



SELECT
MODERN
CLASSICS



SOLITUDE

Sanjour Royal 1827
AN

Examination of the Advantages

OF

SOLITUDE;

AND OF ITS OPERATIONS ON THE HEART AND MIND;

WITH

AN ENQUIRY

Into its prejudicial Influence on the

IMAGINATION AND PASSIONS.

Translated from the German of

JOHN GEORGE ZIMMERMANN,

Counsellor and Chief Physician to his Britannic Majesty at Hanover,
And Knight of the Russian Order of Wladimir.

WITH

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

To which is prefixed,

A BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR,
AND A SKETCH OF HIS CHARACTER AND WORKS.

"What call'st thou *Solitude*?"

MILTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1805.

TO

HER MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

CHARLOTTE

QUEEN OF GREAT-BRITAIN;

THE ILLUSTRIOUS PATRONESS OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS,

AND

PROMOTER OF EVERY VIRTUE

THAT CAN ADORN AND DIGNIFY THE HUMAN MIND---

THIS EDITION OF

SELECT MODERN CLASSICS

IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY HER MAJESTY'S

MOST DEVOTED SERVANTS,

THE PROPRIETORS.

London, Dec. 1, 1804.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

AMONG the causes which have most powerfully conduced to the progress of literature, and the diffusion of knowledge in the present age, may undoubtedly be reckoned that reciprocal communication of ideas, which has taken place between the most enlightened nations of the civilized world. Among the rest, Britain, though abounding in the stores of native genius, has not disdained to increase her riches by transplanting into her blooming garden the most distinguished productions of foreign literature.

Nothing tends more to invigorate the imagination of men of genius, to enlarge and fertilize their ideas, than to transport them to various theatres where they receive new impressions, and observe new effects; where they find, perhaps, the same thoughts, but clothed in a different dress; where they discover beauties, though pos-

sibly disguised in less perfect form. The literature of foreign nations conducts us, as it were, into unknown regions; it exhibits science arrayed in charms to which we were before strangers; in the same manner as certain combinations of light and shade suddenly impart new beauties to a landscape, to which the eye has long been accustomed.

Notwithstanding the avidity with which foreign works of eminence have been caught up, notwithstanding the numerous translations which have recently appeared, many productions of the highest merit are still unknown in this country. Others, either through the ignorance of the translator, or the want of proper encouragement, have been exhibited to great disadvantage in an English dress; while many of inferior worth, are presented to us as first-rate performances. We are, in consequence, led into a great mistake: we suppose ourselves acquainted with the literature of other countries, we imagine that we are competent to decide on its merits, and become unjust, because we have been misinformed.

If, therefore, a literary undertaking be commenced with the design of correcting the judgment, by submitting to the public the select productions of the most celebrated modern European writers;—if the conductors, without arro-

gating the authority of a tribunal, content themselves with preparing the means of guiding the opinions of their countrymen ;—and if, divesting themselves of all prepossession in favor of foreign writers in general, or any nation in particular, they present their *chef-d'œuvres* only as new sources of literary wealth ;—may they not reasonably flatter themselves with the hope of securing the patronage and encouragement of all the real friends of literature, of all those who seriously interest themselves in the improvement of taste and the progress of knowledge ?

Such, then, is the design of the proprietors of the SELECT MODERN CLASSICS, a work intended to comprise the most esteemed productions of French, German, Italian and other European authors, whose writings have contributed either to extend the empire of science and to enlarge the understanding, or have served to promote the cause of religion, morality, and those virtues which do honor to the human character.

It may be necessary to enter into some explanation respecting the manner in which this work will be executed.—All the translations comprehended in this collection will be *entirely new* ; and, as it is evident that the principal merit of the work will consist in its superiority in this point, gentlemen of the highest literary attainments have been engaged to superintend it.

To the writings of each author, will be prefixed a memoir of his life; they will likewise be occasionally accompanied with explanatory notes, and will be printed in such a manner, that the respective productions of the different authors will each form a distinct work.

The SELECT MODERN CLASSICS will be embellished with numerous plates. The subjects will be selected from among those which are considered the most interesting; the designs will be made by the first artists, and the engravings will be executed by men of acknowledged eminence in their profession.

As it is the wish of the proprietors that this Collection of Foreign Classics should combine the highest degree of elegance with the utmost possible utility, they have resolved to publish it in periodical numbers, as they are aware that many, though solicitous of increasing their stock of knowledge, are deterred from indulging that laudable desire, by the immediate expence, attending the ordinary mode of publication. A cheap edition has likewise been prepared, that none, however confined his circumstances, may be prevented from enjoying the benefits resulting from the labors of the most distinguished philosophers of modern Europe.

TRANSLATOR'S

P R E F A C E.

THE study of the German language which, for copiousness and energy, is generally admitted to be surpassed by none in Europe, has, till within these very few years, been unaccountably neglected in this country. Some, have excused their ignorance of its beauties, and the distorted resemblances which their attempts at translation have produced, by unjustifiably applying to it the epithets of barbarous and unpolished; while others, tacitly acknowledging their deficiency, have had recourse to the assistance of our continental neighbors, the French. It is by this circuitous route that, even at the present day, many of the productions of German literature are introduced to the British public. Such, likewise, has been the unmerited fate of the performance selected for the commencement of the Collection of Modern Classics.

It is a truth disgraceful to our national literary character, that Zimmermann's work On Solitude, which has been as universally admired as read, has

hitherto been known in England only through the medium of a translation from the French. The version of Mercier afforded a very partial view of the subject, as treated in the original. It included only four out of the twelve chapters of which the latter is composed, and those were entirely devoted to the consideration of the advantages to be derived from Retirement. The sentiments of the author were, thus, totally perverted, and his character misrepresented; he appeared to be the zealous apostle of unqualified seclusion, instead of the enlightened philosopher, impartially investigating the benefits of Solitude on the one hand, and pointing out its dangers and disadvantages on the other.

If it be true that a translation is invariably inferior in merit to its original, what may not a work be supposed to lose in two transformations! It will, accordingly, appear that, to the misconceptions of the French writer, the English translator has added many errors, arising either from negligence or the want of a sufficient acquaintance with the subject.

It was not till a considerable time after the publication of the first volume, that the second made its appearance. From the partial view of the subject which the former afforded, another volume became indispensably necessary, in order to discuss the contrary side of the question.—But if the first was not a just representation of the original, still less can the second be considered in that light. On the style and

general execution I shall forbear any comment; truth however requires the declaration, that a great portion of this performance is not Zimmermann's, but that it is swelled out by frequent paraphrases on particular observations or assertions of the author, in language, very often rendered ludicrous by its quaintness, and always tedious and disgusting by its diffuseness and verbosity.

The extensive demand for the work of the German philosopher, even in this disfigured and mutilated state, produced the publication of what was announced as a new version of that celebrated performance. Whether it can justify that pretension, the most superficial examination will sufficiently prove. Copying, without much reference to the French or German, all the errors of his predecessor, with as much fidelity as the law would permit, but regardless of either method or arrangement, the editor, by the addition of numerous beauties culled from various English publications of merit, has certainly succeeded in producing an entertaining work. How far it corresponds either with the author's matter or his manner, may very easily be conjectured.

Such, then, were the imperfect sources from which the public derived all their acquaintance with this chef-d'œuvre of Zimmermann's genius. To supply the defects which have hitherto existed, and to afford as complete an idea of the original as the limits prescribed me would admit, has been my aim in the pre-

sent translation, concerning which it may perhaps be necessary to make a few remarks.

The reader of taste and intelligence will perceive the superiority which this performance must possess, in having been executed entirely from the German original. To present a complete translation of four thick volumes in the compass of two was impossible. With the omission, however, of the eighth chapter, which is totally unconnected with the plan of the work, I have given a faithful representation of the whole, not in the way of an abridgment, but by retrenching such parts as appeared the least important, or in any degree exceptionable. Among the latter were many passages, which, though they certainly claim the attention of those who wish to obtain a thorough knowledge of human nature, yet if admitted into this work, would have effectually excluded it from the hands of youth, particularly of the fair sex. By these omissions the general outline is not materially affected; and every thing has been carefully retained which could prove either interesting or instructive.

The life prefixed to the work has been compiled from the most authentic sources, and the notes will, it is hoped, be found an useful accompaniment.

F. S.

MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
J. G. ZIMMERMANN,

With some Account of his Writings.

“THE details of a celebrated life promote, in a particular manner, the purposes of instruction. They interest their readers, by the honor reflected from the individual upon human nature in general, and his own nation in particular*.” Such are Zimmermann’s own words, and they are not less applicable to the present purpose than to the occasion on which he employed them.

John George Zimmermann, was born on the 8th of December 1728, at Brug, a small town in the German part of the canton of Berne, in Switzerland. His father was a senator, and descended from a family the members of which had for a long series of years held the highest employments in their country, with distinguished credit to themselves and advantage to their fellow citizens. His mother was a native of Morges, in the French part of the same canton. Her father, M. Pache, was a celebrated counsellor, and had formerly been a member of the parliament of Paris; and this circumstance sufficiently accounts for the fluency and correctness with which Zimmermann was capable of speaking and writing the French language.

* Life of Haller.

He remained under the inspection of his father and the tuition of able masters, till the age of fourteen. At that period, he was removed to the academy of Berne, where he studied the belles lettres under Altman the Greek professor, and Kirchberger, professor of rhetoric and history; and the benefit he derived from the instructions of those gentlemen, he always acknowledged with becoming gratitude.

Soon after he quitted the paternal roof, he had the misfortune on the 12th of August 1743, to lose his father. Though still young, this loss deeply affected him. In his life of Haller, he introduces a pathetic description of his sensations on this melancholy occurrence, and the day on which it happened, was ever afterwards observed by him as a day of mourning. Time having mitigated the violence of his grief, he prosecuted his studies with unremitted assiduity, and at the end of three years, commenced a course of philosophy under professor Brunner, a zealous disciple of the celebrated Wolf. Brunner's knowledge of the science was confined to the metaphysics of his master, and his method was so extremely dilatory and tedious, that his young pupil, whose ardent mind could not brook the restraint thus imposed on his progress, was disgusted with the pursuit. He, however, met with two able instructors in Messrs. Tribolet and Stapfer, to direct him in his philosophical studies. To these gentlemen, who were both divines, and equally distinguished for learning and genius, Zimmermann owned that he was indebted for all the knowledge of true philosophy, which he acquired during his residence at Berne. In the year 1746, he visited Morges, and passed several months with the relations of his mother. He soon afterwards sustained a very severe shock by the death of that excellent parent.*

* It is without doubt the character of his lamented mother, which the author has drawn at p. 125. Vol. i. of this work.

This stroke was the more afflicting, as he was now finishing his studies, and began to think of applying his talents and attainments to the purposes of active life, when he was bereft of the benefit of her maternal advice, and left without a friend to consult. To an ordinary mind, the want of a guide in a point of such importance, might probably be attended with consequences highly detrimental; but it afforded Zimmermann an opportunity of following the spontaneous impulse of his genius; and guided by this alone, he embraced a profession in which he was destined to attain to great and merited distinction.

His countryman, the celebrated Haller, was now in the zenith of his reputation; he had been appointed to a professorship at Göttingen, and probably his fame contributed in some degree to Zimmermann's determination in favor of physic. Accordingly, in 1747, on leaving the academy of Berne, he resolved to prosecute his medical studies, under the auspices of that great master. He arrived at Göttingen, on the 12th of September 1747. Here he was received by Haller, with the most tender affection; he provided him an apartment in his own house, and not only directed his studies, but assisted him with advice; in a word, he supplied the place of a father, a preceptor and a friend. Under his tuition, and that of Richter, Segner and Brendel, he cultivated every branch of the medical art with the utmost assiduity and success.

But the expansive mind of Zimmermann was not confined only to the study of that science, the practice of which he had chosen for his future profession. Mathematics and natural philosophy engaged a portion of his attention: politics and the science which has since been so generally cultivated under the name of Statistics, were not neglected by him. He also applied himself with such diligence and ardor to the study of English, that he obtained a perfect ac-

quaintance with the language and the literature of this country, for which he ever manifested a remarkable predilection. Pope and Thomson were as familiar to him, as Homer and Virgil, or the best poets of France and Germany.

Thus, during the four years he passed at the university of Göttingen, his time was fully employed in storing his mind with useful knowledge, and in the successful cultivation of the various branches of polite literature. In his intense application to study, he even then seemed to be supported by the presentiment of his future greatness: for one of his letters to his friend Tissot, in 1748, contains this remarkable expression: "I lead the life of a man who wishes to live after his death." By this incessant assiduity he, however, impaired his health, and laid the foundation of that hypochondria, which contributed in such a high degree, to embitter the greatest portion of his life.

He took his doctor's degree on the 14th of August 1751 and left the university the following year. In the last twelvemonth of his residence at Göttingen, he was occupied with a work which formed the basis of his reputation and in which appeared the dawning of that genius which afterwards shone forth with such distinguished lustre. This was a dissertation, founded on experiments, concerning irritability, by which he, indisputably established a doctrine, first suggested by his great master, Haller, and which effected a complete revolution in the theory of medicine.

On quitting Göttingen, Zimmermann travelled to Holland, where he passed a few months, during which he formed an intimate acquaintance with M. Gaubius. He then visited Paris, where he obtained the friendship of M. Senac, with whom he spent much of his time during his residence in that metropolis.

Returning in 1752 to his native land, he settled at Berne,

where he was received with the utmost cordiality by the friends of his early years, and where his reputation soon acquired him abundant practice. It was during his residence in this city, that he published in the Neufchatel Journal, a sketch of Haller's life. This piece, which occupied no more than twenty-four pages, was the only performance he ever presented to the public, in the French language, and it affords a sufficient proof, that he could write it with the same ease, freedom and elegance, as in his native tongue. "This memoir merits the greatest attention," says the celebrated Tissot, "on account of the multitude of facts comprized in such a small compass, the ease and perspicuity that prevail throughout, the judicious reflections with which the facts detailed in it are accompanied, and the interest which, independent of its subject, is excited by the perusal."

This tribute of gratitude to his preceptor and friend, he afterwards enlarged into a complete history of the life of and writings of that celebrated man.

Haller, whose health began to decline, about this time undertook a journey to Berne, to enjoy the gratification of revisiting his friends, and in the hope, that the air of his native land might produce a beneficial effect. After a stay of a few weeks, he resolved to relinquish his professorship and to fix his residence at Berne. In consequence of this determination, he expressed a wish that his friend and pupil would go to Göttingen, and accompany his wife and family to the new abode which he had prepared for their reception. This commission, Zimmermann, who entertained the most sincere esteem for Madame Haller, undertook and executed with the greatest pleasure.

Among Haller's relations, was a lady, whose maiden name was Meley, and who had been left a widow by her husband, M. Stek. She possessed a highly cultivated understanding, and a refined taste; to these accomplishments

she united the more valuable qualifications of mildness and serenity of temper, and a winning sweetness of manner, which often make a more profound impression than the dazzling charms of the most perfect beauty. Zimmermann's heart was endowed with the most delicate sensibility; he perceived the merits of this accomplished female, and his regard for her was soon matured into the most tender attachment. This passion was mutual, and by their union at the altar, their felicity was rendered complete.

Soon after his marriage, the post of physician to the town of Brug having become vacant, Zimmermann was requested by the principal inhabitants to undertake the duties of that situation. The scenes where he had passed his early youth, were so fascinating to his sentimental mind, and the consideration that he should there be surrounded with his relatives and friends, operated with such force, that, relinquishing the advantages he possessed at Berne, he accepted the proposal, and retired with his family to the place of his nativity.

Here his practice continued to increase with his reputation, not only in the town, but in all the adjacent country. Every moment he could snatch from his professional avocations, he employed in the gratification of that thirst of knowledge, which every new acquisition only served to increase. His reading was not confined to the grave subjects of medicine, morality and philosophy, but embraced every Department of literature. Even novels and romances afforded him amusement, and from those of Wieland and the English novelists in particular, he derived the highest pleasure. The observations and ideas which arose in his mind, while perusing any work, he frequently committed to writing, and these pieces he afterwards inserted in a journal called the Monitor, which was printed at Zurich.

It was during his residence at Brug, that Zimmermann began to cherish that decided love of Solitude, by which he was so powerfully influenced the remainder of his life: nor can this be matter of surprize. He enjoyed in the company of an amiable wife, in the bosom of an affectionate family, that supreme delight, and those tranquil pleasures, which he could find no where but at home. His heart was soon attached by an additional tie; he became a father. His wife's mother likewise formed part of his household, and contributed by her understanding and good sense to increase the general happiness.

The active and capacious mind of Zimmermann was not, however, calculated for the limited sphere to which he was confined in the small town of Brug. He soon began to be sensible of many wants which it was there impossible to satisfy. He was cut off from those sources of improvement which he had before enjoyed; he was separated from those literary characters whose conversation had afforded him great delight; he had no professional friends to consult or to whom he could communicate his discoveries. These wants were deeply felt by Zimmermann, and drew from him frequent complaints. This dissatisfaction, it must be acknowledged, did not entirely proceed from the causes already enumerated: Zimmermann was either not sufficiently acquainted with the art of being happy, which men of the highest merit are sometimes weak enough to despise, or he neglected to practise it. The great Haller was perfectly sensible of the value of this art; by indulging the innocent humors and foibles of those around him, he obtained their love as well as their admiration, and by the little sacrifices which he made to their happiness, he insured his own.

Zimmermann's nervous disposition, which was extremely delicate, being irritated by the frequent sensation of dis-

content, plunged him into hypochondria, and the latter increased his taste for Solitude; but he by no means neglected the duties of his station, which he fulfilled with the greatest fidelity and tenderness; and his depression vanished the moment he entered the chamber of the sick. Not confining himself merely to the conscientious discharge of those duties, he consoled and encouraged his patients, and with the character of a physician, he combined that of a friend. He very seldom went into company, and then it was either to gratify his wife, or on particular occasions, when he was compelled by necessity, rather than courted by pleasure. He, nevertheless, was far from considering retirement as a duty, but he rarely had courage to renounce the delights which it afforded. It was by profound reflection on its effects, that he learned to appreciate its advantages.

Under all his distresses, Zimmermann never failed to receive consolation and encouragement from his wife, whose tenderness, sweetness of temper and serenity, dissipated his anguish and soothed his mind. The health of that amiable woman, unfortunately began to decline; this circumstance affected him deeply, and furnished him with an additional reason for confining himself still more closely to the occupations of the closet.

In this situation, he passed fourteen years of his life, in which he divided his time between his professional pursuits, reading, literary composition and corresponding with his friends. During this interval, he published several of his works, and among others, his first Essay on Solitude, which comprehended only a small part of the plan which he afterwards adopted. All his employments, however, did not prevent him from falling a prey to the most gloomy discontent. His friends, sensible that he was formed to move in a more distinguished sphere, employed all their

interest to procure him a situation, in which he might be enabled to give full scope to the extensive powers of his genius and understanding. After several disappointments and many fruitless attempts to please him, he was, through the solicitation of his friend Dr. Tissot and the interest of the Baron von Hochstetten, appointed in April 1768, chief physician to the king of Great Britain, at Hanover.

He set off on the 11th of July, to take possession of this office ; but the fond hopes of his friends, that his departure would be the era of his restoration to happiness, were almost instantly disappointed. His carriage was overturned at the gates of Hanover ; his mother-in-law broke her leg, and this accident rendered the commencement of their residence in that city, extremely unhappy. A few days after his arrival, death deprived him of one of the Lords of the regency, who had given him proofs of the most sincere attachment. He was subjected by the jealousy of a colleague to irritations, which the disordered state of his nerves rendered almost insupportable. The health of his wife, which always influenced his own, declined rapidly, and that of his two children, whose constitutions were never strong, did not improve. In this melancholy situation, he frequently wrote to his friend Tissot : " Save my wife or rather save myself. Save these children who are dearer to me than life."

Fortunately, the reputation of his talents, and the confidence of the public, forced him into extensive practice and continual occupation, which, as he himself so clearly demonstrates in the following work, is the most powerful antidote and the surest protection against the troubles of the mind. He likewise continued to correspond with some of the most distinguished literary characters in Europe, and from this interchange of ideas, opinions and facts, he always derived particular enjoyment.

But his happiness, or rather the absence of his melancholy, was not of long duration. On the 23d of June, 1770, the amiable companion of his life expired in his arms. Well knowing his singularities and the temper of his mind, she expressed with her dying breath her solicitude for the forlorn situation to which he would be reduced. "My poor Zimmermann," said she, "who will comprehend you?" This event, which he has described with such tenderness and sensibility* overwhelmed him with affliction. "Her departed spirit," says he, "incessantly hovered round me, the sweet recollection of her society and the afflicting remembrance of what she suffered for me, were ever present to my mind." This state of mental anguish could not but produce the most prejudicial effects, and his corporeal disorders increased every day. A local complaint, from which he suffered excruciating torture, obliged him, in June 1771, to repair to Berlin and to place himself under the care of M. Meckel; who had been his companion at the university, and by whom he was received with the utmost friendship and cordiality. Under his direction an operation was performed on the 24th of June, and Zimmermann was soon able to mingle in the pleasures of society. This was one of the happiest periods of his life. He enjoyed the inexpressible pleasure of being relieved from a long and cruel complaint, the charms of a most agreeable private society, the satisfaction of being every where received with the most flattering marks of attention, and of forming an acquaintance with some of the most distinguished literati of Germany.

Upon his return to Hanover his reception was equally pleasing. He now hoped to enjoy a good state of health, but that seems to have been a happiness which he was never destined to taste, in any permanent degree. His nervous

* See vol. 1, p. 100.

system was soon deranged by the incessant application he bestowed on the multitude of cases in which he was consulted, and his hypochondria returned with increased violence. Another source of uneasiness was the education of his daughter, who, soon after the loss of her parent, was likewise deprived, by death, of the care of her grandmother. He, therefore, sent her in 1773 to Lausanne, to his friend Tissot, whom he intrusted with the important duty of superintending the education of his beloved child. There she remained two years, till 1775, when Zimmermann himself repaired to Switzerland, where he passed five weeks with his friend, and received back the sacred deposit. Her excellent qualities endeared her in the strongest manner to the heart of her father, to the happiness of whose future life she would doubtless have materially contributed, had not her health soon after she left Lausanne, received such a shock from excessive grief, that she fell into a decline, which after five years terminated her life in the summer of 1781. Zimmermann's sensations on this melancholy event, together with the character of this excellent female, are described by himself in the most pathetic and interesting manner. *

This unhappy parent was doomed, about the same time, to experience another affliction, perhaps still more distressing. His son who, during his residence at the University of Göttingen, had justified the expectation, that he would inherit the talents and understanding of his father, suddenly fell into the most profound melancholy, which at the end of December 1777, was succeeded by a total derangement of his mental faculties. "This calamity," says Zimmermann in the bitterness of parental anguish, "pursues me every moment of my life, it has thrown me into a continued and profound melancholy, and my nervous pains are more

* See vol. 1, p. 114 to 116.

acute than ever." He placed him under the care of his friend Dr. Hotze, whose judicious treatment was attended with such success, that in April 1779, he was perfectly recovered, and preparing to set out on his travels through France, England and Holland, when his disorder suddenly returned, and from that period he has remained in the deplorable state of the most confirmed idiotcy.

The heart of Zimmermann, wounded in the tenderest part by these calamities, was scarcely susceptible of consolation, excepting from the endearing attentions of Madame von Döring.* Of her society he was deprived on the 21st of September, 1781; as she was obliged to accompany her husband, who had been appointed to a new employment in a remote part of the Electorate of Hanover. That lady, sensible of the forlorn and comfortless state, to which her afflicted friend was reduced by this separation, judged that the only method of saving him would be to divert his thoughts and affections to some other object. She conceived that this could be effected only by uniting him to a person possessing the qualifications and accomplishments capable of rendering him happy. The lady who appeared the most worthy of him was the daughter of M. Berger, the king's physician at Lüneburg, and brother of the baron Berger, physician to his Danish Majesty. She had the satisfaction to find, that the sentiments of both parties were favorable to the plan; and at the beginning of October 1782, they were united to each other in marriage. Zimmermann was thirty years older than his bride; but, as Tissot observes, genius neither knows nor regards disparity of age. She possessed a perfect knowledge of Italian, understood English as well as himself; assisted him with her taste and judgment in the revisal of his works; in a word she was the

* See vol. 1. p. 102.

tutelar angel who, during the last years of his life, directed, encouraged and consoled him. The felicity of this union was not disturbed for a moment ; his life was agreeable and happy ; he not only went into company with his wife, but had frequent parties in his own house ; and the intercourse with cheerful society restored him to a gaiety to which he had long been a stranger.

It was at this period that Zimmermann resumed and completed the great work on Solitude, which has contributed more than any other of his performances to that extensive celebrity which he acquired. This work was received with extraordinary marks of approbation, and procured him the gratification of a correspondence with a person equally distinguished for exalted rank and uncommon talents. This was Catharine II. Empress of Russia, to whom his book had been sent without his knowledge, and who was highly delighted with the performance. On the 26th of January, 1785, a messenger from the Russian envoy at Hamburgh brought Zimmermann a small box in the name of her Imperial Majesty. It contained a ring, with a single diamond of extraordinary size and beauty, and a gold medal, on one side of which was the portrait of the empress. This present was accompanied with the following note, in Catharine's own hand-writing : " To M. Zimmermann, counsellor of state and physician to his Britannic Majesty, out of gratitude for the many excellent precepts given to mankind in his book on Solitude."

Nor was this all ; the empress, desirous of a personal acquaintance with the author, gave him a gracious invitation to Petersburg, which he, however, begged to decline, on account of his health. The correspondence, commenced in this unexpected manner, was continued, without interruption, for six years. It was once proposed to him to remove to St. Petersburg, as first physician to her Imperial Majesty,

with a very handsome salary. He refused the offer, upon which the Empress desired him to procure a number of young surgeons and physicians for her armies, and for those parts of her empire where medical assistance was required. This commission he executed so much to the satisfaction of Catharine, that she sent him the cross of the order of Waldomir as a mark of her gratitude for the service he had rendered to the state.

The Empress of Russia was not the only person capable of duly appreciating Zimmermann's professional talents. The health of the king of Prussia, who had been taken dangerously ill towards the conclusion of 1785, continued to decline during the following year. His majesty was, at length, induced to send two very flattering letters, one dated the 6th and the other the 16th of June, to request Zimmermann's attendance and advice. He accordingly repaired to Potzdam, where he arrived on the 23d of June. He immediately perceived that there were no hopes of the king's recovery; and having tried various remedies without effect, he left Potzdam on the 11th of July and returned to Hanover. Frederic did not long survive his departure: he expired on the 17th of the ensuing month.

Zimmermann's admiration and attachment to that great king appear in various parts of the following work. The reception he experienced from him in 1771 strengthened these sentiments, to such a degree, that he felt deeply interested in every circumstance connected with that hero.

During the severe and alarming indisposition of the king of England in 1788, he was sent by the Hanoverian ministry to Holland, that he might be nearer London, in case his assistance should be judged necessary; and remained at the Hague, till his Majesty was pronounced to be out of danger.

These striking testimonies of his talents and skill in his profession were highly gratifying to the mind of Zimmermann; he enjoyed, in the fullest extent, that inward satisfaction, which flows from the consciousness of having merited the public confidence and esteem. Blest with domestic felicity, the delights of friendship, the smiles of fortune, and the love of all those by whom he was surrounded, he was now as happy, as frequent intervals of corporeal suffering and a disposition to the hypochondria would permit him to be.

This enviable state was not of long duration, for, about this period, new causes of vexation arose, and plunged him into a series of troubles, which never ceased to harass and torment this excellent man during the remainder of his life. His enthusiastic attachment to Frederic the Great, not only induced him to vindicate the character of that monarch from the imputations cast upon it by the Count de Mirabeau, the author of *The Prussian Monarchy*; but in 1790, he published a multitude of facts, anecdotes, and observations, which he had long been employed in collecting, in three small volumes, under the title of *Fragments of Frederic the Great*. By these publications he was involved in a literary warfare, and some observations, in particular on the irreligion of the inhabitants of Berlin, drew upon him the most virulent and illiberal attacks. The effects of this treatment on a person of Zimmermann's irritable disposition, could not but prove highly prejudicial; it was a source of continual vexation, and contributed gradually to undermine his health.

A second cause of anxiety and concern, sprung from his attachment to the interests of religion, humanity, and social order: it was the danger to which he saw these exposed by the propagation of principles destructive to all established institutions, that inflicted the stroke which, at length,

brought him to the grave. Every thing capable of promoting the happiness of individuals, or of mankind in general, was to him an object of the highest interest, and he could justly exclaim, *Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto*. Many of his works abundantly prove that morality and politics had frequently occupied his mind, and that he was perfectly acquainted with their principles. He had studied the political works of Montesquieu and Rousseau; he had profoundly meditated on the *Social Contract*; he was sensible of the good it contained, and the facility with which dangerous consequences might be deduced from it. His work on Solitude had led him to investigate the principles of various sects, and he was convinced, that, under every government, they ought to be the objects of the most vigilant attention. He now saw one spring up under his immediate observation; the grand object of which was nothing less than the overthrow of all religion, and the destruction of every established government. Such was the aim of the secret society of the *Illuminated*, which about the commencement of the French Revolution, had increased to a formidable degree, both on account of the number, and the rank and influence of its members.

To enter into a farther detail of the doctrines of this association would be foreign to our purpose; suffice it to say, that Zimmermann was acquainted with its principles, that he was sensible of their danger, and labored to counteract the pernicious consequences with which they were pregnant. The directors of this society were, probably, no strangers to his disposition towards them, and, they were perhaps, not less desirous of silencing one whom they considered a dangerous enemy, than of making a proselyte of a man who possessed such talents, influence and reputation, when they dispatched an emissary to endeavor to gain Zimmermann over to their cause. This attempt he not only treated

with ridicule, but submitted to the public the means employed by the society for obtaining proselytes. He was immediately attacked on all sides; his enemies employed all the means that malice could suggest to blacken and vilify his character, and to degrade him in the public opinion. To these invectives, though he was not a little irritated, he had too much prudence to reply; but in 1790 he exerted all the energy of his mind and pen in exposing the evils resulting from the propagation of the pernicious doctrines of the society.

He neglected no opportunity of rousing the German princes to a sense of the dangers they incurred from the progress of such a formidable league. Among the rest, he presented a memorial on the subject to the emperor Leopold II. who testified his approbation of his zeal, and as a mark of his gratitude, presented him with a box set with diamonds. The gratification Zimmermann received on this occasion, was that of a philanthropist, who finds himself on the point of attaining some favorite purpose to which he has been for a long time devoting all the energies of his mind. In proportion to the pleasure he then experienced, was the mortification and chagrin produced, a few days afterwards, by the intelligence of the emperor's sudden death, and the mysterious circumstances with which it was attended.

Deeply impressed with the importance of the cause in which he labored, this event did not discourage him from proceeding. His pen was incessantly employed, and with his usual energy of diction, he unmasked the artful machinations of the *Illuminated*, sometimes in the form of a pamphlet, sometimes in occasional papers inserted in periodical journals, to many of which he boldly affixed his signature. But these tended only to involve him more deeply in troubles, which preyed, with unceasing activity,

on his spirits. Baron Knigge, one of the supposed leaders of the *Illuminati*, commenced a legal action against him for a libel; the trial was however delayed from time to time, till the last year of his life, when he was not only too weak to defend himself, but even to feel interested in the decision.

These were not the only causes of the rapid decline of his health. While he was employed in any particular undertaking, his mind was so completely engrossed with the subject, that he allowed himself no kind of relaxation. He rose very early, and frequently wrote till a very late hour. Though convinced of the injury which his health received from such close application, yet the gratification he derived from his labor was too great to be resisted. His literary employment at length appeared to be indispensably requisite to his existence, and as he renounced all diversion and amusement, and scarcely indulged in any social pleasure, it at least became recreation. He was at the same time a stranger to almost the only remedies for the disorders by which he was afflicted, exercise of body and tranquillity of mind; and under such circumstances it is not surprising, that with his excessive irritability his health should be greatly impaired.

For some years, however, he bore up with considerable fortitude against the numerous vexations he experienced; till, in 1794, the political horizon unfortunately assumed a gloomy aspect; and the impending tempest seemed ready to break over the electorate of Hanover. An invasion of that country by the French armies was universally expected. The solicitude with which he regarded political events has already been noticed, but here his dearest interests were concerned, and this reflection operated with such force on his lively imagination, that his understanding sunk beneath the weight of apprehension, and his ideas became

more and more confused. He feared lest the principles he had publicly avowed, should draw upon him, in particular, the fury and vengeance of the enemy. In a letter which he wrote on the fourth of October to his friend Tissot, he says : " It is probable, that before the conclusion of the present year, I may become a wretched wanderer, compelled, with the dear companion of his life, to abandon his habitation, without knowing whither to direct his course, or where to find a bed in his expiring moments."

Incessantly haunted by this idea, Zimmermann, at the commencement of the following year, became incapable of attending to his professional avocations, and even his favorite occupation of writing became irksome. In January he was still able to visit a few patients in his carriage, but he frequently fainted in ascending to their rooms. His weakness increased, his memory began to fail, and the idea of the enemy plundering his house seemed to absorb every other. His soul was overwhelmed with the blackest melancholy ; and he enjoyed no respite, either night or day, from the anguish consequent on the most gloomy despondency.

