of our nature; but sense of duty, and concern for lasting happiness, are as evident and much more important parts; yet we must often trample upon these, if we always follow that. Immoderate desires of present gratification, if we suffer them to be continually soliciting us, will frequently prevail when they ought not, and hurry us on suddenly, or entice us gradually, to such lengths as we never intended; possibly till our heart is totally corrupted, and the care of our conduct entirely thrown aside. What ruins or impairs our virtue, is in proportion prejudicial to our hap-

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piness; even that present happiness which the votaries of pleasure are pursuing. Not only reason proves this, if we would condescend to be reasoned with, but daily experience.

How many have we all of us seen or heard of, who, setting out with nothing worse than a thoughtless passion for diversion and entertainment, have grievously, nay perhaps irrecoverably, injured in a few years, some, their healths or fortunes, others, their characters and peace of mind, and treasured up for the remainder of their days pain and want, remorse and shame; it may be artfully palliated, but severely felt! Think then awhile, you that are young, and have pity on yourselves. Shall all this firm and vigorous strength, this affluence of circumstances, this ease of heart and openness of face, this delightful prospect of being esteemed and happy through the whole of life; shall it, merely for want of a little self-restraint, be cast away in the very entrance upon life, and exchanged for guilt and misery, to abide with you during the rest of it! For these are the natural fruits of such neglect; and it is the weakest vanity to hope that you shall escape better than others, unless you keep safe upon firm ground.

Therefore, be persuaded to look forward a lit-

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tle, and attend to consequences. Let the love of pleasure importune you ever so strongly, it is a most material question, whether no mischief will ensue. Mistake not the beginning of life for the whole. Providence in great wisdom hath furnished every period of it with proper satisfactions of its own, and proper employments for the service of the next. Youth is to prepare us for the comfortable enjoyment of manhood; manhood for that of old age: each part of our existence on earth for the blessedness of heaven. Second the intention; pursue the direction of your gracious Maker; and be assured you will never find your account in contradicting it.

Allow yourselves fit instances of pleasure, at fit seasons, to a fit degree; and enjoy them with a merry heart: but never let the thought of living to pleasure get the least possession of you. Be industrious to check so absurd and destructive an imagination, by diligent application to some proper business, and fixing a frequent return of hours devoted to retired and serious recollection. The mere composure and quiet of them will be no small advantage to you; but you will find it a much greater to stop from time to time and see whereabouts you are; to consider whether you are fallen into no wrong course; whether you

are making any progress in the right; whether any danger be near; whether you are taking the best method to avoid it.

No joy on earth can exceed that of answering these questions well. And if any thing be otherwise than well, knowing it, is the only way to mend it; and that the only way to inward peace: of which our gracious God and Father is willing that they, who have most offended him, should on their sincere repentance and reformation immediately partake. Therefore, often examine your own condition; and at such times, also, turn off your eyes a little from the gay scenes of life; take the other parts of it into view, and consider on the whole what this world is. A very different place from what those who are intoxicated with youthful warmth and sanguine expectations, for a while imagine it to be.

Set, therefore, in your view the disappointments and perplexities, the cares and fatigues, the pains and sorrows, of which you amongst the rest of mankind must undergo your share; and while the appearance of things is brightest, as the wise king directs, "remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many." Not that you are to break your spirits or damp your activity by melancholy prospects and apprehensions; but

only to compose your hearts into a state suitable to that which you live in, and form your mind to be content with few and low enjoyments from the things around you; for in such a world as this, it is certain misery to aim at high happiness.

A second instance, in which the young have great need to be "sober-minded," is their desire of imitating others, and doing many things in compliance with fashion, to which they would otherwise have no inclination. Now, conforming to those around us in points of indifference, is one commendable part of social behaviour. And moderately absurd customs, if they be harmless, it is very allowable, when once they become general, to follow and despise at the same time.

But beware of yielding where it may more immediately endanger your innocence: beware of that indifference to religion and religious duties which of late hath appeared so peculiarly infectious: beware of being led insensibly into such a turn of talk and behaviour, such methods of employing your thoughts and time, however polite they are accounted, as may weaken your regard to the principles of virtue. Always examine the rules of custom by those of God's word, of reason and experience; and where you

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have cause to distrust your own judgment, adhere to that of prudent friends, if need were, against the world. But, indeed, it is generally a small part of the world, a few forward empty people, *that make the high vogue in every thing*, and are followed thoughtlessly by others. Be not deceived, therefore, by the self-sufficiency, noise and vain show, of wretches like these; nor ever mistake their opinion for the sense of mankind: but be assured many more will esteem you for right conduct than wrong; and even the silent approbation of the wise and good will do you much more service than the loudest applauses of the inconsiderate.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### FORWARDNESS AND CONFIDENCE.

UNDER St. Paul's general direction for young people, to be sober-minded, it is specially enjoined, "Not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, but to think soberly." Liveliness and want of experience peculiarly dispose them to err in this point; and the superficial education, the disregard to all authority, human



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and divine, and the liberty and the practice of saying and doing what every one pleases, that prevails in the present age, have heightened and spread the error to degrees never known before. Hence they perpetually despise the most useful qualifications, and the worthiest behaviour; admire trifles, follies, sins, as distinctions and excellencies; claim a high merit for accomplishments of which they have little or no share; imagine themselves totally free from defects that are most glaringly visible in them; pity and scorn those whom they have more cause to envy; and thus judging falsely, in the most dangerous manner, of things and persons, others and themselves, are utterly misled in the main concerns of life. Yet they fail not to see, but take a pride in observing from time to time that this is the case of such and such of their acquaintance.

Now, would they but reflect, that it *may* be their own too, it would be no inconsiderable step towards a cure. It must put them on examining what advantages and good qualities they are really possessed of; what the real value of them is; what deductions are to be made from them on account of imperfections and failings; and what ground they have, on the whole, to hope for the esteem of wise men and the acceptance of all

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all-wise God. It must remind them to consider over again the hasty judgments of their early days, and review with a suspicious eye, perhaps, many notions which they are very well satisfied in, without knowing why, and are proceeding to act upon at all adventures.

Most people, indeed, should have more diffidence than they have; but the young much more than others. It is not natural, it is not possible, that in the very entrance of life one who hath taken no pains to know any thing should know every thing; and, therefore, when such are found, as they are every day, perfectly contented with themselves, absolutely clear that their own way of thinking and of acting, whatever it chances to be, is right; when they will venture in questions of the greatest moment to decide, without the least hesitation beforehand, or the least doubt afterwards, perhaps directly contrary to what the ablest persons in all ages have done, and hold every one in utter contempt that can possibly be of another opinion; this is surely an astonishing want of sobriety of mind.

At least, be a little modest, till you can truly say, that you have considered and inquired with some care; for afterwards, in all likelihood, you will be so of course. Especially be modest in

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proportion as any point is of consequence and out of your reach: for instance, in religion. The duties of it are plain, and plainly reasonable; so are the doctrines, too, as far as we can understand them and judge of them: but we can understand and judge of some of them but very imperfectly. They relate to the infinite nature of God; to the boundless views of his providence; to future times; it may be, a future world. No wonder that of such things we do not comprehend the whole, though he may have good reasons, whether we perceive them or not, for telling us part; and yet, without comprehending the whole, some parts must seem unaccountable.

Now, such difficulties as these, or possibly less, a raw self-sufficient youth chances to think or to be told of; runs away with them; and derides the weakness of those who believe what they are taught. But can it possibly make any doctrine of religion doubtful, that persons, bred up in the manner that God knows too many are, and living afterwards as may be expected, do not understand it, or do not like it, or have heard more of the objections against it than the arguments for it! Or should they not rather learn to suspect that they have not a sufficient acquaintance with the subject!

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For what will become of good sense and right behaviour in the world, if people are to think themselves masters of every thing which they know but any thing of, and to despise every thing they know nothing of! This is both a very unreasonable and very immoral turn of mind: it destroys all reverence for truth, all attention to the virtuous conduct of their faculties and their lives; it leads them for the most part to early misery here, and hardens them beyond all things against that penitent conviction which alone can prevent their misery hereafter.

Justly, therefore, doth the Prophet denounce, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight: therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff; so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom go up as the dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."

If this universal inclination in the young to entertain too high an opinion of their own advantages, accomplishments, and abilities, were this

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opinion to go no farther than their own breasts, it would be a great fault, and have very bad effects; but when it is shown to others, and even demands their notice, the case becomes much worse. And, therefore, an additional indispensable duty, comprehended under the character of *sober-minded*, is, that how well soever they may apprehend they see cause to think of themselves, they should behave with humility towards those with whom they have any intercourse; and remember that, in young people above all, modesty is exceedingly graceful, and a remarkable want of it shocking.

It is not meant that they should be frightened, confused, and disconcerted in what they say or do before strangers and superiors; this would be a weakness, though when it does not go very far, an amiable one. Much less is it meant to enjoin so strict a silence or reserve as may bring the goodness of their understandings or tempers into question; but only that their words, looks, and actions should express a consciousness of what is very true, that they have reason, from their youth and experience, to be in some degree suspicious of themselves, even where they seem to be most plainly in the right.

Still, what they are fully convinced, on de-

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liberate consideration, is their duty, they must adhere to, so long as the persuasion continues, though persons ever so much farther advanced in age or knowledge dissuade them from it. But even in this case, and certainly then in others, they ought to show every mark of due regard to those from whom they differ. And the most obliging submission is very consistent with liveliness and spirit: it may give strong proofs of dignity, at the same time, with respect; and by throwing the most advantageous light on every accomplishment, it will please every one worth pleasing, beyond all things.

It is very true that quite different methods—a confident behaviour, and a manner in conversation, bold even to great lengths of indecency, seem to take with too many; even with some who cover their ignorance or neglect of true good breeding and politeness with high pretensions to both. But, then, as the liking which they have, or pretend to have, for these undaunted spirits, can be accompanied with no real esteem, so it seldom holds long; and yet seldomer either produces or intends any good to those who are distinguished by it. For persons of judgment will by no means pitch on those for any purpose of importance with whose empty forwardness

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they are most diverted for an idle hour. The very quality that recommends them in this latter respect, is an insuperable objection to them in the former.

Another thing ought to be observed, which, in our youth, at least, we commonly overlook; that they who love to be often placing themselves in full view, whatever care they take about their appearance, are apt to have more seen of them than is to their advantage. And this danger is the greater, as, whoever desires too earnestly to make the best figure he can, will almost certainly be carried on to aim at making a better than he can, and of consequence will make a much worse than he needs.

Great numbers who might have passed through life with abundantly sufficient approbation and regard, by the mere help of plain good sense and good temper, have, by affecting more agreeableness and sprightliness, more judgment or knowledge, perhaps than they had, or, however, than they had occasion to show, become ridiculous to those whom they wanted to think highly of them. But a farther and more serious evil is, that where the passion for being remarkable is permitted to grow very strong, if laudable methods will not bring it about, people are sorely tempted to use

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others; to procure admiration of their persons by improper arts and freedoms; of their learning by assertions of groundless novelties; of their wit by ill-nature or profaneness.

And yet, after all, generally speaking, these contrivances prove insufficient. Traps laid for applause are almost always seen, and so disgust those who see them, that they often refuse even real merit its due acknowledgments, when they are too openly claimed. Now and then, indeed, these vain characters do push themselves into early reputation, without any title to it; but as their hasty growth is unaccompanied with inward strength, after being a short time gazed at and envied, they are crushed under the weight of their own frame, and sink back into nothing; while every one rejoices at their fall, and wonders how they ever came to rise so high in the esteem of the world.

On all accounts, therefore, young men ought ever to express, in their whole conversation and demeanour, a moderate opinion and distrust of themselves; with no small esteem and deference for others, how far soever they may be from making a showy appearance. For still such persons may have a great deal more even of ornamental accomplishments to produce on fit



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occasions than you are aware of; or, supposing them not at all comparable to you in these respects, they may excel you in much more important things,—in good conduct, virtue and piety.