As no amendment, mental or corporeal, could be expected amidst the apprehensions still entertained at Hanover, and as the alarm of others tended only to aggravate his situation, Dr. Wichman, by whom he was attended, advised his removal to a more tranquil country, conceiving that the change of objects, as well as the journey, might afford him relief. It was not without great difficulty that he was persuaded to concur in this proposal. Eutin, in Holstein, was the place chosen for his residence. There, enjoying the medical care of Dr. Hensler, together with the agreeable society and kind attentions of the Count of Stilleberg, he so far recovered, that in three months, his apprehen-

sions of the enemy had entirely vanished, and in July he returned to Hanover.

But his friends soon found their hopes, alas ! utterly disappointed. His ideas had only taken a different direction, and instead of fearing the persecutions of the French, he was now apprehensive lest he should die of poverty and hunger. His despondency returned, with aggravated force, and all the misery with which that malady is usually attended. His weakness increased rapidly ; he took scarcely any food, testifying an insurmountable aversion to nourishment and medicines of every kind. His abstinence, in Dr. Wichman's opinion, was less the effect of a physical disgust, than of a moral sentiment ; the idea that he was reduced to the most extreme poverty, and unable to pay for the refreshments which were offered him, being so deeply impressed on his mind, as not to be erased by any arguments or proofs to the contrary. His strength naturally decreased from the want of sufficient nourishment, and at length he became a perfect skeleton.

It was not till a short time previous to his death that he was attacked by any fixed or local pain, and notwithstanding his constant complaints, they seemed rather to proceed from the dread of sufferings which he expected to undergo. He refused, for instance, to suffer himself to be shaved for several months, fearing lest that operation might produce a pain in his face.—His terror and anxiety on this account exceeded all the afflictions by which he had yet been overwhelmed, and he exclaimed more than once : “ How shall I escape this infernal torment ! ”

Before he was confined to his bed, expressions indicating a consciousness of guilt, frequently escaped him, amidst the confusion of his ideas. “ I am a villain ! ” he several times repeated ; but when those who were about him requested

him to explain his meaning, his usual reply was. "You will soon see." At other times he spoke with the utmost contempt of his worthlessness and insignificance, and often used the expression: "Let me be thrown to the dogs!"

He foresaw the issue of his disorder, and several weeks before his dissolution, he said: "My death will be very painful and very slow." His prediction was verified. On the sixth of October he shook hands with Dr. Wichman, and said in the most impressive manner: "Leave me alone, I am dying;" and the following day, this excellent man expired with such sweet composure, that he seemed—as Seneca beautifully expresses it—*potius e vita migrare quam mori*.

Zimmermann's character, which was known only to those who were perfectly acquainted with him, is thus described by one of his most intimate friends.—His mind was pure, his heart was excellent; and none ever discharged his duties with greater fidelity. He was a good son, a good husband, and a good father. Friendship was with him a sentiment full of warmth, and if, in moments of inquietude, the slightest disagreement took place, it was abundantly counterbalanced by his subsequent cordiality and affection. Gratitude was one of his most distinguished characteristics, and he never forgot the smallest services that had been rendered him. The irritability of his nerves sometimes led him to commit extravagancies. It likewise produced occasional appearances of pusillanimity very distant from his real character, and rendered him too deeply sensible to those trifling disappointments which are incident to every condition of life. From the asperity and satirical tendency of some parts of his works, his general conduct and character may be supposed to have been tinctured with the same spirit: but the truth is, that both in his behavior and conversation, he shewed a disposition entirely the reverse.

There was a striking difference between his manner of behavior and the tone of his writings. In conversation he was always agreeable, polite, complaisant, and incapable of uttering an offensive word ; but no sooner did he take the pen in hand than he became satirical. In his intercourse with the world, he was restrained by the decorum of society, and the amiableness of his character ; when retired in his closet his energy, his love of virtue, and his aversion to vice and folly prevailed, and he painted the latter in the most lively colors.

As a physician, Zimmermann doubtless possessed extensive knowledge ; but he had less experience than many practitioners, or than his celebrated predecessor, Werlhof. During the last fifteen years of his life, his attention was more engaged with literary composition than with professional practice, to which he usually devoted only two hours in the morning. His knowledge must consequently have been derived less from actual observation, than from his extensive correspondence and from books.—The least apprehension of danger, however, drew him instantly from his study, to visit any of his patients who requested his attendance ; and the imputation of negligence could never be laid to his charge : on the contrary, his disinterested humanity, his active benevolence, and his sympathising concern are still acknowledged with the highest gratitude... His conduct towards other physicians was most exemplary ; the modesty of his deportment, and the deference which, notwithstanding his distinguished reputation, he always paid to the opinion of others, are highly honorable to his professional character.

The celebrated Boerhaave once received a letter from the Emperor of China, which was duly delivered though merely directed: *To Mr. Boerhaave, physician in Europe.* A letter with a superscription equally simple would have

had as little difficulty to find Zimmermann, whose celebrity was not, like Boerhaave's, founded only on his medical talents. His writings, not confined to the use of his own profession, afforded the highest entertainment to readers of every description, not only on account of the correctness of the style, the elegance of the diction, and the energy of expression, but likewise the keenness and the boldness of the satires which are interspersed in them. Even his medical works, particularly that on Experience, were found in the hands of the fair sex, and were perused by the learned, not to discover a cure for their complaints, but for amusement and recreation. It was his talents as an author, rather than his skill as a physician, that were the ground-work of the extraordinary celebrity which Zimmermann obtained.

His first appearance as a writer was, as we have already observed, in 1751, when he published his *Dissertatio Physiologica de Irritabilitate*. Through the whole work, says Tissot, there is an order, a precision, a facility of exposition, a simplicity and purity of style which characterize the soundest understanding and the clearest judgment. There are few works from which so much instruction may be obtained with so little trouble.

In 1755, the *Life of Haller* appeared in one volume octavo, at Zurich.

The following year he amused himself with composing a poem on the *Earthquake which happened at Lisbon* on the fifth of November, 1755. This he transmitted to a friend at Zurich, who thinking it deserving of publication, had it printed without his knowledge. Like his prose works, this is distinguished by purity of style and richness of expression, as well as by harmony and grandeur of design. His first *Essay on Solitude*, which is a very short work, likewise appeared in the year 1756.

In 1758, the *Essay on National Pride* appeared at Zurich. Four editions of this work were rapidly printed under the author's inspection, and it was translated into the French and English languages. From the tenth chapter of this work it appears, that Zimmermann plainly foresaw that revolution which thirty years afterwards astonished Europe. "The knowledge and principles of philosophy, (says he) which are every where diffused, the defects they have shewn in the present modes of thinking, and the attacks that have been made against inveterate prejudices, manifest a boldness of opinion which announces a revolution. That revolution will be happy, if it be directed by political wisdom and the submission due to the laws of the state; but if it degenerate into criminal audacity, it will cost some their property, others their liberty, and the rest their lives."

In 1763, he published in one volume octavo, a treatise *On Experience in Physic*. Of this performance the celebrated Bernouilli observes: "The justness of the thoughts, the elegance and precision of the language, and the literary anecdotes it contains, render this book very agreeable; judicious reflections, a vast fund of information and practical observations make it very useful: the whole is above my praise." This work, which the author modestly termed a juvenile essay, was never completed. He employed himself occasionally on the continuation, which was to have formed two more volumes, but did not live to finish it. This, however, together with an incredible quantity of other papers, is lost to posterity; for he expressly desired in his will, that none of them might be printed or made public.

His *Treatise on the Dysentery* was the next work that he published. It appeared in 1767. Cullen speaks of the author in the following terms: "Zimmermann is the first person who has ever given the true manner of treating the

dyentery." It was translated both into French and English, and will, probably, long continue to be regarded as a medical classic.

From this period no performance of any consequence from Zimmermann's pen appeared till the year 1784. He then published the two first volumes of his great work *On Solitude*, and the following year the two last. We have already seen what flattering distinction this book procured him in addition to the reputation he before enjoyed.

In 1786, on his return from Berlin, he printed an account of his *Journey* to that capital, and of his *Conversations with the King of Prussia*. His *Defence* of that monarch against Count de Mirabeau was published in 1788; and in 1790, his *Fragments of Frederic the Great, or Collections towards a history of his Life and Character*, closed Zimmermann's career as an author.

His literary occupations, it is true, scarcely ceased but with his life; during the last years of which he wrote several pamphlets, besides essays and fugitive pieces in various periodical journals, much too numerous to admit of any detail here.

In 1760, Zimmermann was admitted a member of the Society of Berlin, and many literary bodies expressed their sense of his merits by admitting him into their number. He belonged to the Societies of Berne, Zurich, Basel, Munich, Palermo, Göttingen and to the medical societies of London, Edinburgh, Paris and Copenhagen; and lastly, in 1786, he was chosen a member of the Academy of Petersburg.



INTRODUCTION OF THE AUTHOR.

TO MADAME VON DORING.

AFTER a silence of so many years, a book from my pen must be an object equally extraordinary and unexpected, to all my near as well as distant friends, who will doubtless be surprized at my re-appearance in a literary character, which I was universally supposed to have for ever renounced.

Without you, my dear friend, without the susceptibility of catching that ardor which you communicate, I should not, for many years, have taken a pen in hand. It is you alone, who have, from time to time, wakened me from that death-like slumber into which I was plunged by every kind of domestic calamity, and by diseases which annihilated all the energies of my soul. Twelve years since you persuaded me to seek the preservation of my life, and relief from the most

dreadful corporeal sufferings at Berlin, where I found both, in the bosom of the most generous friendship, and in consummate professional skill. When again overpowered by the shafts of Envy you inspired me with fresh courage, and renewed activity. When the sensibilities of my soul were vanquished and almost totally destroyed by the most confirmed apathy, you roused, you recalled me to society, in which, though I never ceased to fulfil the duties of my vocation, I scarcely took any farther interest.

Your understanding, your joy at every exertion towards attaining some great and noble purpose, your matchless talent at discovering the good that may be derived from every circumstance of life, and your unparalleled friendship would have converted any spirited youth into a great man. But I possessed not vivacity, I was not young, and was worn down with sufferings and affliction when I had the happiness of becoming acquainted with you. My constitution was shattered, my heart was a prey to anguish, and my eyes were dead, when they for the first time, beheld you. It was you alone who revived

within me the sparks of life; you alone prevented me from sinking beneath accumulated distress, and difficulties apparently invincible. For thirteen years you were my consolation, the confidante of all my thoughts, my first and my last refuge in every affliction.

During this period I did nothing good to which I was not excited, and nothing amiss for which I was not censured by you. My soul was so oppressed, and its energies were so completely destroyed, that I should have been incapable of the slightest exertion, had you not been my only strength, had not you attended me with unwearied, with angelic benevolence; had you not consoled me, and with an experience, a wisdom, which I could never attain, led me through a life, the burthen of which you alone enabled me to bear.

I am still delighted with the recollection of the joy you manifested, when in March, 1781, I took up the pen to commence this work. An extravagant enthusiast had written a Romance on Solitude against me. From the beginning to the end his work was a tissue of calumny, falsehood and abuse. You were not less astonished

than rejoiced, when you saw with what gaiety, cheerfulness and alacrity, I prepared to answer this spiritual Don Quixote. Till this time you had always manifested your abhorrence of my petty literary disputes, but then the wild fanatic, who occasioned my writing this book on Solitude, was an object of your warmest gratitude.

But all this ardor, all this enthusiasm was extinguished, when a few months afterwards, on the fourth of June, 1781, I received the intelligence,—unexpected as thunder from a serene sky,—that you were about to leave Hanover. The sentence of death would not have overwhelmed me like this stroke. I was prepared to die, but to live without you was utterly impossible.

You had, it is true, with masculine courage and a bleeding heart, consented to this separation from all your relatives, your friends and your native city. I saw, as well as you, how the health of your excellent husband declined under the daily vexation and chagrin occasioned by his once favorite occupation. I saw how your depressed spirit was elevated by the single idea,

that your duty commanded you to drink this bitter potion. I saw how you were invigorated by this consideration, and how you thence derived courage to tear yourself from your beloved Hanover, where the blessings of your departed father rested on you, where you were surrounded with affluence and ease. I perceived how this idea inspired you with fortitude to tear yourself from the arms of your disconsolate friends; from the extensive circle of the hungry whom you had fed, and the naked whom you had clothed; from a house in which you promised yourself every tranquil delight of life, every peaceful pleasure of the soul; from the prospect of the charming scenery around Hanover, and of the mountains which you had so often pointed out to me; how, with cheerfulness and alacrity, you renounced the world, to bury yourself in the retirement of a small, unfrequented place, on the extremest verge of our province, in order that your husband might again enjoy life with comfort and satisfaction.

After your departure on the 21st of September, 1781, I resumed the pen, which I had thrown

aside. This was your positive injunction; for you well knew, that—overwhelmed as I was with the deepest melancholy; my heart bleeding for the loss of my beloved daughter, who, only twelve days before our separation, expired in your arms, and harassed wherever I went by ghastly spectres which incessantly hovered before my aching sight—all common consolation would be ineffectual; that I should avoid the society of men, and seclude myself entirely from the world. You knew that nothing was able to rescue me but diverting my mind from the cruel ideas which preyed upon me, and fixing my attention on some new and important subject.

This work was to inspire me with fortitude under all my afflictions, to snatch me from myself and to transport me into foreign regions, to call forth the images of distant ages, and, perhaps, to relieve my soul from the reflections by which it was oppressed.

In this state of mind, engaged in a continual conflict with myself; and in a condition so unfavorable for literary composition, I had completed about half my labor, at intervals stolen from dis-

ease and my professional duties, when, to crown your friendship, after an absence of eight months, you again visited Hanover, bringing with you a female who was all that I could wish, and whom, with unexampled kindness, you had chosen as my companion for the remainder of my days.

But, how defective is this book in every respect ! On account of the style, I was inclined, even in the present year, to commit the whole to the flames. How very small a portion of the contents of these volumes is equal to those writers whom I hold in any estimation ! They will likewise be censured because the author too frequently appears in the work ; because I have related and described without embellishment what I have seen and experienced in the world and society. But you, my friend, are capable of judging whether my sentiments on men and human nature are founded in justice. To observe and to paint mankind is your peculiar talent. Your keen penetration into the heart and understanding discovers, at the first sight, what I only learn after long and protracted investigation. Notwithstanding its acuteness and subtilty, your phi-

losophy is so clear, so simple, so full of experience, so remote from pedantry and affectation, and you possess so much good sense that I hope, at least for your indulgence, if I describe without reserve what I see, and like you consider nothing as good and fair excepting what is true. But, to write with your spirit, I ought to be what you are; I ought to possess your talents, your knowledge of mankind, your penetration; like you combine in every word, sensibility, perspicuity, animation, reflection and truth.

At the sight of this book how many passages will, because the author appears too much in the work, bring to your recollection the history of my heart, my manner of thinking and my life! How often will you and other dear friends be reminded of the writer, when I shall be no more, and when my name shall be extinguished like an airy bubble.

Hanover,
September 25, 1783.

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SOLITUDE.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN this turbulent life, oppressed by the urgencies of business, fettered by the cares of the world, and in the evening of my days, I wish to recal the shadows of departed joys, alas! only the shadows of those days of my youth, in which solitude was my sole delight; in which no retreat was more agreeable to me than the sequestered convent and the lonely cell, the lofty and awfully gloomy forests, or the ruined castles of ancient barons; and no pleasure more lively than the converse with the *dead*.

I wish to meditate on an important concern for mankind, on the dangers and consolations of solitude, on its value, acknowledged by the most celebrated nations in every age, but perhaps never compleatly understood; on its omnipotent influence, when consumed by care, enfeebled by sickness, and oppressed with the weight and burden of life; and likewise its cheering power in afflictions too heavy for the heart to bear.

With pleasure will I renounce every social delight, avoid every other recreation, part from every

Definition of Solitude.

other joy of life, if I can sometimes steal a few hours of repose and leisure, can then imagine that I am retired and free; and I may perhaps say something useful on solitude, something that may for a few hours amuse the eccentric, and may perhaps for a moment make an impression on the good.

Solitude is that state in which the soul abandons itself to its own reflections. It consists in the enjoyment of actual retirement and perfect tranquillity; or only in a banishment of the recollection of all surrounding objects.

The mind resigns itself in solitude to its own ideas, in a variety of ways, according to the difference of taste, inclination, genius and intention. Among the shepherds of the desert, one becomes a poet, another carves the tasteful bowl, a third is an observer of nature; one is a philosopher, another an enthusiast; and if in the grateful shade, on the banks of some silent stream, they were respectively to meet a charming shepherdess, each would probably become a lover. But, when deprived of all that is dear to the heart, when compelled to be alone, we have no other resource than our own reflections. Every man takes a particular course when he is at perfect liberty to follow his inclination. One is delighted with the song of the nightingale, another can endure nothing but the hideous notes of the screech-owl. Some there are who dread the friendly visit, who confine themselves to their houses, and employ themselves for pastime in writing a book, or catching flies.

The heart always attaches itself to something that gives it more pleasure than its situation would

otherwise afford. Being once at the Magdalen Convent at Hildesheim, I found, with astonishment, an aviary of Canary birds in the cell of one of the nuns. A nobleman of Brabant lived twenty-five years in the enjoyment of health and happiness, in his own house at Brussels, being occupied with the collection of an admirable cabinet of paintings and prints; but he never went from home for fear of taking cold, and because he had the same antipathy to the female sex that certain persons have to mice.

Even men, condemned to the perpetual confinement of a dungeon, endeavour to beguile the tedious hours of solitude, by resigning themselves to those reflections which give them the most pleasure. In the fortress of Aarburg, in the canton of Bern, Micheli du Cret measured the height of the Alps; Baron Trenk was incessantly occupied in the citadel of Magdeburg, in forming plans for his escape; and in the same place General Walrave spent his time in feeding chickens.

Solitude does not always signify compleat seclusion from the world. Sometimes I mean by it the retirement of a convent or small town, sometimes the closet of a man of letters and sometimes the removal, for an hour, or a day, from the tumultuous scenes of life. All this is embraced by my plan. I first enquire why men are so fond of society; in the next place, why they so obstinately avoid all social intercourse, and retire into solitude from various motives and even from enthusiasm or inclination. I then consider under what circumstances it is of advantage to the heart and mind to live in retirement; and lastly the prejudicial influence upon the

Solitude to be found even in society.

soul, in many points of view, of seclusion from the world. Such are the contents of the present work.

Men are sometimes solitary when they are not alone, if they resign themselves entirely to their own reflections. The haughty female, into whose mind have been instilled the pride and prejudices derived from a long line of titled ancestors, is solitary in every company composed only of persons inferior in rank to herself. A profound thinker is solitary even at the tables of the great. In the midst of the most numerous assembly we may be equally abstracted from all external objects, we may be as completely absorbed in our own reflections, and just as solitary as the monk in his cell or the hermit in his cave. We may be as retired in our houses, even in a crowded city amidst "the busy hum of men" as in the death-like silence of the retired hamlet; in London and Paris as in the deserts of Thebais and Nitria.

The fewer our wants, and the more earnestly we endeavour to discover sources of pleasure within ourselves; so much the more cheerfully we seclude ourselves from the rest of mankind; and with the greater certainty we attain real happiness. At the same time, we reject all the celebrated systems of complete seclusion from the world, the moment we reflect, that, though it is a noble achievement to render ourselves independent of other men, for the sake of enjoying occasional retirement, yet that it is equally praise-worthy to live in social and friendly intercourse with all.

The enjoyment of the world, and the enjoyment of ourselves, are certainly at variance. The man

The character of the solitary man mistaken.

of the world despises the wretch, who imagines that happiness is to be found out of his round of pleasure. How would it irritate him to be told that the lowest characters are the most frequently found in the circles of fashion, or if it were asserted that a court is not always exempt from the unwelcome intrusion of languor! Many cannot comprehend why a man does not like to go abroad, or is never at home to the visits of ceremony, because they know not that there are men who are never so happy as when alone. Such a person is melancholy, say they; he must be visited from morning till night. But if he shew his disapprobation of these impertinent intrusions, and testify the satisfaction he feels in being alone, he is treated in many a town and many a country, like Democritus* by the Abderites.

* Democritus a celebrated philosopher of antiquity, was born at Abdera, in Thrace, about the year 460, before the Christian æra. He was descended from a very opulent family, but preferring the pursuits of philosophy to riches, spent the whole of his patrimony in travelling into distant countries in quest of knowledge. By this conduct he not only incurred the imputation of insanity, but likewise rendered himself liable to the operation of a law in his country, which decreed that every citizen who reduced himself to poverty, should be deprived of the rites of sepulture. His talents however procured him such esteem, that the magistrates presented him with a liberal donation, and agreed that he should be interred at the public expense.

He was denominated the laughing philosopher, from his habit of laughing at the follies of mankind. None of his writings have reached our times. He died upwards of 100 years old, in the year 361 before Christ. T.

Democritus, the Philosopher.

The worthy and sagacious magistrates of the little town of Abdera in Thrace, sent in great haste to Hippocrates, (the famous physician) to inform him that their fellow-citizen, the philosopher Democritus was mad, that he had taken an aversion to society, that he passed both night and day, in retirement, wandering beneath the umbrage of the forest and on the banks of rivulets; that he laughed at the Abderites, their occupations, their manners, their taste and their assemblies; that he despised every thing in the world, and attached himself only to what was above and beneath the world. Hippocrates went to Abdera and found Democritus under the thick embowering foliage of a maple-tree, employed with the dissection of animals and a treatise on madness. "O Democritus!" exclaimed the father of medicine, with rapture, "thou writest against thy fellow citizens at the right time!"

But the annals of mankind prove that it is possible in Solitude, to renounce all the feelings that do honour to human nature. Many a monk loves his convent because he thinks that nothing can be so acceptable to God as his *horas* and *paternosters*. A hermit despises mankind and society, in the agreeable company of serpents and wild beasts. The European enthusiast imagines that he has attained the highest degree of perfection by converting all religion into the extravagant sentiments of idle romance, that he is most intimately united with the Deity, and that of this his reveries are a sufficient demonstration. With a like conviction his brother in Indoustan sits naked on a dunghill, distorts his eyes, and exposed to the



DEMOCRITUS

noon-tide rays of a scorching sun, thus awaits the internal illumination.

Lopez, whom Molinos^a calls a *seraph incarnate*, persuaded himself through solitude and mysticism that men are mere bodies destitute of souls, saw devils in Mexico, and at length attained to such a degree of holy insensibility, that he remained inanimate as a stone, when he had every reason to suppose that his father was perishing in the midst of a conflagration.

Mysticism and enthusiasm are capable of endowing men with such power. But though the Saviour of the world does not reprove the Essenians, the solitary sect among the Jews of those times, yet according to the unanimous decision of the most enlightened commentators on his precepts, his morality is more favourable than any other to social intercourse, universal love, and the extermination of all those passions which separate men from each other. He himself did not establish his residence among deserts, wildernesses and rocks. It was not his wish that we should renounce every kind of connection with the world. He taught us by his own example that we should only withdraw into solitude at certain times, to repose from the urgencies of business and the concerns of this life.

May I escape all these rocks of contrary opinions, advance nothing from prejudice, nothing repugnant to truth, or that may offend the unbiassed observer of men and things! If affliction shall derive consolation from my labors; if melancholy, feeling a temporary alleviation from her horrors, shall rear her dejected head to bless

Wish of the author.

me; if I shall convince the lovers of rural retirement how soon the springs of pleasure are dried up in towns, how cold and insensible the heart remains even amidst boisterous mirth and fashionable dissipation, and how soon all our factitious joys terminate in languor and disappointment; if on the contrary I shall shew the superior pleasures of a country life, what resources it affords against indolence and vexation, the purity of sentiment, the peaceful sensations, the happiness inspired by the sight of verdant meads, of the setting sun, of the return of the flocks to their folds; what delight the soul experiences from a view of the sublime beauties of romantic regions, and the solitary habitations of contented mortals; how infinitely preferable is the life of the rustic labourer to that of the accomplished gambler; and how much easier it is, to banish the sorrows of a wounded heart by the side of a gentle stream, than amidst the delusive smiles and costly banquets of a court, I shall have fulfilled my intention, and attained the object of my wishes.

The solitary man will despise many things that the world highly esteems, and will esteem many that the world despises. I flatter myself that I shall contribute to fortify the heart against the subtle poison of sensuality, if I am only capable of giving expression to my feelings, and am not too often deserted by the hope that there are some good men in the world, by whom I shall be understood.

Man, a social being.

CHAP. II.

PROPENSITY TO SOCIETY.

IT is certainly, upon the whole, not good for man to be alone. Not only innumerable wants, but likewise an innate impulse to social intercourse, strengthen the bonds of society, and prove that we were not destined for solitude. Society is the most essential requisite of man.

A propensity to domestic society and friendly intercourse is implanted in us by nature, but against the inclination to indiscriminate intercourse with the world, it is necessary to be upon our guard. The former cannot be extinguished, as long as man retains his nature, the latter is an art, a mechanical stimulus that we acquire by habit. The former is a compliance with the law of nature, the latter is the invention of indolence, languor and curiosity.

Affectionate intercourse is an inexhaustible source of happiness. The description of our sensations, the mutual communication of ideas, the reciprocal endearments of friendship, impart a pleasure upon which the most solitary hermit, the most surly misanthrope reflects with envy. I cannot communicate my sorrows to the obdurate rock, nor my joys to the evening gale: my soul longs for a congenial spirit, my heart seeks a kindred bosom. Heaven and earth are forgotten in the object of our love. Remote from the world and society, cut

The love of society innate in the soul.

off from the intercourse with mankind, our highest attainments, our sensations, thoughts and ideas afford us no pleasure. So, likewise, even amid the gayest circles of fashionable dissipation, all is dry, empty and insipid if the affections are not engaged by some beloved object.

But, if you renounce the foolish rage for pleasure, you are pronounced a misanthrope. If you are animated by a secret impulse to some great purpose, which can only be executed in retirement, and therefore, hate the interruption and insipidity of ceremonious visits, you are called unsociable. If you retire from the world, perhaps, on account of a temporary dejection, or renounce all society, in consequence of disappointed love, because nothing has then any charms for you, because you cannot then connect the object of your affections with your thoughts, actions and enjoyments, you are pronounced mad. You would not renounce the world, if you could find a congenial, a sympathetic spirit. A lady once told me, that when she was six years old, her guardian gave her a very fine doll. He wished to observe the effect of his present upon the child; but the moment he turned his back, she threw the doll into the fire. "My dear," said the guardian, "why did you do so?" The child replied weeping: "I told the doll that I loved her, and she would not make me any answer."

Inclination to social intercourse is one of the most powerful propensities of the soul, although its direction may be so easily changed. With what anxiety do we seek an amiable being, whose affections we incessantly endeavour to secure, or who is at least more partial to our conversation than to

The tender affections dispose to society.

that of others, who comprehends our meaning better, or in whose company a more than ordinary impression is reciprocally produced. And though circumstances may not always perfectly accord with our wishes, though we may not be able to gratify all the desires of our heart and soul, yet, the sympathetic impulse overpowers every other consideration. The cook of a gentleman at Hanover, being once reproached with the unreasonable number of her admirers, replied very justly: "A young woman must have a friend, if it were only a hedge-stake."

Love sometimes arises from the sensations of a soul that knows not how to employ its inclinations, and powerfully feels that it is not good to be alone.

Kindness, benevolence, sympathy and love, the propensity which nature has implanted in man to domestic or affectionate intercourse, that almost invincible desire to pass our days in the society of other beings, mutually to share in joys and sorrows, and to live in the interchange of reciprocal endearments; this it is that calls forth the strongest energies of the soul.

But the artificial propensity to society, frequently renders man unfit for retirement. Seclusion, for a single day, from the world, then appears a separation from every pleasure, because he finds none within himself. He seeks his only resource in a round of dissipation, and turns with aversion from every other source of pleasure. Company and diversions must then supply what retirement denies. The soul thus becomes insensible to every tranquil joy of life, to all the charms of solitude; and

Dissipation of the age.

the man, who unfortunately possesses no resources within himself, flies for relief to the circles of the gay, and the places of public resort.

To this inclination the manners of the age are particularly favorable. The inhabitants of the civilized world were perhaps, never so much disposed to company. All the amusements of fashionable life are industriously imitated by the inferior classes, and the rage for dissipation is become general; while, on the contrary, the mild virtues of domestic life incur detestation and contempt. Children who can scarcely walk are initiated into the etiquette of company, and fettered with the observance of its formalities; nay, these infant mimics already give their assemblies and card-parties. The manners of the metropolis are copied with inferior splendor by the smaller towns, and there is scarcely a village without its routes and assemblies.

The spirit of dissipation has even reached the gypsies of a rich and extensive province in the north of Germany. On the last day of every week they assemble at a mill, and consume, amidst the fumes of tobacco, the produce of the week's plunder. These assemblies are permitted by the proprietor of the mill, as well out of policy that he may secure his property from their depredations, as from curiosity; for, through their means, he procures intelligence of all the occurrences of the country.

Yet, after all, our every action, exertion and design, has no other impulse than the dread of languor or disgust. Languor is a contagion which we endeavour to prevent, by going into company, and by which many unfortunate persons are now where attacked sooner than in the haunts of dissipation.

Languor and its effects.

It is a sinking of the soul into inanity, an annihilation of all our energies and powers, an irresistible heaviness, weariness, dullness, drowsiness and disgust; and, what is worse than all, is frequently a murder, committed with the utmost politeness, on our understanding, and every agreeable sensation. Every faculty of the soul, all the energies of the mind and heart may be debilitated and paralysed by the languor which attacks us, or is produced by others. Languor makes us sullen and dejected in the gayest circle, at the festive board, and while we listlessly hearken to, and praise all that is said, we destroy our own ideas.

We are infallibly attacked by languor, when long confined to a company where we hear only things not worth knowing, and when we are forced into conversation on subjects perfectly uninteresting to us. The loquacious coxcomb glows with rapture, while he exhausts the patience of a whole company. He is enamoured with his eloquence, because he neither knows nor feels the disgust he excites in the breast of every one who is so unfortunate as to be within hearing.

The great Leibnitz * was frequently observed

* William Godfrey, Baron Leibnitz, one of the profoundest mathematicians and acutest philosophers that Germany ever produced, was born in 1646, at Leipzig, where his father was professor of moral philosophy. Having finished his studies at the universities of Leipzig and Jena, he resolved to make the law his profession, and took his doctor's degree in that faculty at Altorf. He was then appointed to a post at the court of the Elector of Mentz, and sent by his patron, Baron Boineburg, to transact some concerns at Paris. While in that capital, he

Languor a chief cause of the love of society.

by his servant to make notes when at church, and the latter very naturally concluded that they were on the subject of the sermon: but it is more probable, that the philosopher was exercising the powers of his own capacious mind, when those of the preacher ceased to interest him.

Languor is a principal cause of the propensity to social intercourse, for all mankind are subject to it. Most men are driven into society by being tired of themselves; some are driven into solitude by disgust with society. An indolent man feels most irksome when alone; to an active mind, that time is intolerably tedious, in which its activity is suspended. The former flees from himself in quest of pleasure; the latter having vainly sought for happiness in the world, enjoys it in communion with itself.

Thus, when oppressed with languor, man naturally wishes to rouse himself from that state of lethargy. For this purpose, a stimulus must be ap-

presented to Louis XIV. a memoir on the advantages which the French monarchy would derive from the conquest of Egypt; which has been a favorite scheme with all the subsequent rulers of that country. Leibnitz afterwards visited England, and disputed with Sir Isaac Newton, the priority of the discovery of fluxions. He was employed by George I. while elector of Hanover, to write the history of the house of Brunswick. Upon the institution of the royal academy of sciences at Berlin, Leibnitz was appointed perpetual president, and received various honors and emoluments from several of the sovereigns of Europe. At the time of his death, in 1716, he was engaged in a controversy with Dr. Samuel Clarke, on the subjects of free-will, space, and other abstruse points. His works are extremely numerous. T.

Cause of the general love of dissipation.

plied, either to the senses or the understanding; either to the body or the soul. To feel, is much easier than to think; to receive than to give: and though not capable of affording entertainment ourselves, we have no objection to receive it from others. Thus the multitude rushes to the most crowded places of public diversion, in search of happiness, pleasure, and mirthful enjoyment. They hasten in crowds, to assemblies, balls, and routes, amid the glare of innumerable lights, and the blaze of diamonds, into the brilliant ranks of palpitating females, whose sensibilities are excited, and whose passions are roused by the sprightly music, and the licentious dance. These fashionable pleasures may be procured without trouble: but the pleasures of solitude can frequently not be obtained without exertion.

Some possess souls incapable of relishing intellectual enjoyments; these despise every thing that is great and good, and to them the most inimitable productions of human genius, are tasteless and insipid. They have neither organs nor inclination for things of that kind, the vacancy of their minds impels them to seek every where for amusement, which their stupidity prevents them from finding.

The love of retirement is far less common than the fondness for scenes of social dissipation, because it is much easier to amuse the senses than the understanding. Man therefore seeks those pleasures which are the most readily procured, which afford him the greatest gratification, which most quickly fill up the void in his soul, and excite those ideas in which he likes best to indulge. Violent and tumultuous impressions can alone delight the vul-

gar, whose minds are incapable of enjoying the superior pleasures derived from intellectual exertion.

Persons of an indolent disposition, however fond of society, pursue pleasure, but can never overtake it. They are every where dissatisfied; they always feel disgust, and always create it in others. They are continually running, but always remain on the same spot. They bewail the shortness of life, complain day and night of the multiplicity of their concerns, and forget that nothing is effected without perseverance. They are alarmed at the close of every year, and each morning the first thought is: how shall I get through this day? In summer, they wish for winter, in winter for summer; in the morning for evening, in the evening for morning, and hate each as soon as it arrives. These unhappy mortals are provided with a scanty stock of ideas, and have an aversion to reflection, which makes them eager to frequent places where any thing is to be seen or heard.