Whatever advantages you have over any one besides these, remember it depends entirely on your use of them whether you shall be the better or the worse for them; and be assured they will never be truly beneficial to you without humility of heart and behaviour. Instead, therefore, of the unprofitable and unsafe employment of admiring yourselves, and endeavouring to make others admire you, for qualities of small and doubtful value, indulge but a moderate complacency in the very best that you conceive you are possessed of; think how imperfect you are in them, how many others you want, how many bad ones you have; and far from cherishing the poor vanity of vying with those around you, prostrate yourself before God, and earnestly beseech him to turn his face "from your sins, and put out all your misdeeds; to make you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### ETIQUETTE.

THE desire of pleasing is at least half the art of doing it: the rest depends only upon the manner,—which attention, observation, and frequenting good company, will teach. Those who are lazy, careless, and indifferent whether they please or not, we may depend upon it, will never please. The art of pleasing is a very necessary one to possess, but a very difficult one to acquire. To do as one would be done by, is the surest method of pleasing. Observe carefully what pleases us in others, and probably the same things in us will please others. If we are pleased with the complaisance and attention of others to our humours, our tastes, or our weaknesses, the same complaisance and attention on our parts to theirs will equally please them. Let us be serious, gay, or even trifling, as we find the present humour of the company; this is an attention due from every individual to the majority. The art of pleasing cannot be reduced to a receipt: if it could, that receipt would be worth purchasing at any price. Good sense and good nature are the principal ingredients; and our own observation,

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and the good advice of others, must give the right colour and taste to it.

The graces of the person, the countenance, and the way of speaking, are essential things; the very same thing, said by a genteel person, in an engaging way, and gracefully and distinctly spoken, would please, which would shock if muttered out by an awkward figure, with a sullen serious countenance. The poets represent Venus as attended by the three Graces, to intimate, that even beauty will not do without them. Minerva ought to have three also; for, without them, learning has few attractions.

If we examine ourselves seriously, why particular persons please and engage us more than others of equal merit, we shall always find, that it is because the former have the graces, and the latter not. I have known many a woman, with an exact shape, and a symmetrical assemblage of beautiful features, please nobody;—while others, with very moderate shapes and features, have charmed every body. It is certain, that Venus will not charm so much without her attendant Graces, as they will without her. Among men, how often has the most solid merit been neglected, unwelcome, or even rejected, for want of them! while flimsy parts, little

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knowledge, and less merit, introduced by the graces, have been received, cherished, and admired.

We proceed now to investigate what these graces are, and to give some instructions for acquiring them.

A man's fortune is frequently decided for ever by his first address. If it be pleasing, people are hurried involuntarily into a persuasion that he has a merit which possibly he has not; as, on the other hand, if it is ungraceful, they are immediately prejudiced against him, and unwilling to allow him the merit which, it may be, he has. The worst-bred man in Europe, should a lady drop her fan, would certainly take it up, and give it to her: the best-bred man in Europe could do no more. The difference, however, would be considerable; the latter would please by his graceful address in presenting it; the former would be laughed at for doing it awkwardly. The carriage of a gentleman should be genteel, and his motions graceful. He should be particularly careful of his manner and address, when he presents himself in company. Let them be respectful without meanness, easy without too much familiarity, genteel without affectation, and insinuating without any seeming art or

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design. Men, as well as women, are much oftener led by their hearts than by their understandings. The way to the heart is through the senses; please their eyes and their ears, and the work is half done.

However trifling some things may seem, they are no longer so when above half the world thinks them otherwise. Carving, as it occurs at least once in every day, is not below our notice. We should use ourselves to carve adroitly and genteelly, without hacking half an hour across a bone, without bespattering the company with the sauce, and without overturning the glasses into your neighbour's pockets. To be awkward in this particular, is extremely disagreeable and ridiculous. It is easily avoided by a little attention and use; and a man who tells you gravely that he cannot carve, may as well tell you that he cannot blow his nose; it is both as easy and as necessary.

Study to acquire that fashionable kind of small-talk, or chit-chat, which prevails in all polite assemblies, and which, trifling as it may appear, is of use in mixed companies, and at table. It turns upon public events, and then is at its best; very often upon the number, the goodness or badness, the discipline, or the cloth-

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ing of the troops of different princes; sometimes upon the families, the marriages, the relations, of people of fashion; and sometimes the magnificence of public entertainments, balls, masquerades, &c. Upon such occasions, likewise, it is not amiss to know how to *parler cuisine*, and to be able to dissert upon the growth and flavour of wines. These, it is true, are very little things; but they are little things that occur very often, and therefore should be said *avec gentillesse et grace*.

The person should be accurately clean; the teeth, hands, and nails, should be particularly so. A dirty mouth has real ill consequences to the owner; for it infallibly causes the decay, as well as the intolerable pain of the teeth; and is very offensive, for it will most inevitably stink. Nothing looks more ordinary, vulgar, and illiberal, than dirty hands, and ugly, uneven, and ragged nails; the ends of which should be kept smooth and clean (not tipped with black, and small segments of circles), and every time that the hands are wiped, rub the skin round the nails backwards, that it may not grow up, and shorten them too much. Upon no account whatever put your fingers in your nose or ears. It is the most shocking, nasty, vulgar rudeness, that can be

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offered to company. The ears should be washed well every morning, and in blowing the nose, never look at it afterwards.

These things may perhaps appear too insignificant to be mentioned; but when it is remembered, that a thousand little nameless things, which every one feels, but no one can describe, conspire to form that whole of pleasing, I think we ought not to call them trifling. Besides, a clean shirt and a clean person are as necessary to health, as not to offend other people. I have ever held it as a maxim, and which I have lived to see verified, That a man who is negligent at twenty, will be a sloven at forty, and intolerable at fifty years of age.

Attend to the compliments of congratulation, or condolence, that you hear a well-bred man make to his superiors, to his equals, and to his inferiors; watch even his countenance, and his tone of voice; for they all conspire in the main point of pleasing. There is a certain distinguishing diction of a man of fashion; he will not content himself with saying, like John Trott, to a new-married man, "Sir, I wish you much joy;" or to a man who has lost his son, "Sir, I am sorry for your loss," and both with a countenance equally unmoved: but he will say in effect the

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same thing, in a more elegant and less trivial manner, and with a countenance adapted to the occasion. He will advance with warmth, vivacity, and a cheerful countenance, to the newly-married man, and embracing him, perhaps say to him, "If you do justice to my attachment to you, you will judge of the joy that I feel upon this occasion, better than I can express it." &c. ; to the other in affliction he will advance slowly, with a grave composure of countenance, in a more deliberate manner, and, with a lower voice, perhaps say, "I hope you do me the justice to be convinced, that I feel whatever you feel, and shall ever be affected where you are concerned."

There is a certain language of conversation, a fashionable diction, of which every gentleman ought to be perfectly master, in whatever language he speaks. The French attend to it carefully, and with great reason; and their language, which is a language of phrases, helps them out exceedingly. That delicacy of diction is characteristic of a man of fashion and good company.

Dress is one of the various ingredients that contribute to the art of pleasing, and therefore an object of some attention; for we cannot help forming some opinion of a man's sense and char-



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acter from his dress. All affectation in dress, implies a flaw in the understanding. Men of sense carefully avoid any particular character in their dress; they are accurately clean for their own sake, but all the rest is for the sake of other people. A man should dress as well, and in the same manner, as the people of sense and fashion of the place where he is: if he dresses more than they, he is a fop; if he dresses less, he is unpardonably negligent: but of the two, a young fellow should be rather too much than too little dressed; the excess of that side will wear off with a little age and reflection.

The difference in dress between a man and a fop is, that the fop values himself upon his dress, and the man of sense laughs at it, at the same time that he knows he must not neglect it. There are a thousand foolish customs of this kind, which, as they are not criminal, must be complied with, and even cheerfully, by men of sense. Diogenes the Cynic was a wise man for despising them, but a fool for showing it.

We should not attempt to rival or to excel a fop in dress; but it is necessary to dress, to avoid singularity and ridicule. Great care should be taken to be always dressed like the reasonable people of our own age in the place where we

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are, whose dress is never spoken of one way or another, as neither too negligent, nor too much studied.

Awkwardness of carriage is very alienating, and a total negligence of dress and air, an impertinent insult upon custom and fashion. Women have great influence as to a man's fashionable character; and an awkward man will never have their votes, which are very numerous, and oftener counted than weighed.

When we are once well dressed for the day, we should think no more of it afterwards; and, without any stiffness for fear of discomposing the dress, we should be as easy and natural as if we had no clothes on at all.

Dancing, likewise, though a silly trifling thing, is one of those established follies which people of sense are sometimes obliged to conform to; and if they do, they should be able to perform it well.

In dancing, the motion of the arms should be particularly attended to, as these decide a man's being genteel or otherwise, more than any other part of the body. A twist or stiffness in the wrist will make any man look awkward. If a man dances well from the waist upwards, wears his hat well, and moves his head properly, he

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dances well. Coming into a room, and presenting yourself to a company, should be also attended to, as this always gives the first impression, which is often indelible. Those who present themselves well, have a certain dignity in their air, which, without the least mixture of pride, at once engages and is respected.

Drinking of healths is now growing out of fashion, and is deemed unpolite in good company. Custom once had rendered it universal; but the improved manners of the age now consider it as absurd and vulgar. What can be more rude or ridiculous, than to interrupt persons at their meals with an unnecessary compliment! Abstain, then, from this silly custom, where you find it disused; and use it only at those tables where it continues general.

A steady assurance is too often improperly styled impudence. For my part, I see no impudence, but, on the contrary, infinite utility and advantage, in presenting one's self with the same coolness and unconcern, in any and every company. Till one can do that, I am very sure that one can never present one's self well. Whatever is done under concern and embarrassment must be ill done; and till a man is absolutely easy and unconcerned in every company,

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he will never be thought to have kept good, nor be very welcome in it. Assurance and intrepidity, under the white banner of seeming modesty, clear the way to merit that would otherwise be discouraged by difficulties in its journey; whereas barefaced impudence is the noisy and blustering harbinger of a worthless and senseless usurper.

A man of sense may be in haste, but can never be in a hurry; because he knows, that whatever he does in a hurry, he must necessarily do very ill. He may be in haste to dispatch an affair, but he will take care not to let that haste hinder his doing it well. Little minds are in a hurry when the object proves, as it commonly does, too big for them; they run, they hare, they puzzle, confound, and perplex themselves; they want to do everything at once, and never do it at all. But a man of sense takes the time necessary for doing the thing he is about well; and his haste to dispatch a business, only appears by the continuity of his application to it: he pursues it with a cool steadiness, and finishes it before he begins any other.

Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners: it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy at silly

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things; and they call it being merry. In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter. True wit or sense, never yet made any body laugh: they are above it; they please the mind, and give a cheerfulness to the countenance. But it is low buffonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter; and that is what people of sense and breeding show themselves above. A man's going to sit down, in the supposition that he has a chair behind him, and falling down upon his breech for want of one, sets a whole company a-laughing; when all the wit in the world could not do it; a plain proof in my mind, how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is; not to mention the disagreeable noise that it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face that it occasions.

Many people, at first from awkwardness, have got a very disagreeable and silly trick of laughing whenever they speak; and I know men of very good parts, who cannot say the commonest thing without laughing; which makes those who do not know them take them at first for natural fools.

It is of the utmost importance to write letters well; as this is a talent which daily occurs, as well in business as in pleasure; and inaccura-

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cies in orthography, or in style, are never pardoned but in ladies; nor is it hardly pardonable in them. The epistles of Cicero are the most perfect models of good writing.

*Letters should be easy and natural, and convey to the persons to whom we send them, just what we would say to those persons if we were present with them.*

The best models of letter-writing are Cicero, Cardinal d'Ossat, Madame Savigne, and Comte Basby Rabutin. Cicero's epistles to Atticus, and to his familiar friends, are the best examples in the friendly and the familiar style. The simplicity and clearness of the letters of Cardinal d'Ossat, show how letters of business ought to be written. For gay and amusing letters, there are none that equal Comte Bussy's and Madame Savigne's. *They are so natural, that they seem to be extempore conversations of two people of wit, rather than letters.*

Neatness in folding up, sealing, and directing letters, is by no means to be neglected. There is something in the exterior, even of a letter, that may please or displease; and consequently deserves some attention.