But every one is not disappointed of his aim in going into company. Society and conviviality are a real and desirable recreation, after labor and care; by the relaxation from exertion, they furnish strength for renewed efforts. Social intercourse is of infinite advantage to youth; it assists persons of every age to acquire a knowledge of mankind, philanthropy, condescension and modesty. Even for persons of the highest rank it is a school of humanity, wisdom, and self-knowledge.

The pleasures of society, are also frequently sought, to alleviate care, to divert the pangs of distress, or the lingering dread of an impending evil.

Solitude disagreeable to some

Alas! solitude seldom affords consolation to the miserable being, whose only joy is swallowed up by the grave, who continually sees the beloved shadow beckoning him away; who would give the world for an accent from that voice he will never hear again; all the energies of whose soul are extinguished with tears; who knows and feels nothing but pain and despair.

Thus the confinement to their own reflections, is terrible to all those, whose souls recoil from self-examination. How many shudder at every question of conscience! What an alteration must take place in their minds before they can find repose without dissipation, and discover that incessant diversion is not the surest means of silencing that inward monitor which disturbs their tranquility when in solitude.

Solitude is likewise terrible to those whose happiness is grounded on popular applause. They establish their reputation upon the basis of universal philanthropy, extensive charities and many other laudable actions. They bend with servile submission to the pride of power; they flatter the vanity and accommodate themselves to the caprices of the great; they see no failings, they discover no vices, except in the upright man who has the voice of the people against him. They perceive neither petulance nor prejudice, folly nor error, superstition, nor mental slavery in the places they frequent. These estimable characters are therefore welcomed in every company with smiles of universal approbation.

Solitude, like religion, is frequently represented in such gloomy colours, that many are afraid to think

Solitude should be sought in prosperity.

of it till compelled to have recourse to its aid by sickness, misfortune, or mental affliction; that is, at a time when they are least capable of employing it to advantage. But that man cannot be acquainted with the nature of religion, nor be sensible of its power, who, even amid prosperity, does not court its pleasures. And equally insensible to all the sublime delights of converse with himself, equally incapable of the enjoyment of sweet tranquillity and silent happiness, is he, who cannot see and feel, that solitude, well employed and sought at the proper time, imparts even in this life a foretaste of celestial joys.

It must not then be inferred, that those who retire from the boisterous pleasures of the world, the endless circle of fashionable dissipation, are men of gloomy and anti-social characters, nor must it be imagined, that they are completely out of their senses, because they are contented and cheerful when left alone.

CHAP. III.

OF THE MOTIVES OF SOLITUDE.

THE propensity to solitude is the desire of separation from all that disturbs, afflicts and torments us; the desire of tranquility and the unmolested enjoyment of intellectual pleasures, to which the worldly-minded man is a perfect stranger. This inclination to solitude is therefore not very common, and chancellor Bacon says, that it evinces either the utmost savageness of disposition, or the highest elevation of mind.

An inclination to solitude may sometimes proceed from no determined motive, but from indolence. Repentance and shame of past follies, the failure of some favourite design, or sickness, may wound the mind so deeply, that it may wish to conceal its pain in solitude, and be induced to renounce the enjoyment of all social pleasures. In each of these cases an inclination to solitude is to the soul merely what an inclination to sleep, is to the wearied body.

Satiety likewise impels many to a seclusion from the world. The weeping philosopher Heraclitus* who was disgusted with society, and

* Heraclitus a celebrated philosopher of Ephesus, flourished about 500 years before the Christian æra. His unsociable and melancholy disposition, which he indulged to

Heraclitus the Philosopher.

weary of all its pleasures conceived an antipathy to mankind and became a misanthrope. Retiring to a solitary mountain, he there supported himself on the wild herbs of the desert in the savage society of beasts, despising the enjoyments of civilized life. Conduct like this evinces more weakness than strength, more indolence than energy.

He who possesses every gratification that the world can afford, who sighing for fame, honour, power, wealth and pleasure, has attained the object of all his desires and at last cries "All is vanity!"--he who during his whole life has been impelled by ungovernable passions, and has no longer any passion to impel him, falls a victim to satiety. Though he does not take up his abode among the brute

a ridiculous excess caused him to pass a considerable portion of his time in solitude, and his custom of weeping over the follies of men, procured him the appellation of the *crying philosopher*. Heraclitus composed many excellent works, particularly one on the Elements of Nature. Socrates, to whom this work was sent by Euripides, observed that such parts of it as were within his comprehension were excellent, and he doubted not but that those which he could not understand, possessed equal merit. Darius, the king of Persia, was so charmed with this production, that he sent the author the most flattering invitation to repair to his court where his merit would be duly appreciated; but this the philosopher surlily rejected. He afterwards conceived such an invincible antipathy to mankind, that he retired, as our author observes, to an inhospitable mountain, supporting himself like the beasts, with the scanty herbage which it afforded. This mode of life produced a dropsy, and he once more sought the society of man, in hopes of obtaining a cure for his disorder. At length, at the age of sixty, he quitted, with great regret, the world which he had affected to despise. T.

creation, nor feed upon the herbs and roots of the field; yet solitude is at last, his only resource. I have seen princes and nobles in this condition; for men in a humbler sphere never sink so low. Their hearts had no wish to gratify: attached only to life, nothing besides had charms for them. Solitude was the couch upon which they hoped to find repose. But, even to the prince disgusted with the pleasures of the world, solitude denies its pleasures, if he does not pursue the tranquil occupations, and peaceful amusements of retirement, with the same eagerness as he before sought immortality at the head of his army, or forgot his glory in the soft indulgencies of love.

Thus an inclination to solitude is of three kinds; a desire of retirement arising from the antipathy to society; or it proceeds from the wish of independence and repose; or it is the impulse of a sound and vigorous mind, to enjoy, in its full extent, that unenvied happiness it is capable of finding in itself. The supreme felicity of man is a peaceful mind and liberty to follow uncontrolled his own inclinations. But one loves solitude because he loves unmolested repose, and another because he wishes to prosecute his labors without interruption. Yet both seek independence; and in the eccentric, the melancholy, the philosopher and the man of letters, the love of independence powerfully contributes to produce a love of solitude.

A desire for repose and retirement, naturally arises after long-continued exertions, especially if required in opposition to our inclinations. Without independence and tranquility there is no real

Variety necessary to mankind.

enjoyment. Yet there are many who devoting themselves to the interest of the public, sacrifice every personal pleasure to the advantage of their fellow-creatures, and from a refined sense of duty, submit to the disappointments and mortifications, the hindrances and delays, which men in various stations of public life are doomed to encounter.

The repose and independence sought in solitude, consist in the removal from all that oppresses the mind. How great must be the enjoyment of the minister, who, after attending to the laborious duties of the state, disengaging himself from the irksome occupation of official detail, refreshes his mind in the calm of some delightful retreat, with works of taste and of the imagination.

Variety is necessary in all the occupations, all the pleasures, and all the enjoyments of life. The most delightful object ceases to please if too long beheld. When weary of solitude we refresh ourselves in society, when tired of the world nothing affords us greater felicity than retirement. Pascal, who was never inactive, calls the love of repose a relic of the original purity of our nature, and says, that our real happiness consists in tranquility.

Tranquility is the wish of the wise man amidst the urgencies of business, the active exercise of professional duties and the most tumultuous scenes of life. In the most limited, as well as in the most extensive sphere, the mind always regards repose as the height of felicity. Tranquility was

Anecdote of the Emperor Joseph II.

the final aim of all the wars, in which the restless and ambitious Pyrrhus * was engaged. How anxiously the great Frederic desired repose amidst the wonderful career of his immortal achievements, may be discovered by his exclamation, "When shall I see the end of my torments!" after a battle in which he had been victorious.

// The Emperor Joseph once asked the celebrated Hanoverian pedestrian, Baron Grothaus, what part of the world he still intended to visit. Grothaus named a hundred different countries, "And what then?" asked the emperor. "Then," replied Grothaus, "I shall return to Hanover and plant cabbages."—"Ah!" exclaimed the empe-

* Pyrrhus was king of Epirus, and a descendant of Pyrrhus the son of Achilles and Deidamia. During his infancy he was deprived, by the fortune of war, of his father and his crown, by the king of Macedonia. Two of his father's faithful attendants Androclides and Angelus conveyed him for safety into Illyria, where Glancias its sovereign educated him as his own child, and when he had attained the age of 12 years, placed him by force of arms on the throne of his ancestor. Bred amidst the perils and turbulence of camps, Pyrrhus indulged his warlike disposition in almost continual disputes with the neighbouring states. He made himself master of Macedonia, and was called by the Tarentines to their assistance against the power of Rome. But he was completely foiled in this expedition and obliged to leave Italy with disgrace. He was afterwards engaged in various contests, with a variety of fortune, and making war upon Sparta, he laid siege to Argos, and being admitted into the city through treachery, he was there killed by a tile, thrown by a woman from a house, in the year 272 before Christ. Though this prince appeared so fond of war, he professed that he engaged in it only for the purpose of obtaining a solid and permanent peace. He was the inventor of the game of chess. T.

Examples of illustrious Recluses.

ror with equal good-humour and sagacity, "you had better return *immediately* to Hanover and plant cabbages."

The slave, bending beneath his burden, and the statesman, whose unavailing efforts are directed to the welfare of his country, feel the same ardent longing for relaxation from labor, the same desire for repose. With the same hope, the sailor, rolling on the tempestuous ocean, casts his eyes over the raging billows; and his present sufferings are alleviated by the prospect of tranquil pleasures. The monarch is weary of the throne and its empty pageantry, the noble sinks beneath the weight of accumulated honours, and the courtier sickens at his splendid slavery. They embrace every opportunity of withdrawing from the restless bustle of their worldly pursuits, and seek tranquility in solitude.

When Publius Scipio * held the highest offices at

* Publius Cornelius Scipio, was the son of P. C. Scipio, who was consul, and commanded the Roman army, that marched to oppose Hannibal, when he crossed the Alps to invade Italy. The old consul was wounded, and taken prisoner at the battle of the Teisin, but was rescued from captivity by the gallantry of his son, then only seventeen years of age. At 24 he was appointed to the chief command in Spain, from which country, he expelled the Carthaginians in the space of four years. His virtues contributed no less to establish his fame, than his valor, and his chastity was conspicuous in his conduct to his beautiful Spanish captive, whom he restored to her lover, Allutius. Being made consul upon his return from Spain, he immediately passed over into Africa, where he conquered Asdrubal, one of the most celebrated of the Carthaginian generals, and overcame Syphax, king of Numidia. After this

Scipio's Love of Solitude.

Rome, he frequently retired from the busy scenes by which he was surrounded, and sought repose in Solitude. He was not like Cicero, engaged in the elegant occupations of literature, but he weighed in silence, the destinies of the republic, and declared, that he was never less alone, than when

victory over Syphax, perceiving that his ally Masinissa, wholly resigned himself to his love for his fair prisoner Sophonisba, Scipio, taking the king aside, said to him: "Believe me, we have much less to fear at our age from the arms of our enemies, than from the multitude of seductive pleasures, by which we are surrounded. He, who by temperance restrains and overcomes his passions, obtains a much more glorious victory than ours over Syphax." His next exploit, was the victory of Zama, where he defeated Hannibal, the inveterate foe of the Roman name, and effectually destroyed the power of Carthage. The victor, concluded a peace highly advantageous to the Romans, and was honored with a triumph, and the surname of Africanus. A few years afterwards, he was again made consul, and went to Asia, where he defeated and imposed his own terms on Antiochus. On his return to Rome, at the instigation of Cato, he was accused by the tribune Petilius of peculation and was cited three times before the people. Disgusted with public life, he retired to Liturnum where he cultivated his lands in peaceful retirement. Of this retreat, Seneca speaks in the following terms, in his eighty-sixth epistle: "I write to you from the habitation of Scipio Africanus, I behold a stone mansion embosomed in woods, and a small dark path, according to the ancient custom. When contrasting Scipio's manners with ours, I am filled at the same time with pleasure and shame. In this obscure corner, that terror of Carthage, washed his body, fatigued with rural labors; for, he cultivated his land with his own hands, as was the practice in the early times of the republic. He stood beneath this mean roof, and this wretched pavement was trodden by the hero." At this villa, Scipio died, 180 years before Christ. T.

M. T. Cicero.

alone. Thus after his virtues had raised him to the proudest elevation of human glory, he voluntarily banished himself from Rome, and retiring to his country house at Liturnum, in the midst of a romantic forest, he spent the concluding portion of his glorious life in philosophic tranquility.

Cicero,* to whom every eye was directed,

* Marcus Tullius Cicero, one of the greatest men of antiquity whether considered as an orator, a statesman, or a philosopher, was born at Arpinum, in the 647th year of Rome and 107 years before Christ. In a life of incessant activity, during which he filled the highest offices of the republic, the most striking event is his detection of the famous conspiracy of Cataline and his accomplices. This occurred during the consulship of Cicero, and the services which he rendered to the commonwealth on that occasion procured him from his fellow-citizens the glorious title of *Pater Patriæ*, Father of his country. Being afterwards calumniated and exposed by a powerful faction with Clodius at its head, he went into voluntary exile, from which he was however recalled by the unanimous voice of the senate and people and re-entered the city in triumph. Cicero joined the party of Pompey against Cæsar and followed the former into Greece; but after the battle of Pharsalia, he returned to Italy, where he was received by Cæsar with the utmost cordiality. He then bade adieu to the tumult of political contentions, and retiring to his villa, resigned himself wholly to literary pursuits. From this dignified retreat, he was again drawn by the death of Cæsar, upon which event, he again entered the dangerous walks of public life, and at length fell a sacrifice to the vengeance of Mark Anthony. Being included in his proscription, Cicero left Tusculum, with a view of escaping the resentment of his enemies, but he was pursued, overtaken, and beheaded, by Popilius Lenas, a tribune, whose life he had formerly saved by his eloquence. Popilius carried the head to Anthony, who, after his wife Fulvia had treated it with the most wanton indignity, ordered it to be erected on that rostrum, where Cicero had so often and so

Abdication of Dioclesian.

while his influence over the minds of the Romans remained unimpaired, retired with the expiring liberties of the republic, from a city blackened with crimes, and exchanged the pleasures of the metropolis for the shady retreats of Tusculum. Horace, likewise, forgot the pride of imperial splendor and the seductive allurements of the first court in the world, in his sequestered Tibur.

Few monarchs passed the concluding scenes of their lives in more calm content than the emperor Dioclesian, the celebrated persecutor of the christians, but in other respects, a great and wise sovereign. He had swayed the imperial sceptre five and twenty years, when he resolved to resign it. Books had not inspired him with philosophic sentiments, for he had never read any; but he was the first Roman emperor who possessed sufficient magnanimity to lay aside the imperial purple. His reign had rolled on in a tide of uninterrupted success, all his enemies had been subdued, all his views accomplished. He was only 59 years of age, but infirmities began to render painful the execution of his important duties, and caused him to adopt the resolution of spending the remainder of his days in honourable tranquility, to place his glory beyond the reach of fortune, and to relinquish his empire to his younger and more active

ably defended the lives, liberties and fortunes of the citizens of Rome. Cicero's death happened in the 43d year before the christian era. Of the works of this great man, which will remain a monument of his talents and attainments to the latest period of time, not above a tenth part has reached us. T.

Occupation in Retirement.

assistant. In an extensive plain near Nicomedia, he seated himself on a lofty throne, and in a speech replete with reason and dignity, he communicated his determination to the people and the army: and as soon as he had resigned the purple, he retired from the eyes of the astonished multitude, in a covered chariot, proceeding through the city of Nicomedia, to a favorite retreat, which he had long before chosen, at Salona in Dalmatia. Dioclesian, who had raised himself from an obscure origin to the imperial dignity, lived at Salona, in the enjoyment of tranquil pleasures, nine years after the dictates of reason had induced him to relinquish the throne. He long enjoyed the esteem of his successor in the sovereignty of the world. To the pleasures derived from literary pursuits he was a stranger, but he had a taste for the most natural and innocent enjoyments of life. He built himself a palace, an edifice of such magnitude and splendor, that its ruins, even at the present day, fill the beholder with astonishment. To this palace he annexed a garden, which he cultivated with his own hands. The admirable answer which he gave to Maximian is justly celebrated. The latter, had been his partner in the empire, but was obliged to relinquish his authority at the same time. He continually endeavored to persuade Dioclesian to resume the purple; who at length replied with a smile of pity and the utmost composure: "If I were to shew you all the cabbages which I have planted at Salona with my own hand, you would no longer press me to resign such happiness for a throne."

Zenobia queen of Palmyra.

Zenobia* the celebrated queen of Palmyra, the ungrateful disciple and friend of the sublime Longinus, who read Homer and Plato, who rivalled in beauty the most celebrated females and surpassed them all in chastity and heroic courage, whose name struck terror into Arabia, Armenia and Persia, and whose victorious arms had even triumphed over the legions of imperial Rome, was at length defeated, and taken prisoner by Aurelian. Her cou-

* Zenobia was descended from the Macedonian sovereigns of Egypt, and married Odenatus, who from an obscure station raised himself to the sovereignty of the east. She was the companion of his victories over the Persian monarch, whom they twice pursued to the gates of his capital.

Odenatus being assassinated by his nephew Mæonius, Zenobia filled the vacant throne, and administered the affairs of state with the greatest prudence and ability. Her husband's death had not damped her military ardour, she conquered Egypt and was preparing for fresh victories when the emperor Aurelian declared war against her. Being defeated in the two great battles of Antioch and Emessa, she was obliged to shut herself up in her capital, Palmyra, which city was besieged by Aurelian. After an obstinate defence the princess, finding herself deceived in the hopes of succour, privately quitted her metropolis for one of her fleetest dromedaries, and had just reached the Euphrates, when she was overtaken and made prisoner by a detachment of Aurelian's cavalry. Her courage now forsook her, and the emperor incensed by her obstinate resistance, spared her life on condition of her sacrificing those who had been her advisers: among these was Longinus, the celebrated author of the treatise on the sublime, whom Zenobia had invited to her court, who was tutor to her sons, and to whose counsels she was in no small degree indebted. Being condemned to die by Aurelian, Longinus, without uttering a complaint, calmly followed the executioner, endeavouring to alleviate the afflictions of his friends, and lamenting the fate of his unhappy mistress. T.

The Emperor Charles V.

rage abandoned her, and she abandoned her friends. The emperor gave her a delightful country-house on the celebrated Tibur, or Tivoli, where she bore her misfortunes with dignity, where she knew how to console herself for the loss of a throne with the calm enjoyments of solitude, and for her departed greatness with the pleasures of philosophy.

In the humble and sequestered cloisters of St. Justus in Spain, the emperor Charles the fifth, whose arms had filled every nation with terror and with the dread of being subjected to his yoke, buried that ambition and those boundless projects which for half a century had kept all Europe in a flame. Kien Long * the late emperor of China, and the

* The excellent character of the emperor Kien Long is manifested in the letter written with his own hand to the viceroy of the province of Fou-Kim, of which the following is an extract :

" The misfortune that befel my island Ray-Onan (Formosa) the 22d May, 1782, has reached my ears. I therefore command you accurately to investigate the injury sustained by the remaining inhabitants of the unfortunate island, and instantly inform me of it, that I may afford them speedy relief. The houses and buildings, that have been destroyed by the inundation, shall be rebuilt at my sole expence, and those that are damaged shall be repaired. Provide the unhappy sufferers with all the necessaries of life at my charge. Distribute this my aid to them all, without exception ; it would give me pain, if one individual were forgotten. Consider that my eye regards them all, and that I love them all with tender affection. Tell them that they receive this assistance from me, their sovereign and their father. Build, out of the coffers of the state, as many ships of war and magazines as the all-powerful arm has swept away by the tempest and the billows. Oppress none, I command you, and inform me how you have performed my will."

Kien Long, emperor of China.

real father of his people, combined, with the noblest qualities, a powerful inclination to solitude and tranquility. He wrote a great number of books; it is said, eight and thirty. An emperor doubtless has more important concerns, than literary composition; but in a poem written on a visit he paid to the tombs of his ancestors, to refresh his mind with the remembrance of their virtues and talents, Kien Long laments his inability to make his subjects so happy as he could wish. He requests the assistance of his counsellors, and wishes always to keep before his eyes the bright examples of his forefathers. In a short poem on tea, inscribed upon a set of china, sent by him to Paris, and which he composed when hunting among the Tartars, beyond the great wall, he says, "O, that I could live, like a philosopher of antiquity upon the fruit of the pine, that I might enjoy retirement, ease and independence, nor desire more."

All these examples and facts prove, upon the whole, that a desire of independence and repose is a sentiment perfectly congenial to our nature, that there are even some who would gladly exchange a crown for tranquility; and that in solitude, judiciously employed, it is very easy to renounce all that the world values and esteems.

But the desire to remove from society may arise from many other motives and sources that merit serious consideration. A man may avoid his fellow-creatures out of hypochondria; from indignation at their false opinions, calumnies and aversion to truth; out of misanthropy and likewise out of a wish to enjoy the most refined intercourse with the best heads and hearts of every age; out of love

Hypochondria.

to the immortal works of genius, to liberty, and repose; and lastly, from motives of religion and enthusiasm.

The state, into which the soul is plunged by hypochondria, is an inexhaustible source of pain, which the unhappy sufferer is not fond of communicating, but is more inclined to retain within his own breast. The internal sensation occasioned by it, that he is no longer to others, what he ought to be and once was, is frequently the cause why a man avoids the society of his fellow-men.

Tortured with continual depression, racked with the most painful apprehensions, the unhappy martyr to this malady cannot be cheerful with the gay, nor appear, with confidence, in the haunts of pleasure. All the joys of life are poisoned, all the energies of his soul are paralysed; with the indelible impression that he is suited to none, and that few are suited to him, he is utterly incapable of acting or speaking like other men. He cannot get rid of the idea that nobody understands him, because none knows the state of his mind. With all these feelings and impressions which render a man inexpressibly miserable; with this dreadful malady of the imagination, which is usually censured, ridiculed and despised by others, ignorant of the mental as well as corporeal sufferings to which it subjects its unhappy victims; with this thorn in his heart, he shuns society, he flies the tables of the proud, the witty and the gay, where his distempered mind would experience sensations too painful for endurance.

This state of mental sufferance excites in every man the same inclination to solitude and retirement. Even there he cannot always find tranquillity.

lity. But there he finds himself independent and free; there he can do as he pleases, unmolested by the oppressive intrusions of ceremony and garrulity, or the attacks of wanton malice. He, therefore, constantly seeks to be solitary and alone, as long as he has none to whom he can communicate what he feels, none who understands these sensations, and who listens to his tale of misery with patience, tenderness, affection and good humour.

The erroneous opinions, and inveterate prejudices of the world, produce a disgust, which as frequently induces men to abandon society, as the conviction, that they shall find in solitude superior pleasures for the mind, and greater tranquillity for the heart.

He, whose independent spirit scorns the prejudices of society; who disdains to form his opinions by the capricious notions of the world, and is too candid to expect others to be guided by him; who rejoices at the rapid progress of the human mind in the path of science; withdraws from the degenerate crowd which misrepresents all that is great and good, and cherishes in his heart the love of solitude and its concomitant pleasures.

In such minds the love of retirement is very naturally produced in places where the judgment is warped by prejudice, where only one opinion, and that evidently not the best, is allowed to prevail, where passion lends wings to every error and gives irresistible power and influence to every prepossession. They avoid, with equal caution, him who presumes to guide the public opinion, and the person who is weak enough to be directed by it.

To this servile yoke no independent spirit can consent to bend, nor to the self-created critics, who drag before their wretched tribunal every thing that differs from their narrow-minded sentiments, and pour forth their invectives against all their contemporaries, whether writers, philosophers, legislators, commanders, princes or kings, against whose superior merits and qualifications they vomit forth all the venom of their invidious and malicious dispositions. The chief object of these arbiters of public taste is to condemn the excellency, to blast the fame and to stifle the merit of every production where spirit, good sense, and freedom of sentiment combine with undaunted courage, in the cause of truth; the vilest trash of the vilest scribbler may anticipate the tribute of their unbounded applause.

The shafts of ignorance, intolerance, and envy have been levelled against the good in every age, and among the most celebrated nations. Of this truth, David Hume is a striking example. He maintained throughout his whole life an unsullied reputation for virtue and honour. The goodness of his disposition was apparent both at home and when in company. The calmness of his temper never forsook him, even at the time when the petulance of his learned antagonists exposed him to the grossest ridicule. With the utmost patience and candor he read the most scandalous invectives that were propagated against him. These wretches even endeavoured to excite in the minds of the poor in his neighbourhood a personal detestation, but his philanthropy and benevolence secured their gratitude and veneration. His conduct on every occasion was

manly and generous, and the very reverse of affectation or pomp. He was remarkably affable and easy of access. The man of learning never appeared either in his exterior or in his conversation. His ardent affection was the spontaneous ebullition of a good heart, without ceremony or disguise. Hume, it is true, made an improper use of his talents, with regard to religion, but his manners would have been an ornament to the times of the early and yet unsullied purity of Christianity. He possessed those sublime energies of soul, and that unexceptionable goodness of heart, which in every country, and in every age, ennoble the possessor, and secures him a place among the greatest and the best of mankind. Such are the sentiments now generally entertained of the character of David Hume; but far different were those of his contemporaries. Living, not among uncivilized men, nor in a barbarous age; but in an enlightened period, in the midst of a polished, a philosophic nation, is it any wonder that Hume felt a powerful impulse to solitude and retirement from a world, in which he had experienced nothing but mortification?

All that could be advanced against Hume's scepticism, would not be sufficient, in England, to produce the condemnation of an author. National prejudice perhaps contributed its part, as Hume was a native of Scotland; but the clamor excited against him, extended to his native country, as did likewise the indifference, which probably wounded him still more severely. The history of his literary transactions, a work written by himself, cannot be perused without grief or surprize, at least by any writer of sensibility.

The greatest philosophers on the continent of Europe considered Hume's works as models of philosophical composition. They equally admired his acuteness, profundity, and elegance. In his history, Hume, like Voltaire, evinces his talents as a painter, and probably the latter learned more from Hume, than Hume from him. Yet, with all these qualifications, Hume made an impression upon his countrymen, of which, not he, but they, had reason to be ashamed.

The account of the reception which his works successively experienced, cannot be read without deep regret. At the conclusion of the year 1738, he published his *Treatise on Human Nature*. "Never," says he, "was literary attempt more unfortunate, than the publication of this treatise. It fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots." He then introduced the first part of this treatise into his *Inquiry concerning the Understanding*, which appeared in 1748, while he was at Turin. Upon his return to England, he had the mortification to find, that this work was wholly overlooked and neglected. A new edition of his *Essays, moral and political*, at the same time met with little better success in London. His *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, printed in the year 1752, he considered beyond comparison, the best of all his writings, historical, philosophical and moral; it came into the world unnoticed and unknown.

Of the success of his *History of the House of Stuart*, which appeared in 1754, Hume entertained the most sanguine hopes and expectations. "But

miserable," says he, "was my disappointment:" I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation and even detestation. English, Scotch and Irish, whig and tory, churchman and sectary, free-thinker and religionist, patriot and courtier, united in their rage; against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles the first, and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I, scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates, separately sent me messages not to be discouraged. I was, however, I confess, discouraged; and had not the war at that time been breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage and to persevere."

His *History of the House of Tudor* appeared in 1759, and excited a clamour in the three kingdoms equal to that which the *History of the two First Stuarts* had experienced. At length, in the year 1763, Hume accompanied the Earl of Hertford to Paris, and there met with a reception as honorable to the French as to himself. "Those," says he,

with the greatest modesty, "who have not seen the strange effect of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and stations: the more I recoiled from their excessive civilities, the more I was loaded with them." *

Such is Hume's history, and such is the history of almost all those who attempt to correct the errors of their age and country. He, who has the good fortune to see objects in a more distinct light

* All the literati and philosophers of Paris, paid Hume higher respect than they would have done to a king, and the following account of his reception in the female circles of fashion, is given by one of the most pleasing German writers, Mr. Sturz: "When Hume was expected at Paris," says he, "his fame preceded him; all the *beaux esprits* waited for his arrival with impatience, because, said they, *c'est un homme d'un esprit infini*. Scarcely had he set his foot on shore, when the highest *cateries* warmly contended which should have the honor of entertaining him first. An elegant princess was the fortunate competitor for introducing him into the fashionable circles. Preparations were made for a splendid supper; cards of invitation were instantly dispatched to all the gossips in Paris, to invite them to a *souper délicieux où se trouveroit Monsieur Hume*. At length appeared the reserved stranger, who never opened his mouth, if nothing interested him. These amiable ladies left no means untried to electrify him. They spoke of his *charmans ouvrages*, which none of them could read, of the *genie profond de Messieurs les Anglois*. All was ineffectual, the ungrateful Englishman could not be induced to utter a word, or emit a spark of his genius. Unable, at last, to conceal their disappointment, they shrugged their shoulders and regarded each other with looks of sympathy. Next day it was whispered about: *Ce Monsieur Hume n'est qu'une bête*. An arch-wag added: *c'est qu'il a fourré tout son esprit dans son livre*.

Envy of superior talents.

than his contemporaries, and has the audacity to disseminate his useful discoveries, instantly provokes a general attack, and sets himself up as a mark for the obloquy of all those who possess talents inferior to himself. There are always many in every country who are ready to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, and to afford assistance in every kind of distress, but whose jealousy is incessantly on the watch, to blast the rising fame of merit and talent. The Ephesians, with republican pride, banished from their state every individual, who wished to surpass the rest of his countrymen in literary attainments. I would not exhort the man, whose talents attract the jealousy and malice of his fellow citizens, to forsake his country, but would advise a temporary retirement and seclusion from them, not for the indulgence of his spleen, but in order to forget them.

We should treat the failings of our fellow-creatures with tenderness, and not be intent only on exposing their errors; otherwise we convert innocent fools into inveterate enemies. But we ought to rise superior to the despicable clamors and insinuations, to which every candidate for fame is invariably exposed. Let us not oppose the opinions of men whom we cannot convince by reason; it is much easier to gain their hearts. This point once attained, we can always direct their understanding whichever way we please.

We must not destroy the flowers which God has scattered in our path. We must not withdraw from the world, till we find our exertions in the cause of virtue unavailing. If we are ever attacked by the universal voice of public opinion, we may

Solon and Pisistratus.

rest secure under the conscious approbation of our own minds. If we cannot gain the hearts of our fellow-creatures, we must not indulge in ebullitions of passion, but learn to bear with them.

In courts and in cities, nay, even in the obscurest privacy of retirement, those who have presumed to differ from the vulgar herd, have not been exempted from the persecutions of calumny. Some, therefore, cheerfully renounced every claim to the approbation of mankind, they calmly withdrew to solitary situations, remote from society, to which they had become intolerable; but under these circumstances they certainly did not remain free from impressions of misanthropy. • When Solon* found that he could no longer oppose the tyranny of Pisistratus, he threw his weapons into the street, ex-

* Solon, one of the seven sages of Greece, was born at Salamis, and educated at Athens. By his courage and talents he obtained the government of his country, revised and amended the severe laws of his predecessor Draco, and introduced a milder and more equitable system. He likewise either instituted or improved the Areopagus of Athens. He died at Cyprus in the 80th year of his age, before Christ, 558.

Pisistratus was an Athenian general, who having acquired great popularity by the manner in which he had signalized himself at the battle of Salamis, endeavoured to enslave his country. For this purpose he assumed the mask of patriotism, and attempted to seduce the people by holding out to them the illusory system of equality. Solon, however, saw through his artifices and zealously opposed him. To effect his design, Pisistratus had recourse to the expedient of wounding himself in several places, and giving out that he had been thus treated by his enemies. The credulous Athenians, believing this story, allowed him a guard of 50 men

Intrigues of a court.

claiming, that he had done every thing in his power for the defence of the laws of his country; and afterwards employed himself in writing satires on the Athenians.

There never was a statesman possessed of sensibility and manly feelings, who did not occasionally wish to exchange the vices of a court, for the innocent pleasures of rural retirement. Such characters cannot see, without indignation and disgust, how often the hopes of the virtuous and the brave are blasted by the envious courtier and by female favourites, whose whole time is occupied with parrots and monkeys, or in calumniating the merit of those who do not see through them the road to preferment. They deplore the numberless artifices and insinuations employed to lead astray the minds of the most virtuous princes, and which frequently succeed in dazzling the most sharp-sighted. They despise the intrigues of groveling minds, who fawn and cringe to their superiors in power, at the same time that they are ever upon the watch to discover the slightest misconduct, in the hope of seating themselves in their places. But the objects of their greatest detestation, are those insignificant and contemptible wretches, who are ready to burst with envious rage, if they hear the sovereign applaud

for his preservation; this number he soon augmented, made himself master of the citadel and became the sovereign of Athens. He was expelled from the city by Megacles and Lycargus, but finding means to ingratiate himself again with his countrymen, he was restored to his authority. At length, having lost his popularity, and his supporters, he went into voluntary exile, and died in Eubœa, about 527 before Christ after enjoying the sovereignty of Athens 33 years. T.

Dion of Syracuse.

the meritorious services of some distinguished character.