There is nothing that a young man, at his first appearance in the world, has more reason to

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dread, and therefore should take more pains to avoid, than having any ridicule fixed on him. In the opinion even of the most rational men, it will degrade him; but ruin him with the rest. Many a man has been undone by acquiring a ridiculous nickname. The causes of nicknames among well-bred men, are generally the little defects in manner, elocution, air, or address. To have the appellation of muttering, awkward, ill-bred, absent, left-legged, annexed always to your name, would injure you more than you imagine; avoid then these little defects, and you may set ridicule at defiance.

To acquire a graceful utterance, read aloud to some friend every day, and beg of him to interrupt and correct you, whenever you read too fast, do not observe the proper stops, lay a wrong emphasis, or utter your words unintelligibly. You may even read aloud to yourself, and tune your utterance to your own ear. Take care to open your teeth when you read or speak, and articulate every word distinctly; which last cannot be done but by sounding the final letter. But above all, study to vary your voice according to the subject, and avoid a monotony. Daily attention to these articles will, in a little time, render them easy and habitual to you.

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The voice and manner of speaking, too, are not to be neglected. Some people almost shut *their mouths when they speak, and mutter* so that they are not to be understood; others speak so fast, and sputter, that they are not to be understood neither; some always speak as loud as if they were talking to deaf people; and others so low, that one cannot hear them. All these habits are awkward and disagreeable, and are to be avoided by attention: they are the distinguishing marks of the ordinary people, who have had no care taken of their education. You cannot imagine how necessary it is to mind all these little things: for I have seen many people with great talents, ill received for want of having these talents; and others well received, only from their little talents, and who had no great ones.

Orthography, or spelling well, is so absolutely necessary for a man of letters, or a gentleman, that *one false spelling may fix a ridicule on him* for the remainder of his life. Reading carefully will contribute, in a great measure, to preserve you from exposing yourself by false spelling; for books are generally well-spelled, according to the orthography of the times. Sometimes words, indeed, are spelled differently by different au-



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thors; but these instances are rare; and where there is only one way of spelling a word, should you spell it wrong, you will be sure to be ridiculed. Nay, a woman of a tolerable education would despise and laugh at her lover, if he should send her an ill-spelled billet-doux.

Style is the dress of thoughts; and let them be ever so just, if your style is homely, coarse, and vulgar, they will appear to as much disadvantage, and be as ill-received, as your person, though ever so well proportioned, would, if dressed in rags, dirt, and tatters. It is not every understanding that can judge of matter; but every ear can, and does, judge more or less of style.

Mind your diction. In whatever language you either write, or speak, contract a habit of correctness and elegance. Consider your style, even in the freest conversation and most familiar letters. After, at least, if not before you have said a thing, reflect if you could not have said it better.

Every man who has the use of his eyes, and his right hand, can write whatever hand he pleases. Nothing is so ungentleman-like as a schoolboy's scrawl. I do not desire you to write a stiff formal hand like that of a school-master,

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but a genteel, legible, and liberal character, and to be able to write quick. As to the correctness and elegance of your writing, attention to grammar does the one, and to the best authors the other. Epistolary correspondence should be easy and natural, and convey to the persons just what we would say if we were with them.

Vulgarism in language is a certain characteristic of bad company and a bad education. Proverbial expressions, and trite sayings, are the flowers of the rhetoric of a vulgar man. Would he say, that men differ in their tastes, he both *supports and adorns that opinion, by the good old saying*, as he respectfully calls it, that "what is one man's meat is another man's poison." If any body attempts being *smart*, as he calls it, upon him, he gives them tit for tat, ay that he does. He has always some favourite word for the time being; which, for the sake of using often, he commonly abuses; such as, vastly angry, vastly kind, vastly handsome, and vastly ugly. Even his pronunciation of proper words, carries the mark of the beast along with it. He calls the earth, yearth; he is obleiged, not obliged to you. He goes to-wards, and not towards such a place. He *sometimes affects hard words, by way of ornament*, which he always mangles like a learned

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woman. A man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs, and vulgar aphorisms; uses neither favourite words nor hard words; but takes great care to speak very correctly, and grammatically, and to pronounce properly; that is, according to the usage of the best companies.

Humming a tune within ourselves, drumming with our fingers, making a noise with our feet, and such awkward habits, being all breaches of good manners, are therefore indications of our contempt for the persons present; and consequently should not be practised.

Eating very quick, or very slow, is characteristic of vulgarity: the former infers poverty; the latter, if abroad, that you are disgusted with your entertainment; and if at home, that you are rude enough to give your friends what you cannot eat yourself. Eating soup with your nose in the plate is also vulgar. So likewise is smelling to the meat while on the fork, before you put it in your mouth. If you dislike what is set upon your plate, leave it; but never, by smelling to, or examining it, appear to tax your friend with placing unwholesome provisions before you.

Spitting on the floor or carpet is a filthy practice; and which, were it to become general, would render it as necessary to change the car-

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pets as the table-cloths. Not to add, it will induce our acquaintance to suppose, that we have not been used to genteel furniture; for which reason alone, if for no other, a man of liberal education should avoid it.

To conclude this article: Never walk fast in the streets, which is a mark of vulgarity, ill befitting the character of a gentleman, or a man of fashion, though it may be tolerable in a tradesman.

To stare any person full in the face whom you may chance to meet, is an act also of ill-breeding; it would seem to bespeak as if you saw something wonderful in his appearance, and is therefore a tacit reprehension.

Keep yourself free, likewise, from all odd tricks and habits; such as, scratching yourself; putting your fingers to your mouth, nose, and ears; thrusting out your tongue, snapping your fingers, biting your nails, rubbing your hands, sighing aloud, an affected shivering of your body, gaping, and many others, which I have noticed before; all which are imitations of the manners of the mob, and degrading to a gentleman.

## CHAPTER XV.

### EXTRAVAGANCE.

It is the fate of almost every passion, when it has passed the bounds which nature prescribes, to counteract its own purpose. Too much rage hinders the warrior from circumspection; and too much eagerness of profit hurts the credit of the trader. Too much ardour takes away from the lover that easiness of address with which ladies are delighted. Thus extravagance, though dictated by vanity, and incited by voluptuousness, seldom procures ultimately either applause or pleasure.

If praise be justly estimated by the character of those from whom it is received, little satisfaction will be given to the spendthrift by the encomiums which he purchases. For who are they that animate him in his pursuits, but young men, thoughtless and abandoned like himself, unacquainted with all on which the wisdom of nations has impressed the stamp of excellence, and devoid alike of knowledge and of virtue? By whom is his profusion praised, but by wretches who consider him as subservient to their purposes; Syrens that entice him to shipwreck; and Cyclops that are gaping to devour him!

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Every man whose knowledge, or whose virtue, can give value to his opinion, looks with scorn or pity (neither of which can afford much gratification to pride) on him whom the panders of luxury have drawn into the circle of their influence, and whom he sees parcelled out among the different ministers of folly, and about to be torn to pieces by tailors and jockeys, vintners and attorneys; who at once rob and ridicule him, and who are secretly triumphing over his weakness, when they present new incitements to his appetite, and heighten his desires by counterfeited applause.

Such is the praise that is purchased by prodigality. Even when it is yet not discovered to be false, it is the praise only of those whom it is reproachful to please, and whose sincerity is corrupted by their interest; men who live by the riots which they encourage, and who know, that whenever their pupil grows wise, they shall lose their power. Yet with such flatteries, if they could last, might the cravings of vanity, which is seldom very delicate, be satisfied: but the time is always hastening forward, when this triumph, poor as it is, shall vanish, and when those who now surround him with obsequiousness and compliments, fawn among his equipage, and animate his riots, shall turn upon him with insolence, and

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reproach him with the vices promoted by themselves.

And as little pretensions has the man, who squanders his estate by vain or vicious expenses, to greater degrees of pleasure than are obtained by others. To make any happiness sincere, it is necessary that we believe it to be lasting; since whatever we suppose ourselves in danger of losing, must be enjoyed with solicitude and uneasiness; and the more value we set upon it, the more must the present possession be imbibited. How can he, then, be envied for his felicity, who knows that its continuance cannot be expected, and who is conscious that a very short time will give him up to the gripe of poverty, which will be harder to be borne, as he has given way to more excesses, wanted in greater abundance, and indulged his appetite with more profuseness.

It appears evident, that frugality is necessary even to complete the pleasure of expense; for it may be generally remarked of those who squander what they know their fortune not sufficient to allow, that in their most jovial expense there always breaks out some proof of discontent and impatience; they either scatter with a kind of wild desperation and affected lavishness, as criminals brave the gallows when they cannot

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escape it; or pay their money with a peevish anxiety, and endeavour at once to spend idly, and to save meanly; having neither firmness to deny their passions, nor courage to gratify them, they murmur at their own enjoyments, and poison the bowl of pleasure by reflection on the cost.

Among these men there is often the vociferation of merriment, but very seldom the tranquillity of cheerfulness; they inflame their imaginations to a kind of momentary jollity, by the help of wine and riot; and consider it as the first business of the night to stupify recollection, and lay that reason asleep, which disturbs their gaiety, and calls upon them to retreat from ruin.

But this poor broken satisfaction is of short continuance, and must be expiated by a long series of misery and regret. In a short time the creditor grows impatient, the last acre is sold, the passions and appetites still continue their tyranny, with incessant calls for their usual gratifications; and the remainder of life passes away in vain repentance, or impotent desire.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### CHASTITY.

I KNOW not how it is, that our sex has usurped a certain authority to exclude chastity out of the catalogue of masculine virtues; but as I am now talking to the world yet untainted, I will venture to recommend it as the noblest male qualification.

It is, methinks, very unreasonable, that the difficulty of attaining all other good habits, is what makes them honourable; but in this case, the very attempt is become ridiculous: but, in spite of all the raillery of the world, truth is still truth, and will have beauties inseparable from it. I should, upon this occasion, bring examples of heroic chastity, were I not afraid of having my volume thrown away by the modish part of the town, who go no further, at best, than the mere absence of ill, and are contented to be rather irreproachable, than praise-worthy. In this particular, a gentleman in the court of Cyrus, reported to his majesty the charms and beauty of Panthea; and ended his panegyric by telling him, that since he was at leisure, he would carry him to visit her. But that prince, who is a very great man to this day, answered

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the pimp, because he was a man of quality, without roughness, and said, with a smile, 'If I should visit her upon your introduction, now I have leisure, I do not know but I might go again upon her own invitation, when I ought to be better employed.' But when I cast about all the instances which I have met with in all my reading, I find not one so generous, so honest, and so noble, as that of Joseph in holy writ. When his master had trusted him so implicitly (to speak it in the emphatical manner of the Scripture) 'He knew not aught he had save the bread which he did eat,' he was so unhappy as to appear irresistibly beautiful to his mistress; but when this shameless woman proceeds to solicit him, how gallant is his answer! 'Behold my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in the house than I, neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife.' The same argument, which a base mind would have made to itself for committing the evil, was to this brave man the greatest motive for forbearing it, that he could do it with impunity; the malice and falsehood of the disappointed woman naturally arose on that occasion, and there is but a short step from the practice of

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virtue to the hatred of it. It would therefore be worth serious consideration in both sexes, and the matter is of importance enough to them, to ask themselves whether they would change lightness of heart, indolence of mind, cheerful meals, untroubled slumbers, and gentle dispositions, for a constant pruriency which shuts out all things that are great or indifferent, clouds the imagination with insensibility and prejudice to all manner of delight, but that which is common to all creatures that extend their species.

A loose behaviour, and an inattention to every thing that is serious, flowing from some degree of this petulancy, is observable in the generality of the youth of both sexes in this age. It is the one common face of most public meetings, and breaks in upon the sobriety, I will not say severity, that we ought to exercise in churches. The pert boys and flippan't girls are but faint followers of those in the same inclinations at more advanced years. I know not who can oblige them to mend their manners; all that I pretend to, is to enter my protest, that they are neither fine gentlemen nor fine ladies for this behaviour. As for the portraitures which I would propose, as the images of agreeable men and women, if they are not imitated or regarded, I can only answer, as

### HONOUR.

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Mr. Dryden did on the like occasion, when a young fellow, just come from the play of Cleomenes, told him in raillery against the continency of his principal character, 'If I had been alone with a lady, I should not have passed my time like your Spartan;' 'That may be,' answered the bard with a very grave face, 'but give me leave to tell you, sir, you are no hero.'

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### HONOUR.

EVERY principle that is a motive to good actions ought to be encouraged, since men are of so different a make, that the same principle does not work equally upon all minds. What some men are prompted to by conscience, duty, or religion, which are only different names for the same thing, others are prompted to by honour.

The sense of honour is of so fine and delicate a nature, that it is only to be met with in minds which are naturally noble, or in such as have been cultivated by great examples, or a refined education. This essay therefore is chiefly designed for those, who by means of any of these

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advantages are, or ought to be, actuated by this glorious principle.

But as nothing is more pernicious than a principle of action, when it is misunderstood, I shall consider honour with respect to three sorts of men. First of all, with regard to those who have a right notion of it. Secondly, with regard to those who have a mistaken notion of it. And thirdly, with regard to those who treat it as chimerical, and turn it into ridicule.

In the first place, true honour, though it be a different principle from religion, is that which produces the same effects. The lines of action, though drawn from different parts, terminate in the same point. Religion embraces virtue as it is enjoined by the laws of God; honour, as it is graceful and ornamental to human nature. The religious man fears, the man of honour scorns, to do an ill action. The latter considers vice as something that is beneath him; the other, as something that is offensive to the Divine Being: the one, as what is unbecoming; the other, as what is forbidden. Thus Seneca speaks in the natural and genuine language of a man of honour, when he declares, that, were there no God to see or punish vice, he would not commit it, because it is of so mean, so base, and so vile a nature.

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I shall conclude this head with the description of honour in the part of young Juba :

Honour's a sacred tie, the law of kings,  
The noble mind's distinguishing perfection;  
That aids and strengthens virtue when it meets her,  
And imitates her actions where she is not ;  
*It ought not to be sported with.—Cæsar.*

In the second place, we are to consider those who have mistaken notions of honour. And these are such as establish any thing to themselves for a point of honour, which is contrary either to the laws of God, or of their country ; who think it more honourable to revenge, than to forgive an injury : who make no scruple of telling a lie, but would put any man to death that accuses them of it : who are more careful to guard their reputation by their courage than by their virtue. True fortitude is indeed so becoming in human nature, that he who wants it scarce deserves the name of a man ; but we find several who so much abuse this notion, that they place the whole idea of honour in a kind of brutal courage ; by which means we have had many among us, who have called themselves men of honour, that would have been a disgrace to a gibbet. In a word, the man who sacrifices any duty of a reasonable creature to a prevailing mode or fashion ; who

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looks upon any thing as honourable that is displeasing to his Maker, or destructive to society; who thinks himself obliged by this principle to the practice of some virtues, and not of others, is by no means to be reckoned among true men of honour.

Timogenes was a lively instance of one actuated by false honour. Timogenes would smile at a man's jest who ridiculed his Maker, and at the same time run a man through the body that spoke ill of his friend. Timogenes would have scorned to betray a secret that had been intrusted to him, though the fate of his country depended upon the discovery of it. Timogenes took away the life of a young fellow in a duel, for having spoken ill of Belinda, a lady whom he himself had seduced in her youth, and betrayed into want and ignominy. To close his character, Timogenes, after having ruined several poor tradesmen's families who had trusted him, sold his estate to satisfy his creditors; but, like a man of honour, disposed of all the money he could make of it, in paying off his play debts, or, to speak in his own language, his debts of honour.

In the third place, we are to consider those persons, who treat this principle as chimerical, and turn it into ridicule. Men who are profess-

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edly of no honour, are of a more profligate and abandoned nature than even those who are actuated by false notions of it; as there is more hope of a heretic than of an atheist. These sons of infamy consider honour, with old Syphax in the play before mentioned, as a fine imaginary notion, that leads astray young inexperienced men, and draws them into real mischiefs, while they are engaged in the pursuit of a shadow. These are generally persons who, in Shakspeare's phrase, 'are worn and hackneyed in the ways of men;' whose imaginations are grown callous, and have lost all those delicate sentiments which are natural to minds that are innocent and undepraved. Such old battered miscreants ridicule every thing as romantic, that comes in competition with their present interest, and treat those persons as visionaries, who dare to stand up, in a corrupt age, for what has not its immediate reward joined to it. The talents, interest, or experience of such men make them very often useful in all parties, and at all times. But whatever wealth and dignities they may arrive at, they ought to consider that every one stands as a blot in the annals of his country, who arrives at the temple of honour by any other way, than through that of virtue.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### FEMALE CONVERSATION.

It is a fact, however it may be received, that the fair sex excel more in conversation than ours. I do not intend to flatter the women, for I have flattered them too much already, nor will I pretend to say that *they speak less*; but the beauty of their conversation is, that they listen to and hear a great deal more. They have some way an acuteness of perception, which enables them to follow the most rapid discourse, and a superiority of candour which prevents them from misrepresenting it. They never wrangle from slowness of apprehension, nor for the purpose of misleading or perplexing their hearers; and, *therefore, all men of superior minds have preferred the conversation of the fair sex to that of their own.* Were they to add a competent knowledge of all proper colloquial subjects, they would enchant mankind still more; and, God knows, their power over us is sufficient already!

But, for all their faults, we must confess that nature has fitted women for conversation in a superior degree to our own sex. Their minds are more refined and delicate than ours, their imaginations more vivid, and their expressions

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more at command. When sweetness and modesty are joined to intelligence, the charms of their conversation are irresistible. I, therefore, earnestly wish and pray that the ladies, who have so much power over the whole progress of society, and can model mankind as they please, would take the pains to model some plan of national solidity. I assure them, I am in earnest. At present they justly and properly take the lead in all conversations, and are uniformly listened to with respect, and the reverence with which we approach them is rather incompatible with that playfulness which we are obliged to assume to humour them, by conforming to their manner, of which we are *incapable*.

The ladies have, moreover, the advantage of going wherever their fancy leads them, with little danger of being envied or affronted. A man of learning is responsible for his opinions, and is generally as positive as he is learned. But the fair sex have the power of dressing science in her gayest robes, of laughing us into wisdom, and conquering us when seeming to yield. It is, indeed, but a little way that the most enlightened of the human race can descend into the mysteries of nature and providence which surround them; yet, if we do not render

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ourselves incapable by our carelessness, a certain degree of knowledge on all subjects is nearly competent to all. There are, then, common grounds on which, as rational creatures, we daily meet. How useful and how improving might our conversation be rendered! We might discuss, in the first place, the topics on which every man's senses give him sufficient information.

I have been often amused at the general topics of conversation discussed by men respectable in life. The quarter from which the wind blows, and how long it has travelled on the same current, and the effects it has on the flocks, fields, and cattle, is a grand and never-ending subject, though all know it alike well. Then the different dishes and wines are to be discussed, and, above all things, the sauces. O, it is amazing what grand discoveries have been made in these! I once heard a reverend professor assert, that he had of late made a very important discovery. What was it, think you! That beet radish made a pickle greatly superior to the radishes or cabbage of Savoy!

This, to be sure, is all very trivial; but it is harmless, and may lead to deeper researches into the arcana of nature. It is, at all events, better than circulating slander and insinuations tending

### FRIVOLITY.

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to mischief. The illiberal prejudices and ridiculous customs of the world, compel me to descant on such trifles, as they occur in all parties where business is not conducted, and where friendship dare not unbosom itself. But, alas! what a pity that reasonable creatures should eat and drink together to so little purpose! It is one of the unaccountable characters of our nature, that in those companies where trifles form the principal topics of conversation, no man or woman will venture a wise or deep remark. We choose rather to appear what we are not, than fail in what we wish to be. But surely in all such parties the finer and more aërial portion of our constitution, the soul, ought to be gratified as well as the palate.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### FRIVOLITY.

I HAVE often heard the ladies complain of the frivolity of our conversation; and that where they expected the finest wheat, they found only chaff. They would be wiser to hold their tongues on this matter, as they themselves are

often the cause of that frivolity; and they little know what is said of them in certain situations. It is a pity there should be any reason of complaint on either side; for it is not because good sense is banished from among us, but because the two sexes are absurdly pleased mutually to converse together under a mask, until the whole becomes a scene of impertinence and folly, where the greatest contest seems to be, who shall best conceal their ignorance, and not display their knowledge. Hence vivacity is often substituted for wit, and pleasing trifles dressed out in the gaudiest colours; and thus our intercourse with the world may amuse us for a while, but can yield us no solid or lasting advantage. Let the fair sex, then, be the first to pull off the mask themselves, and they will soon prevail on their acquaintances of the other sex to unmask also. It is their bounden duty to set the example; for we are much more afraid of them than they are of us, and much more influenced by their manners than they are by ours. If once their general conduct be moulded into the form of advice, it is irresistible. How lovely to see modesty mixed with learning, wit with good-nature, and a taste in dress with a taste for something of more intense value.

## SCANDAL.

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But if you find, that among your associates the disease is so inveterate as not to be cured by the example of the fair, the wise, and the good; if folly shall continue to be predominant, clamour to overtop reason, and scandal triumph over decency; then it is time to retire from the world, *and in some obscure retreat, with as many friends as choose to follow you, try to seek wisdom in the shade, disencumbered of scoffers and evil-speakers; for truly a wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach of the spirit.*

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## CHAPTER XX.

### SCANDAL.

FROM my choice of the above text, it is manifest that I wish seriously all scandal to be banished from well-bred society. People of the *higher walks of life, if ignorant, which they sometimes are, seem to be most addicted to scandal.* You would scarcely believe that the little tricks and failings of the peasantry are often minutely detailed at a great man's table. There is an elevation in rank which must be supported,

either by dignity of character or by a comparison with the vulgar. There lies the fountain-head of their malevolent talk. But it is only an invidious rising on other men's defects; a vain attempt to scramble over a wall of mud, in which you do no more than show your ambition and foul your clothes.

Let me entreat, then, of every Christian and genteel community to check every attempt at the introduction of that vile ingredient into social conversation. What pleasure can it give to any rational being to hear that a man who is not present to defend himself, is suspected of a very wicked or ridiculous action? Is it not most unfair to tell a story to a dozen of people, which cannot be told to the person most deeply interested? And why does one expose himself to the danger of circulating a lie? When a man or woman brandishes this weapon of mischief among their friends, it is a clear proof that they are unfit for the rational enjoyment of their company. There may be some present who will give full credit to the account, though, perhaps, the retailer may be the twentieth person from the original. This is stabbing a man behind his back; and for his own character's sake, no one

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should introduce topics of scandal and detraction. The heart that believes them is malicious, and the vanity that indulges in them is contemptible.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION.

I HAVE just one other observation to make before leaving this subject, and I am afraid it may be thought by many to come but ill from the pen of one who has concocted so many manifest, though amusing falsehoods. It is religious conversation, of which I have as yet said nothing. Now, I never like to hear religion brought into a large company as matter of general conversation. It is a dangerous topic, and apt to be productive of more evil than good, there being so many scoffers and Deists in almost every community; and I have even heard some of the wildest blasphemy poured unblushingly and triumphantly forth. Therefore I would not have the mild and humble religion of Jesus even risked against such a battery. But, among friends, whose hearts and sentiments are known to each other, what can be so sweet or so ad-



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vantagous as occasional conversation on the principles of our mutual belief, and the doctrines of grace and salvation? Suffer me, then, to detail a few of the advantages which, by the blessing of God, we are likely to enjoy by indulging in this blissful communication of sentiments, and abstracting ourselves from worldly concerns.