Dion * was envied, hated and persecuted by the

* Dion was the son of Hipparinus and brother-in-law of Dionysius the younger, the sovereign of Syracuse. By his persuasion Dionysius invited Plato, the celebrated Grecian sage, to his court. The sublime precepts of the philosopher made a deep impression on Dion's mind, and his exemplary conduct rendered him odious in the eyes of the tyrant and his profligate ministers. He was banished in consequence, and retiring to Greece, he there collected an army in the hope of rescuing his country from slavery. He entered the port of Syracuse with only two ships, and in three days reduced the empire under his power, obliging the tyrant to flee in his turn. Dion held the reins of government till he was basely murdered by one of his friends named Callicrates. It is related of Dion that when he had made himself master of Syracuse, Heraclides and Theodotus, his inveterate enemies, voluntarily surrendered themselves, confessed their guilt, and entreated him to shew more mercy to them than they had to him. Dion's friends advised him not to spare men of such abandoned characters, and the authors of such destructive feuds, but to deliver them over to the fury of the soldiers. Dion replied: "Other generals are acquainted only with the profession of arms and the usages of war; but having passed most of my time in the study of philosophy, I have endeavoured to learn how to conquer anger, revenge, hatred, obstinacy, and other baleful passions. He that has gained this victory, is not only kind to his friends and to good men, but is mild and merciful even towards the wicked, and to his implacable enemies. It is my desire to shew myself superior to Heraclides, not in power but in humanity and justice; for in these virtues, true fortitude, greatness and glory consist. Because Heraclides is faithless, base, and wicked, must Dion sully his virtue by impotent rage? Human law declare him less culpable who revenges an injury, than he who does an injury; but both proceed from the same weakness of mind. Besides, the disposition of no man is so rugged and savage as not to be corrected and improved

Misanthropy.

courtiers of the younger Dionysius, because he led a life different from theirs; he did not appear in the companies which they frequented, and disagreed with their principles and professions. They gave his virtues the plausible appearance of vices, they traduced him to Dionysius, they called his grave deportment, pride---his freedom of speech, insolence. When he intended to offer good advice, they declared that he was pronouncing satires; and if he refused to take part in their extravagancies, they asserted that he despised them; and in this point they were certainly right.

All these false opinions, and this fatal perversion of the intellectual faculties, prove that even persons possessed of the most philanthropic dispositions, sometimes have occasion to withdraw from society. Yet we must beware not to let hatred into our hearts. Hatred destroys all love; and what is life without love! It is but a short step, an easy, rapid, and dreadful transition from actual aversion to misanthropy. He, whose indignation is roused by all the follies and frailties that he observes, who reflects on their vices only to increase his knowledge of mankind, hates them as soon as he becomes the dupe of their villainies. His judgment is warped, his conclusions are false, and every object is tinged with the bile of misanthropy. He falls a prey to suspicion, jealousy, malice and revenge; and when passion has at length exterminated every generous sentiment, he perhaps wishes with M. de St. Hyacin-

by repeated kindness." Actuated by such motives, Dion generously dismissed Heraclides and Theodotus. T.

A Swiss misanthrope.

the* for some solitary island, that he may enjoy the savage satisfaction of murdering all those unfortunate wretches, who might be driven naked, helpless and forlorn to its inhospitable shores.

But, if to a disposition embittered by the black gall of misanthropy, be added a considerable share of pride, great learning, and great perversion of intellect, the mind is inflamed to the highest pitch of malignancy and enmity against all good men, and feels a still more powerful impulse to solitude. I shudder whenever I recollect a monster of this description, whom the duties of my profession obliged me to visit occasionally in Switzerland. I always fancied that I saw serpents writhing among his wild, matted locks. A livid incrustation covered his face. His eyes glared, like lightning, through the thick gloom of his impending eye-brows. To promote discord was his delight, and mischief his highest joy. His house was the professed refuge of every villain in the country, and of the enemies to the public tranquillity. He was the protector of injustice, the persecutor of virtue, the patron of villainy, the promoter of calumny, the propagator of lies, the advocate of the devil and the father of a fury. Such were the delights of this Helvetian Timon. In the enjoyment of these misanthropic pleasures he passed his life in solitary retirement unmolested by inquietude or discontent. ✕

The unfortunate Timon† of Lucian had some ex-

* M. de St. Hyacinthe was the son of the celebrated bishop Bossuet, and author of the excellent work, *Chef d'œuvre d'un inconnu par le docteur Mathanasius*.

† The prototype of Lucian's Timon was a native of



Craig, del.

Edwards, sc.

2nd Jan. 22. 1828. By James Dundee, London.

Timon's love of Solitude.

cuse for his hatred of mankind. His philosophy was the natural expression of the feelings with which his misfortunes had inspired him. "This solitary spot," said he, "shall be my habitation and my grave. Henceforth will I detest everything that is, or is called man. The sentiments of friendship, compassion, and pity, I renounce for ever. To condole with the unfortunate, and to assist the distressed is weak and criminal. I will pass my days in solitude, like the beasts of the desert, and none but Timon shall be Timon's friend. I will consider all men as villains and traitors, to associate with them, profanation, and to converse with them, impiety. Accursed be the day that brings one of them into my sight. I will regard them as statues of brass or stone; I will have no

Athens. Plutarch relates, that he had one friend named Apemantus, with whom he associated on account of the similarity of their dispositions. Happening once to be at supper with Timon, he exclaimed, "How delightful, Timon, is this repast!" "Yes," replied he, "if you were absent." The same man once asked him why he shewed so great a partiality for Alcibiades, a youth of such haughty and audacious manners; Timon told him that his love to the young man arose from a presentiment of the great evils he would bring upon the Athenians.—Timon once appeared at the public assembly at Athens, which being an uncommon circumstance, all were curious to know the reason of his coming. He ascended to a conspicuous place from which he addressed the people in these words. "Athenians, I have a certain court-yard where stands a fig-tree, on which many have put a period to their lives by hanging. But as I am going to build a house upon the spot; before I cut down the tree, I give this notice to such of you as have any intention of hanging themselves, to make as much haste as possible." T.

Timon's love of Solitude.

peace, no connection with them; my retirement shall for ever be the limit between them and me. Relations, friends, and country are empty names, respected only by the fool. I will despise all praise and execrate disgusting adulation. Myself shall be the source of all my pleasures. Alone will I sacrifice to the gods, alone will I feast; I will be to myself a neighbour and companion. Solitary will I live, and solitary will I die. It shall be my pride to deserve the appellation of misanthrope, by my anti-social disposition, my ferocity and inhumanity. If I see a human being writhing in the flames and imploring my assistance, I will throw in pitch and oil to augment their fury. If the unhappy victim, struggling with the impetuous torrent, extend his arms toward me for relief, I will plunge him to the bottom that he may never rise again."

In this soliloquy, Lucian has most admirably expressed the feelings of wounded sensibility, driven to the utmost pitch of distraction, and stung to the quick by injustice and ingratitude; of a mind, before humane and benevolent, overwhelmed with the injuries of mankind. Such was the Timon described by Lucian. But a disposition to solitude is not produced only by provocations of such magnitude, but by every slight attack of melancholy arising from similar causes. Anthony gave the appellation of Timon's House to the edifice he erected for his residence after the battle of Actium, and lived there for some time secluded from human society, and deserted by all the world.

There is likewise a numerous class of misanthropes, who have no occasion to complain of the injustice of mankind. They love solitude, because they

hate the light, and creep out from their retirement only in the dark. Thus sneaks Envy which, according to the Caraihs, was one of the first creatures on earth, where he was the origin and fancied himself extremely beautiful, but when he saw the sun, he concealed himself, and now appears only at night.

But there is still another description of men who, unoppressed by melancholy, untinctured by spleen, at the false opinions, the prejudices, and the perverse disposition of mankind; free from the slightest trace of misanthropy, and replete with generous and liberal sentiments, withdraw from society, desirous of enjoying, in retirement, the communion of those eminent men, of every age and country, who have contributed to enlighten the understanding and to ameliorate the heart.

To attain this favourite aim, is the object of their utmost and unwearied exertions; they hate nothing but what prevents or obstructs their career. All cares vanish in tranquillity and independence, which are the summit of their wishes. They withdraw, indeed, from the society of mankind, but only with a view to gratify the desire of uninterrupted repose, and to indulge in the love of science, independence and ease. Disgust with the world and with society would be productive of the most baneful consequences, if solitude did not afford its votary the sublimest pleasures.

Retirement, to those who seek it with such motives, is the antidote to misanthropy. It inspires them with such energy of sentiments and ideas, as to render them indifferent to the false opinions and malicious insinuations of mankind, at the same time

Demosthenes.

that it imparts to the heart the power of practising the most rigid virtues.

The mind and heart are expanded, animated and invigorated in retirement. Philosophers, poets, orators and heroes, desirous of encreasing their knowledge, and rising to superior distinction in their respective careers, have uniformly courted the fostering influence of retirement. They exchanged the distractions of social life for the refreshing shades and the inviting tranquillity of their rural retreats. Thus Homer painted the sequestered scenery of Greece and Italy with such truth and coloring, that, as Cicero says, "his descriptions present to our eyes, what he himself never saw." Demosthenes * withdrew, far from the bustle of

* Demosthenes, the greatest Grecian orator, was born at Athens, in the second year of the 101st Olympiad, or about 370 years before Christ. It is universally admitted, that no orator ever spoke with such force, or could command the passions of his hearers with such skill as Demosthenes. These distinguished powers he nobly employed in rousing his countrymen from their apathy, and persuading them to arm in opposition to the ambitious projects of Philip of Macedon. After Philip's death, he, with equal spirit resisted the incroachments of his son Alexander, whom he petulantly called a boy. The conqueror, irritated at his conduct, demanded of the Athenians, that he should be given up, but this they refused. However, when Antipater, Alexander's successor, made the same request, Demosthenes fled, and took poison in the 60th year of his age.

Though this celebrated orator attained such perfection in his art, he commenced his career under great disadvantages. Besides an impediment in his speech, which rendered his pronunciation inarticulate, he had a weak voice, short breath, and very uncouth manner and gesture; but by perseverance and resolution, he overcame all these defects. To

Fondness of other celebrated men for Solitude.

Athens, to a subterraneous abode where he lived whole months, and shaved half his head that he might not be induced to leave this retreat, where he wrote his orations. The most celebrated heroes of Greece and Rome divided their time between arms and books, between their military occupations and the refined pursuits of studious retirement, and were as distinguished for philosophic research, as for their warlike achievements. In the most dreary desart, St. Jerome acquired that animated eloquence and power of expression, which both dazzled and enlightened a great portion of the world. The Druids in ancient Britain, Germany and Gaul, abandoned the towns, when permitted by their official duties, and lived in the recesses of venerable forests, instructing beneath their shade the most hopeful of the national youth, and being at once the priests and the legislators, the counsellors and the judges, the physicians and the philosophers of those countries.

The tranquil shades of rural retirement have likewise been the favorite retreat of the most celebrated generals of modern times. I still remem-

help his wind, he used to climb up steep and craggy places, and to acquire a firmness of tone, he declaimed on the seashore, at such times when its waters were most furiously agitated, in order to prepare himself for the commotion of a popular assembly. To remedy the imperfection in his speech, he went to harangue with pebbles in his mouth; and to correct the awkwardness of his gesture, he would practise before a mirror. From all these circumstances it may be inferred that Demosthenes was not born an orator, and this distinguished professor affords a striking example, how much may be effected by unwearied exertion and assiduity. T.

Ferdinand of Brunswick, and Frederic III. of Prussia.

ber with pleasure, that when rambling in the woods of Antoniettenruh, near Wolfenbittel, I found there a young hero, who rivals the most celebrated of antiquity, in his love of literature, in energy and greatness of soul, wrapt in solitary meditation, and reading while the lightning flashed from his eyes. My heart still glows at the recollection of my visit to the peaceful mansion of the great Ferdinand, where I called to mind, with tender emotion, all his heroic deeds, related by the father to the son, in the sequestered abodes at the foot of the Alps, and shed tears of joy while supporting myself against a French cannon before the door.

At Sans-souci, where the hoary veteran, the great Frederic, contrives the means of hurling destruction on his enemies, and composes the immortal works of his genius; where he governs his people with the anxiety of a tender parent; where he devotes half of his time to consider the petitions, to redress the grievances of the meanest of his subjects, and to promote the general prosperity of his kingdom; and where in the other half he resigns himself to the charms of poetry and philosophy; reigns a profound silence, interrupted only by the refreshing breath of gentle zephyrs. I ascended the hill upon which it is situated, during the twilight of a winter's evening. When I came within sight of the small habitation of this mighty monarch, and approached his apartment, I observed a light, but was impeded by the enquiries of no jealous sentinel, no scrutinizing chamberlain. I proceeded, free and unchecked, through the humble and tranquil residence of this extraordinary man.

Solitude is frequently sought from a desire to impart

Solitude favourable to literary pursuits.

the benefit of our talents to those, with whom we are not acquainted, or by whom we wish to be known. But it too frequently happens, that a writer, whose works abound with instruction and delight, obtains not the applause of the country to which he belongs. Those who scarcely condescended to notice him before, regard, with envy, his rising reputation. Yet, if calumniated by all the enemies of liberty, if ridiculed in all the circles of fashion, and reviled by all the critics, he finds resources within himself to enable him to support the complicated injuries of mankind. He who, like Petrarch, holds up the mirror to nature, will find admirers in every age, though with that celebrated writer, he may complain: "The shafts of calumny were directed against me from every quarter, my dearest friends became my inveterate enemies, the persecutions of envy harassed me incessantly; the people, those to whom my poetry was perfectly familiar, traduced my reputation; and they who were least acquainted with me, were most eager to vilify my character and to blast my fame."

How many excellent men are overwhelmed with the baneful fogs of ignorance and envy, and deprived by them of both health and life! How much that is imperfect, are they prevented from completing! But in proportion as the crowded city and the splendid court cripple the exertions and relax the energies of such minds, they acquire vigor and originality in retirement. Wieland the favorite of the muses and graces, the pride of his nation, and perhaps the first writer of the age, formed the powers of his classic mind, in the lonely and obscure town of Biberach in Swabia.

Plato and Aristotle.

Where did the greatest philosophers and statesmen lay the foundation of their glory? Did Aristotle compose his profound systems in the tumultuous court of the Macedonian sovereign? Did Plato * conceive his admired productions in the

* Plato, one of the most illustrious philosophers of antiquity, was born at Athens, about 430 years before Christ. He employed himself with great assiduity in the study of the literature and arts then taught in Greece, and particularly to poetry: but, happening to be present at a discourse of Socrates, he was so powerfully impressed with his doctrines, that he burned all his compositions and applied himself entirely to the study of philosophy. After the death of Socrates, he travelled to Italy, where he became the disciple of Archytas the Pythagorean. Being invited to the court of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, he endeavored to prevail on him to change the government of that state into an Aristocracy. Though he here made a disciple of Dion, yet Dionysius was so indignant at the freedom of his discourse and the dignity of his manners, that he soon commanded him to leave his dominions; and when, upon the solicitations of Dion, he a second time visited Sicily, the tyrant delivered him to a merchant to be sold as a slave. After visiting Egypt and perfecting himself in the learning of that country, he returned to Athens, where he established a school for the instruction of youth in the principles of philosophy. This school soon became celebrated and drew disciples to Plato from all parts, and among them was the great Aristotle. Plato died in the 81st year of his age.

Aristotle, the chief of the Peripatetic sect, was born at Stagira, in Macedonia, about 384 years before Christ. He was the son of Nichomachus, physician to Amyntas the grandfather of Alexander the great. Having lost his parents in his youth, he resigned himself to the allurements of pleasure and dissipation, till by these means he had squandered away all his patrimony. He then went to Athens, where he became a disciple of Plato, led a life of

Religion sometimes produces a love of Solitude.

company of Dionysius? No; they all sought retirement. Leibnitz passed great part of the year at his villa, near Hanover. None of those ministers, whose splendid talents and refined understandings have diffused light, liberty and knowledge, who have reduced the empire of ignorance within its narrowest limits, and have unmasked the wily designs of specious hypocrisy; none of these, I say, formed their minds amid the noisy scenes of public assemblies or private dissipation.

To this catalogue of causes, producing a love of Solitude, may be added religion and fanaticism. Religion leads us into retirement, from the noblest and most exalted motives and the deepest convic-

rigid temperance, and acquired such reputation for wisdom and talents, that Philip of Macedon, invited him to his court to undertake the tuition of his son Alexander. "I thank the Gods," said Philip, in his letter to the philosopher, "not so much for having given me a son, as that he happened to be born during your life; and I hope that, by your precept and example, you will make him worthy of me and of the sovereignty of the empire." Philip was not disappointed in his expectations, and his pupil, grateful for the advantage he derived from his instructions, declared, that he was as much indebted to Aristotle as to Philip; his father had only given him life, his preceptor had taught him how to live virtuously. Upon leaving Alexander, he again repaired to Athens, where the magistrates gave him the Lyceum, in which he taught his philosophy to a great number of disciples. Here he composed his principal works, particularly his Natural History. The occasion of his death, which happened in the 63d year of his age is uncertain. Of his works, it has been justly observed, that "whoever surveys the variety and perfection of his productions, all delivered in the chastest style, in the clearest order, and the most pregnant brevity, is amazed at the immensity of his genius." T.

Its effects on the mind in such cases.

tion, that it is really and essentially necessary to our happiness. Fanaticism originates in the same sublime motives, but debased by mistaken zeal, superstition and folly.

Minds impressed with religious enthusiasm feel an irresistible impulse to retirement, at the sight of the world and its dangers. Perhaps, in the fervor of their piety, they deny themselves many innocent pleasures, not forbidden by the moral precepts of religion. Convinced that the world is incapable of affording them what constitutes their highest enjoyment, they do not trifle away their moments. Filled with the hope of higher joys and a blissful futurity, they maintain their independence of all worldly concerns. They prefer renouncing, in early youth and the flower of their days, what all are compelled to renounce on the bed of death. They hope, by the privations and mortifications to which they submit during their lives, to disarm death of its terrors. At the sight of the tomb and the contemplation of eternity, all the pleasures of the world lose every charm. That religion in general produces such a disposition, it is not my intention to assert; on the contrary, I frankly confess, that such is not my religion; but yet, when I meditate, in the silence of my chamber, on the elevation of mind and sublimity of sentiment which it inspires, I am overwhelmed with shame and shed tears of sorrow, upon finding myself so far below this standard.

The votaries of fanaticism avoid society from extravagant notions of perfection. At every step of their career, they think themselves nearer heaven, and pronounce their anathema against all

Other motives to Solitude---Fashion.

those, who do not seek to attain it by the sameroad. The weakness of their understandings renders their imaginations the more lively and ardent; and if they are the greatest fools in retirement, they are however happy in the enjoyment of their extravagant fancies.

• This long list of motives conducing to a propensity to Solitude, might be swelled by many others. People of rank, for example, seek retirement, because it is the fashion. In compliance with its dictates, all those who pretend to belong to the fashionable world, retire into the country in summer, and imagine that nobody is then left in town. A philosopher has observed, that the rage for Solitude in this class of society is produced neither by lassitude after labor, nor the desire of knowledge, that their only view is to exchange one scene of indolence for another, and to sleep in stillness instead of madly consuming their nights in public dissipation. The greatest advantage they derive from Solitude is, that they prolong their ludicrous existence in privacy, and indulge in their extravagances before fewer witnesses. Those who devote their days to indolence, find no charms in the shady grove or the fragrant valley. In vain are nature's beauties expanded for them; retirement neither improves their minds nor ameliorates their hearts. Thus, upon their return to the gay scenes of dissipation, they possess the satisfaction of having spent their time like others of the same rank, and of being able, like them, to talk of the delights and beauties of the country; delights which they never felt, and beauties which they never relished.

Derangement of the nervous system.

Ambition, love of indolence, and ease are, even in the present age, in catholic countries, the most powerful incitement with a parent, to chuse the monastic life for his children, and likewise with the latter, who observe with what veneration that state is regarded, to embrace it.

Upon many of the motives to solitude which have been here enumerated, temperament and constitution have a considerable influence. Their action therefore varies in every individual. But the most powerful impulse to solitude is, very frequently, an undeniable evidence of distracted organs. A greater or less oppression and irritation of the nerves operates, alas! with too fatal expedition and effect upon the soul, to leave the smallest doubt, that it is wholly on this account we wish to be alone. Aversion to mankind, and retirement from society, are the invariable consequences of melancholy.

CHAP. IV.

GENERAL ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE.

SOLITUDE is always interesting wherever it holds up to our view the image of tranquillity. The distant and doleful sound of the bell of some sequestered convent, the silence of universal nature in a still night, the pure air we breathe on the summit of a lofty mountain, the impervious gloom of an aged forest, the ruined monuments of antiquity, fill the soul with soft melancholy, and make us forget the world and mankind. But he who cannot find in his own heart the pleasures of friendship and of society, who is afraid to resign himself to his own reflections, to pass a moment alone, regards solitude and death in the same light. He wishes to enjoy all the voluptuousness which the world is capable of affording, to drink the cup of pleasure to the dregs, and when he finds his nerves shattered, and all the powers of his soul destroyed, he ventures to make the tardy confession: "I am weary of the world and its follies, and prefer the shade of the mournful cypress, to the intoxication of turbulent pleasure and tumultuous dissipation."

All the dangers attendant on solitude, and their existence cannot be doubted, are no argument against it; they may easily be avoided, if we know how to employ repose and liberty to advantage, and are vigilant over our hearts. The navigator steers,

To what persons the author recommends Solitude.

undaunted, between the most dangerous rocks, when he sees the signals and perceives the fatal spot in time to avoid it. A still weaker argument against retirement, are the complaints of those men, who, feeling a continual necessity of fleeing from themselves, take delight only in the pleasures which the world affords, to whom stillness and retirement appear the height of folly, and who, knowing no other felicity than that of giving and receiving visits, have not the remotest idea of the advantages of solitude.

I pretend, therefore, to recommend solitude to such only, who can find in their own minds resources against languor, who are not deterred by the numerous sacrifices which virtue requires, and who, possessing sufficient energy of soul not to dread being left to their own reflections, are susceptible of the pure and tranquil pleasures of domestic happiness. He, in whom the world has already destroyed these precious gifts of nature, who knows no other pleasure, no other happiness than cards, or the indulgence of epicurean gratification, who disdains every exertion of the mind, and regards all the refined sentiments of the soul as unmeaning cant and stupid whining, and who, from brutality almost inconceivable, laugh at the bare mention of sensibility—such a person will doubtless find no pleasure within himself. Nor can it be expected, that a lady of fashion can spend as much time in contemplation on objects unconnected with sensual enjoyments, such as God or eternity, as she does at her toilette.

Ministers of the gospel and philosophers would infallibly bring wisdom and virtue into disrepute, if they were to withdraw entirely from society and

avoid too sedulously all innocent and social pleasures: but there are few who fall into excess on that side. How many are there, on the contrary, both in town and country, to whom solitude is insupportable, and who shamefully mingle in the most boisterous scenes of dissipation or degrade their professions as retailers of scandal! Those times are past when a life of solitude and contemplation was alone esteemed, and when its votaries imagined, that they approached nearer heaven by total seclusion from the world.

After having first examined what are, in general, the advantages of solitude in common life, and amidst those pleasures so ardently sought in the world, it is my intention to shew, in the first part of this chapter, that it accustoms man to live independent and alone; that no sorrow is so great, no affliction so powerful, as not to be alleviated by its influence; that it imparts to the character and sentiments superior power and energy; that we there acquire a better knowledge of our own hearts; consider and examine objects with greater attention; are enabled to subdue vicious habits and propensities; in a word, that solitude alone affords durable pleasure and real felicity.

If we compare the enjoyments of fashionable life with the most ordinary advantages of solitude, we shall soon see, how well-grounded is the opinion of those sages, who considered the turbulent intercourse with the world, and the love of dissipation, as incompatible with the employment of tranquil reason, sound judgment, the enquiry after truth, and the study of mankind.

Men plunge into dissipation for want of reflection.

The reason of the votary of pleasure is overwhelmed by the multitude of prejudices, to which he is obliged to submit and that enervate his soul. He sinks under the weight of so many trifles and follies. He does not see objects as they really are, and his capricious mind knows no real and solid pleasure. His soul is filled with confusion, and his heart with illusions and chimæras. In what a different light would every thing appear, were he accustomed to resign himself to his own reflections, to meditate coolly, in the silence of his solitary hours, on the delusive joys derived from everlasting visits and the whole train of factitious pleasures and diversions. He would soon acknowledge their insignificance and frivolity, he would soon see the world as it actually is, and would perceive, that he blindly wanders in pursuit of phantoms which have more appearance than reality.

He who spends the days of youth and health in the vain and empty pleasures of the world, who makes them his principal, his only concern, does not consider that he ought to sow in times of prosperity, that he may reap in a less favourable season. I will not mention those, who, possessing a sound constitution and worldly happiness, are so frequently snatched away by the hand of death, while in eager pursuit of their youthful joys. But as we all have to encounter affliction sooner or later, as we have so little reason to rely on the duration of health, it behoves us, at least, to fortify our souls with energies of which they cannot be deprived. The best state of health is liable to interruption, to disease, but we ought to watch over the sacred fire

of the soul, that it may never be extinguished. Philosophy and virtue, benevolence towards men, and veneration for the Deity, assist us to bear and forbear, protect, invigorate and raise us up again, even when labouring under the horrors of deep dejection.

Languor and disgust are the inevitable consequence of the ardent pursuit of incessant diversion and dissipation. He who has emptied the cup of pleasure to the last drop; who is at length obliged to acknowledge, that he has nothing left to seek or to hope for in the world; who experiences nothing but disgust in the midst of enjoyment; who is astonished at his own insensibility, and no longer possesses that creative imagination which adorns and embellishes every object; applies in vain to the daughters of voluptuousness. Their caresses cannot dissipate his ill-humour and chagrin, their wanton songs cannot alleviate his languor. Behold that debilitated and infirm old man, with what eagerness he pursues pleasures he can no longer enjoy. He attempts to be gay and is ridiculous; he wishes to shine and excites contempt; he endeavours to display his wit and betrays the garrulity of old age. His trite and hackneyed conversation only produces disgust, and extorts a smile of pity from his youthful rivals: but he always appears the same in the eye of the sage, who formerly saw him shine in the circles of folly, and in the turbulent haunts of vice and extravagance.

The wise man frequently retires within himself amidst the most tumultuous pleasures, and compares what he might have done with what he has been doing. Amidst the general intoxication there exist

Causes of the love of dissipation.

firm and energetic minds, susceptible of the most virtuous desires and the most sublime sentiments. Many a noble enterprise executed in stillness, and many an immortal action were probably planned and conceived amidst the sprightly music and the festive dance. Perhaps an elevated mind is never less abstracted than in those places, where the vulgar, resigning themselves to the illusion and caprices of the senses, are incapable of reflection, and blindly suffer themselves to be hurried along by the torrent of folly.

Empty minds are a burden to themselves, and are therefore incessantly in quest of dissipation. This irresistible impulse which carries them continually abroad, and drives them incessantly into society, the trifles with which they are daily occupied, indicate their emptiness and frivolity. Having nothing within themselves capable of affording them occupation or amusement, they roam abroad in search of it, grasp at every object that attracts their attention, till they at length attain the desired haven, where they are secure from the attacks of languor, and their attention is diverted, by a variety of objects, from the reflection on their own debasement.

Thus this continual pursuit of sensual gratifications proceeds only from a desire to fly from ourselves. We seize every thing that appears capable of affording enjoyment for the present day, for the passing moment; there must always be some external object, some new phantom, something to prevent us from seeking resources within ourselves. If you possess an imagination capable of inventing, every day and every hour of the day, new schemes of pleasure for the indolent and luxurious, you are an

excellent companion, and their best friend. Every man might, it is true, find occupations that would prevent his being a burden to himself and the total loss of his time; but as he wishes continually to be led to some external object, dissipation becomes the most essential requisite of life, and to escape from his own reflections his most ardent wish. He by degrees loses the power of acting and operating for himself, and depends for amusement upon surrounding objects, without being able to direct and determine the impressions he ought to receive from them. For this reason, nobody on earth is so unhappy as the man of rank and opulence, who is a stranger to every pleasure but those of sense.

Nobles and courtiers imagine, that their pleasures appear vain only to those who are precluded from partaking of them. I am of a different opinion. One sunday, returning from the Trianon to Versailles, I observed at a distance a prodigious concourse of people on the terrace before the palace. When I came nearer, I saw Louis the fifteenth, with his whole court, at the windows. A man, uncommonly swift of foot, had a large pair of antlers fastened on his head and was called a *stag*. He was pursued by a dozen others, who composed the pack. The stag and dogs leaped into the great canal before the palace, scrambled out again and ran in every direction, amidst the loudest shouts of applause that ever greeted human ears.—“What can all this mean?” said I to a Frenchman who stood by.—“Sir,” replied he, with the utmost gravity, “it is for the amusement of the court.”

The meanest of mankind are happier than these masters of the world and their slaves, with all

Happiness often sought in frivolous pursuits.

their sorry sports and diversions. The courtier affects to be gay at his asser blies, while his heart is torn with the most poignant sorrow ; he speaks with the liveliest interest of occurrences that are perfectly indifferent to him. He must deceive those who, in the same manner, impose upon him, and yet he rejoices if he can but see his house filled with men, whose only merit, in his eyes, is, that they have a long catalogue of titles and are decorated with stars and ribbands.

On this privation of the light of the human understanding depends, frequently, the felicity of social life. Hence springs the imperious pride of the noble and the no less inordinate ambition of the lower orders : hence the contempt of the one, the envy of the other, and the folly of all.

All the haunts for turbulent diversions, and the perpetual intoxication of life, are temples of pleasure and of the highest enjoyment, to those dissipated men who dread every object that might awaken too serious reflections. The man who seeks his felicity in indolence, or directs all his activity and energy to vain and frivolous pursuits, which consume all his time, engage all the powers of his soul, and are the only subject of his conversation, cannot endure the idea of being left a single day to himself. What ! is, then, a useful or merely an agreeable occupation beneath his dignity ? Is he reduced to the melancholy condition of being unable to perform one virtuous action, during the intervals of leisure ? Can he render no services to his friends, to his country, to himself ? Can he find no victim of misfortune to relieve ? Is it impossible for him to be wiser or better to day than he was yesterday ?

Inanity of worldly pleasures.

The powers of the soul are more extensive than they are generally imagined to be. He who, from necessity or inclination, frequently exercises those powers, quickly discovers that his greatest felicity lies within himself. Most of our wants are artificial: if external objects contribute to our happiness and satisfaction, it is not because they are absolutely necessary, but because we have accustomed ourselves to them. The pleasure they afford us, renders it easy to persuade ourselves they are indispensable. But if we had fortitude to resist their charms, and endeavoured to find within our own bosoms that felicity we expect from external objects, we should much more frequently find those resources which the latter are incapable of affording.

Men of superficial understanding, indeed, find pleasure and amusement in those places, which are frequented principally for the purpose of seeing and being seen. But how many fine ladies are ready to expire there with mortification and languor! how many men of the most brilliant talents sit melancholy in a corner! Our expectations of the pleasure we shall receive in large companies are always over-rated. They are certainly favourable to the exercise of wit, the indulgence of coquetry and the gratification of sensuality. Every one is eager to display his talents, and those who are least informed sometimes acquire the reputation of shining characters. But we likewise see and hear many things that give us pleasure. Now and then we hear a witty expression, or a judicious remark. We meet with amiable and interesting persons, men of merit with whom we were before unacquainted. We find ourselves in the company of estimable and virtuous

Inanity of worldly pleasures.

females, whose refined conversation ravishes the mind, while the charms of their beauty delight the eye; sometimes, likewise, we may enjoy the exquisite pleasure of speaking well of our enemies, or even of doing them a kindness.

But with how many painful sensations are we not obliged to purchase these pleasures! He who by internal discontent, secret chagrin, or the dictates of reason, is prevented from participating in the general intoxication, observes with regret the confidence, the levity, the gaiety, the self-sufficiency, the thoughtless conduct and conversation of these sons and daughters of vanity and dissipation. It is certainly diverting to see the extravagant joy of so many supercilious placemen, the ridiculous airs of so many superannuated dowagers, and the absurd excesses of so many hoary-headed children. But who would not grow tired of the most diverting comedy if too frequently repeated? Thus whoever is accustomed to such scenes, has often yawned with fatigue in these temples of pleasure, and is convinced that they afford more illusion and specious deception, than substantial enjoyment, is sad amidst these diversions, and hastens back to his chamber, to resign himself to pleasures which do not deceive, which may be enjoyed at every period of life, and leave behind in his bosom neither inquietude nor discontent.

An invitation to the board of luxury, where Langour with leaden sceptre is known to preside, where each of the guests is sure to hear what he wishes not to hear, where the keen shafts of calumny and reproach are directed indiscriminately against every reputation, is considered by the world to confer dis-

Domestic happiness produces a love of Solitude.

tinguished honor and the highest gratification. But if a man feel an energy in his own mind, he has an aversion to all society that tends to enervate that power. To him, the simplest fare, with independence, is a thousand times more agreeable than ortolans and Tokay, at the board where he is obliged to be silent out of politeness to some vain wit, who utters only the most egregious nonsense.

What constitutes the real pleasure of society, is the amiable, confidential and reciprocal interchange of ideas and sentiments. Even those assemblies, at which prejudice and folly preside, doubtless afford a certain portion of social pleasure; but the wise man, who goes thither to seek rational intercourse, and agreeable recreation, and finds only uniform dullness, and a fatiguing round of ceremony, soon conceives an aversion to these abodes of pleasure, and never enters them without coldness, indifference or disgust.