One great advantage, then, which the fearers of God derive from conferring together, is growth and improvement in the spiritual life. The words we hear in conversation, especially from those we love, have a surprising influence on the turn of the mind, the feelings of the heart, and our behaviour in life. I have seen many instances, and I relate it with pleasure, that a simple hint hath raised and cherished devout affections, hath caught hold of a man when he was tottering on the verge of some foul transaction, and been the means of re-establishing him in virtue, and in a laudable course of action every way becoming a sincere Christian. I have known even a conversation held in a dream, have a powerful effect on the heart in warning one from approaching evil. And I know that many a man hath felt the emotions of gratitude stir in his breast by being casually put in mind of God's great loving-kindness towards him. A single expres-

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sion from those we esteem concerning the excellency of our religion, and the surpassing love of Jesus for fallen and ruined mankind, or concerning the dignity, the reality, and the beauty of virtue, amidst all the corruption, confusion, and dissipation, which like a cloud of wrath hath overspread the world,—such a genial hint, I say, will seldom fall in vain. It awakens in the soul admiration and love to God; it kindles a warm desire in the hearer towards virtue and holiness, cherishing the same desire in the heart of the speaker. How often, too, hath soft persuasion pacified wrath and stemmed the impetuous tide of passion! How often hath it excited pity and commiseration, and allayed the boisterous intentions of revenge and cruelty, controlled a friend's criminal desires, made him alter his purpose, and preserve his innocence! How beautiful and forcible, then, are these words of the great King of Israel! They ought to be engraved on the tablet of every heart. *A wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach of the spirit.*

I could quote many passages of holy writ to the same purport, not one of which is to be despised or neglected; such as, "A word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

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"The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened in sure places by the masters of the assemblies." "Let, therefore, no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth; but that which is good to the use of edifying." "Be ye filled with the spirit, speaking among yourselves mutually." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another." All these are maxims bearing the same stamp, and from the very highest source.

Let us, then, endeavour to dispose ourselves to an exercise so salutary. We can never be at a loss for materials, having the whole Scriptures of truth before us. We may converse on the failings and virtues of the patriarchs of old, and how the judgments and mercies of God were exercised toward them and their families. We may trace the history of the most wonderful people that ever inhabited the face of the globe, the prophecies concerning them, and their extraordinary fulfilment. All the prophecies concerning our Saviour, from the day that man first fell in Paradise, to that in which the Son of the Highest came in the likeness of sinful flesh to save us. Such communications can hardly fail to warm our hearts with the love of God, love to one

## GENTLENESS OF MANNERS.

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another, give us the command of our passions, and bend us to the practice of righteousness. We might farther enlarge on the nature and beauty of every Christian virtue, the obligations to the practice of it derived from the light of nature, and strengthened by revelation of the love and gospel of Jesus. Indulge, then, in this heavenly conversation, and you shall ever bless the day that made you acquainted with such friends; *for in very deed a wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach of the spirit.*

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### GENTLENESS OF MANNERS.

I do not know any one rule so unexceptionably useful and necessary in every part of life, as to unite gentleness of manners with firmness of mind. The first alone would degenerate and sink into a mean timid complaisance, and passiveness, if not supported and dignified by the latter; which would also deviate into impetuosity and brutality, if not tempered and softened by the other: however, they are seldom united. The

warm choleric man, with strong animal spirits, despises the first, and thinks to carry all before him by the last. He may possibly, by great accident, now and then succeed, when he has only weak and timid people to deal with; but his general fate will be, to shock, offend, be hated, and fail. On the other hand, the cunning, crafty man thinks to gain all his ends by gentleness of manners only; he becomes all things to all men; he seems to have no opinion of his own, and servilely adopts the present opinion of the present person; he insinuates himself only into the esteem of fools; but is soon detected, and surely despised by every body else. The wise man (who differs as much from the cunning as from the choleric man) alone joins softness of manners with firmness of mind.

The advantages arising from an union of these qualities are equally striking and obvious. For example:—If you are in authority, and have a right to command, your commands, delivered with mildness and gentleness, will be willingly, cheerfully, and consequently, well, obeyed; whereas, if given brutally, they will rather be interpreted than executed. For a cool steady resolution should show, that where you have a right to command, you will be obeyed; but, at

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the same time, a gentleness in the manner of enforcing that obedience, should make it a cheerful one, and soften, as much as possible, the mortifying consciousness of inferiority.

If you are to ask a favour, or even to solicit your due, you must do it with a grace; or you will give those who have a mind to refuse you either, a pretence to do it, by resenting the manner; but, on the other hand, you must, by a steady perseverance and decent tenaciousness, show firmness and resolution. The right motives are seldom the true ones of men's actions, especially of people in high stations, who often give to importunity and fear, what they would refuse to justice, or to merit. By gentleness and softness, engage their hearts, if you can; at least prevent the pretence of offence; but take care to show resolution and firmness enough to extort, from their love of ease, or their fear, what you might in vain hope for from their justice or good nature. People in high life are hardened to the wants and distresses of mankind, as surgeons are to their bodily pains;—they see and hear of them all day long, and even of so many simulated ones, that they do not know which are real, and which not. Other sentiments are therefore to be applied to than those of mere justice

and humanity; their favour must be captivated by the graces; their love of ease disturbed by unwearied importunity, or their fears wrought upon by a decent intimation of implacable cool resentment. This precept is the only way I know in the world, of being loved without being despised, and feared without being hated. It constitutes the dignity of character, which every wise man must endeavour to establish.

To conclude: If you find that you have a hastiness in your temper, which unguardedly breaks out into indiscreet sallies, or rough expressions, to either your superiors, your equals, or your inferiors; watch it narrowly, check it carefully, and call the graces to your assistance. At the first impulse of passion, be silent, till you can be soft. Labour even to get the command of your countenance so well, that those emotions may not be read in it: a most unspeakable advantage in business! On the other hand, let no complaisance, no gentleness of temper, no weak desire of pleasing, on your part, no wheedling, coaxing, nor flattery, on other people's, make you recede one jot from any point that reason and prudence have bid you pursue; but return to the charge, persist, persevere, and you will find most things attainable that are possible. A

#### GENTLENESS OF MANNERS.

yielding timid meekness is always abused and insulted by the unjust and the unfeeling; but when sustained by firmness and resolution, is always respected, commonly successful.

In your friendships and connections, as well as in your enmities, this rule is particularly useful. Let your firmness and vigour preserve and invite attachments to you; but, at the same time, let your manner hinder the enemies of your friends and dependants from becoming yours: let your enemies be disarmed by the gentleness of your manner; but let them feel, at the same time, the steadiness of your just resentment; for there is a great difference between bearing malice, which is always ungenerous, and a resolute self-defence, which is always prudent and justifiable.

Some people cannot gain upon themselves to be easy and civil to those who are either their rivals, competitors, or opposers, though, independently of those accidental circumstances, they would like and esteem them. They betray a shyness and an awkwardness in company with them, and catch at any little thing to expose them; and so, from temporary and only occasional opponents, make them their personal enemies. This is exceedingly weak and detrimental; as, indeed, is all humour in business;



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which can only be carried on successfully by unadulterated good policy and right reasoning. In such situations I would be more particularly civil, *easy*, and *frank*, with the man whose designs I traversed. This is commonly called generosity and magnanimity, but is, in truth, good sense and policy. The manner is often as important as the matter, sometimes more so; a favour may make an enemy, and an injury may make a friend, according to the different manner in which they are severally done. In fine, gentleness of manners, with firmness of mind, is a short, but full, description of human perfection on this side of religious and moral duties.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### MORAL CHARACTER.

THE moral character of a man should be not only pure, but, like Caesar's wife, unsuspected. The least speck, or blemish, upon it, is fatal. Nothing degrades and vilifies more; for it excites and unites detestation and contempt. There are, however, wretches in the world, profligate enough to explode all notions of moral good and

evil; to maintain, that they are merely local, and depend entirely upon the customs and fashions of different countries: nay, there are still, if possible, more unaccountable wretches; I mean those who affect to preach and propagate such absurd and infamous notions, without believing them themselves. Avoid, as much as possible, the company of such people, who reflect a degree of discredit and infamy upon all who converse with them. But as you may sometimes, by accident, fall into such company, take care that no complaisance, no good humour, no warmth of festal mirth, ever make you seem to acquiesce, much less approve or applaud such infamous doctrines. On the other hand, do not debate, nor enter into serious argument, upon a subject so much below it; but content yourself with telling them, that you know they are not serious; that you have a much better opinion of them, than they would have you have; and that you are very sure they would not practise the doctrine they preach. But put your private mark upon them, and shun them for ever afterwards.

There is nothing so delicate as a man's moral character, and nothing which it is his interest so much to preserve pure. Should he be suspected of injustice, malignity, perfidy, lying, &c., all

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the parts and knowledge in the world will never procure him esteem, friendship, or respect. I, therefore, recommend to you a most scrupulous tenderness for your moral character, and the utmost care not to say or do the least thing that may, ever so slightly, taint it. Show yourself, upon all occasions, the friend, but not the bully, of virtue. Even Colonel Charters, (who was the most notorious blasted rascal in the world, and who had, by all sorts of crimes, amassed immense wealth,) sensible of the disadvantage of a bad character, was once heard to say, that "though he would not give one farthing for virtue, he would give ten thousand pounds for a character; because he should get a hundred thousand pounds by it." Is it possible, then, that an honest man can neglect what a wise rogue would purchase so dear?

There is one of the vices above mentioned, into which people of good education, and, in the main, of good principles, sometimes fall, from mistaken notions of skill, dexterity, and self-defence; I mean lying; though it is inseparably attended with more infamy and loss than any other. But I have before given you my sentiments very freely on this subject: I shall, therefore, conclude this head, with entreating you to

#### COMMON-PLACE CONVERSATION.

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be scrupulously jealous of the purity of your moral character; keep it immaculate, unblemished, unsullied; and it will be unsuspected. Defamation and calumny never attack where there is no weak place; they magnify, but they do not create.

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### CHAPTER XXIV.

#### COMMON-PLACE CONVERSATION.

NEVER use, believe, or approve, common-place observations. They are common topics of wittings and coxcombs: those who really have wit, have the utmost contempt for them, and scorn even to laugh at the pert things which those would-be wits say upon such subjects.

Religion is one of their favourite topics; it is all priest-craft, and an invention contrived and carried on by priests of all religions, for their own power and profit. From this absurd and false principle, flow the common-place, insipid jokes, and insults upon the clergy. With these people, every priest, of every religion, is either a public or a concealed unbeliever, drunkard, and whore-master; whereas, I conceive, that

#### COMMON-PLACE CONVERSATION.

priests are extremely like other men, and neither the better nor the worse for wearing a gown or a surplice; but if they are different from other people, probably it is rather on the side of religion and morality, or at least decency, from their education and manner of life.

Another common topic for false wit and cold raillery, is matrimony. Every man and his wife hate each other cordially, whatever they may pretend in public to the contrary. The husband certainly wishes his wife at the devil,—and the wife certainly cuckolds her husband. Whereas, I presume, that men and their wives neither love nor hate each other the more upon account of the form of matrimony which has been said over them. The cohabitation, indeed, which is the consequence of matrimony, makes them either love or hate more, accordingly as they respectively deserve it; but that would be exactly the same between any man and woman who lived together without being married.

It is also a trite, common-place observation, That courts are the seats of falsehood and dissimulation. That, like many, I might say most common-place observations, is false. Falsehood and dissimulation are certainly to be found at courts; but where are they not to be found?

#### COMMON-PLACE CONVERSATION.

Cottages have them, as well as courts; only with worse manners. A couple of neighbouring farmers, in a village, will contrive and practise as many tricks to over-reach each other at the next market, or to supplant each other in the favour of the 'Squire, as any two courtiers can do to supplant each other in the favour of their prince. Whatever poets may write, or fools believe, of rural innocence and truth, and of the *perfidy* of courts, this is undoubtedly true,—That shepherds and ministers are both men; their nature and passions the same, the modes of them only different.

These, and many other common-place reflections upon nations, or professions, in general, (which are at least as often false as true,) are the poor refuge of people who have neither wit nor invention of their own, but endeavour to shine in company by second-hand finery. I always put these pert jackanapeses out of countenance, by looking extremely grave, when they expect that I should laugh at their pleasantries; and by saying, Well, and so; as if they had not done, and that the sting were still to come. This disconcerts them, as they have no resources in themselves, and have but one set of jokes to live upon. Men of parts are not reduced to these

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shifts, and have the utmost contempt for them; they find proper subjects enough for either useful or lively conversation; they can be witty without satire or common-place, and serious without being dull.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### ORATORY.