We soon grow weary of the world in the tender embraces of an affectionate, patient and enlightened friend: we readily renounce the trammels of society for that independent and intimate communion, in which, unfettered by any restraint, we can think, do, and say what we please; can impart our thoughts and desires, our pleasures, and our pains; where we are led with tenderness into the paths of truth and virtue, where our thoughts are anticipated before they can escape our lips, where we receive and afford mutual support, assistance, counsel and consolation, in every misfortune, every accident or circumstance of life. Reanimated by the genial influence of friendship, the weary and dejected spirit is roused from its torpor, depression and apathy, and the

Domestic happiness produces a love of Solitude.

cheering ray of hope beams with undiminished splendor. Upon surveying the past, the happy pair mutually exclaim, with the tenderest emotion, "Ah! what have we not already experienced together." Their days pass like minutes; they are never tired of contributing to each other's amusement. They dread no misfortune, but the greatest they can possibly experience, occasional separation and death.

In such a complete, and intimate union of hearts and souls, they communicate to each other every day all that they hear, feel or know. Does one shed a tear of affliction, the other wipes it away, and mutual sympathy augments every joy and alleviates every sorrow.

Amidst such felicity it is neither rudeness of character nor incivility, but a very venial error of the imagination, if the intercourses of ordinary men no longer afford satisfaction, if we are insensible to their indifference, and heedless of their aversion; and if, expecting no enjoyment from the turbulent pleasures of the world, we avoid those companies, which have nothing to recommend them but their numbers.

But how frail is even this felicity; frequently alas! at the moment of the most perfect security, a sudden and unexpected blow strikes, even in our very arms, the object of our affections. All the pleasures of life seem to be for ever extinguished; all around appears dreary and forlorn; every object excites emotions of terror. In vain our arms are extended to embrace the friend that is no more, in vain we articulate his name. The step, the well-

Solitude soothes grief for the loss of a beloved object

known step strikes upon the listening ear, but reflection soon convinces us of the illusion. All is still and lifeless, and we are scarcely conscious of our own existence. A dreary solitude surrounds us, and we are sensible only to the pangs of our wounded hearts. In our dejection, we imagine that we are no longer capable of loving or being beloved; and life, without affection, to a heart that has known the delights of love, is the most terrible of deaths.

Thus the unfortunate being wishes to live in solitude and to die alone. In these gloomy moments when his imagination is overwhelmed with the magnitude of his misfortune, he sees no compassionate hand extended to assist him, none to sympathize in his afflictions, or that can form any conception of them, for none, who has not sustained such a loss, knows the pangs which it inflicts.

It is in cases like these that Solitude enjoys its highest triumph: there is no affliction too great, no sorrow too oppressive to be alleviated, and at length totally removed, by Solitude, when well applied.

The wounds of affliction, however, admit only of a slow and gradual cure. The art of living alone requires long experience, is grounded on so many contingencies, on so many particular situations that give tone to the character, that there must be a strong pre-disposition to solitude, before we can expect from it any considerable advantage. But he who has already shaken off the galling yoke of prejudice, who, from his earliest youth, has loved and valued the pleasures of retirement, will not be at a loss to know when he is prepared to benefit by them. When he feels indifferent to all surrounding

Effect of Solitude on a mind disgusted with life.

objects, when society has lost every charm in his eyes, he employs all the powers of his soul never to be less alone than in the company of himself.

Men of the highest talents are often obliged to attend to concerns, as disagreeable to their minds, as the most nauseous medicine to the stomach of the hungry man. Condemned to some dry and disgusting occupation, confined to the same spot and unable to extricate themselves from a heavy and painful yoke, they often resign every hope of tranquillity on this side the grave. Deprived of the enjoyment of relaxation, every object in the world fills them with disgust. It is not for them that the youthful zephyrs fan with gentle breezes the nascent foliage, that the winged creation chant their wild notes in melodious concert, that the meadows are bespangled with the variegated hues of innumerable flowers. But restore them to themselves, give them only liberty and leisure, you will soon see them recover their native vigour and enthusiasm, and soar aloft with eagle-flight into the remotest regions of intellect.

If Solitude be productive of such benefit under affliction, what effect will it not have upon him, who can retire when he pleases beneath its friendly shades, and whose soul seeks and desires nothing but pure air and domestic felicity! Antisthenes,* being

* Antisthenes, was born at Athens, and was the founder of the sect of the Cynics. He exerted himself with such energy in behalf of Socrates, that he procured the death of Militus and the banishment of Anytus, two of his persecutors. Of all his numerous works only a few apophthegms remain. Antisthenes was used to say, "that he would rather agree with a few good men, in opposition to the multi-

Advantage to be derived from dissipation

asked what advantage he had derived from philosophy, replied, that it had taught him to subdue himself. Pope confessed that he never laid his head on his pillow, without reflecting, that the most important concern for man, is to learn to be happy within himself. I conceive, that when we enjoy the pleasures of content within our own habitations, and are fond of every surrounding object even to our dog and cat, we have found what Pope looked for. Those pleasures and dissipations, which we seek with such eagerness and ardor, are certainly attended with this advantage, that they lead us to make the more serious reflections, when we return to the communion with ourselves. We then learn to know in what properly consists true felicity; whether it is in external objects, which we can neither alter nor amend; or whether it depends upon ourselves. It is then we discover all the deceitfulness of those flattering illusions, which promised us unceasing happiness. A lady, possessed of youth and beauty, wrote to me one evening, upon her return from a brilliant assembly: "You saw with what gaiety and content I left you, but, believe me, at the sight of those factitious joys, I felt a void so painful in my breast that I could have torn away the flowers that decorated my dress."

All the pleasures of this word are worthless, unless they make us happier in our own hearts, and tend to encrease our domestic felicity. The man who

tude of the wicked, than differ with the latter from a few virtuous men." Being told that Ismenias played excellently on the flute; he replied, "He cannot possess a great mind, or he would not be able to play so well."

Indisposition sometimes productive of happiness.

can find tranquillity in his chamber, amidst the privacy of study, acquires fortitude to support every misfortune. This alone is a great felicity ; for it would be presumption to exact more from ourselves than the will to regulate our heart and desires. A celebrated philosopher has said with great justice, that there was both pride and falsehood in the assertion, that we can find perfect felicity within our own bosoms.

But we are certainly capable of modifying ourselves, we can regulate our tastes, our sentiments, our inclinations, and even our passions ; and we are then not only less sensible of our wants, but we likewise find happiness in a state which others would consider dreary and deplorable. Health is, doubtless, one of the most precious blessings ; but there are circumstances and cases in which its loss is accompanied with real tranquillity. Ah ! how often have I thanked the supreme disposer of events for an indisposition, that has confined me to my house, and afforded me an opportunity to collect the scattered powers of my soul in quietude ! This felicity indeed terminated with my convalescence. After having been obliged for many years to drag through the streets every day of my life, with a weakly constitution, enfeebled limbs and shattered nerves, when the slightest degree of cold produced a sensation as if a hundred knives were separating the flesh from my bones, continually surrounded in the course of my profession with sorrow and affliction, I felt gratitude for every agreeable moment, and found inexpressible felicity in the tranquil pleasures, which confinement by indisposition afforded. Continually occupied with the sufferings of others, a physician

of sensibility, without doubt, frequently forgets his own; but alas! how often does the man feel all his own sufferings increased, when, however oppressed by pain of body or anguish of mind, he is summoned to exercise powers which he does not possess! Under these circumstances, I enjoy even amid indisposition, a sweet repose, a delightful solitude, provided I am not politely disturbed with the visits of ceremony. In those moments I pray heaven to bestow its blessings on all those who leave me to myself, who neglect to overwhelm me with their idle and insipid conversation, and have the compassion to refrain from enquiries concerning the state of my health. If even, when very ill, I can enjoy tranquillity at home for a single day, free from the intrusion of visitors and the fatigue of writing letters, it affords me greater pleasure, than ladies of quality and gentlemen of fashion receive from all their diversions and entertainments.

This alleviation of our sufferings in solitude must be considered a great advantage; for, to a man whose duties depend upon the necessities and caprices of the public, of whom incessant activity is required, and who passes his days in continual torment, tranquillity of mind is a transcendent felicity.

In our early years, or more mature age, the power of employing ourselves, in the retirement of our closet, with any useful or agreeable occupation, banishes the dread of solitude. When soured by disappointment, we must endeavour to pursue some fixed and pleasing course of study. We never read without profit, if, with the pen or pencil in our

Mental pleasures superior to those of sense.

hand, we mark such ideas as strike by their novelty, or correct those we already possess. Reading soon becomes fatiguing, unless undertaken with an eye to our own advantage, or that of others, and when it does not enrich the mind with new ideas. But this habit is easily acquired by exercise, and then books afford the surest relief in the most melancholy moments.

Painful and disagreeable ideas vanish from the mind, that can fix its attention upon any subject. The sight of a noble and interesting object, the study of a useful science, the varied pictures of the different revolutions exhibited in the history of mankind, the improvements in any art, are capable of arresting the attention and charming every care. It is thus that man becomes sociable with himself; it is thus that he finds his best friend within his own bosom.

Pleasures of this nature are certainly far superior to every sensual gratification; I am aware that, in speaking of the pleasures of the mind, profound reasoning, abstract research, or the brilliant productions of fancy are generally understood; but, there are others, for the enjoyment of which, neither extensive learning nor extraordinary talents are necessary. These are the pleasures of active labor, pleasures equally within the reach of the clown and the philosopher, and which ensure delights as sweet as the former. The occupations of laborious industry should never be treated with contempt. I am acquainted with many noblemen who can repair their watches, who are painters, cabinet-makers and carpenters, who possess the

The pleasures of the heart attainable by all.

tools necessary for almost every business, and know how to use them; they feel no inquietude for want of society, and are the happiest of men.

When the study of any art or science is commenced from predilection, and prosecuted with ardor to a certain point of perfection, it makes man satisfied with himself, and counterbalances the greatest moral evils. To conquer difficulties, whether great or small, is to increase our pleasures. When advancing towards any proposed object, or when we see, with inward satisfaction, the completion of some favorite scheme, the mind feels tranquil and contented, and looks forward with pleasure to the coming day.

The pleasures of the heart are within the reach of all those whose minds are easy, contented, tranquil and pleased with those around them. Ah, how preferable is, therefore, the happiness we enjoy in rural retirement, to the deceitful felicity which is affected in the splendid palace or the circles of the gay! But this is no secret to the votary of fashionable dissipation, who so frequently complains of lassitude and languor: those intruders are unknown among the vallies of the Alps, upon the mountains where innocence resides, and which the stranger cannot quit without the tribute of a tear.

But this bane of life may be avoided, even amidst luxurious cities, by renouncing the insipid life of their inhabitants. Every virtuous action diffuses a calm in the soul, permanent and tranquil joy accompanies the mind in the privacy of retirement, after every exertion in the cause of humanity. As we all dwell with delight upon the

recital of our school-adventures, and the wanton tricks of our boyish years; what pleasure do we not derive from the recollection of the occurrences of the early periods of our lives, the remembrance of our sportive pastimes, of our petty troubles and puerile wishes. Ah! with what a smile of complacency, with what pleasing pain, the venerable old man casts a retrospective look at those happy times, when the carnation of health glowed on the cheek, when every enterprize was undertaken with vigor and resolution, and executed with courage, and when he sought difficulties, merely to have an opportunity of exercising his powers in the obstinate contest.

Let us compare what we once were, with what we are at the present moment, and we shall discover the influence of our youthful actions upon the happiness of our maturer years. Even yet, we shall feel their powerful effects, in every vicissitude of fortune, upon our virtues and vices; in a word, in every occurrence and transaction of our lives. Or, if, forgetting ourselves and giving our ideas a more extensive range, we consider all the various events that we have witnessed, the means employed by the Almighty for the elevation or humiliation of empires; the rapid progress of our age in knowledge and science; the revival of ancient prejudices; the empire of barbarism and superstition over the human mind, notwithstanding the efforts of enlightened genius; the sublime flights of the imagination, and its boundless excesses; languor will immediately disappear, and peace, tranquillity and good humour will take possession of our bosoms.

In every period of life, and in every station, re-

Reflection in Solitude affords such felicity and such enjoyments as transcend all those that are derived from the pleasures of sense. He who, to a vigorous constitution, a tranquil and independent spirit, adds the powers of a mind, animated by exercise and expanded by cultivation, can always find pure delights within his own breast, if his heart enjoy that peace which innocence inspires.

The love of exercise animates all the powers of the mind and encreases the energies of nature. A lively imagination meets with continual difficulties. It is the inward consciousness it possesses of its native power and dignity, that directs the virtuous soul to the noblest purposes amidst this inquietude. But if, by the duties of our station, or other circumstances, we are obliged to maintain a continual intercourse with mankind; if, in spite of ourselves, we are necessitated to submit to frivolous and fatiguing dissipations; it is upon quitting these tumultuous scenes, that we feel the most powerful, the most ardent desire, to break all these chains, to withdraw from the servility of pleasure, and from the tumult of dissipation.

We never feel, with greater energy and satisfaction, with greater comfort and cordiality, that we live, think, are reasonable beings, self-instigated, independent, capable of the most sublime exertions and immortal, than at the moment when we shut our doors against idle and impertinent intruders.

Few vexations are more insupportable than those tasteless visits, those disgusting formalities, which constitute the chief business of a life of splendid and luxurious indolence. "My thoughts," said

New Virtues acquired in Solitude.

Rousseau, "will only come when they please and not when I chuse;" he therefore took them when they came. The intrusions of foreigners and strangers were, for this reason, so hateful to him: on this account, that great man, who so seldom passed an hour in quietude and free from pain, was filled with such indignation at the visits and inquiries of impertinent civility, at the empty compliments and disgusting inspidity of common conversation, though nothing afforded him greater delight than the intercourse with sensible and well-informed minds.*

The character is debased by the intercourse with low and little minds. How many rays of brightest intellect are obscured and extinguished by the noxious vapors of stagnant life, precious rays, immediate emanations from the Divinity; which, by reflexion and meditation in Solitude, recover their primitive lustre, exalt the mind, and give consistency to the character.

Virtues of which the mind, even amidst the most amiable intercourse, is not susceptible, frequently flourish in Solitude. Are our friends removed from us, are we deprived, for ever deprived of their society, the delight of our hearts—such a misfortune leads us to fortify our minds in Solitude and to adopt the boldest resolutions. When, on the contrary, the protecting arm of love or friendship is continually extended, with affectionate care, to ward off every thing that might molest us, and

* "I never could endure (says Rousseau,) "the silly and unmeaning compliments of common conversation, but from solid and useful conversation, I always derived the highest pleasure, and such I never refused."

It imparts strength and originality of character.

to anticipate our every want, we often forget that we possess the power to move, to act of ourselves, and to struggle through all the adversities of life. Are we compelled even against our inclination to live solitary and alone, the soul acquires new fortitude and is restored to tranquillity, if it oppose, with vigor and resolution, the calamities that seem ready to overwhelm it. We find resources within ourselves, of which we had no idea, while philosophy inspires us with courage to meet the most rigorous shocks of fate.

The character and sentiments acquire additional energy and originality, when we retire from the tumult of life, to commune with our own hearts and to reflect in stillness on the world and ourselves. If the soul can find delight only in external objects, the reason is, because it is too weak to resign itself to reflection; it must first consult the infallible oracle of public opinion, to know what to think and how to act, to direct its judgment and regulate its conduct. *

Weak minds always think it safest to follow the sentiments of the multitude. They never venture to form an opinion till they are acquainted with that of the public, and adopt all its decisions concerning

* "Ignorance," says Garve, "is weakness, and weakness makes us dependent on others, causes us to seek their company, to avoid their displeasure and to court their love. Understanding, on the contrary, renders man independent, and furnishes him with native resources. He who feels that he possesses it, conscious of his independence, steadily prosecutes his purposes, regardless of the interest, the convenience or the prejudices of others."

Solitude calls forth the resources of the Mind.

men and things, without giving themselves the trouble to examine whether they are founded in truth and justice. Equity cannot be expected from him, who dreads being abandoned to his own reflections; men of superficial and dissipated minds never take the part of the weak and the oppressed. Are the numerous and powerful hosts of ignorance and folly drawn up in array against you; are you calumniated and traduced by the combined powers of error and prejudice—never expect assistance from superficial minds, which are nothing more than the echo of the public voice.

To live in Solitude, to feel that we are alone, inspires terror, only as far as regards the repulsion of one corporeal power by another. The energy of the mind, on the contrary, is augmented, by the very circumstance of our calling forth all our native resources, when we observe that none takes our part, that nobody fights in our cause. We must live alone, that we may acquire courage to resist alone, that we may be less affected by the impressions of the moment, that we may be raised above the contingencies of life, and be inspired with courage to meet every danger. How smoothly our lives glide away when we have no anxiety to enquire: what says this man, or what says that? How many contemptible prejudices and passions are banished from the soul by reflection! How speedily vanishes that idolatrous, scandalous and servile veneration for what is unworthy of our regard! With what noble spirit we then fearlessly disdain those characters, who imagine, that the hereditary dignity derived from their ancestors gives them a right to tyrannize

It leads to a more intimate knowledge of ourselves.

over their fellow creatures; and who invariably persecute, with the most unrelenting cruelty, those who have the greatest reason to despise them.

A highly celebrated and acute observer of the nature of men and things, tells us, "that in the repose of leisure and the privacy of retirement, the soul exalts itself to that sublime tranquillity, which renders it superior to the vicissitudes of life, to praise and reproach, and even to life and death; that *there* are developed those principles and ideas which constitute the great man and enable him to support that character. Even philosophy itself," continues this excellent writer, in his observations upon Cicero, "which is the ground-work of the sublime powers of the statesman, and enables him to fulfil, with ability, his important functions, is formed in Solitude, remote from the great theatre of the world."

Thus we see, that Solitude not only imparts to the character and sentiments greater energy and correctness, but likewise a real degree of elevation. No situation is so favorable for cultivating the acquaintance with our own hearts. We are led to a much closer communion and more intimate connection with ourselves. We may, it is true, make many excellent reflections in the tumultuous intercourse with the world, especially if we entered it with minds imbued with virtuous principles; but it is far more difficult to maintain a correct line of conduct there, than in the calm of retirement. How many obtain universal applause merely for their follies or their vices! How many accomplished villains and unprincipled profligates are welcomed into every company, because they know

Solitude leads to a more intimate knowledge of ourselves ;

how to flatter the foibles, applaud the extravagances and encourage the vices of those, who take the lead in the circles of fashion! How, indeed, should such characters be capable of appreciating their own deserts, when they are intoxicated with the fumes of the incense, which adulation burns to their honor? In privacy they would learn what they are and what they ought to be, if they were capable of reflection, if, by the pressure of misfortune, they were compelled to serious communion with themselves, and a thorough examination of the state of their hearts.

How many useful discoveries we might make, were we occasionally to withdraw from our ordinary intercourse with the world, or only to abstract ourselves from it, by indulging in silent contemplation! To this end, nothing more is necessary, than to examine our hearts with sincerity, and to weigh our actions with rigid impartiality. Many would then see, with surprise, that they are the wretched slaves of fashion, habit and public opinion, submitting, with the most scrupulous accuracy and the best possible grace, to the imperious dictates of politeness and established usage; never venturing to contradict any thing, however absurd; but blindly complying with the follies, prejudices and caprices of others. If such characters possess candor, they will likewise find, that they every day say and approve an infinite number of things, out of complaisance and the dread of ridicule; that, in the presence of princes and nobles, they only study to flatter their fancies and caprices; that, out of politeness, they chuse rather to be the ministers of their injustice, than to contradict, or to give any opin-

And strengthens us in the practice of Virtue.

ion that might incur their displeasure. Whoever coolly considers this dreadful picture in silent communion with himself, must feel the necessity of a temporary retirement from the world, in order to associate with men of nobler sentiments and more exalted principles.

The violent alternatives of pleasure and pain, hope and fear, content and disappointment, incessantly torment him, who has not the power of raising himself, by silent contemplation, above the objects of sense. There is an end of all virtue, if we give way to every impression, and resign our minds to every momentary feeling. Virtue disdains to dwell in the bosom of him, who, after the example of the times, suffers himself to be guided entirely by selfish motives, whose conduct is governed by views of interest, either immediate or more remote. To possess the power of practising virtue even at our own expence, it is necessary to live in retirement, regardless of the occurrences of the moment, and to learn to appreciate in stillness the value of all human things and actions. The slave of worldly pleasures knows not how to forego present advantage, is a stranger to the noble sacrifice of fame and fortune. Such characters estimate no action by its intrinsic value; their whole conduct is regulated by the favors, honors and emoluments they expect to derive; they fawn, flatter, lie, calumniate and cringe to him, who, if he were equally base, might prejudice their interests; and for a prospect of like advantages, they act over again the same scenes of meanness behind his back.

The mind more easily discovers, and becomes better acquainted with the passions that govern it,

In Solitude the Passions are more easily subdued.

when it reflects upon them in the calm of retirement; for there it enjoys more perfect liberty, and does not hesitate between fear and pride. Ah! how virtuous are we under the pressure of misfortune! How submissive, how indulgent, how humble is man, when chastised by the hand of the Almighty, when he frustrates his plans and disappoints his hopes; when his omnipotence bows him in the dust, converts his wisdom into folly, and his profoundest counsels into manifest weakness and imbecility! At such times the caresses of a child, or the civilities of a beggar afford pleasure. But, in what a different light does he view every object, how much less mild and patient is he, when consciousness of his power renders external objects indifferent to him, when he feels his strength and superiority over all that humbles the weak and alarms the timid. All external objects make a deeper impression upon the soul, when we live among men, who rejoice at our calamities, and to whom a dignified and enterprising spirit is obnoxious.

In Solitude we are less dejected by calamity, less intoxicated with prosperity, being much less exposed to the vicissitudes of fortune, where life glides away like a flitting shadow. Adversity needs not here intrude, to teach us that we are nothing in the sight of God, and can effect nothing without his assistance; that pride, without power, poisons the happiness of life, torments the heart, and is the endless and ever encreasing source of misery. But should we, even then, sink into despondency and despair, should we be bereft of every comfort, and uncertain what course to pursue, yet we are more capable of submitting, with resignation, to the

It assists to correct the judgment.

stroke of fate, in tranquillity and retirement, where nothing shocks the eye, where none despises us unjustly, or esteems us without reason.

Let every one, therefore, who wishes to think with greater dignity and prudence, seek the retreats of Solitude and commune there with his heart. Oh! how small a portion of true philosophy and enlightened reason renders us humble and compliant! But bewildered by prejudice, enveloped with the gloom of ignorance, we stray from the right path and seek felicity in dullness and obscurity. We must live in tranquillity and seclusion, that we may not estimate men and things beyond their real value. To reject all the prejudices of society, is the first step towards reason, which enables us, in our researches after truth, and in the unmolested exercise of practical philosophy, to prize only what is worthy of our esteem.

Notwithstanding these advantages of Solitude, they may still leave us unacquainted with our own hearts. With what favor and partiality do we frequently judge of our merits in Solitude, to how many ignoble passions do we listen, even there, and how much is still wanting to durable pleasure and true internal happiness!

This felicity, Solitude affords, if, when we are alone before God, remote from the eyes of men, the silent language of conscience shews us, how different we are from what we are thought, how short we fall of what we ought to be, and what difficulties we have to surmount, before we arrive at that point. In the world, men mutually deceive each other; they make a parade of learning, and affect sentiment which they do not possess; each

We more easily discover our failings in Solitude.

misleads the other, and at length, himself, by his own illusions. In Solitude, the candid mind scrutinizes more severely, and judges with more correctness: remote from flatterers and hypocrites, the heart there learns to esteem simplicity and sincerity. There, we fear no prejudice from these virtues, for there nothing virtuous is ridiculous or contemptible. There, we compare the character we have acquired with what we actually are; there, all the superior advantages, all the apparent virtues which are attributed to us, vanish like an airy vapor. There, the shallowness of our knowledge, the false conclusions of our reason, in a word, every failing of the heart is developed to the eye of impartiality. Every dereliction of virtue, all the imperfections of our sublimest sentiments and most generous actions, all the ostentation of our self-love, are there delineated by the hand of truth. But these defects we are never capable of discovering in ourselves, amidst the bustle of business, the turbulent intercourse with the world, and the dangers of social life.

To subdue those dangerous passions and pernicious inclinations, that we may have brought with us into Solitude, it is only necessary to divert the attention to other objects and other passions. Solitude affords inexhaustible resources for new sentiments and new ideas; the powers of the soul are expanded, and acquire all the energy of which they are susceptible. If Solitude, with the indolent, favor the seductive influence of the desires, to the active mind, it ensures the victory over every unruly passion.

Snatched from the illusions of society and the

What persons are incapable of profiting by Retirement.

snare of the world, and buried in the privacy of retirement, we see every object in its true form, as well as under the distractions of misfortune, in disease and upon the bed of death. We there discover the vanity and insignificance of all external advantages, and the necessity of curbing the extravagance of thought and licentiousness of desire. Every illusion vanishes, and he, who by his faults and vices, is as much exalted above others, as he ought to be sunk beneath them, there perceives what adulation conceals, and what a herd of miserable slaves is mean enough to justify and extol.

To find durable pleasure, and to experience true felicity, it is necessary to possess that sound and judicious philosophy, which causes man to consider life as an affair of high importance, to pursue pleasures which no accident can destroy, and to regard, with pity, the stupid multitude alternately tormented and diverted by the most insignificant objects. Those, on the contrary, who are unacquainted with their own hearts, who have not accustomed themselves to reflection, to habits of industry, to persevere in doing good and to listen to the voice of reason, have nothing to hope from Solitude. All their joys are annihilated, when their blood has lost its warmth, when their senses are satiated and their strength diminished; when every breeze shatters their nerves, when the least indisposition, or the slightest reverse of fortune, fills them with the most alarming inquietude, the most dreadful apprehensions, and all the tortures of a sickly imagination.

Hitherto I have only pointed out the most common advantages of Solitude; many others remain

Advantages of Solitude on the bed of death ;

to be treated of, which are infinitely more important to mankind. Many will remain, even after I have demonstrated the beneficial influence of Solitude upon the mind, in the various occurrences and afflictions of life, its consolatory power when oppressed by sickness, and melancholy, or when deprived, by separation or death, of the beloved object of our affection; when I have shewn the immense advantages of religious retirement, of a sacred tranquillity, where all the virtuous sentiments we bring with us from society are more deeply impressed upon the heart. 'Tis there we learn to renounce the world, in which it is impossible to acquire true wisdom; there we overcome the greatest obstacles to our happiness, and devote ourselves to the practice of every peaceful virtue; there too, every man, when on the bed of death, wishes that he had lived. But these advantages become much more obvious, when we compare the mode of thinking of the solitary philosopher with that of the worldly sensualist; when we contrast the horrors of the death-bed of the worldly-minded man, with the peaceful and tranquil exit of those religious souls, who submit, with pious resignation, to all the dispensations of heaven.

We then perceive the necessity of turning an eye inwardly upon ourselves, and of a religious communion with God, that we may thence derive fortitude to endure the sufferings of life as well as the pains of death.

Solitude affords incontestable advantages in the greatest adversities of life. The sick, the afflicted, and even the misanthrope, frequently find relief in retirement.

And in the hour of sickness and affliction.

The sick and the afflicted would remove, with horror, from the retreats of Solitude, if its shades did not afford them resources, not to be obtained in the abodes of worldly pleasure. In the hour of sickness and affliction, the subtle vapor, which sensuality and an ardent imagination shed upon every object, around those who possess health and prosperity, entirely disappears. All the charms, which have no existence in nature, but are the offspring of the imagination, vanish from their eyes. To the happy, every thing appears in the delightful colours of the rose; to the afflicted all is black and gloomy. Both are mistaken; but neither discovers his error till the curtain falls, the scene changes, and the illusion vanishes. Both awake from their dream, when the imagination is silenced. The latter, at length, perceive, that God directs things for their good, even when they think themselves entirely abandoned by him; with the former, all the pleasures and amusements they enjoyed, in the tumultuous intercourse with the world, lose the imaginary value which they attached to them, when they reflect seriously upon themselves, their present state, and that for which they are destined, together with the means of attaining the only real felicity.

How miserable we should be, if Providence were to grant all our wishes! At the very moment, when man believes that all the happiness of his future life is utterly destroyed, God, perhaps, purposes something extraordinary in his favour. New circumstances excite new energies. From a state of inactivity, the mind is often suddenly roused to the noblest exertions; when relying on the arm of Provi-

Advantages of Solitude in sickness and affliction.

dence, we earnestly endeavour, in Solitude and tranquillity, to overcome misfortune. We feel renewed life and vigour, after we had long imagined, that we were condemned to eternal inaction, and that all the energies of our souls were extinguished.

If even sorrow force us into Solitude, patience and perseverance soon restore the mind to tranquillity and joy. We should never seek to dive into futurity, as we only deceive ourselves. On the contrary, we should continually repeat to ourselves this consolatory truth, established by the test of experience, that a circumstance, which, when at a distance, we regard with inquietude and apprehension, loses all its terrors as it approaches, and frequently brings with it unexpected felicity. The man who tries every expedient, who struggles against every obstacle, and manfully opposes every difficulty; who neglects nothing that is in his power, and firmly relies upon his God, deprives every affliction of its sting and melancholy of its victory. *

Misfortune, sickness, and affliction, quickly and easily make us familiar with Solitude. How soon we learn to renounce the world and become indifferent to its pleasures; how feeble is the inward voice

* O that every one of my readers could comprehend the following words of a dying philosopher, the late professor Hissman of Göttingen, which he wrote a short time before his death: "God never ordains any of his children to pursue a path which does not lead sooner or later to felicity: and he never draws from the bosom of sensibility the most secret sigh, that is not, at length, drowned in the rapturous strains of gratitude."

Conduct to be observed by the Valetudinarian.

of passion, when we are overwhelmed with grief and pain, and abandoned by all the energies of the mind ! How quickly we then perceive the weakness of all those succours which the world affords, where pain incessantly intrudes and vanity reigns uncontrolled ! How many useful truths are then suggested to the prince or the noble, by his own mind, when every one besides combines to impose upon him !

The time is certainly short and rolls rapidly away, in which the valetudinarian is able to employ his powers with facility, with success, and in a manner corresponding with his designs. Such happiness is the lot only of health ; those alone who possess a robust constitution can say, " Time is my own." But he, who labors under continual sickness and suffering, and whose avocations depend upon public necessity or caprice, can never call an hour his own. He must steal the flitting moments when and how he can. Notwithstanding his daily sufferings, his melancholy, his dejection and ill-humor, he must oppose all these evils, and manfully combat every difficulty, if he would not be entirely disheartened. The more we enervate ourselves, the more our health declines. A courageous and obstinate resistance is, in this case, a proof of a remnant of strength, and he, who in retirement vigorously opposes misfortune, must in the end obtain some advantage.

In sickness we are too apt to listen to the voice of indulgence ; we forget our remaining strength, and resign ourselves to every distressing sensation, instead of diverting and employing our attention with other subjects. Thus the mind sinks deeper into dejection and inquietude, and loses the portion of energy

Conduct to be observed by the Valetudinarian.

and reason it still possessed. We are likewise inclined to place too little confidence in those designs, which we commence in a state of continual pain and suffering. Let the valetudinarian only strive to forget his troubles, let him disengage his soul from the corporeal weight which depresses it, and he will certainly find unexpected relief, he will be enabled to perform what before appeared impossible. But he must previously dismiss all the physicians, who every day come to ascertain the state of his health, feel his pulse with a ludicrous gravity, wisely shaking their heads, and making many other accustomed grimaces; who possess the faculty of seeing what does not exist, and unfortunately overlook what is most plainly to be seen. By their lamentations and their affected sympathy in his sufferings, these empirics rivet the patient's attention to subjects which he ought to forget. He should likewise forbid his friends and acquaintance to humor his weaknesses. He should intreat them not to believe all that he says; for if all his sensations are real, his imagination will accompany them with delusive phantoms and terrifying chimæras.

Even in situations of the utmost dejection and debility of mind, Solitude is capable of affording counsel and consolation. Are the nerves deranged; is the head incessantly tortured with vertigoes; are you deprived of the power of thinking; of reading, of writing; is it physically impossible to rouse yourself to the slightest exertion of the mental faculties—in such a situation you must learn to vegetate, as one of the most enlightened philosophers in Germany said to me, when he saw me at Hanover, in a state which rendered me incapable of doing any-

thing else. O Garve! with what tenderness I pressed you to my bosom, with what rapture I listened to you, when you shewed me the necessity of learning to support myself, under that state, when I heard that you had experienced equal sufferings, and had practised what you taught!

• There was a time when the sublime Mendelssohn was obliged to retire from company, whenever the conversation turned upon philosophical subjects, to avoid the danger of fainting. He, for a long time, denied himself every occupation, and every study. While in this state, as this great and amiable philosopher himself informed me at Hanover, his physician visited him and asked: "How can you employ yourself alone in your chamber, if you dare not think?" "I stand at the window," replied Mendelssohn, "and count the tiles upon the roof of my neighbour's house."

Without thy tranquil wisdom, O my beloved Mendelssohn! without thy resignation to the will of heaven, none can attain to that grandeur of character, that noble submission under affliction, that stoic fortitude, that perfect independence on corporeal affections and the vicissitudes of fate! How consolatory is thy example, and how must humanity rejoice, to see with what power resignation endues us, even against the severest of physical evils!

Resignation under complete imbecility, and moderate exertion, upon the most distant glimpse of returning strength, must be mutually brought to each other's aid. As long as a man asserts the least claim to virtue, he will never become so debased, as not to endeavour to subdue himself, even when, in the unhappy moments of despair, he believes that

Necessity of employment in hypochondria.

nothing is capable of affording him relief and consolation.

The martyr to hypochondria and nervous debility may rise superior to the most acute bodily sufferings, if he be not indolent and unemployed, if his attention be diverted by other objects from himself; if he make but a very moderate effort, to banish from his mind every painful and melancholy thought, and resign himself to the influence of those inclinations and passions, that ennoble and elevate the heart. We should, therefore, cultivate within our breasts every germ of activity; we must even compel ourselves to active occupation, till we feel an ardor in the prosecution of it, which leads us to a state of habitual unremitted energy. Next to the indispensable, filial and entire submission to the dispensations of Providence, I consider the judicious employment of solitude amidst the depression arising from nervous debility, as the best and most efficient antidote to lassitude, melancholy and ill-humor.

The influence of the mind upon the body is a truth, highly consolatory to those, subject to constitutional complaints. Supported by this idea, they are never completely dejected; religion never loses its power over them; and they remain strangers to the lamentable truth, that men of the most enlightened understandings, and the finest sensibilities, are often weaker in affliction than the vulgar. If Campanella's * assertion appear too incredible, that he

* Thomas Campanella, an Italian philosopher, and a monk of the Dominican order, was born at Stilo in Calabria, in 1568. His sagacity enabled him to discover the falsity

Instances of the power of the mind over the body.

could divert his attention so completely from the most acute sensation, as to be capable of enduring the rack without feeling much pain; I can however declare, from my own experience, that even in the most severe attacks of nervous complaints, whatever powerfully attracts the attention, never fails to alleviate the disorder, and frequently removes it before we are aware.

By diverting the attention, many celebrated philosophers have not only preserved the tranquillity of their minds, amidst the most alarming inquietudes, but have increased the powers of their intellectual faculties, notwithstanding their constitutional infirmities. Rousseau wrote many of his immortal works, under the pressure of almost incessant pain. Gellert, by his agreeable, mild, and instructive writings, became the preceptor of Germany; and this interesting occupation certainly afforded him the surest remedy, against the attacks of the most confirmed melancholy. At an advanced age, Mendelssohn, who was never melancholy, but was long subject to extreme dejection, arising from a nervous complaint, elevated himself to that sublimity of mind, for which he was so conspicuous in his youthful years, by resignation under his afflictions, by patience and docility. Garve, who passed

of the Peripatetic system, and he undertook to form one of his own, which raised him numerous enemies. In 1599 he was seized at Naples, on suspicion of being concerned in a conspiracy, and languished in confinement till 1626, when he was released at the request of the Pope. In 1634 he went to France, where he was kindly received by Cardinal Richelieu, who granted him a pension. He died at Paris in 1639. His writings are very numerous. T.

whole years without reading, writing or even thinking, since that melancholy period composed his *Treatise on Cicero*, in which work this profound writer, so circumspect in all his expressions, who would have felt regret if a single word too emphatic had escaped from his pen, returns thanks to God, with a kind of extacy, for the infirmity of his constitution, because it had convinced him of the powerful influence of the mind over the body.

By resolution, and fixing our view on some noble and interesting object, we are enabled to bear the most poignant afflictions; heroic courage is extremely natural in circumstances of extraordinary danger; and is more common than patience under the little vexations of life. But, persevering courage under afflictions of long duration, is very rare, especially when the soul is enervated by melancholy, and when the mind abandons itself to the ordinary refuge, *despair*, and imagines that misfortunes will never cease to torment it. Thus, of all the calamities that afflict human nature, melancholy is the most severe; and of all the remedies for it, none is so efficacious as activity, in the tranquil bosom of retirement.

With moderate exertion, and a small degree of resistance, Solitude never fails to alleviate melancholy; as soon as we make it a rule never to be idle, to endure our sufferings with patience, and to employ ourselves, in stillness, with some kind of occupation, be it of ever such a trifling nature. Submission and calm resignation, even under the most acute sufferings of the soul, often inspire it with renewed energy, if we do not cherish a repugnance to all active exertion, and endeavour to repel

our misery by moderate but continued efforts. A small victory leads to a greater; and even the slightest joy arising from it, at least interrupts the sensation of incessant sorrow. When the efforts of reason and virtue are incapable of producing a salutary effect in sickness and melancholy, the mind should be employed with objects of little importance and that require no great exertion of its powers, for sometimes the slightest effort suddenly dissipates the severest sorrow. The clouds of melancholy disappear, the moment we feel an interest in any occupation, even if undertaken with the greatest reluctance. Even that supineness, apathy and despair, which reject all advice and all consolation, are frequently nothing but a disguise for our ill-humor and consequently a real disease of the imagination, which can only be subdued by firm and constant perseverance.

For persons of too refined sensibility, whose imagination is too ardent to mix with society in the world, and who are always dissatisfied with men and things, retirement is not only necessary, but it is a real duty. He who suffers himself to be dejected by what scarcely produces the least emotion in another; who complains of the severity of those pains, which others scarcely feel; who sinks into despair if he cannot instantly recover felicity and content; who is incessantly tormented by the illusions of fancy; who thinks himself miserable only because prosperity does not anticipate his wishes; who is dissatisfied with every thing because he knows not what he wants; who flies from one wish, and from one gloomy idea, to another; who dreads every thing and enjoys nothing—such a character is not suited

Fortitude and Resolution acquired in Solitude.

to the Society of mankind and if Solitude prove incapable of affording relief, he will certainly not find, in the world, any other remedy to cure him.

Men, possessing the soundest judgment, the most fervent piety and the most benevolent disposition, are often tormented by extreme dejection and alarming inquietude, in direct opposition to their principles ; but they are themselves generally to blame. If their melancholy be occasioned by childish fears ; if they be inclined to torment themselves and others, on account of every trifling inconvenience, every slight derangement of their health ; if they seek in medicine that relief which reason alone can afford ; if they do not endeavor to repress the extravagancies of their imagination ; if, after having supported with patience the acutest sufferings and the severest misfortunes, they will not habituate themselves to bear the smallest puncture of a pin, the petty inconveniencies of human life ; such a state of dejection must be attributed to themselves alone. Those, who by a single effort of the imagination, would, with the utmost composure, advance under the heaviest fire to the cannon's mouth, frequently fall under the apprehension of being fired at with pop-guns.

All those essential qualities of the soul, firmness, resolution and a stoic fortitude of character, are much more easily acquired in the communion with our own minds, than amidst the tumult of society, where we encounter a thousand difficulties that oppose us, where ceremony, servility, and fear paralyse every energy, and obstruct every power, and where, for this reason, men of weak and narrow minds are always more versatile and

Fortitude and Resolution acquired in Solitude.

active, and always obtain greater regard, attention and applause, than those who possess the highest and most refined understandings.

Solitude fortifies the mind the more effectually, in sorrow and affliction, because all the shadows and vanities, which distract the soul and drive it to wander in a dreary void, are dispersed in retirement. We there renounce so many enjoyments, we are there accustomed to have fewer wants, we have there perhaps made such progress in the knowledge of ourselves, that we are less astonished, when the Almighty humbles us by affliction, disappoints our proud and vain conceits, restrains the violence of our passions, and recalls us to a lively sense of our weakness and inanity. How many important reflections there present themselves, to which the worldly-minded man is a stranger, and which are stifled by the torrent of vanity in his dissipated soul! What a superior knowledge of human nature we there acquire, by the examination of our own hearts, and of surrounding objects! Ah! in what a different light many things appear in retirement, how the heart expands to more virtuous sentiments, how we learn to blush at ourselves; how our minds are elevated to sublimer conceptions, more virtuous resolutions and a more irreproachable conduct!

The unfortunate being, who mourns the death of some beloved object, feels a laudable inclination to withdraw from the intercourse of society; but this desire his friends unite to destroy. They prevent all conversation with the unhappy sufferer concerning his loss. They think it preferable to surround him with a crowd of cold and indifferent persons, who imagine, that to dissipate sorrow and

Necessity of Solitude in mental affliction.

affliction, it is sufficient to pay the tributary visit, to chatter from morning till night on the news of the town, as if each of their pleasantries conveyed a healing balsam to the wounded heart.

Leave me alone; thought I a thousand times, when, in less than two years after my arrival in Germany, I lost the dearly beloved companion of my life. Her departed spirit incessantly hovered about me, the sweet recollection of her society, and the afflicting remembrance of what she suffered for me, in this strange country, were ever present to my mind. Amidst the firmest conviction of her purity and innocence in the sight of God, and her universal benevolence towards mankind, such a conclusion of such a life precipitated me into the abyss of torturing despair.* During five months the pangs of death hung continually around her. One day, when I was reading by her bed-side, the *Death of Jesus* by Rammler, she cast her eyes upon the book, and, without saying a word, pointed to the following passage: "My breath grows weak, my life is shortened, my heart is full of affliction, and my soul is ready to take its flight!" Ah! when I recollect all these circumstances, and how impossible it was for me to abandon the world, at that period of distress and pain, being still a slave to the

* I still remember with heart-felt gratitude, how Lavater relieved me from this dreadful situation by a single expression, which I shall never forget, and which was so consolatory to my mind, that I sought no farther consolation. He wrote to me as follows: "As the momentary smart from the puncture of a lancet contributes to the cure of a heavy and painful disease, so all the sufferings endured in this life contribute to the joys that succeed in eternity."

Necessity of Solitude in mental affliction.

necessities or caprices of the public; when, at the same time, I carried the seeds of death in my bosom, I had neither strength, nor fortitude to resist my afflictions, and was persecuted by malice and outraged by calumny :--I can easily comprehend with what feeling, a person, in such a situation, may exclaim: "Leave me to myself!"

To be alone, far from the tumult of society, far from all intercourse with mankind, is the most fervent wish of the heart, when a person has the misfortune to live among men, who, having never experienced similar sufferings, are incapable of forming any idea of the torments he endures.

To be alone, far retired from the intercourse of society, to be buried alive in a rude and desert country: ah! this affords consolation, in all afflictions which the heart has not fortitude to endure. When everlasting separation from beloved friends is as painful and distressing as if they were snatched away by the relentless hand of death, nothing but Solitude is capable of mitigating our pain. Is the heart torn with anguish; do we imagine that the ground is sinking beneath our feet, when we think of the dreadful hour, which so rapidly approaches, to separate us from friends, whose society, for so many years, has constituted our highest felicity, whom we shall never forget to the latest moment of our existence and whose absence renders all the pleasures of the world odious and disgusting--- Ah! in such a case, we have no other resource than *Solitude*. But it is only by a judicious employment of Solitude, by proposing an object capable of diverting the attention, and by leading the imagination from one object to another, that we can alleviate the

Necessity of Solitude in mental affliction.

agony, produced by the idea of this separation, the pain that preys upon the heart, consumes the vital principle and appears in every feature of the altered countenance.

Ah ! how many sufferings and afflictions we experience, which the world cannot see, which we must bear with our own strength, and which we can no where endure, but alone, and in retirement from the world !

Represent to yourself a foreigner, so shy that every look disconcerted him, in a country where every thing was entirely strange, overwhelmed by misfortunes from every side, attacked incessantly by despair, unable, for many years, to stoop or sit down to write, without feeling the most excruciating pains, whose paths were strewed with thorns and briars by the hand of fanatic prejudice, and and who sees the object, dearest to his heart, snatched from his side after a long period of lingering torments. Yet in such a country and under such circumstances, he finds a hand * kindly extended to his relief, he hears a voice, like a voice from heaven, saying to him ; “ Come, I will dry thy tears ; I will inspire thy wounded heart with courage ; I will attend thee and sympathize in all thy afflictions ; I will assist thee to support them ; I will make thee forget thy sorrows, awaken thy

* The author alludes to Madam von Döring, the daughter of vice-chancellor Strube, to whom he dedicates the present work. In the dedication, he says among other things : “ For thirteen years you were my only consolation at Hanover, the confidante of all my thoughts, my first and my last refuge in every affliction.” T.

Necessity of Solitude in mental affliction.

sensibility to the beauties of nature, and direct thy attention to that God who here also dispenses his favors, and strews our paths with flowers. I will then conduct thee to my habitation, we will read, think and feel together; there, when thou art oppressed by despair, we will lift up our hands together to the Almighty; when tranquillity returns I will point out new prospects, collect for thee every flower that is scattered over the path of life, converse with thee concerning those sympathizing friends, who think and speak of thee with love, confidence and esteem. I will prove to thee, that those, among whom thou art situated, are not so wicked as thou mayest think, perhaps not so at all; that they are only unacquainted with thee. I will relieve thee from all domestic cares; I will do every thing to soothe and to please thee; shew thee all the felicity of a peaceful, tranquil life; diligently endeavour to point out all thy faults, and in return thou shalt correct mine; thou shalt form my mind and communicate to me all thy knowledge; shalt, with the blessing of God, and the assistance of thy art, preserve my life and those of my husband and my children. We will learn together to love our neighbor, to relieve the unfortunate, and to console the afflicted."

But if, after having experienced all this delight for so many years, after having daily enjoyed this consolation under the most severe and trying misfortunes of life, when his hairs were grown grey and the fear of death was extinguished in the confident hope, that he should expire in the arms of this dear friend--if, I say, this heroic soul, from the noblest motives of commiseration, tore herself from the society of all who loved and esteemed her,

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and cheerfully exiled herself, because it was the will of the Almighty, to a foreign land, of which she could never think without aversion and horror; what resource would be left him after her departure, whither could he fly, abandoned and forlorn?—Into *Solitude*, there to struggle with misfortune and to learn to bear his destiny with fortitude.

Solitude alone can afford consolation to a heart at a loss where to fix its affection, to communicate its feelings, and torn by too rigorous a destiny, from a bosom that throbbed in unison with it, and which, even in absence, is still occupied with the beloved object. Every one who smarts under the rod of affliction, must learn to be alone. Nothing but Solitude can administer comfort to him, who, at the cruel hour of separation, exclaims in the bitterness of his soul: “In my every exertion to do good, I had no other hope than to give you pleasure, and the highest happiness of my life was to see you happy.”

We see, therefore, that there are misfortunes and afflictions, which nothing but Solitude and retirement from Society is capable of relieving. For the same reason, it is frequently prudent for those, whom melancholy depresses, to remain alone; because as will soon be shewn, they may find, in Solitude, innumerable subjects of consolation, and abundant resources for the heart and mind.

The sick and the healthy, the happy and the miserable, the rich and the poor, all, without exception, occasionally find infinite advantages in a frequent and religious retirement from the world. It is not, alas! in the abodes of pleasure, in those assemblies where every one empties the cup of dissipation to the last drop; it is not in meetings de-

Advantages of religious retirement.

voted to boisterous mirth, in brilliant assemblies, or at luxurious boards, that we become familiar with those tender and sublime sentiments, which subdue every sensual desire, ennoble all the enjoyments of life, moderate our attachment to them, give importance to the present moment on account of its connection with futurity, and are capable of banishing, from a life that flits like a shadow, the immoderate fondness for wordly enjoyments.

In Solitude, we behold more nearly and intimately that Providence which sees all things. Profound silence is favorable to that sublime idea, that sweet and consolatory sentiment, that the Almighty sees and accompanies us, superintends our actions, and directs all around us by his power and goodness. In Solitude, the Deity is ever present with us. Delivered from the dangerous fermentation of sensual passions, guided by nobler inclinations, and filled with purer joys; we contemplate with seriousness and vigor, with confidence and freedom on our supreme felicity, and enjoy it while occupied in the reflection. In this sacred retirement, every ignoble thought, every earthly care, and anxious concern vanishes from the mind.

Solitude brings us nearer to God, if, besides inspiring us with humane and tender sensations, it excite and maintain in us those salutary emotions of mistrust and jealousy of ourselves, which are so soon and so easily effaced in society. At the bed of sickness, when I see the efforts of nature against impending dissolution, and the agony which accompanies every moment of protracted life; when I behold my unhappy patient extend his cold and trembling hands, to express his gratitude to heaven

Advantages of religious retirement.

for the smallest mitigation of his sufferings; when I hear his groans and the broken accents of his departing breath, and view the silent anguish of the surrounding friends; my strength forsakes me, my heart bleeds, and I tear myself from the melancholy spectacle, to pour forth my tears over the lot of humanity, and my own inability to afford that relief, which I so fervently and heartily wish within my power! When, with a heart filled with these melancholy images, I prostrate myself in my chamber before my Maker, all dependence upon the stability of life, all confidence in the vain expedients of art, every hope with which men are used to console themselves, is banished from the mind. On this account, I never rise from my bed, in the morning, without thinking that it is a heavenly miracle that I am still alive. I never number my years, without exclaiming with the warmest gratitude: "How much farther has divine goodness conducted me, than I ever could have expected! How incomprehensibly it has led me through seas of danger!" And what can I then do, but silently adore that Providence which has preserved me, when I feel my own weakness and see men suddenly snatched away before me in the prime and vigor of life, who, a few days before, were unconscious of any danger, and perhaps imagined themselves secure, for a long period, from the all-powerful hand of death.

How can we be wise and escape all these perils, unless by renouncing the tumultuous intercourse with the world, which is destructive of every good impression, and by entering into a serious examination of ourselves? Then, only, can we maturely reflect

Advantages of religious retirement.

on what we daily hear and see, and on those objects which are never attended with a lasting benefit to the heart, we meditate on them in the calm retirement.

Wisdom is not to be acquired by the incessant pursuits of diversion, by flying, without reflection, from one dissipated company to another, by conversing continually on trifling and insignificant subjects, and by undertaking so much without doing any thing. "He who would become wise," says a great philosopher, "must learn to live with propriety in Solitude." The uninterrupted dissipations of the senses stifle every virtuous idea. In this intoxication, we are scarcely masters of our reason, its voice is not heard, nor its power felt. We overcome no temptation, we seek, instead of avoiding, the snares of the passions. The duties of religion are no where so totally forgotten, as in the ordinary diversions of social life. Amidst so many absurd occupations, amidst the extravagancies of folly and gaiety, the continual intoxication which sets in motion every passion and inflames every desire, all our connections with our Creator are dissolved. We renounce this first and only source of all our felicity, together with the faculties of reason, and think of our religious duties with levity and indifference. On the contrary, he who, by serious self-examination and silent meditation, can elevate his soul to God, who regards universal nature, the azure vault of heaven, the meads enamelled with flowers, the lofty mountain and the solitary forest, as a temple of the Deity, who constantly directs his heart to the author and ruler of all things, who is ever mindful of his all-seeing

In Solitude the greatest obstacles to devotion are overcome.

providence, must assuredly have learned to live in sacred retirement, in persevering and fervent devotion.

Thus Solitude overcomes the greatest obstacles to a religious life, if we devote to it, daily, only as much time as we spend in adorning our persons, or at the card-table. Silent and serious meditation not only inspires the mind with firmness and vigor, but produces an aversion from the too frequent commerce with mankind, and disgust of their invitations. We may entertain the most favorable disposition to our fellow-creatures, may take delight in relieving the distressed and in doing them all the good that is within our power, and yet avoid their festive and convivial parties, and find no pleasure in their frivolous pursuits.

To be extensively useful and, to contribute, in an eminent degree, to the general welfare of mankind, falls to the lot of very few. But, how many private virtues are there, which every man can practise every day of his life, without leaving his chamber! He, who can employ himself at home, may remain there a whole year, and may every day contribute to the happiness of others, may listen to their complaints, soothe their afflictions, dispense benefits to all around him, unseen, unnoticed and unknown by the world.

A lively and decided inclination to Solitude is sometimes the happy means of calling us early to God. It is in that nameless and undefinable melancholy, to which many minds are subject in early youth, that we begin to think with seriousness and sincerity of ourselves, of what we are and what we ought to be. This disposition assumes a

The heart sometimes derives benefit from Melancholy.

more decisive character, and excites the mind more powerfully in maturer years. It is in those moments, when, perhaps a physical change in the constitution gives a new direction to the soul, that the awakening conscience, menacing us with the judgments of the Almighty, suggests the necessity of prostrating ourselves, with fervor and devotion, before God. Melancholy is the school of humility, and self-distrust is the first step towards the knowledge of ourselves. In the solitary, melancholy hours passed in serious self-examination, all the sophistry of the passions is silenced. But, if we even proceed too far, if we become too gloomy and fall into superstitious extravagancies, such impressions are quickly and easily effaced. Yet, these excesses would be advantageous, when compared with the contrary extreme, that fatal indifference, which extinguishes every virtue. Deep mortification at the discovery of our defects is changed, by the light of a rational faith, into a happy tranquillity; and, at length, the enthusiastic self-observer is probably preferred, in the sight of God, to the supercilious wit, who scoffs at piety and religion.

The study of ourselves is so rare, that every object which disposes us to it, should be dear and precious to our hearts. We must be awakened by grief, we must be weaned from the world by affliction, we must drink deeply of the cup of adversity, before we can enter with cheerfulness into this self-examination, before we can renounce our futile, flighty dissipations, and that discontent, which continually drives us in quest of new objects. For this reason, one of the greatest philosophers of

The heart sometimes derives benefit from Melancholy.

Germany, the celebrated Garve, said, with the utmost cheerfulness and serenity, to the respectable and pious Dr. Spalding and myself: "I have derived from my malady this advantage, that it has led me to a stricter scrutiny of myself."

Here religion and philosophy combine their powers, to lead us to the examination of ourselves. Both tell us that we cannot too sedulously avoid the dangers of fanaticism, nor represent them in a form too terrible; but if virtue cannot be instilled into the soul, without producing convulsive efforts, they likewise teach us not to dread even these. It is not in the day of joy, when we turn aside our eyes from God and eternity, that we experience these salutary convulsions. Even the powerful influence of religion is less subject to produce them, than physical debility and profound melancholy. But if we do not proceed so far in the heroic career of virtue as Charles Borromæo, * if this energy of the conscience be lost amidst the bustle of the world,

* Charles Borromæo, a Romish saint, was born in 1538, and was made archbishop of Milan, and a cardinal in 1560 by his uncle pope Pius IV. The youthful pastor discharged his ecclesiastical functions with great ability and discretion, and was a liberal patron of literature and men of talents. At the council of Trent, while other prelates were deliberating upon the reformation of the clergy, he actually commenced a reform in his own person and family, discharging most of his servants, renouncing the use of gaudy apparel and enjoining to himself the observance of a weekly fast. He likewise attempted a reformation of some of the monastic orders, which produced an attempt to assassinate him by an individual belonging to one of them. After a life of the strictest piety, he died in 1594. His works were printed at Milan, in 5 vols. folio, in 1747.

Comparison between a fashionable and retired life.

ah! then let us, as often as possible, withdraw into Solitude, and prostrate ourselves before God and our own hearts.

In the last moments of life, it is certain that we all wish we had lived more retired, in more intimate communion with ourselves and with God. We are then oppressed by the recollection of all our sins; we then clearly perceive that many of them proceeded from not avoiding, with sufficient caution, the snares of the world, from not preparing in Solitude to watch over our hearts, amidst the corruptions of society and the perils of the world.

If we oppose the sentiments of a solitary man, who passes his life in communion with God, to those of the senseless, and dissipated characters, who never think of their Creator, and who devote their whole existence to the enjoyment of the present moment; if we compare the character of the man who reflects, with dignity, on the importance of eternity, with that of the votary of fashion, whose ideas are occupied only with the next route: if we place all the assemblies, balls and parties in the scale against the words of the angel in the Revelations, who stood upon the earth and the sea, lifted his hand towards heaven, and swore, by him who liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer: O! then we are convinced, that the desire of Solitude and peaceful retirement, the wish to possess a friend, to possess society within our own bosoms, produces, even in this life, true pleasures, and affords what all the factitious and delusive joys of the world are incapable of bestowing, consolation in death, and the assurance of everlasting felicity.

Life and Death of the Honorable Mr. Damer.

It is on the bed of death that we perceive the greatest difference between the just man, who has lived in silent converse with his God, and the man of the world, whose thoughts have been employed only with the gratification of his passions and desires. How different is the close of a life passed amidst the tumult and dissipation of the world, even if unsullied by the commission of any positive crime, from that which has been spent in the bosom of retirement, innocence and peace!

As example teaches more effectually than precepts, as curiosity is more alive to recent facts than to occurrences of remote antiquity, I shall here introduce the history of a man of rank and fashion who, a few years since, shot himself in London; from which it will be seen, that a man, who possesses the best qualities of the heart, may be extremely miserable, if he want prudence, even though he may live in the highest style of fashion.

The honorable Mr. Damer, the eldest son of Lord Milton, was five and thirty years of age when he terminated his existence, with the same principles according to which he had lived. He had married the only daughter of General Conway, an heiress with a very ample fortune. He possessed respectable talents, and, if they had been employed to better purpose, his death would probably have made a deeper impression; but the most inordinate love of dissipation had destroyed all his good qualities and the faculties of his mind. His houses, his carriages, his horses, and his wardrobe, exceeded every thing in London, in magnificence and splendor. His large income was insufficient to defray all these expences, and his debts soon

Life and death of the Honorable Mr. Damer.

amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. A great part of this sum was employed in relieving such of his friends as he saw in distress; for he possessed a very compassionate heart. The indulgence of his extreme sensibility to the wants of others roused him, at length, to a sense of his own. His situation reduced him to despair. He repaired to a celebrated brothel, sent for four women of the town, passed several hours in their company and appeared in the highest spirits. About midnight he requested them to retire, and a few moments afterwards, he drew from his pocket a loaded pistol, which he carried about him the whole afternoon, and shot himself dead on the spot. He had passed the evening with these women, as he had been used to pass a great number of others with different females, without desiring those favors which they are so ready to grant. Their conversation, or at the most a kiss, was all that he wished and desired of them in return for his money. The gratitude he felt for their society was converted into real friendship. A celebrated actress, in London, whose conversation had cost him considerable sums, requested him, three days before his death, to send her five and twenty pounds. He returned for answer, that he had not so much money, that he had not then more than eight or ten guineas in his purse, which he sent her. But he instantly went out to borrow the remainder of the required sum, which was instantly transmitted to the lady. Shortly before the melancholy catastrophe, this unhappy man had written to his father, candidly disclosing all the horrors of his situation, and the very night on which he put

Character of the author's daughter.

a period to his life, the good Lord Milton arrived in London, for the purpose of discharging all his son's debts. Thus lived and died this dissipated man; how different, on the contrary, is the life and death of the innocent and virtuous!

I trust I shall be pardoned for illustrating this observation by the history of a young lady, whose memory I wish to preserve, for I can say with truth of her, as Petrarch of his Laura: "The world was unacquainted with the excellence of her character, which was known only to those, whom she has left behind to lament her."

Solitude was her world, and retirement her pleasure. She submitted with pious resignation to all the dispensations of heaven, and though born with a weakly constitution, she supported her sufferings with the greatest fortitude. Mild, amiable and tender, yet timid, modest, reserved and seldom communicative except in a kind of filial enthusiasm, ---such was the female character of whom I now write, a character that convinced me by her silent suffering under the most excruciating agony, that, in Solitude, the soul can arm itself with invincible energy, even when it is united to the greatest corporeal infirmity. Full of confidence in God, and distrust of herself, she followed my will in every respect. Equally docile and submissive, she entertained for me the most ardent affection, of which she endeavored to convince me, not by professions but by her actions. Willingly would I have sacrificed my life for her, and she would have been ready to do the same for me. My greatest happiness consisted in contriving how to afford her pleasure. The highest pleasure that she ever at-

Character and death of the author's daughter.

tempted on her part to give me, was to present me sometimes with a rose, which from her hand was a treasure. Quite unexpectedly, she was attacked by a most obstinate and violent hæmorrhage of the lungs, which, with her constitution, I instantly foresaw would prove fatal. Twelve times on that day I sank to the ground, oppressed by the acutest anguish of body and mind. But I concealed my sufferings from her. She knew not that I considered her situation so alarming; but she was sensible of her danger, though she never communicated her apprehensions to me. A smile played upon her cheeks whenever I entered or left her chamber. Throughout her whole illness, under the most painful and the most complicated sufferings, not a single complaint escaped her lips. To all my questions, she returned a concise, mild and affectionate answer, but without entering into any detail. Under this painful decay of nature, her countenance preserved the same sweet serenity and the same tender expression.

Thus I beheld my beloved, my only daughter, expire in my arms, after a lingering affliction of nine long months. Besides the usual fatal appearances attending pulmonary consumption, I found the liver extremely large, the stomach uncommonly small, and unnaturally contracted, and the spleen full of indurations; evils sufficient to deject, afflict and oppress the mind! From her earliest infancy she had been the victim of ill health; her appetite was almost gone before our removal from Switzerland, which she quitted a few years before, with me, with her usual sweetness of temper, and with-

Character and death of the author's daughter.

out expressing the least reluctance, though she left behind her a youth possessing a person as amiable as his mind was accomplished, the object of her first. her only attachment, and who a few weeks afterwards put a period to his life in despair.

Among her papers, I found several prayers composed by her, in the happiest days which she passed at Hanover, where she was much beloved, in which she most fervently supplicates the Almighty, to remove her soon out of the world and to conduct her into the society of her departed mother! There were likewise letters, written about the same time, many of which were sublime and highly affecting, expressive of her continual desire, her incessant longing for a speedy dissolution! The last words uttered by my child, my dearly beloved daughter, amidst inexpressible agony, were these: "To-day I shall taste the joys of heaven!"

He would be unworthy of such an example who, after having seen the severest sufferings endured by a female, at such an early age, and of such a weakly constitution, suffers himself to be dejected by misfortunes, which fortitude would enable him to surmount. She, who sustained inexpressible anguish without uttering a complaint; she, who submitted with cheerfulness and resignation to every dispensation of Providence, in the hope of eternal felicity; she, who, amidst her weakness, displayed qualities of such a superior kind, is now made perfect, is relieved from the pressure of human infirmity, in the regions of everlasting bliss. And we, who are left behind, who have before our eyes the sublime instructions which she gave us under the acute suf-

Solitude recommended under every affliction.

ferings of a painful disease, and the protracted and cruel pangs of death, we, who likewise aspire to attain the happy abodes of peace and felicity; should not we make every sacrifice, employ every endeavor to fortify our minds against affliction, and to acquire patience and resignation, in silent converse with ourselves, and in solitary communion with God?

Afflicted fellow-creatures! every distress now overwhelms you with despair, but believe me, there are also pleasing pains! They raise the mind above earthly objects and impart a strength which now appears impossible. You may now imagine yourselves in the deepest abyss of anguish and sorrow; but the time will arrive, when you will find yourselves in that happy state between earth and heaven. Then you will enjoy true, sublime felicity, far removed from the tumults of society, and in the sweetly soothing recollection of departed virtue.

But Solitude is not capable of healing the wounds of every afflicted mind. The soul cannot always disengage itself from the pressure of bodily infirmity, of pain, and of suffering. Blessed, eternally blessed, be the friendly hand of sympathizing affection, that supports and assists us to endure such afflictions! But if they be not augmented by continual reflection on the dear departed object, if they be converted into a mild melancholy; or if there exist persons whose nerves are not affected by such misfortunes; seek, ye happy mortals, blessed with such constitutions, seek the shades of rural retirement and the silence of solitary groves!

Solitude recommended under every affliction.

There you will find celestial tranquillity, even beneath impending clouds of sorrow and dejection; you will acquire fortitude, courage and perseverance to surmount the transient afflictions of life, you will learn to be alone without dread, and to cultivate beds of roses around the tomb of death.



Solitude procures independence for the mind.

CHAP. V.

ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE UPON THE MIND.

THE value of freedom is felt only by independent minds: slaves are contented with their servitude. He, who has long been tossed by the tempests of social life, who has learned by experience to appreciate men and things, who examines every object with impartiality, who, proceeding in the rugged path of virtue, finds felicity within his own breast, may be pronounced free.

The path of virtue is indeed dreary, dark and toilsome, but it conducts through painful difficulties to sublime repose, to peaceful shores, to a climate blest with perpetual serenity. Solitude secures to the mind the most noble independence, if we are early acquainted with all its advantages, and are careful to cultivate them. It is to youth in particular, to unprejudiced minds, susceptible of virtuous impressions, and to these only I can be of any service, that I here point out the road which leads to such felicity. They must not be led into solitude by gloomy discontent, but by the dislike of dissipation, disgust with idle pleasures, mistrust of the treacherous promises of the world, and a dread of its seducing allurements and insinuating temptations.

Many have acquired and exercised in Solitude the highest virtues of the mind. As the majestic bark braves the fury of the northern blast, so many

Solitude particularly advantageous in youth and old age.

champions of virtue have remained unmoved in the bosom of retirement. Some indeed have retained in Solitude all the weaknesses of human nature; but others have shewn, that wisdom does not degenerate even in the most dreary seclusion. Surrounded by the spirits of the dead, the solitary man embraces in idea what his eye cannot see; and, secluded from every living object, he converses with God alone.

There are two periods of life in which Solitude is particularly advantageous; in youth, to acquire a fund of useful knowledge, to form the character and to adopt the mode of thinking, according to which we ought to regulate our future life: in age, to take a retrospective view of the course we have pursued, to reflect on the occurrences of our past lives, all the flowers we have gathered, and all the storms we have encountered.

Lord Bolingbroke says, that there is not a deeper or finer observation in Lord Bacon's works, than the following: "We must choose betimes such virtuous objects as are proportioned to the means we have of pursuing them, and as belong particularly to the stations in which we are, and the duties of those stations. We must determine and fix our minds in such a manner upon them that their pursuit may become the business, and their attainment the end of our whole lives. Thus we shall imitate the great operations of nature, and not the feeble, slow and imperfect, operations of art. We must not proceed in forming the moral character, as a statuary proceeds in forming a statue, who works sometimes on the face, sometimes on one part and sometimes on another; but we must proceed and it is in our power to proceed as nature does in forming a flower,

Address to youth in favor of Solitude.

or any other of her productions : *elementa partium omnium simul parit et producit* ; she throws out altogether and at once, the whole system of every being and the rudiments of all the parts."