ORATORY, or the art of speaking well, is useful in every situation of life, and absolutely necessary in most. A man cannot distinguish himself without it, in congress, in the pulpit, or at the bar; and even in common conversation, he who has acquired an easy and habitual eloquence, and who speaks with propriety and accuracy, will have a great advantage over those who speak inelegantly and incorrectly. The business of oratory is to persuade; and to please is the most effectual step towards persuading. It is very advantageous for a man who speaks in public, to please his hearers so much as to gain their attention; which he cannot possibly do without the assistance of oratory.

It is certain, that by study and application,

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every man may make himself a tolerably good orator, eloquence depending upon observation and care. Every man may, if he pleases, make choice of good instead of bad words and phrases; may speak with propriety, instead of impropriety; and may be clear and perspicuous in his recitals, instead of dark and unintelligible; he may have grace, instead of awkwardness, in his gestures and deportment. In short, it is in the power of every man, with pains and application, to be a very agreeable, instead of a very disagreeable speaker; and it is well worth the labour to excel other men, in that particular article in which they excel beasts.

Demosthenes thought it so essentially necessary to speak well, that though he naturally stutered, and had weak lungs, he resolved by application to overcome those disadvantages. He cured his stammering, by putting small pebbles in his mouth; and gradually strengthened his lungs, by daily using himself to speak loudly and distinctly for a considerable time. In stormy weather he often visited the sea-shore, where he spoke as loud as he could, in order to prepare himself for the noise and murmurs of the popular assemblies of the Athenians before whom he was to speak. By this extraordinary care and atten-



tion, and the constant study of the best authors, he became the greatest orator that his own or any other age or country have produced.

Whatever language a person uses, he should speak it in its greatest purity, and according to the rules of grammar. Nor is it sufficient that we do not speak a language ill; we must endeavour to speak it well; for which purpose, we should read the best authors with attention, and observe how people of fashion and education speak. Common people, in general, speak ill; they make use of inelegant and vulgar expressions, which people of rank never do. In numbers, they frequently join the singular and the plural together, and confound the masculine with the feminine gender, and seldom make choice of the proper tense. To avoid all these faults, we should read with attention, and observe the turn and expressions of the best authors: nor should we pass over a word we do not perfectly understand, without searching or inquiring for the exact meaning of it.

*It is said that a man must be born a poet, but it is in his power to make himself an orator: for to be a poet requires a certain degree of strength and vivacity of mind; but that attention, reading, and labour, are sufficient to form an orator.*

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### PEDANTRY.

EVERY excellency, and every virtue, has its kindred vice or weakness; and, if carried beyond certain bounds, sinks into the one or the other. Generosity often runs into profusion, economy into avarice, courage into rashness, caution into timidity, and so on;—insomuch that, I believe, there is more judgment required for the proper *conduct of our virtues, than for avoiding their opposite vices.* Vice, in its true light, is so deformed, that it shocks us at first sight; and would hardly ever seduce us, if it did not, at first, wear the mask of some virtue. But virtue is, in itself, so beautiful, that it charms us at first sight; engages us more and more upon further acquaintance; and, as with other beauties, we think excess impossible: it is here that judgment is necessary to moderate and direct the effects of an excellent cause. In the same manner, great learning, if not accompanied with sound judgment, frequently carries us into error, pride and pedantry.

Some learned men, proud of their knowledge, only speak to decide, and give judgment without appeal. The consequence of which is, that man-

#### PEDANTRY.

Kind, provoked by the insult, and injured by the oppression, revolt; and in order to shake off the tyranny, even call the lawful authority in question. The more you know, the modester you should be; and that modesty is the surest way of gratifying your vanity. Even where you are sure, seem rather doubtful; represent, but do not pronounce; and if you would convince others, seem open to conviction yourself.

Others, to show their learning, or often from the prejudices of a school-education, where they hear of nothing else, are always talking of the ancients as something more than men, and of the moderns as something less. They are never without a classic or two in their pockets; they stick to the old good sense; they read none of the modern trash; and will show you plainly, that no improvement has been made, in any one art or science, these last seventeen hundred years. I would by no means have you disown your acquaintance with the ancients; but still less would I have you brag of an exclusive intimacy with them. Speak of the moderns without contempt, and of the ancients without idolatry; judge them all by their merits, but not by their ages; and if you happen to have an Elzevir classic in your pocket, never show it nor mention it.

### PEDANTRY.

Some great scholars, most absurdly, draw all their maxims, both for public and private life, from what they call parallel cases in the ancient authors; without considering, that, in the first place, there never were, since the creation of the world, two cases exactly parallel; and, in the next place, that there never was a case stated, or even known, by any historian, with every one of its circumstances: which, however, ought to be known, in order to be reasoned from. Reason upon the case itself, and the several circumstances that attend it, and act accordingly; but not from the authority of ancient poets or historians. Take into your consideration, if you please, cases seemingly analogous; but take them as helps only, not as guides.

There is another species of learned men who, though less dogmatical and supercilious, are not less impertinent. These are the communicative and shining pedants, who adorn their conversation, even with women, by happy quotations of Greek and Latin, and who have contracted such a familiarity with the Greek and Roman authors, that they call them by certain names or epithets, denoting intimacy—As old Homer; that sly rogue Horace; Maro, instead of Virgil; and Naso, instead of Ovid. These are

## PREJUDICES.

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often imitated by coxcombs, who have no learning at all; but who have got some names, and some scraps of ancient authors by heart, which they improperly and impertinently retail in all companies, in hopes of passing for scholars. If, therefore, you would avoid the accusation of pedantry on one hand, or the suspicion of ignorance on the other, abstain from learned ostentation. Speak the language of the company that you are in; speak it purely, and unlarded with any other. Never seem wiser, nor more learned, than the people you are with. Wear your learning, like your watch, in a private pocket; and do not pull it out, and strike it, merely to show that you have one. If you are asked what o'clock it is, tell it; but do not proclaim it hourly and unasked, like the watchman.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### PREJUDICES.

NEVER adopt the notions of any books you may read, or of any company you may keep, without examining whether they are just or not, as you will otherwise be liable to be hurried

PREJUDICES.

away by prejudices, instead of being guided by reason; and quietly cherish error, instead of seeking for truth.

Use and assert your own reason; reflect, examine, and analyze every thing, in order to form a sound and mature judgment. Let no *ipse dixit* impose upon your understanding, mislead your actions, or dictate your conversation. Be early, what if you are not, you will, when too late, wish you had been. Consult your reason betimes; I do not say, that it will always prove an unerring guide; for human reason is not infallible: but it will prove the least erring guide that you can follow. Books and conversation may assist it; but adopt neither, blindly and implicitly: try both by the best rule, which God has given to direct us, reason. Of all the troubles, do not decline, as many people do, that of thinking. The herd of mankind can hardly be said to think; their notions are almost adoptive; and, in general, I believe it is better that it should be so, as such common prejudices contribute more to order and quiet, than their own separate reasonings would do, uncultivated and unimproved as they are.

Local prejudices prevail only with the herd of mankind, and do not impose upon cultivated, in-

#### VANITY.

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formed, and reflecting minds; but then there are notions equally false, though not so glaringly absurd, which are entertained by people of superior and improved understandings, merely for want of the necessary pains to investigate, the proper attention to examine, and the penetration requisite to determine, the truth. These are the prejudices which I would have you guard against, by a manly exertion and attention of your reasoning faculty.

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### CHAPTER XXVIII.

#### VANITY.

Be extremely on your guard against vanity, the common failing of inexperienced youth, but particularly against that kind of vanity that dubs a man a coxcomb: a character which, once acquired, is more indelible than that of the priesthood. It is not to be imagined by how many different ways vanity defeats its own purposes. One man decides peremptorily upon every subject, betrays his ignorance upon many, and shows a disgusting presumption upon the rest:

### VANITY.

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another desires to appear successful among the women; he hints at the encouragement he has received from those of the most distinguished rank and beauty, and intimates a particular connexion with some one. If it is true, it is ungenerous; if false, it is infamous: but in either case he destroys the reputation he wants to get. Some flatter their vanity, by little extraneous objects, which have not the least relation to themselves; such as being descended from, related to, or acquainted with, people of distinguished merit, and eminent characters. They talk perpetually of their grandfather such-a-one, their uncle such-a-one, and their intimate friend Mr. such-a-one, whom possibly they are hardly acquainted with. But admitting it all to be as they would have it, what then! Have they the more merit for those accidents? Certainly not. On the contrary, their taking up adventitious, proves their want of intrinsic merit: a rich man never borrows. Take this rule for granted, as a never-failing one, That you must never seem to affect the character in which you have a mind to shine. Modesty is the only sure bait when you angle for praise. The affectation of courage will make even a brave man pass only for a bully; as the affectation of wit will make a man



#### PRUDENTIAL MAXIMS.

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of parts pass for a coxcomb. By this modesty I do not mean timidity and awkward bashfulness: on the contrary, be inwardly firm and steady; know your own value whatever it may be, and act upon that principle; but take great care to let nobody discover that you do know your own value. Whatever real merit you have, other people will discover, and people always magnify their own discoveries as they lessen those of others.

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### CHAPTER XXIX.

#### PRUDENTIAL MAXIMS.

A MAN who does not solidly establish, and really deserve a character of truth, probity, good manners, and good morals, at his first setting out in the world, may impose, and shine like a meteor for a very short time, but will very soon vanish, and be extinguished with contempt. People easily pardon, in young men, the common irregularities of the senses; but they do not forgive the least vice of the heart.

The greatest favours may be done so awkwardly and bunglingly as to offend; and disagree-

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able things may be done so agreeably as almost to oblige.

There are very few captains of foot, who are not much better company than ever Descartes or Sir Isaac Newton were. I honour and respect such superior geniuses; but I desire to converse with people of this world, who bring into company their share, at least, of cheerfulness, good-breeding, and knowledge of mankind. In common life, one much oftener wants small money and silver than gold. Give me a man who has ready cash about him for present expenses, six-pences, shillings, half-crowns, and crowns, which circulate easily; but a man who has only an ingot of gold about him, is much above common purposes, and his riches are not handy or convenient. Have as much gold as you please in one pocket, but take care always to keep change in the other; for you will much oftener have occasion for a shilling than for a guinea.

Advice is seldom welcome, and those who want it the most, always like it the least.

Envy is one of the meanest and most tormenting of all passions, as there is hardly a person existing that has not given uneasiness to an envious breast; for the envious man cannot be happy while he beholds others so.

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A great action will always meet with the approbation of mankind; and the inward pleasure which it produces, is not to be expressed.

Humanity is the peculiar characteristic of great minds; little vicious minds abound with anger and revenge, and are incapable of feeling the exalted pleasure of forgiving their enemies.

The ignorant and the weak only are idle:—those who have acquired a good stock of knowledge, always desire to increase it. Knowledge is like power in this respect,—those who have the most, are most desirous of having more.—Idleness is only the refuge of weak minds, and the holy-day of fools.

Every man has a natural right to his liberty, and whosoever endeavours to ravish it from him, deserves death more than the robber who attacks us for our money on the highway.

Modesty is a commendable quality, and generally accompanies true merit; it engages and captivates the mind of people; for nothing is more shocking and disgusting than presumption and impudence. A man is despised, who is always commending himself, and who is the hero of his own story.

Not to perform our promise, is a folly, a dishonour, and a crime. It is a folly, because no one

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will rely on us afterwards; and it is a dishonour and a crime, because truth is the first duty of religion and morality: and whoever is not possessed of truth, cannot be supposed to have any one good quality, and must be held in detestation by all good men.

Wit may create many admirers, but makes few friends. It shines and dazzles like the noon-day sun, but like that too, is very apt to scorch, and therefore is always feared. The milder morning and evening light and heat of that planet, soothe and calm our minds. Never seek for wit: If it presents itself, good and well; but even in that case, let your judgment interpose; and take care that it be not at the expense of anybody. Pope says very truly,

There are whom Heaven has blest with store of wit,  
Yet want as much again to govern it.

And in another place, I doubt with too much truth,

For wit and judgment ever are at strife,  
Though meant each other's aid, like man and wife.

A proper secrecy is the only mystery of able men; mystery is the only secrecy of weak and cunning ones.

To tell any friend, wife, or mistress, any secret

#### PRUDENTIAL MAXIMS.

with which they have nothing to do, is discovering to them such unretentive weakness, as must convince them that you will tell it to twenty others, and consequently that they may reveal it without the risk of being discovered. But a secret properly communicated, only to those who are to be concerned in the question, will probably be kept by them, though they should be a good many. Little secrets are commonly told again, but great ones generally kept.

A man who tells nothing, or who tells all, will equally have nothing told him.

If a fool knows a secret, he tells it because he is a fool: if a knave knows one, he tells it wherever it is his interest to tell it; but women and young men are very apt to tell what secrets they know, from the vanity of having been trusted. Trust none of these, wherever you can help it.

In your friendships, and in your enmities, let your confidence and your hostilities have certain bounds; make not the former dangerous, nor the latter irreconcilable. There are strange vicissitudes in business!

Smooth your way to the head through the heart. The way of reason is a good one; but is

#### PRUDENTIAL MAXIMS.

commonly something longer, and perhaps not so sure.

Spirit is now a very fashionable word: to act with spirit, to speak with spirit, means only to act rashly, and to talk indiscreetly. An able man shows his spirit, by gentle words and resolute actions: he is neither hot nor timid.

Patience is a most necessary qualification for business: many a man would rather you heard his story, than granted his request. One must seem to hear the unreasonable demands of the petulant unmoved, and the tedious details of the dull untired. This is the least price that a man must pay for a high station.

It is always right to detect a fraud, and to perceive a folly; but it is often very wrong to expose either. A man of business should always have his eyes open; but must often seem to have them shut.

In courts (and everywhere else), bashfulness and timidity are as prejudicial on one hand, as impudence and rashness are on the other. A steady assurance, and a cool intrepidity, with an exterior modesty, are the true and necessary medium.

Never apply for what you see very little probability of obtaining; for what you will, by asking

improper and unattainable things, accustom the ministers to refuse you so often, that they will find it easy to refuse you the properest and most reasonable ones. It is a common, but a most mistaken rule at court, to ask for every thing in order to get something: you do get something by it, it is true; but that something is, refusals and ridicule.—This maxim, like the former, is of general application.

A cheerful easy countenance and behaviour are very useful; they make fools think you a good-natured man; and they make designing men think you an undesigning one.

There are some occasions in which a man may tell half his secret, in order to conceal the rest; but there is seldom one in which a man should tell it all. Great skill is necessary to know how far to go, and where to stop.

Ceremony is necessary, as the outwork and defence of manners.

A man's own good-breeding is the best security against other people's ill manners.

Good-breeding carries along with it a dignity that is respected by the most petulant. Ill-breeding invites and authorizes the familiarity of the most timid. No man ever said a pert thing to the Duke of Marlborough. No man ever said a

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civil one (though many a flattering one) to Sir Robert Walpole.

Knowledge may give weight, but accomplishments only give lustre; and many more people see than weigh.

Most arts require long study and application: but the most useful art of all, that of pleasing, requires only the desire.

It is to be presumed, that a man of common sense who does not desire to please, desires nothing at all; since he must know that he cannot obtain any thing without it.

A skilful negotiator will most carefully distinguish between the little and the great objects of his business, and will be as frank and open in the former, as he will be secret and pertinacious in the latter.—This maxim holds equally true in common life.

The Duc de Sully observes very justly in his Memoirs, that nothing contributed more to his rise, than that prudent economy which he had observed from his youth, and by which he had always a sum of money beforehand in case of emergencies.

It is very difficult to fix the particular point of economy; the best error of the two is on the par-



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simonious side. That may be corrected, the other cannot.

The reputation of generosity is to be purchased pretty cheap; it does not depend so much upon a man's general expense, as it does upon his giving handsomely where it is proper to give at all. A man, for instance, who should give a servant four shillings, would pass for covetous, while he who gave him a crown would be reckoned generous: so that the difference of those two opposite characters turns upon one shilling. A man's character in that particular depends a great deal on the report of his own servants; a mere trifle above common wages makes their report favourable.

Take care always to form your establishment so much within your income as to leave a sufficient fund for unexpected contingencies, and a prudent liberality. There is hardly a year in any man's life, in which a small sum of ready money may not be employed to great advantage.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### PUNCTUALITY.

It is a common and trite remark among the active and energetic denizens of the commercial world, that "dispatch is the soul of business." So far are we from disputing the correctness of this definition, that we shall willingly carry the axiom farther, and assert that, *as dispatch is the soul of business, so is punctuality the soul of credit, and the strongest bond of commercial confidence.* It is, in fact, the sheet-anchor of trade, and the ballast that preserves a tradesman's reputation. What is more gratifying than to hear the praise of an experienced merchant, when patronising a youthful candidate who is first starting in the race of honourable enterprise? How estimable is it to obtain that confidence which hesitates not to declare, that "he is punctual in his dealings—whatever he promises, he will perform; trust him—for he will neither deceive nor disappoint you!" Whereas, whatever might be his abilities, or however amiable might be his disposition, should he want this one grand essential for the commercial character, there is not a man of stability or moral rectitude

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who would venture to recommend him, or who would thus hazard his own reputation for sound judgment and discretion. Where punctuality is strictly observed, a man's character rises in proportion far exceeding what it ever could acquire by persevering industry, by the influence of friends, or by the propitious gales of fortune, without it. On the contrary, where its non-observance is apparent, no adventitious aids will be sufficient to gain him even a temporary reputation.

In all stages of society, and among every class, whether commercial, professional, or the inoperative and merely fashionable, the absence of punctuality inevitably brings a person into disrespect, often disgraces him, and, not unfrequently, leaves on his character a stain so indelible, that many good offices and excellent qualities are insufficient to obliterate it. And though, it must be confessed, there are men of high intellectual attainments, and urbane manners, who would willingly find some excuse for their culpable negligence, their apparent disregard of this most valuable quality, which, if not a cardinal virtue in itself, at all events—

"Aids and strengthens Virtue when it meets her,  
And imitates her where she is not,"

yet it is certain that its exact and rigorous ob-

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servance is scarcely less requisite with them, than with those of humble mould, and with less aspiring pretensions.

How vexatious is it, in any of the common transactions of life, or even in affairs of mere courtesy, to find that the appointment which some friend had made with us has been broken, at a moment, too, perhaps, when our time was so valuable, that we would have given almost any thing to have been released from the obligation of keeping it ourselves! We can hardly feel satisfied when a plausible excuse is made; and should we happen to be unceremoniously left without one, the offence to good manners is absolutely unpardonable. In short, if there be one quality more than another that is necessary to be diffused through all the ranks of life, or the absence of which is more severely felt in a highly civilized community, it is—Punctuality.

Like the insidious approaches of vice, the want of punctuality first shows itself on slight occasions, and advances towards a confirmed habit by imperceptible degrees. Negligence is suffered to usurp the place of attention in small affairs, and grows strong by repeated indulgences. People do not break through their moral restraints all at once; they venture not on the violation of

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solemn engagements, nor do they think they may with impunity forfeit their word in matters affecting property, till the practice of breaking their promises in minor affairs has rendered them callous to the obligation of keeping them. But who knows, when once a breach has been made in our principles, what vice shall enter it! Who can tell, when a promise is broken without compunction, or a pledge forfeited without an anxiety for its redemption, what a series of miseries may flow through the inlet of violated honour!

Let it then be our aim to have this maxim constantly in view,—be faithful to our promises, and punctual in all our engagements; so shall we acquire credit and renown in society, while we enjoy the enviable satisfaction which arises from a mind well regulated, and from a conscience unfettered.

In one of the excellent papers of *The Observer*, by Mr. Cumberland, we recollect the following sentence, which, though not exclusively applicable to our remarks on punctuality, bear so closely on the subject, that we shall conclude with it. "If all the resolutions, promises, and engagements of *to-day*, that lie over for *to-morrow*, were to be summed up and posted by items, what a cumbrous load of procrastinations would be

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transferred in the midnight crisis of a moment!"

Remember—punctuality is the open and undisguised enemy of procrastination; and he who makes alliance with the former, need not fear the treacherous stealth of the latter.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### PROCRASTINATION.

PROCRASTINATION has been very well and very prettily defined to be "*the thief of time*;" and it is a thief, too, of a very alert and mischievous ability, for though to-day is always with us, we can never contrive to come up with to-morrow. The very brevity, and still more the uncertainty of our mortal life, should be sufficient to dissuade us from putting off to a future time that which we are at present able to perform; to-day is in our own possession, but

"No man, how bright so e'er the present hour,  
Can say he hath to-morrow in his power."

The intellect which to-day is in meridian lustre, the power to which to-day admiring mil-

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lions bow, the strength which to-day can rend the gnarled oak, the wealth which to-day can purchase the means of great enterprises; nay, even the life and health, without which all else are but names without reality, may to-morrow have departed from us forever. It is therefore foolish to procrastinate any thing which ought to be done at all, and to procrastinate any thing of great consequence is frequently both ruinous and criminal; ruinous to him who procrastinates, and ruinous not only to himself, but also to those who trust him, or are dependent upon him. It argues a very contemptible indolence to defer to a future time what can as well be done at the present; and more advantages of fortune, learning, and rank, are lost by the indulgence of this most dangerous species of indolence, than the brightest genius can attain by the merely occasional exertion of the most splendid abilities. One of the greatest heroes of modern times, the gallant and immortal Nelson, was unable to bear of procrastination without anger. When he was about to proceed on his last glorious, though fatal expedition, a tradesman waited upon him to receive an order. His lordship having enjoined punctuality in its execution, the tradesman replied, "I will have them on board, my Lord, *precisely* at the

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time." "Twenty minutes *before* the time, Mr. —," replied the hero; "I owe my whole success in life to being twenty minutes in advance of my engagements;" so important did he think that alertness and punctuality, which procrastination habitually and systematically violates. Julius Cæsar was no less an enemy to procrastination; he would not even allow a river to stop him, but while less ardent persons would have *been seeking or constructing a bridge, he and his legions had forded the river, if fordable, and swum it if not!*

While we condemn all unnecessary delays in acting, let us not be thought to recommend a flighty and inconsiderate haste. Never was a better maxim than the "hasten slowly"—*i. e.* deliberately, of the Latin poet; but it applies to counsel, not to action. We cannot be too cautious or too careful in resolving upon any project; but having once resolved upon it, nothing should hinder us from putting it into instant effect, except the intervention of more important business.

Horace says, that he who defers a project from day to day is like one who should wait by a river's side for the river to run completely away, in order that he may reach the opposite bank.



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Horace is high authority, but we may venture to observe that the victim of procrastination is still more egregiously simple; the river indeed keeps perpetually running on, and the simpleton who wishes it all to run by him, may possibly get fairly tired into wisdom, and, as the river will not run from him, make up his sapient mind to run away from it. But the man of procrastination is somewhat worse situated: his *life* is running away from him, and death sternly beckons him to the grave ere he can resolve to defer no longer. It is easy no doubt to flatter our indolence by promising to be more alert to-morrow; the space between Monday and Tuesday is not great; we are young and healthy, and we are so *determined* to be very active to-morrow! Healthier than we are will, ere the to-morrow to which we allude, be racked with anguish, or plunged into mental darkness; and younger than we are will, ere the sun shall set, be numbered among the dead. Even if we were sure that to-morrow would do as well for our business as to-day; even were we sure that to-morrow we shall be both able and willing to do it; we ought not to wait. But we are sure of neither—we may be dead; and if living and healthy, who can answer that we shall not be as indolent then as now! Pro-

## COURAGE.

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crastination must be spurned from us at once, or never. It is a habit "which makes the meat it feeds on;" increases with increased indulgence; and becomes at last the nurse of that indolence of which it is the offspring.

Do any of our young readers feel inclined to "wait until to-morrow," let them remember what we have already said, and let them also remember that "TO-DAY IS THE TO-MORROW OF YESTERDAY."

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### COURAGE.