Amiable youth, from whose mind the artifices and gaities of the world have not erased the wise precepts of a virtuous education, you, who are not yet infected by its idle vanities ; who, uncorrupted by the tricks and blandishments of seduction, possess the inclination and the power for noble achievements ; who, in the midst of feasting, dancing and assemblies, would gladly escape from their unsatisfactory delights ; Solitude is your world. Retire to your study, rouse and invigorate your soul for exalted deeds, acquire that noble and commendable pride, which, in every period, and in every situation of life, will teach you to form a just estimate of men and things.

For this purpose it is necessary, that you should force yourself from a world, which is too insignificant to afford you great examples. It is by the study of mankind, the Greeks, the Romans and the English, that you will learn to excel your contemporaries. Or, where do we find more celebrated instances of human greatness ? What people possessed greater valor and courage, more extensive knowledge, a more ardent love of science and more enlightened understandings ? Do not however imagine, that cutting your hair short gives you the character of an Englishman ; but instead of this, eradicate your own follies and vices, and emulate only what is great. Love of liberty, courage, penetration, sublimity of sentiment and energy of mind, constitute the character of the true Englishman, and not a

Address to youth in favor of Solitude.

round hat and half boots. Virtue alone, and not titles, elevates the man. Illustrious descent is an advantage, but not a merit. But you have already learned to form a true estimate of those splendid trifles; and know, that he who regards little objects never acquires true greatness. Let women enumerate their ancestors, who, for a long series of ages, have distinguished themselves only by fighting on horseback, while the humble citizen followed on foot. But, in tracing your genealogy, reckon only those among your ancestors, who never fled from the field of battle, nor plundered the peaceful traveller: number such only as have performed glorious actions, whose names shine in the pages of history, and are pronounced with veneration in distant countries; but never lose sight of this important truth, that only our own actions can make us truly great.

+ You have before you two roads. The one leads through fragrant gardens and delicious groves, where verdant beds, bedecked with roses, invite to voluptuous repose. This is the path which the multitude are seduced to follow, where at every step they are beset with the allurements of music, dancing and love. The other is a less frequented way, steep and rugged; on which the toiling passenger proceeds but slowly, and frequently falls down the rocks when he imagines that he has made considerable progress. Nothing is heard there but the howling of savage beasts, the doleful croakings of the raven and the shrill hisses of the serpent. A vast, unbounded and gloomy solitude inspires the mind with fear and terror. The agreeable road is the way of the world, the rugged path is that of

Advantages of an early love of Solitude.

honor. The former conducts through the midst of society, winding through places, pensions and emoluments; the latter leads farther and farther into Solitude. In the one you perhaps become a villain, but a villain rendered dear and amiable by his vices; in the other you are hated and despised, but become a man after my own heart.

With energy and virtuous principles you will become a great man, even if you indulge in all the pleasures of youth. These are medicine and not food. You must invigorate your body by air and exercise, and spare no pains and exertions to fortify the mind. But without a rooted abhorrence of indolence and dissipation, you never commence any undertaking with spirit, or prosecute it with vigor. Many celebrated Germans with whom I am acquainted, lived solitary and unsociable, during their residence at the University. They fled the fashionable vices of the college, and preserved their native purity of manners. By their rectitude of conduct, their stoic inflexibility, their continence and love of labor, they have become ministers who govern states, writers who have devoted their lives to the diffusion of knowledge, and philosophers who, in their youth, learned to reject vulgar errors and universal prejudices.

X The highest gratitude is due to the noble character who has said: "When a youth of solid parts, withdraws himself from the world, becomes melancholy, and reserved, and testifies, by the austerity of his manners and the coldness of his feelings, the contempt with which vicious characters inspire his soul; when his mind darts forth, like lightning through the obscurity of night, and is again lost in

Solitude sometimes produces arrogance and obstinacy.

a long and silent calm ; when he finds that all around is a dreary void, and every object only inspires his mind with new disgust and increased aversion ; you then behold a noble plant, which requires only the cultivation of a judicious hand to develope its beauties. Apply your fostering care, and be it your sacred duty to protect it. He who destroys such a character is the most detestable of murderers."

To rear a youth of this description would be my joy and delight. I would cherish him in my heart and watch over him with the tenderest care. I would conceal him from the jealous and malignant observation of envious eyes, inflamed with rage at the sight of superior genius. With a single breath I would drive all those noxious vermin, those frivolous, enervated and insipid men of fashion, from my flourishing plant. But if the beloved youth did not at the proper time display candor, openness, flexibility and a compliance with the manners of the world, I would suffer him to sail among the rocks of life and to be gently wrecked, where experience, even without the energy of youth, would have preserved him from every danger.

Solitude sometimes produces a degree of arrogance and obstinacy, but social intercourse soon corrects and eradicates these defects. The misanthropy of youthful minds, their contempt and pride, assume a nobler form when they arrive at maturity, and are released from all fear of the opinion of the world. Their satires are then only a mild contrast between things as they are and as they ought to be. Their contempt of vice becomes a noble enthusiasm in the cause of virtue, and they derive, from the long

Power of maternal instruction and example.

contest, that experience of the world, and that benevolence, which imparts a caution without inflicting a sting.

But there is also a science of the heart, too frequently neglected, with which it is necessary to familiarise ourselves, as early as possible in our youth, and which soon corrects the asperity of our dispositions. This science is philosophy, which forms the characters of men, which wins them by love, rather than by precepts, enlightens their understandings, warns them against error, impels and elevates their minds to the practice of every virtue.

Dion was educated in all the baseness and servility of a court; he was accustomed to a life of ease and effeminacy, and, what is still more pernicious, was a slave to pomp, profusion and abandoned pleasures; but, no sooner did he hear the sublime precepts of Plato, no sooner did he taste the delights of philosophy which leads to virtue, than his whole soul became deeply enamoured with its charms.

That disposition, which Dion caught from Plato, many a mother imparts to her son, even unperceived by the father. Philosophy, from the mouth of a sensible and experienced mother, penetrates the understanding through the feelings of the heart. Who is not fond of walking even on the most rugged and painful path when conducted by the hand they love? What instruction can be compared to the mild lessons of a female, endowed with a sound understanding, an exalted manner of thinking, and a heart that feels and inspires the tenderest affection?

May every mother so endowed be blessed with a son, who loves to retire with her to her chamber, who, with a book in his pocket, is fond of climbing

How to banish melancholy and dejection.

among the rocks, that he may be alone, and when engaged in rural sports, rather throws himself beneath some venerable oak and derives more gratification from tracing the actions of illustrious men recorded by Plutarch, than beating the woods in pursuit of his game. Every point is accomplished, when the solitude and silence of the forest elevate and invigorate his ideas; when he sees, that more exalted characters have existed and still exist in the world, than emperors and kings; that these men enjoyed more sublime pleasures than those of the gaming-table or the luxurious board; that they loved to be solitary in their hours of repose; that retirement, the love of literature and philosophy, formed their minds in early youth and warmed their hearts in maturer age, and that, amidst the greatest dangers, they preserved that love, by which melancholy is banished from the most gloomy dungeon and dejection from the most dreary desert.

But every mind, thus disposed, must be disgusted and rendered unhappy by many things in the intercourse of cities, in which it is the lot of man to be placed. It may, therefore, be advantageous, to shew how many resources against the insipid society and idle dissipation of cities, a wise and sensible man, whatever may be his station, age or country, may find in Solitude.

Small towns possess a considerable advantage over large cities, with respect to the communion with our own hearts. How much better we can employ our time, how much more leisure, liberty and quietude we enjoy there, than in the distracting variety of the metropolis! The morning is not here destroyed by incessant messages of compli-

Men of rank frequently oppressed by Lassitude.

ment, or a hundred new schemes for killing time. Domestic cares are not interrupted by continual visits, nor are we prevented from the occupations of the mind, or the delightful intercourse of friendship. In rural retirement we can follow the course of our sentiments and ideas, and examine whether they be just, before we act upon them. In great cities we act first and reflect afterwards. In a village, the impressions we receive are more lively and profound; while in large cities we are only employed in procuring gratifications, which vanish from our grasp. We there enjoy no repose; we drive it from our presence, yet continually sigh after it, while our minds are ever agitated by hope, desire, ambition, duty, lassitude, disgust and repentance over every moment that escapes us.

But the minds of those, who retire to the calm scenes of rural life, are frequently as dull and vacant as the places they inhabit. Every one cannot employ to advantage the leisure, the precious leisure, which he enjoys without knowing its value. There are few, indeed, who possess the art of rendering Solitude useful and rational. The horrors of lassitude are particularly oppressive to men of rank, who imagine themselves degraded by associating with their inferiors; who, in consequence, submit to a life of restraint and seclusion, and vegetate in splendid languor, rather than participate in the enjoyments of life with sensible men of subordinate condition. Their conduct ought to be the very reverse, especially if they are incapable of finding employment for their minds; they ought to associate with honest men, and love all, that they may be beloved by all. To an idle man, tormented by

Advantages of rural retirement.

languor and ill-humour, the lowest clown capable of communicating a new thought, or an agreeable sentiment, ought to be an interesting companion. Those who are at a loss how to kill time, should despise no man; in rural retirement the foolish distinctions of rank should cease, and the shepherd should live upon equal terms with the king.

If people of rank wish to live agreeably in the country, they must conduct themselves peaceably and affably towards all; they must feel and exercise universal benevolence, and at the same time retain as much liberty and leisure as they find necessary.

The advantages, obtained by the mind in the solitude of rural retirement, when attacked by disgust at the insipid intercourse of such situations, are incredible. Life is no where so completely enjoyed; the happy days of youth are no where employed to such advantage, a sensible man no where meets with fewer temptations to dissipation, no where does he learn better to know and to avoid the dangers of Solitude. A sequestered village may be considered as a convent, where, in a small circle of men, secluded and detached from the world, we are confined to few ideas, where, for this reason, the passions of wicked minds rage with greater violence, and where the virtuous find no resource but in the company of those, who are similarly disposed, or in the retirement of their cells.

All small towns resemble each other in certain principal points; they only differ in the manner in which they are governed. The mind is no where subjected to a more odious tyranny, than in these petty republics, where the rich citizen not only erects himself into a master over his less opulent

equals, but where the contracted notions of the little despot, if unopposed, become those of the whole town. The members of small republics care only for themselves and feel little concern respecting what passes beyond their own limits. The all-powerful and self-sufficient magistrate considers his petty jurisdiction as the universe. Like an inexhaustible spring, his mouth incessantly overflows on the subjects of the deliberations at the town-house. For the rest, he is occupied only with the preservation of his influence over the minds of his fellow citizens, the circulation of scandal, the repetition of superstitious tales, the prices of corn, the collection of tythes, hay-harvest, vintage-time and the next market. Second to God alone, such a person is, within his own circumscribed territory, the greatest man on the face of the earth. His words either exhilarate the heart or blanch the cheek with terror. The honest citizen never appears but with fear and trembling in his awful presence, because he knows the ruin that attends his anger. The thunder of heaven is less terrible than the wrath of a magistrate in a small town; the former passes quickly away, the latter never. His favor or his displeasure raises the individual to honor or overwhelms him with shame, establishes his happiness or plunges him into the depths of misery.

The inhabitants of such towns are generally addicted to law, and in their eyes an attorney is the brightest genius. To them the voice of reason cries in vain, they disregard its precepts and believe only what is proved in a court of justice. If any one withdraw from their factious assemblies, if he reason with impartiality, and act with indepen-

Picture of society in small towns.

dence, he incurs their jealousy and contempt. Of study and reflection, except among the clergy, they have no idea, and language cannot furnish a word expressive of their sovereign contempt for a literary character. They are ignorant that superstition and sound reason are in direct opposition to each other. If a black cock have left his excrement before their door, if a raven have flown over their house, if a mouse have run across the floor, they imagine some dreadful misfortune is impending, and consider him who smiles at their credulity as lost to all sense of religion. They are ignorant that those men are not free-thinkers, who humbly doubt, whether the spots frequently observed in linen announce the death of some near relation, or call in question the existence of witches. Unconscious that those possess any merit who never open their mouths in the circles where they take the lead, they never entertain an idea, that it is possible for him to enjoy the favor of the truly great, who has the misfortune to incur the displeasure of the leaders of their little town. They are ignorant that there exist men of independent spirits, and that none but themselves are capable of such servile and degrading submission, towards the petty chiefs of their insignificant domain. They have yet to learn, that an honest man bows only before the deity, submits only to the laws, respects only superior talents, merit and virtue, and calmly smiles at the indignant countenance of the provincial magistrate, or if he receive him in his apartment with his hat on his head. They perceive not that slander, the common scourge of all country towns, is the vice only of vacant and narrow minds, of those who visit a

Picture of society in small towns.

neighbour merely to pry into his conduct, and to report every insignificant oversight in the management of his house, his kitchen, or his poultry-yard.

Amidst their ignorance of so many things, they know not that he neither finds pleasure in the insipid chit-chat and frivolous transactions of petty towns, nor amuses himself with diving into his neighbour's concerns, who is acquainted with the advantages of Solitude, who with noble ardour explores the paths of knowledge, and superior to the shafts of envy and disgraceful calumny, pursues the career he has chosen with steadiness and ardor.

In such situations the only resource is a resolute seclusion from society. The most extensive philanthropy will not silence the tongue of envy, because it is always supposed to proceed from interested motives. We ought therefore, rather to turn our backs on all mankind, excepting the few that we find worthy of our love and veneration.

A young man, who aspires to advance himself in life, will there find, that he has not to expect the least assistance. In the fashionable circles he meets neither with instruction nor encouragement. He is considered as a weak and ridiculous character, if, instead of endeavouring to gain the favor of the opulent and the powerful, he prefer the pleasure of reading and writing at home. In vain he has been educated in the bosom of liberal, enlightened and independent men; in vain has his mind been formed by the greatest philosophers of the age, and his principles established by a correspondence with the most virtuous and learned characters. How can these advantages be felt or understood by the ignorant inhabitants of a country-town? What man

Picture of society in small towns.

will patronize him, if he cannot accommodate himself to the caprices of those, in whose hands the whole power resides, who alone distribute employments and emoluments, to whom every thing is submitted, who govern all, and by whom fame, honor and reputation are conferred or taken away. He must conceal his knowledge, be silent respecting what he feels or sees, but must listen with seeming attention to things which he wishes not to know. During the most fatiguing conversation, he is not allowed the liberty of yawning, and he is ruined for ever, if, by his silence, he betray the slightest degree of disgust. He is despised as a man of understanding, though he use every endeavour to be thought an idiot.* Amidst so much deformity, he and his friends are obliged to blush at the want of the distinguishing eminence on their backs, even when he hears them gravely debate in their town-house concerning a pig-stye, for a longer time than is required to decide the destiny of Europe in the cabinets of sovereigns; and must sit, with as much attention, to hear the arguments on the most insignificant cause, as if he were placed in the council of the gods.

When he thus sees, that presumptuous ignorance and proud stupidity are infinitely more esteemed than the soundest understanding; that men of the shallowest minds, the dullest apprehensions and consummate impudence, alone govern the taste and direct the opinion; that envy attaches itself to all

* "A man of an enlightened mind," says Helvetius, "with whatever address he may disguise himself, never resembles a fool so perfectly, as a fool resembles himself."

The poet Martial's situation at Bilbilis.

literary fame, to every spark of improvement; that philosophy is regarded as contemptible nonsense, and liberty as a spirit of rebellion; when he perceives that nothing can avail him but servile complaisance and humble submission; what resource has then a young man, whose talents might have raised him to eminence in the world, but *Solitude*!

The poor poet Martial* on his return to Bilbilis in Spain, the place of his nativity, found it a dreary desert, a frightful solitude. He had lived four and thirty years in learned and enlightened Rome, and returned, with cheerfulness and pleasure, to the stupid Bilbilis. There he was oppressed by the most dreadful languor, unable to find a society suited to his disposition, obliged to associate with his fellow citizens, most of whom possessed no taste for the pursuits of literature or the sciences. He longed incessantly to revisit the metropolis, where he enjoyed general estimation, where the younger Pliny admired his good sense, penetration and sagacity, praised his works for their sharpness, wit and ease, and declared that they would render him immortal; while, on the contrary, in Bilbilis his fame only ac-

* Marcus Valerius Martialis, a celebrated Latin poet was born at Bilbilis, now Bilboa, in Spain A.^d. 29. He went to Rome at the age of 20, and enjoyed the favour of Domitian, whose vices and cruelties he exposed after his death in glowing colours. Being treated with neglect by Trajan, he retired to his native place in his 54th year, and died there aged 75. His fourteen books of epigrams are well known. He is generally allowed to have excelled all the writers both of ancient and modern times in the pointed epigram, the chief requisites of which according to Scaliger are brevity and smartness. T.

quired him what must be expected in every small town, envy and contempt.*

In general, however, in all small towns, the mind recovers in Solitude what it loses in society. If you must be absurd out of politeness and blind with eyes that see; if, in the circles of insipidity, you are obliged to conceal your sentiments and ideas and are compelled to hear when you wish yourself deaf; if you must be chained to the gaming-table, though to you there is no punishment so severe; if you must suppress every happy thought, every expressive word, every piercing look and offensive truth; if your whole time must be devoted to the study of pleasing, and gaining the affections of people, who know not how to appreciate your merit, who strangle every sensation at its birth; when you consider, that, in such a state, the enervated spirit lies buried in cold obscurity, as the fire in flint untouched by steel; if you have languished, perhaps several years, without emitting a spark of that genius, which only opportunity and a fortunate moment can call forth into action: ah! then, you must flee the feasts and society of your contemptible town, and seek independence, either in the retirement of your chamber, or in the solitude of the shady forest.

Then the veil, which obscured the sight, immediately vanishes, the clouds disappear, the burden which oppressed the soul is alleviated. We no longer struggle against misfortunes, but call forth all our

* "Accedit his," says Martial, in his preface to the twelfth book of his epigrams, "*municipalium rubigo dentium et judicii loco livor—adversus quod difficile est habere quotidie bonum stomachum.*"

Society more dangerous in the metropolis than in small towns.

resources to soften them. There we no longer murmur against Providence, but with a mind calm and serene, we reflect upon the advantages which Solitude affords. The contented heart becomes patient; we drive away care, by our gaiety; on every side, agreeable and interesting scenes present themselves; the brilliant sun, sinking beneath the lofty mountains and tinging their snow-clad summits with rays of fire; the birds hastening to enjoy the sweet pleasures of repose; the proud crowing of the amorous cock, the noble pace of the generous steed. We can then receive the visits of intruders without impatience, and are reconciled to all mankind, provided they do not, too frequently, interrupt the pleasures of our retreat.

But we have far greater reason to flee into Solitude, from the dangers of the metropolis, than from those of provincial towns. The errors and vices of the great world are much more contagious than those of the simple citizen. How soon the imagination dies away; how easily every virtue is choaked, where sense and truth are hated, where energy of mind only inspires aversion, and where virtue is thrown aside as an oppressive yoke! How superficial the mind becomes, when separated from all those by whom it might be enlightened! How soon all the powers of the heart and understanding decay, in the haughty noble, who finds no pleasure but in assemblies, *sans œuvre mêlée*!*

Yet in every country, the great and the fashiona-

* An assembly *sans œuvre mêlée* is, in the style of the German nobility, an assembly, from which not only commoners are excluded, but even those whose nobility is liable to the slightest suspicion.

Observations on what is called good company.

ble are esteemed the only good company: but, unfortunately, the great are not always the best, however contemptible the inferior class of mankind may appear. Whoever can deduce his nobility through sixteen descents, the value of his character is established, be his mind ever so shallow; he is welcome at the court and table of every prince, and where merit is not sought, he obtains the precedency over those whose merit is their only recommendation. But what constitutes the real value of a man, *his excellency* must learn in those societies where reason and good sense alone confer distinction. Let such a character, if he should find himself alone, in the anti-chamber, and have a moment's respite from repulsing those who might, perhaps, obtain a more distinguished place in the prince's favor than himself, examine, with calmness, the prerogatives of which he is so proud, which in his estimation elevate him so much above the rest of mankind, and which he is fond of retracing to the creation of the world. He will find that titles and genealogies, without merit, resemble air-balloons, which rise only from want of weight.

In almost every country, however, titles of nobility separate a certain class of men from their fellow-citizens, who are often better informed, more virtuous, wiser, and frequently possess the true nobility, that of the mind. Men who derive credit, rank and consequence only from ancestors, not always the most respectable, who seek to acquire no merit because their birth is all the merit they possess or want; such characters every where enjoy the highest consideration. It is true, they are acquainted with the latest fashion of dress, they direct the mode,

Languor experienced even in the circles of the great.

understand the *bon ton*, the etiquette and manners of the day ; that they possess all the resources of voluptuousness, all the requisites for sensuality, and imagine themselves endowed with more refined nerves, organs and sensations, for the indulgence of these gratifications.

Languor penetrates even into the midst of those circles, where the most *illustrious* characters of the nation are assembled, from which the pure and ancient nobility cautiously exclude the profane vulgar. This proposition may, perhaps at first, appear a paradox, but the following explanation of the enigma was given me by a German lady, more distinguished for the excellent qualities of her heart than her illustrious birth.

“ The men,” said she, “ of whom our assemblies are composed, do not always possess the same taste and sentiments ; but it still more rarely happens that the ladies are on good terms with each other. Such is, in general, the lot of the great ; born to possess much, they desire more and enjoy nothing ; in consequence of this disposition, they meet at places of public resort without feeling any mutual esteem ; they see each other without giving or receiving pleasure, and lose their companions among the crowd, without perceiving it.” “ What is it, then, that unites them ?” asked I. “ Their rank,” replied she, “ together with habit, languor and the incessant desire of dissipation inseparable from persons of our condition.”

As it is really possible to experience lassitude and disgust, in the assemblies of the great, it might perhaps be worth while to examine, whether Solitude would not be useful even to persons of that class.

Mortification often felt where pleasure is expected.

People of rank have maintained, that all the pleasures of Solitude lead to misanthropy; or, what is still worse, that misanthropy produces them. On the contrary, I think, that they frequently bring with them from their assemblies more spleen than they take from home into the world. He who lives alone has none to offend him. How many, on the contrary, frequent assemblies with a view of enjoying pleasure, and experience only mortification! They are disappointed in every wish. How seldom is the voice of reason understood; how often do we express sentiments and ideas which nobody can feel or comprehend! How often does our satisfaction excite envy, and our serenity of mind produce a gloomy sadness! In general, every member of society is actuated by such different and opposite interests, that it is impossible to reconcile them. Ask that young and lovely girl, if she always find in a public assembly the pleasure she hopes to experience; whether she be not offended if a smart youth leave her to pay his addresses to another. Ask the rival beauty if she be not mortified when supplanted by a third; and let this last acknowledge, whether she can with pleasure see him pay the same homage to her bosom friend. Ask that grave matron, who was once in the same situation, if she experience not heart-felt pangs, when the charms of youth are more highly complimented than the wisdom of age. An Englishman, whom I saw in Germany, says, in a manner particularly lively, "There are women, who are continually jealous that you do not pay them sufficient respect, and who, in consequence, assume an arrogance that would be insupportable in an empress. While others, by a benevo-

Character of the votaries of fashion.

lent smile diffuse happiness around, and dignity befits them like a well-made dress, the false dignity of these females bristles like the quills of a porcupine, or the feathers of an angry turkey-cock."

The most dissipated man cannot, certainly, view such characters without aversion and disgust. If he reflect how many of these leaders of fashion there are, to whom truth and error, appearance and reality, are objects of indifference; how often those who constitute what is called *good company*, are satisfied, even in the judgment and opinion of their sincerest and warmest admirers, with more contracted ideas, and a more limited knowledge, than they ought to possess, according to their talents, their rank, their means and opportunities of obtaining it; that they dread reflection, tranquillity and Solitude, which are so favorable and frequently so indispensable; that they prefer living in an unceasing state of dissipation; that they rarely attain to a consciousness of their real situation; seldom make use of their own judgment and understanding; expect pleasure from others, rather than endeavour to find it within themselves; more frequently consult the public opinion than employ their own energies; that with the best opportunities for the observation and study of mankind, they blindly adopt and defend the prevailing opinion; suffer themselves to be guided entirely by the prejudices of education, the pride of rank and the dictates of fashion; that they continually revolve in the same circle of defective images, of false and obscure ideas; that they thus destroy all desire of knowledge, and neither seek nor acquire better information—when he reflects upon all these errors, the most dissipated votary of fashion must ex-

Reasons for preferring Solitude to a fashionable life.

claim, with one of the wisest and most virtuous men in Germany: "To be obliged to frequent *good company* is, to a thinking and judicious mind, one of the greatest torments of life; and if a wise man be obliged, by unavoidable necessity, to endure the burthen, he learns by comparison to prize more highly than before, the inestimable value of a rational Solitude."

If, therefore, men of the world, with impartiality and sincerity of heart, examine what good company is, they will not fail to feel contempt for those splendid scenes of noise and tumult; and will prefer tranquil retirement, and experience a desire to employ the faculties and energies of their mind in nobler pursuits. Amidst this unceasing tumult of life, this continual distraction and eternal dissipation, amidst this uninterrupted flight from ourselves, all the powers of the soul are destroyed. By the scrupulous observance of all the forms which politeness requires, by endless enquiries after the health of each, and incessantly running from door to door, we insinuate ourselves into the good graces of both great and small; we flatter the multitude, but we are shamefully prodigal of life. A passion for play consumes time and enervates the mind, and gallantry keeps it in perpetual servitude.

All the other pleasures of the great are of as little value as their conversation. A man whom heaven has endued with no other talent than that of dancing well, is a miserable companion. The courtier who is ignorant of every thing, but that "this is contrary to etiquette, or this is the newest fashion; all the embroideries in silks, cloths and velvets are now made in this manner; and in such or such a

Reasons for preferring Solitude to a fashionable life.

month there will be a *gala*," is a creature equally insipid.

A man doubtless acquires the esteem of the fashionable circles by this kind of knowledge, by the affected interest with which he enters into a thousand trifling concerns, by the flattery with which he feeds every passion, every prejudice and every folly: but he thereby narrows his mind, and deprives it of the faculty of forming a judgment and estimate of any important subject. All the pleasures of the great cannot be enjoyed without the concurrence of many, and, consequently, they are dependent upon others; while, on the contrary, reading and meditation can be pursued for years, with the greatest pleasure, without requiring the presence of another person. Indeed, if a man of the world were to adopt such a mode of life, he would be despised as a misanthrope, and would frequently be told, that nothing but company could effect his cure. But it is there that the attacks of misanthropy are most powerful. Society, while it polishes our natural rudeness, and refines our manners, gives additional venom to misanthropy, by furnishing it with grounds of justification. In short, the burden of misanthropy is not heavier to the mind of him, who avoids the pleasures of society, than of him who seeks them; the former hates only vice and folly; but, on the contrary, the idle and superficial man, roving in search of diversion from one society, from one party to another, hates every man who distinguishes himself by his actions or his writings; and while he ridicules all who possess merit, he shews, by such conduct, that he has no hope of acquiring fame or reputation himself.

Disgust of Pliny the younger with public diversions.

If we seriously contemplate these and many other truths, we shall perceive the necessity of occasional retirement from the world. We might, at least, begin, by confining ourselves to a circle of amiable friends, whose minds, compared with those of other men, are what a stop-watch is when compared to the clock of a church-steeple. He who studies, or wishes to study, men and books, will certainly find pleasure only in the society of enlightened men; and should he not meet with such, Solitude makes him amends for every deficiency.

A very great character, Pliny the younger, felt no satisfaction in any public diversion, festival or other solemnity, because he possessed within himself all the pleasures derived from a contemplative mind. He wrote to one of his friends: "For several days past I have read and written in the most delightful tranquillity. You ask me how that is possible in the midst of the metropolis. It was the time of our games at the Circus, which afford me not the smallest pleasure. I find in them nothing new, no variety, nothing that I should wish to see more than once. I am the more astonished, that so many thousands are so childish as to go thither to see horses gallop, and slaves seated in chariots. When I think on the interest, eagerness and insatiable avidity, with which men crowd to scenes so vain, so insipid and so often repeated, I feel a certain joy in confessing, that these things afford me no delight, and that I devote here, with the same pleasure, to the study of the *belles lettres*, that time which they so miserably consume in the Circus."

But if, from similar motives, a man of the world were to withdraw from the pleasures of good com-

Figure which the solitary man makes in the world.

pany, would he not degrade himself? Would he not in the retirement of Solitude forget the *bon ton*, and, consequently, lose all that constitutes the real external distinction between the nobility and the vulgar?


Bon ton, which consists only in facility of expression, and in presenting our ideas in the most agreeable manner, belongs to every country, and is found, in general, among all men of sense and education, whatever may be their rank. Thus the noble and the peasant may alike possess the *bon ton*. Perhaps it is possible to lose in Solitude the custom of the moment; or, the man who ventures to think for himself may there retain certain qualities, though he is convinced they will displease the world. The solitary character will probably come into society with a coat, the collar of which was in fashion last year; perhaps his manners and behaviour may be rather offensive to the man of the world, who, in all matters of such importance, invariably follows the opinion of the day. But, by his easy, honest frankness, his unaffected politeness, arising from a sensible and amiable mind, a man, although somewhat behind the fashion, will not displease a rational and refined observer, even in the courtly circle, if he be found to possess good sense, decency of demeanour and a sufficient stock of useful information. He will certainly discover, that those qualities are not required there; as the most accomplished courtier, notwithstanding the studied refinement of his manners, often betrays, too soon, his paucity of ideas, and that his attention is engrossed by insignificant objects. A solitary person appears to least advantage among dissipated characters, who consider grossness and impudence as the surest sign of a good compa-

Solitude habituates the mind to reflection.

nion and a sensible man. Such a disposition is certainly not acquired in Solitude ; for he, who extorts the loudest applause from people of the world, frequently possesses no other merit than that of being able to ridicule all that is true, noble, great and sublime ; of being a babbler without judgment, principles or morals.

I have not yet treated, in this chapter, of the internal and immediate advantages of Solitude upon the mind. We have, doubtless, gained a material point, if we have habituated ourselves from our youth to retirement and a judicious employment of our time. It is not an unimportant circumstance, that, in small towns, the mind may be impressed with the greatest disgust for all those vices that are common to such places ; and it is beneficial that, with all due respect to the talents and virtues of people of rank, we should likewise observe their vices and defects, that we may feel the greater inclination for retirement from the world and communion with our own hearts, and be convinced of the advantages of cultivating our minds and of acquiring new and useful ideas, which are rarely met with in what is called good company.

But the first and most incontestable internal advantage of Solitude for the mind, is, that it habituates us to reflection. The imagination becomes more lively, and the memory more faithful, when nothing distracts our senses and no external object disturbs the soul. Remote from the fatiguing tumult of the world, where a thousand incoherent objects dance incessantly before our eyes and divert our mind ; in Solitude we seek but one object. We steal ourselves away from all external things, but



Solitude accustoms the mind to Reflection.

that of which our heart is in pursuit. A writer whom I could read every day of my life,* says: "It is the power of attention which, in a great measure, distinguishes the wise and the great from the vulgar and trifling herd of men. The latter are accustomed to think or rather to dream, without knowing the subject of their thoughts. In their unconnected roving they pursue no end; they follow no track. Every thing floats, loose and disjointed, on the surface of their mind; like leaves scattered and blown about on the face of the waters."

We acquire the habit of reflection, if we frequently withdraw our thoughts from every thing that distracts the attention, turn our minds from the observation of external objects, and live in a situation where the daily course of occurrences is not liable to continual change. If we were indolent in Solitude, all its advantages would be lost to us, for inactivity excites the meanest passions and produces, in the mind of a solitary man, a multitude of extravagant ideas and inordinate desires. To exercise the mind in reflection, we must, therefore, retire from amidst the noisy multitude and elevate it above sensual objects. We shall then easily recollect all the information we have acquired by reading, observation and experience. Every silent reflection produces new ideas, and affords the mind

* Dr. Blair, author of the celebrated sermons, and an inestimable work entitled *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, printed in London for the first time in the year 1783; and indispensably necessary to be studied by every one who wishes to learn to speak and write with elegance and accuracy.

A knowledge of mankind acquired by reflection in Solitude.

the purest pleasures. We cast our eyes upon the past, we look forward to the future, and even forget them both in the enjoyment of present felicity. But, that our reason may preserve its native strength in Solitude, it is necessary that we always direct our activity to some noble purpose and occupation.

I may, perhaps, excite a laugh, if I say that Solitude is a school in which we acquire a knowledge of mankind. It is confessed, that in social life we collect more materials for reflection, than our contemplative faculties, even in their full vigor, can employ. We go into the world only to make observations which it is the business of Solitude to arrange with propriety. I cannot see how, under this view of the subject, those characters can be called envious and misanthropic who seek to discover all the secret failings of mankind, and to bring to light all their errors and imperfections. A knowledge of mankind is a necessary study, and we cannot acquire that knowledge without observation. I cannot, therefore, think that this study, enjoyed in tranquillity or employed for the general advantage, is illusory or dangerous, that it tends to debase the human character, to degrade the species, that it is sooner or later succeeded by pain and remorse, which deprive the mind of a thousand nobler pleasures and destroy all its faculties. In such a character I perceive only a very laudable spirit of observation.