FEW qualities are more boasted of and talked about, yet more imperfectly understood and appreciated, than courage. Real courage is considerably less valued than it ought to be, while, with a strange inconsistency of judgment, men call that courage which is very opposite, and assign a rank and value to the spurious courage, which they deny to the real one; to which alone, however, they justly belong. Without possessing real courage, we can only be respectable by mere chance; and cannot, by any means, be really and eminently virtuous. Our wishes and

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our inclinations may lean towards virtue ; but of what avail is that, if we be so infirm of purpose that we cannot resist the temptations of gaudy vice, or the threatenings of reckless and brutal wickedness ? To what purpose is it that we perceive indeed, what is good, but are seduced or intimidated into a participation and acquiescence in what is bad ?

It is most probable, that could we dive into the secret thoughts and make ourselves minutely and perfectly acquainted with the earliest actions of some of the most atrocious of those criminals who in the endurance of an ignominious death have made terrible atonement to society for their violation of its rights and laws, we should find that the majority of them owed their first criminality to want of courage ; and there is scarcely a better proof of the erroneusness of confounding courage and mere animal daring together, than a brief consideration of the actions of such men will afford us. Superficial judges award the praise of courage to every action which partakes in any considerable degree of mere animal daring. Ought we not, *in such a view of the case*, to rank our burglars and our highwaymen among the most exalted heroes ? Nay, should we not even exalt them *above* those men of ancient

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as well as of modern times, whose splendid military achievements have ranked them among heroes! A little reflection will convince us that we most undoubtedly *ought* to do so. There is not a peril to which a military man is exposed to which the violator of the law is not occasionally liable; and while the former is upheld and cheered onward in his perilous career by the consciousness of well doing, and by the hope at once of exalting himself, serving his country, and obtaining the applause of his contemporaries, and the admiration of posterity; the latter feels that detection is death, and that as his daring practices are injurious to society, so his destruction is necessary to it, his profession infamous, and every man's hand ready to be outstretched for his discomfiture. If, then, the mere braving of peril were entitled to the praise of COURAGE, it is obvious that the violator of the law *dares* considerably more than the general who battles in defence of the liberties or interests of his country, and is, consequently, entitled to higher praise for courage: for the latter, as we have already shown, is cheered and supported by the legitimacy, and, to his peculiar community, the usefulness of his exertions, while the former dares only on his own behalf, and far from being

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encouraged, is denounced at every step by that society upon which he preys. It is true that even in legitimate warfare the courage which is servicable to one community is in precisely the same degree injurious to another; but legitimate courage is admired even by those against whom it is exerted; while illegitimately exerted daring is the most detestable to society, the more it is exerted and manifested.

Why, then, do we deny the praise of courage to the brutal daring of the midnight robber and assassin? For this simple reason, that his *daring* is the result of the grossest and most contemptible *cowardice*. He fears labour, and in order to avoid it flies to crime; he dreads want, and will rather inflict it upon others than feel it himself; he fears that those whom he plunders will denounce him to justice, and, in order to prevent them from so doing, in order to shun for a brief space the immediate vengeance of human law, he imbrues his hands in blood, and evokes the distant but certain and terrible vengeance of the Divinity. He is not intrepid; contrariwise, he trembles at the rustling of a leaf or at the fixed gaze of the most insignificant stranger; he is most completely a coward, and it is *cowardice under a mistake* which leads him to embrace the

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most horrible prospective evils, rather than submit to present ones, though comparatively unimportant in nature and extent.

By applying the same rule to the examination of those traits of conduct which the worthless describe, and the thoughtless are led to believe, to be indications of courage, we shall come to a very decisive conclusion upon the subject. Thus we have only to dive in the actuating feeling of the duellist to pronounce him a rank coward: he endangers his life, it is true, but he does so from the absurd fear of being ridiculed or despised by beings whom he considers ridiculous, and knows to be despicable! He is, as one of our preachers beautifully says, "towards man a coward, and towards Almighty God a bravo! He dreads the creature, yet impiously defies the Creator!"

It is want of true courage that induces the weak and the vicious to yield respectively to external and internal temptations; to prefer the gratification of present desires, or the avoidance of present evils, to that suppression of the one or endurance of the other, which is essential to permanent peace of mind and future safety, temporal or eternal.

True courage is calm, determined, and invariably virtuous; the vicious man is always on

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some point or other a coward. Nothing can shake the resolution of the courageous man, or induce him to act otherwise than as he has determined to act. He does not seek danger, nay, he will rather avoid than court it, for courage is always combined with prudence. But when her evils are presented for his inevitable choice, he chooses that which it is the most fit that he should choose. He does not allow his tastes, his desires, his ease, or his safety, to weigh with him, when they, or any of them, can be gratified or considered only by an abandonment of his duty to man, or a violation of the laws of God. On any other account than that on which they parted with their lives, the martyrs of former ages would have acted not only unjustifiably, but even sinfully. But when it was required of them to testify against the living God, and to purchase their temporal at the sacrifice of their eternal lives, they chose wisely. They avoided, indeed, the greater evil, by submitting to the endurance of the lesser; but to have done otherwise would have been the very contrary of courage; it would have been to purchase a remission of present pain by laying up a reversion of future pain, indescribably more awful and more difficult to be borne; and to act in this manner would be to act rashly, weakly

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and imprudently, which true courage never does or can do.

To make this matter clearer, let us explain that a man may, under some circumstances, be hardy, yet not courageous; while under other circumstances, want of hardihood implies extreme cowardice. Let us imagine that we see an individual who wishes us to think him courageous plunging a poniard into various parts of his limbs and body: the blood gushes, and we are at once shocked and disgusted; but do we feel impressed with any feeling of admiration? Decidedly not: he is acting unnecessarily, he is endangering his life, and flying in the face of his Creator; and that, too, merely to gratify an absurd vanity. If we reason even with tolerable accuracy, we cannot fail to despise him as a vain and braggart person: we discover that though he has a brutal resolution, which enables him to endure his self-inflicted bodily pain, he is wholly destitute of that serenity and steadfastness of mind which make usefulness and duty at once the motive and the guide of human conduct.

Here, then, the daring endurance of great bodily pain is actually a sufficient proof of want of true courage. Let us now imagine the endurance of pain under different circumstances.



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Let us suppose that a severe chronic disease, or an unusually terrible accident, has reduced an individual to so dangerous a condition, that nothing but an operation, almost too painful for human endurance, can give him even a chance of preserving his life. Let us further suppose that, being duly impressed with the sublime promises of the gospel, and being accustomed to view life merely as a trial state, preparatory to eternity, he is, as far as his own interests are concerned, more desirous of death than of life, but submits to a cruel and protracted operation, because the interests of his family are so centred in him that his death would infallibly be productive of ruin, suffering, and degradation to them. How can we describe the extent, the purity, the sublimity, of his courage! He submits to misery rather than fail in the performance of duty; and though christian faith assures him of a happy futurity, christian piety induces him to prefer the endurance of pain in his own person, to the infliction of it upon those who are dependent upon him.

Real courage avoids evil when it is neither a duty nor a necessity to endure it; but submits to it firmly and without complaint when it can only be avoided by incurring a greater future evil, or

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by abandoning the course prescribed by religion, virtue, and social duty: while false courage is displayed in unworthy actions, and excited by unworthy motives; is bold only where boldness is criminal or injudicious, and is invariably found wanting when the interests of religion, morality, truth, and justice are endangered.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

MEANS OF ENJOYMENT.

THE mind of man is so curiously constructed, and so fitly framed for enjoyment, that it is capable of extracting pleasure from the most opposing circumstances, and the most diversified scenes. When contemplating an Alpine chain of mountains, or measuring its altitude by the eternal stars, it rises and swells with emotions of sublimity, because it becomes conscious of an acquaintanceship with the Deity through the medium of his most exalted works. It exults and riots in the more playful garniture of nature—the flying cloud—the running stream—the plumage of birds, and the graceful motions of animals; it reposes with intense gratification on the

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gentle slope of hills—the undulation of vales—the meanderings of rivers, the heaven-tinctured bow; it glows with enthusiasm when feasting on the rich prospect of the full-orbed sun, sinking amid the golden clouds of the west.

In spring, man hails with delight the verdant livery of the fields, the kindly influence of the gradually approaching sun, and all the variegated charms of unfolding nature; his bosom swells with the ripening bud, his heart is in unison with every thing around; and his soul, harmonizing with the thousand songsters of the grove, hymns forth spontaneously its liveliest feelings of gratitude and devotion. It is the season when the beautiful vitality of nature rekindles the dormant sparks of ambition, pours tributary streams into his sea of love, animates him to exertion, recalls to his memory the golden past, and uncurtains to his admiring view the glorious vista of the future; it is the season of the imagination, and, steeped in delicious dreams of poesy, he sees noon-day visions of the great of old; already feels upon him the warm flush of inspiration, and hails, with rapturous emotions, the first consciousness of genius, as the harbinger of perpetual spring-time to his soul—

"'Tis the Divinity that stirs within him."

#### MEANS OF ENJOYMENT.

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Let us reverse the picture, and pourtray the falling honours of the year; let us look at the autumn with "his golden hand gilding the fallen leaf; amid waving harvests and luxuriant vintages, walking like the god of plenty, pressing the blood of grapes beneath his feet, and bearing the sheaves with him. The former was the season of flowers, this of fruits; still the contemplative mind feels an equal susceptibility of delight. The pervading spirit is the same, whether it speaks to him in the breeze which wanders among the myrtles, or in the stormy gale that riots on the proud cedar tops, or which dashes the wild ocean waves in anger against the sky.

Without this capability of the mind to adapt itself to surrounding circumstances, by far the greater portion of man's life would be consumed by uneasiness, vexation, and regrets. The past, the present, and the future, would be equally uninteresting and perplexing; day and night, spring-time and harvest, summer and winter, would afford no subject for enjoyment; all nature would be, as it were, a boundless desert, through which the soul would travel onward to its immortal destiny, uncheered by events which now constitute a felicity only inferior to that which

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we are taught to believe it will experience when permitted to join the morning stars in their full tide of harmony, and complete that climax of knowledge which the Creator has reserved for it in the region of bliss.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

RELIGION.

THE pious and talented Dr. Isaac Watts very beautifully and very truly says—

"To man, in this his trial state,  
The privilege is given,  
When tossed by tides of human fate,  
To anchor fast on heaven."

It is indeed most true that, in the most perplexing difficulties, the most agonizing sufferings, and the most imminent peril, we have, in religion, an all-sufficient solace and support.

Though the chief advantage which we derive from revealed religion is undoubtedly the knowledge which it affords us of the corrupt state of our nature, the infinite power and goodness of our Creator, and the infallible and only means of avoiding his displeasure, and securing his approbation, yet this is by no means the only one. It is from the great manual of our religion, the

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Bible, that we derive all that we know, with any considerable degree of certainty, of the earliest ages of the world; and but for the light thus afforded us by religion, some of the most delightful and useful stores of profane learning would be so unintelligible and unfathomable as to be destitute alike of usefulness and of beauty.

Moreover, religion not only throws a light upon profane learning, but it also disposes our hearts and minds for profitably pursuing and attaining it; for the qualities of mind which are enjoined by religion are as essential to intellectual eminence as to moral perfection. To be modest, industrious, temperate, and unprejudiced, are so essential to the improvement of the intellect, that the strongest natural mind, unrulèd by these, will never arrive at any very great height of excellence. And where, so well as in Scripture, are modesty, industry, temperance, and impartiality, inculcated and enforced? To what profane writer can we refer whose directions are at once so sublime and so intelligible, or whose warnings are so solemn, and whose consolations are so effectively soothing, as are those of the inspired penmen!

Every branch of science and of learning is to be advanced by a profound study of holy writ;

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yet its essentials are laid down so clearly, and with such beautiful simplicity, that the most trivial amount of scholastic attainment suffices for comprehending and profiting by them. Profound sciences, and an extensive acquaintance with the tongues of foreign lands, and other times, can draw assistance and improvement from the book of life; but to read it to its chief end, namely, virtue here and happiness hereafter, the mere power of reading our vernacular tongue, and a humble frame of mind, alone are requisite. The peasant is in this respect as happy as the wealthiest and greatest noble of the land; the wealth of this world he cannot attain, but he can contemplate the riches of the world to come; and he can at once rely upon the truths of the gospel for future happiness, and derive from them patience under privations and sufferings, and consolation amidst the most terrible calamities.

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THE END.