Do I feel either envy or hatred to mankind when I study their diseases; when I explore the most secret causes of the weaknesses of the human body; if I examine the imperfections and vices in the constitution, and rejoice when I have discovered what was before obscure to myself and other

A knowledge of mankind acquired by reflection in Solitude.

men. I do not however tell others, that one person has this and another that disease; but when it is of advantage to make public the knowledge I have acquired, what can prevent me from disclosing all the symptoms of a disorder, with all its changes and complications?

Now draw a line, between what you allow the observer of your body, and what you forbid to the observer of the mind. You will reply: the physician studies corporeal diseases, to find, if possible, a remedy for them: but that is not the aim of the moralist. How do you know that? A man, possessing a sensible mind, views the moral defects of a fellow creature with the same regret, that he feels at the sight of physical infirmities. Why do we else avoid them; and retire into Solitude as if apprehensive of infection? But as there are a thousand moral foibles and defects, which are not considered as such, even in the places where they are indulged; there must, without contradiction, be a great pleasure in knowing these defects, where the discovery may be of advantage to mankind, without proving injurious to any individual. To place them in their true light; to give them their real name; to set them up as a beacon to mankind, is so far from having a mischievous tendency, that I rather think, and shall continue to think so in the hour of death, that this is the only true mean of discovering the artifices of the devil and destroying his works.

Bonnet in an affecting passage in the preface to his work on the soul, speaks of the advantages he derived in Solitude from the weakness of his sight; "Solitude, (says he,) naturally leads to meditation; the solitude in which I have in some measure,

Japanese Academy of blind people.

hithertolived, together with the unfortunate circumstances, which have for some years afflicted and still afflict me, induced me to seek, in the resources of my mind, that relief which the state of my soul rendered so necessary. My mind became a peaceful retreat, from which I derived pleasures that have charmed my affliction." At this period the *great*, the *good* Bonnet was almost blind.

Pfeffel, of Colmar, an excellent man of another description, who has devoted himself to the instruction of youth, supports the total loss of sight in a manner equally noble and affecting; in a life less solitary, but frequently in an agreeable leisure, dedicated to philosophy, poetry, and the exercise of humanity.

In Japan, there was formerly an academy of blind persons, who, perhaps, possessed as much discernment as the members of many other academies. They consecrated their lives to the study of the history of their country, poetry, and music. They chose the most celebrated traits in the annals of Japan, as the subjects of their muse, and afterwards adapted them to sublime and solemn music. When we reflect on the folly and extravagance, of which multitudes who led a solitary life have been guilty, we regard these blind Japanese with pleasure and veneration. Their minds' eye opened, to compensate for the deficiency of their corporeal organ. Light, life, and happiness issued from the bosom of darkness to bless them, amidst tranquil reflection and solitary occupations.

Let us then live solitary and free; let us frequently resign ourselves to that happy tranquillity, which is enjoyed in the English garden of my immortal

Advantages of Liberty and Leisure.

friend, von Hinüber, at Marienwerder; where every object invites to the enjoyment of peaceful and pious sentiment and to sublime reflection; or, if disposed profoundly to examine subjects of higher import, to prevent the soul from being overwhelmed and annihilated by the inanity of social life, let us repair to the shade of thy ancient pines, beloved Hapsburg!*

If Solitude invite us to think; thought is the first spring of our actions. It has been observed that actions are only ideas, matured into substance and existence; consequently each of us, by an impartial examination of the ideas which afford him the most pleasure, may discover the whole mystery of his real character; for those who accustom themselves to retirement, and the communion with their own hearts, will sometimes learn truths, which the world had concealed from them.

For a mind which aspires to activity in Solitude, liberty and leisure are the only requisites. Leave him to himself, and all the faculties of his soul are set in motion, give him liberty and leisure, and he will soar incomparably higher than if he were to drag on a painful existence in society. Writers who never aim at originality but employ themselves in collecting the thoughts of others, here pursue their labors, and are happy. But it affords far greater pleasure to the mind, to be continually em-

* The author was born at the foot of this celebrated mountain, whose summit is crowned with the ruins of the ancient castle, whence issued the progenitors of the present house of Austria; and the wood, with which it is covered was his favorite retreat.

Courage inspired by Solitude.

ployed in Solitude in a manner that may be productive of benefit, even though we may irritate fools and cover the vicious with confusion. Universal obscurity and tranquillity give repose to a lively imagination, concentrate the ideas, and inspire the soul with a courage which nothing can daunt. Fearless such a character encounters a whole host of adversaries ; conscious of his powers, his only wish is, that justice may sooner or later be done to him. He will doubtless see, with regret, that, in the world, vice is so often exalted, so generally honored with public esteem, and that the voice of prejudice is so obsequiously obeyed. When filled with these reflections he will say : " This ought to be so, and is not so ;" and with one stroke of his pen he brands the vicious man with everlasting infamy, and with another overthrows and annihilates the most obstinate prejudices.

To the profound thinker, the enlightened philosopher and the man of genius, the charms of truth are disclosed with superior lustre in Solitude. A great and wise man, Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, says : " The great and the worthy, the pious and the virtuous, have ever been addicted to serious retirement. It is the characteristic of little and frivolous minds to be wholly occupied with the vulgar objects of life. These fill up their desires and supply all the entertainment which their coarse apprehensions can relish. But a more refined and enlarged mind leaves the world behind it, feels a call for higher pleasures and seeks them in retreat. The man of public spirit has recourse to it in order to form plans for the general good ; the man of genius in order to dwell on his favorite themes ; the philosopher to



*Truth unfolding her
Charms in Solitude.*

Numa, king of Rome.

pursue his discoveries; the saint to improve himself in grace."

Before Numa,* the legislator of Rome was elevated to the sovereignty, he retired, on account of his wife's death, into the country, where he passed his time in wandering through the sacred groves and lawns and the most solitary places. Hence it was reported that Numa avoided the converse with mankind neither out of melancholy nor discontent; but that his solitude was enlivened by the society of a being of a higher order and sacred origin: that the goddess Egeria had become enamoured of him, had married him, and by enlightening his mind and storing it with superior wisdom had led him to the possession of supreme felicity. The Druids, likewise, amidst their rocks and the solitude of their groves, instructed the nobles of their nation in philosophy and oratory, the phænomena of nature, the

* Numa Pompilius was descended from a noble Sabine family, and though he had married the daughter of the king Tadius, yet the grandeur of royalty could not induce him to leave his patrimonial farm. He consoled himself in this rural retreat, with the mild precepts of philosophy, for the loss of his consort, till he was elected by the Romans to fill the throne, vacant by the death of their first king Romulus. His inclination to Solitude occasioned the report of his holding a secret intercourse with the nymph Egeria; and "although" in the words of an elegant historian, "the integrity of the sage may be impeached in countenancing fiction, yet the pious fraud of the monarch may be palliated, if not vindicated; and policy will pardon that deceit which is exercised to reform the manners and to restrain the passions of a lawless and barbarous people." After a prosperous and peaceful reign of 43 years Numa died anno 672 before Christ. T.

Solitude calls forth the powers of genius.

courses of the stars, the mysteries of the gods, and the nature of eternity. If, like the story of Numa, this high idea of the wisdom of the Druids be but an agreeable fiction, it however, shews what respect and veneration were paid in every age to those sages, who devoted themselves in dignified retirement to the study of wisdom.

Solitude alone, unaided by the patronage of power, the encouragement of the great, or the hope of recompence, frequently calls forth the intrinsic force of genius. Amidst all the horrors of civil war, Flanders was filled with painters, whose talents were only equalled by their poverty. Corregio had been accustomed to receive so small a compensation for his labors, that the payment of ten pistoles, which he was obliged to go to Parma to receive, created in his mind such extravagant joy, that it cost him his life.* The consciousness of their merits must have been the recompence of these artists; they painted for immortality.

Profound meditation sometimes excites in retirement, the highest powers of the understanding, fires the imagination and gives birth to the most sublime sensations and ideas. The soul there enjoys more pure, more durable satisfaction, and is invigorated for new efforts. In Solitude, to live and to think are synonymous terms. The soul launches into infinity,

* The payment was made in a copper coin called *quadrini*. Corregio was so overjoyed to be the bearer of such a sum to his wife, that it prevented his thinking either of the weight he had to carry or the heat of the day. He had 50 miles to walk; upon his return home he was attacked by a pleurisy and died.

The value of time learned in Solitude.

glows with enthusiasm at the free enjoyment of its own powers, acquires the habitude of meditating on sublime objects and of adopting heroic resolutions. In a very solitary spot, upon a charming mountain near Pyrmont, the foundation is said to have been laid of one of the most remarkable events of the eighteenth century. The king of Prussia, having visited the place for the benefit of the waters, withdrew from the public company and used to walk alone upon this beautiful, though at that time uncultivated, mountain, now called *Königsberg* (the Royal Mountain). Thus where common minds are occupied only with the pursuits of intrigue and dissipation, the youthful monarch, it is said, formed the project of the first Silesian war.

The inestimable value of time, with which the indolent are unacquainted, and which, without the requisite activity of mind, cannot be duly appreciated, is naturally learned much better in Solitude than amidst the levity of social life. He who employs himself with ardor, who wishes not to have lived quite in vain, never regards without dread and apprehension the rapid movement of a stop-watch, the truest emblem of human life, the most striking monitor of the swift career of time.

The time consumed in social intercourse, when it raises the mind and heart to a certain degree of elevation, enlarges our ideas and banishes our cares, is not misapplied. But if this intercourse become our only pleasure and delight, if it be converted into love, if it change hours into moments, and we reject every other idea to indulge only in the contemplation of the favorite image, even love, alas! will consume our time, and years pass away unheeded like minutes.

Frederic II. of Prussia understood the value of time.

To him, who always employs his time according to the purpose of his existence, in discharging the duties of his station to the best of his ability and capacity, the time never appears too long, but on the contrary too short. I know a prince* who, with the assistance of six domestics, employs very few minutes in dressing. His carriage cannot be said to go, but it flies. At his hospitable board the repast is finished in a moment. I shall be told that this is the manner of all princes: that they wish every thing to be done with dispatch. But I have beheld this exalted, this noble-minded sovereign receiving petitions with his own hand; and I know that he answers them all. I know that he attends daily, with the most scrupulous exactness, to the important concerns of government and devotes seven hours in each day to reading the best English, French, Italian, and German authors. This prince knows the value of time.

All the time which the man of the world throws away, is gained by the solitary man; and no enjoyment on earth is so permanent as the real enjoyment of time. Man has many duties to perform; therefore the good that he has it in his power to do, he must do immediately, that the present day may not be torn like a blank leaf from the book of life.

* The intelligent reader will perceive that the author here alludes to the great Frederic of Prussia, of whom he speaks in several other passages of his work. The term "Royal Youth" given him in this paragraph, in the translation printed by Mr. Dilly and copied into the paraphrase on Zimmermann's work published by Messrs. Vernor and Hood, cannot, with the strictest propriety, be applied to that monarch, such a short time before his death. T.

Dr. Johnson on the employment of time.

We protract the career of time by employment, we lengthen the duration of our lives by wise thoughts and useful actions. Life, to him who wishes not to have lived in vain, is thought and action. Our thoughts are never so rapid or so pleasing, as in those hours which we have saved from the languor and fatigue of a fashionable visit.

We should be more frugal of our time, if we always bore in mind, how many hours escape against our inclination. A great English writer* says: "When we have deducted all that is absorbed in sleep, all that is inevitably appropriated to the demands of nature, or irresistibly engrossed by the tyranny of custom, all that passes in regulating the superficial decorations of life, or is given up in the reciprocations of civility, to the disposal of others; all that is torn from us by the violence of disease, or stolen imperceptibly away by lassitude and languor; we shall find that part of our duration very small, of which we can truly call ourselves masters, or which we can spend wholly at our own choice. Many of our hours are lost in a rotation of petty cares, in a constant recurrence of the same employments; many of our provisions for ease or happiness are always exhausted by the present day, and a great part of our existence serves no other purpose than that of enabling us to enjoy the rest."

Time is never more mispent than when we complain of the want of it. Every thing is then done with ill-humor. We may be assured, however, that the yoke is less galling when it is borne with

* Dr. Johnson.

Less time is lost in solitude than in society.

patience! But when we are wearied by ceremonious intrusion, we ought to possess sufficient courage to shake off our chains, and learn to reduce the number of visits, which employ the week. This victory, and a door closely locked against the impertinence of idle visitors, together with a regular plan each morning, and a severe scrutiny of our daily conduct, every evening, will double the term of our lives. When any visitor announced his intention of calling upon Melancton, he not only used to inquire the hour, but the minute in which he would come, that the day might not be consumed in listless inactivity and uncertainty.

Lamentations, on the subject of lost time and business neglected, cease when we have learned to spend our time with economy, and live in the independence of rural retirement. We have then no more visits to pay; we are not obliged to accept of invitations, in spite of our declared aversion; we are not liable to the interruption of a crowd of strangers, upon the most insignificant pretexts; we are released from the innumerable duties imposed by society, and all which are not worth a single virtue. No importunate and unwelcome guest robs us of the hours we hoped to spend in the most useful manner. No loquacious visitor torments us, for half the day, with a thousand stories which we did not desire to know, while we are dying with impatience for him to take his leave, that we may return to our studies and our occupations.

But it has been said with much justice, how few of the numberless hours passed in Solitude are distinguished by any permanent or useful effect! How many are consumed in empty reveries, in discon-

Loss of time occasioned by ill-humour.

tented and unquiet reflections, in base, anti-social passions, or inordinate and guilty pleasures !

To retire into Solitude is not always a proof of serious reflection and useful occupation. We may there fall into a disposition, which is far more dangerous than all the dissipations of the world. How often does sickness, even amidst perfect leisure, render us incapable of thinking or acting to any useful purpose ! The most melancholy mode of life, in Solitude, is that of the hypochondriac who is sensible only to his pains. The most dissipated man does not mis-spend more time, in pursuing the vanities of the world, than the melancholy man in total seclusion and abstraction from the rest of mankind. Ill-humour occasions as great a loss of time as melancholy, and is certainly one of the greatest obstacles to internal happiness. Melancholy is an enemy that we dread and oppose ; ill-humour takes us by surprise, and overcomes us before we think of resistance.

If we reflect that, by ill-humor, we lose not only days but even weeks and months, we shall endeavour to avoid, or at least to resist its attacks. A single thought, with which we unnecessarily disturb and torment ourselves, frequently deprives us, for a considerable time, of the ability to perform any thing, beyond the circle of our daily occupations. We should, therefore, always endeavour to prevent any untoward occurrence of life from exercising a greater influence upon the activity of our minds, than it ought. While our attention is employed with useful occupation, sorrow takes less hold upon the mind. In literary composition we can instantly banish ill-humour, by venting our spleen in our

Life affords abundant leisure if not misapplied.

book ; thus we often take up the pen with frowns of discontent and lay it down again with a smile.

Our time and our life is mispent if we give way to all the difficulties, cares, and perplexities which attend it. We become incapable of any great or manly action, if we occupy ourselves only with trifling circumstances, and never have the courage to engage in any undertaking, only on account of its difficulty or danger. "The main of life," as an Eng^lish writer* has admirably observed, "is, indeed, composed of small incidents and petty occurrences, of wishes for objects not remote, and grief for disappointments, of no fatal consequence, of insect vexations, which sting us and fly away, imper tinences which buzz a-while about us, and are heard no more : of meteorous pleasures, which dance before us, and are dissipated : of compliments which glide off the soul like other music, and are forgotten by him that gave and him that received them."

Life would afford abundant leisure for every purpose, if we could not only prevent the intrusion of others, but were guilty of no misapplication of it ourselves. He who, in his youth, has learned nothing but the art of devoting every hour to useful employment, has acquired the principal requisite of a man of business. But, either out of ill-humour or indolence, before we undertake any task, we consult our convenience, hesitate, and endeavour to persuade ourselves that it is not yet a proper season for the work. Our indolence must be gained over by caresses, before it is converted into activity.

* Dr. Johnson.

How Frederic II. of Prussia divided his time.

Our first care must therefore be, to pursue invariably a certain object; and to endeavour to make ourselves independent of circumstances, instead of being governed by them. To form the character of a man of business, firmness and decision must be blended with flexibility and good-nature. Certainly no man knows better how to employ every moment than the monarch of whom Voltaire said: "He is like marble, equally polished and hard."

The pursuit of some particular object operates as an antidote to the loss of time. Therefore, every man, from the monarch to the laborer, should, each day, know what he has to do, and what he can execute to-day, he ought not to postpone till to-morrow. Thus every thought, every action of man should tend towards the object of his existence. The monarch* who is an example to his own age, and who will furnish a model for all future sovereigns, rises at the hour of four in summer and five in winter. All the letters, which any of his subjects is at liberty to write to him, all memorials or other papers which arrived the preceding evening, or during the night, are placed before him on a table. The monarch opens and peruses every paper, and then divides them into three heaps. One is answered immediately, according to his directions; the second, to which he makes marginal notes with his own hand, is delivered to the proper ministers, or military and law officers; and the third, which is not worthy of notice, the monarch throws into the fire. His private secretaries then enter, and his Majesty delivers into their hands, the business of

* Frederic II. of Prussia.

How Frederic II. of Prussia divided his time.

the day, which must be immediately performed. He afterwards mounts his horse, reviews his troops, or receives those foreigners who desire to be introduced to him. He then sits down to dinner, enlivens the company by his gaiety, and mingles with the conversation, maxims, and sentiments, equally admirable for their truth and wisdom. When the repast is finished, the secretaries return, bringing with them all the letters of which they received the rough draught in the morning, neatly written out, for the royal signature. Between the hours of four and five in the afternoon, the business of the day is concluded, and the monarch thinks himself at liberty to take repose, which consists in reading himself, or in having read to him, the best works, ancient and modern, till the hour of supper. A sovereign who thus employs his time, may fairly require that the time of his ministers, generals, and officers, civil and military, shall not be mispent.

Many men, disdaining trifling objects, aspire to be employed only in matters of high importance; and as they will not take the time these require, they perform nothing. There are others who do nothing because they know not how to distribute their time. They might effect some great and useful purpose, by seizing every idle half hour, and employing it in the object they propose: for how many important things are performed only by slow degrees! But those who are pleased with and invite interruption, who wait till they feel an inclination and humor, which are only acquired by industry, who have not that perfect leisure which they desire and which many never obtain, soon conclude that they possess neither inclination nor leisure; and to kill time,

saunter about, on foot and on horseback, morning, noon, and night.

One of the greatest and most worthy men that ever adorned Switzerland, my late friend Iselin, wrote his *Ephemerides*, a work which all the nobility of Germany ought to study and which many of them have read, in the midst of the senate of Basel.* The celebrated Möser of Osnabrück, equally beloved by our sovereign and by his prince, by the nobility and the clergy, the citizen and the peasant, of that principality, as a man of business and a patriot, raised himself to a distinction which few writers of Germany have attained, while enjoying the recreation of a social game.†

Carpe diem, says Horace, and the same precept applies to every hour. The voluptuous, the sons of Anacreon and votaries of Bacchus, advise us to drive away every sorrow, to be ever gay, and to enjoy each passing moment: their recommendation is good, but in a different sense from what they intend it; to proceed in the execution of some useful purpose must be the object of our lives. It is possible to be solitary amidst all the tumult and bustle of society. Morning visits may be paid at

* Mr. Iselin was secretary to the senate; and while he was composing his *Ephemerides*, the senators imagined that he was noting down their speeches; in the same manner as the counsellors of Zurich thought the immortal Gessner was collecting their proceedings in his tablets, while he was drawing the ludicrous portraits of the worthy magistrates in caricature.

† Möser dictated, while at play, to his accomplished daughter, almost all his fugitive pieces, the sure pledges of his immortality.

Advantageous employment of time taught by Petrarch.

noon, and cards of ceremony circulated; we may appear at every fashionable assembly, and yet preserve the morning and evening for ourselves. We must propose an invariable plan for our conduct; we must be as fond of pursuing our occupations at home, with renewed courage and perseverance, as to dance attendance every day at the toilette of every fine lady. It is only the man of labor and application, only he who has been employed the whole day in the service of the state, or for the benefit of his fellow-men, that can, with a good conscience, fix himself, for the evening, at the card-table, without hearing or uttering one interesting expression and without carrying home with him any other idea, than "I have lost or won so much money."

The highest advantage of time and the sole end to which I would direct all these observations, has been already taught us by Petrarch. "If," says he, "we feel an inclination to serve God, in which consists the highest degree of liberty and felicity; if we wish to improve our minds by the sublime pursuits of literature, which, next to religion, procure us the greatest pleasure; if we are desirous of leaving behind us, in our thoughts and writings, something to preserve our memory, to arrest the rapid career of our days, and prolong this limited existence; if we are anxious to do all these things; ah! let us flee I entreat you, and let us pass the short remnant of our days in Solitude!"

This advice cannot, indeed, be followed by all. But most men are, in a greater or less degree, masters of their time, and have the choice of forming connections with other men, or of avoiding them. For the benefit of these I shall continue the consideration of the advantages of Solitude.

Solitude contributes to refine the taste.

Solitude refines the taste, expands the ideas, encourages the inclination to activity, and procures pleasures which raise the mind above all earthly considerations, and of which no accident can deprive it.

In Solitude, taste is refined by a more careful selection of the beauties with which the mind is engaged. It depends upon ourselves, to make choice of such objects only as afford us pleasure, of such books and subjects of reflection as improve our taste. There we avoid those false ideas which we so easily adopt in society, by reposing greater confidence in the judgment of others than in our own. It is insupportable to be obliged so often to say: "Thus I ought to feel." Why should not men rather endeavour to acquire correct sentiments of their own, and follow their own judgment without adopting the arbitrary opinions of others. If a work please me, of what importance is it whether it be approved by the *beau monde*? What can I learn from you, ye miserable, cold critics, who have no taste for what is truly noble, great, and good? How can I bow to your partial tribunal, which decides the merit of a work by arbitrary agreement, and is deceived by false views and false notions? What can I think of the multitude, who only repeat your opinions and always wait to hear the public judgment? What confidence can be placed in your decisions, when all of you would extol the vilest book, if it happened to be praised by any person of rank or high reputation; upon whose word, too, you would not hesitate to condemn a work, whatever degree of merit it may possess?

Without a total seclusion from such a class of readers, it is impossible to feel or to discover truth,

Solitude makes us conscious of our powers.

for we catch the infection before we are aware. But he who possesses a mind that is capable of distinguishing beauties from defects, that feels a passionate enthusiasm and real happiness in contemplating works of genius, and experiences pain, languor, and disgust, at the sight of dullness and deformity, is fond of withdrawing from the vulgar herd, and indulging alone, or amidst a small number of select friends, in tranquil intercourse with the most admired writers of ancient and modern times.

We experience the most agreeable sensations of our existence, when we discover how much we may ourselves contribute towards the perfection of our nature, and the felicity of our minds. We then rejoice that we possess such powers, that we can employ them, that they are fully competent to our own instruction and amusement, to the pleasures of our friends, and perhaps the delight of congenial minds, to whom we are yet unknown, and who may be charmed with the truths that proceed from our pens.

Solitude expands the ideas, extends the sphere of knowledge, and incites the mind to active exertion, by rendering curiosity more lively, application more constant, and perseverance more firm. One who was well acquainted with its advantages has said that, "by silent contemplation, all the faculties of the mind are exercised and invigorated; many obscurities that rendered the path of life painful are dissipated, and we return more tranquil and serene to the busy scenes of social intercourse. Our mental horizon is enlarged by reflection, we learn to survey more objects, and to connect them together; we carry with us more correct views, more just opinions, and firmer principles, into the world, in

It excites the mind to new discoveries.

which we live and act ; and amidst distractions of every kind, we are then better able to command our attention and to judge with accuracy, because we are exercised and prepared by the reflections we made in the hour of retirement."

Ah ! how soon is rational curiosity satisfied in the ordinary intercourse with the world ! In Solitude it increases every day. The human mind never discovers an end to its researches ; it adds observation to observation, and conclusion to conclusion ; and one truth is developed after another. Those who first observed the courses of the stars, could not possibly foresee what influence their discoveries would once have upon the interests and welfare of mankind ; they were delighted with the spectacle of the nocturnal luminaries, observed the changes in the positions of many of them, were anxious to explore the causes of the phænomena that excited their wonder, and thus, by degrees, they determined their courses. In the same manner, the powers of the soul are augmented in silent activity, and the contemplative mind is expanded, in proportion as it reflects upon all the causes, effects and consequences of an established truth.

But if the ardor of the imagination be moderated by reason, our progress is less rapid, but we are never obliged to measure back the course we have already proceeded. Hurried along by the impetuosity of the imagination, the mind may construct new worlds, which burst like airy bubbles ; while reason submits every thing to the test of investigation, and retains only what is of real value. " The great art to learn much," says Locke, " is to undertake but little at a time."

Dr. Johnson on perseverance.

That celebrated English writer, Dr. Johnson, has very happily said, "All the performances of human art, at which we look with praise or wonder, are instances of the resistless force of perseverance: it is by this that the quarry becomes a pyramid, and that distant countries are united by canals. If a man were to compare the effect of a single stroke of the pick-axe, or of one impression of a spade, with the general design and last result, he would be overwhelmed by the sense of their disproportion; yet those petty operations, incessantly continued, in time surmount the greatest difficulties, and mountains are levelled and oceans bounded by the slender force of human beings. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance, that those who have any intention of deviating from the beaten roads of life, and acquiring a reputation superior to names hourly swept away by time among the refuse of fame, should add to their reason and their spirit the power of persisting in their purposes; acquire the art of sapping what they cannot batter, and the habit of vanquishing obstinate resistance by obstinate attacks."

Activity enlivens the most savage desert, converts the solitary cell into a lively world, procures immortal glory for him who meditates in the silence of his chamber, and for the industrious artisan in his work-shop. The mind takes pleasure in the exercise of its powers, it is encouraged by the prospect of future fame, and excited to more vigorous exertions by difficulty and opposition. When Apelles was reproached on account of the small number of his productions, and the incessant attention which

Monastic Solitude ridiculous.

he bestowed upon retouching his pieces, his only reply was, "I paint for posterity."

The Cenobites and Anchorets of Egypt and the East would never have been possessed with the spirit of indolence and inordinate desires, if, instead of yawning away their days in pious idleness, they had applied themselves, in their dreary deserts, to some useful occupation. If they had studied mankind, instead of hating and condemning them for insignificant differences of opinion, the spirit of persecution, hot from hell, had never fired their souls, nor ignorance established its throne upon their altars.

To recommend monastic ideas of Solitude and the tranquillity of a cloister to men, who, after a serious preparation in retirement, and an assiduous intercourse with their own minds, are capable of great and good actions in the world, would be highly ridiculous. Princes cannot lead the life of monks; ministers of state are no longer sought in convents, nor generals among priests. Petrarch, therefore, very justly says, "I condemn the solitude which is spent in sloth, and that leisure which is consumed in indolence and employed to no useful purpose. To many Solitude must be attended with great advantages; but to the inactive and indolent mind, seclusion from the world must be productive of melancholy and misery. Such a character is incapable of doing any good, he cannot resign himself to the pursuits of literature and science, nor endure to contemplate the bright examples of illustrious characters."

But the pleasures of the mind are accessible to every man. It is only to the pleasures that are

Zollikofer on the pleasures of the mind.

procured by money, and in which the understanding does not participate, which tend only to drive away languor or to gratify the senses, that the *great* can claim an exclusive privilege. But, they do not possess the same right over those enjoyments, which the mind procures itself, which are the fruits of its own activity, meditations and research, which are more nearly connected with invisible than visible objects, with the knowledge and contemplation of truth and the sensation of our progressive advancement towards moral perfection.

An ecclesiastic from Switzerland* has said in a German pulpit, that "one mental pleasure, consequently a pleasure that is within the reach of every man in every station of life, begets another; and even that of which we have drunk the most copious draughts, loses none of its relish, never becomes unpalatable, is continually acquiring new charms and fresh interest, and appearing in new views and new combinations. The materials for these pleasures are as boundless as the empire of truth, as extensive as the world, as unlimited as the divine perfection. The pleasures of the mind are, therefore, more durable than any others. They do not shrink from the light of day, nor are lost with the external form of things, nor perish with our bodies in the grave. They remain while we exist. They accompany us through every vicissitude, through every change, both in our present and future state. In the obscurity of night, amidst the gloom of affliction, they

* Zollikofer, whose sermons have lately been translated into English by the Rev. Mr. Tooke. T.

Philip of Macedon, and Dionysius of Syracuse.

compensate the loss of all visible objects, and the total separation from society."

Thus, men of exalted minds have preserved, amidst the splendor of the world, and in the brilliant career of heroic achievements, a taste for mental pleasures. While engaged in affairs of the highest importance, in spite of all distractions, they remained faithful to the Muses, and studied the works of men of genius. They were not of the opinion that reading and knowledge were unnecessary for great men. They were not even ashamed sometimes to become writers themselves. Philip, king of Macedon, having invited Dionysius the younger to dinner, he began to deride the father of the latter, for having united the characters of prince and author, and for having composed odes and tragedies. "When," said Philip, "could your father find leisure to write such things?" "In those hours," replied Dionysius, "which you and I spend in drunkenness and debauchery."

Alexander was passionately fond of reading. While he filled the world with the glory of his victories, and marked his way with blood and slaughter; while captive kings crowded his train; and, impelled by increased ardor to new conquests, he was advancing over the ruins of their thrones, through smoking cities and depopulated provinces, into the heart of Asia; he felt the attacks of languor, and had no books. He, therefore, wrote to Harpalus, for the works of Philistus, many of the tragedies of Euripides, Sophocles, and Eschylus and the Dithyrambics of Thalestes.

Brutus, the avenger of the liberty of Rome, while serving in Pompey's army, employed every moment

Brutus.

with his books that was not occupied by his military duties. The time allowed for the army to repose, he not only devoted to reading and writing, but employed himself in the same manner, on the day preceding the memorable battle of Pharsalia, fought for the empire of the universe. It was the middle of summer; the heat was excessive, and the army had encamped on marshy ground. The servants of Brutus, who carried his tent, did not arrive till late hour. Being much fatigued, he bathed in the mean time, and caused his body to be rubbed with oil. He then took some refreshment, and while others slept or contemplated the event of the ensuing day, Brutus, without tent and exposed to the heat of a scorching sun, employed himself, till evening, in making an extract from the history of Polybius.

None was more sensible of the pleasures of the mind than Cicero, who in his oration for Archias says: "How can I be ashamed of these pleasures, which, for so many years, have never prevented me from relieving others, or weakened the inclination to serve their interests? Who can reproach or who has a right to censure me, for spending that time in reading and writing, which others consume in trivial occupations, spectacles, and diversions, or destroy in feasting, gaming, debauchery, and idleness?"

Full of the same spirit, Pliny the elder,* employ-

* Caius Plinius Secundus, usually denominated Pliny the elder, was born at Verona about the year of Christ 23. He filled several important offices during the reigns of Vespasian and Titus. His death was occasioned by his curiosity to see the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, the noxious va-

Pliny the elder and younger:

ed every moment of his life in useful pursuits. He kept a person to read to him during meals; and when he travelled, always had a book and a writing-desk by his side. He made extracts from every work he read. By such assiduity he hoped to double the period of his existence; and scarcely considered that he lived, while sleep prevented the exercise of his mental faculties.

Pliny the younger* neglected no opportunity of reading, either when taking the pleasures of the chase, or walking, at meals, and in every moment of leisure that his occupations allowed him. He had made it an invariable rule, to prefer the discharge of his duty, to those employments which he followed only for amusement. On this account, he

pour from which is supposed to have suffocated him. He wrote upon various subjects, but his principal work and the only one now extant, is a System of Natural History, in 37 books. T.

* C. Cæcilius Plinius Secundus, was the nephew of Pliny the elder, from whom he is distinguished by the appellation of the younger Pliny. He was born at Como, in the year of Christ 62, and was adopted by his uncle, whose talents he inherited together with his fortune. He was highly celebrated for his abilities as a lawyer, in which profession he attained to great eminence. His eloquence is likewise conspicuous in his Letters, which are historical, moral, and amusing. He appears to have owed his life to the opportune death of the tyrant Domitian, for he says, that his name was found in that emperor's tablets, among those destined for destruction. In the year 100, he was raised to the Consular dignity by Trajan; whose panegyric he pronounced in the Senate. This master-piece of composition and his Epistles, are the whole of his writings that have escaped the wreck of time. His death is conjectured to have happened about the year 116. T.

was always the more anxious for Solitude and repose. "Shall I," said he, in moments of despondency, "never be able to break the bonds by which I am held? Are they indissoluble? No, I dare not hope it. Every day adds new torments to the former. Scarcely is one duty performed when another awaits me. The chain of my labors is continually becoming longer and more oppressive."

Petrarch labored under incessant melancholy when he was not employed in reading or writing; or, at least, when he was prevented from indulging, in Solitude, in the reveries of a poetic imagination, beside the limpid stream, amidst mountains, rocks, and flowery vallies. That he might lose no time during his frequent journies, he wrote at every inn where he stopped. One of his friends, the Bishop of Cavaillon, apprehensive that the assiduity with which he employed himself in reading and writing, at Vaucluse, might entirely destroy his health, which was already impaired, one day asked him for the key of his library. Petrarch gave it him, ignorant of the reason of his request. The good bishop instantly locked up his books and his writing-desk, saying, "I forbid you to read or write for ten days." Petrarch, suppressing his feelings, obeyed. The first day seemed longer than a year; on the second, he was tormented with incessant head-ach; and in the morning of the third, symptoms of fever appeared. The bishop, affected by his situation, restored him his key, and with it his health.

The late Earl of Chatham, as I have been informed by his nephew, my intimate friend, was, in his youth, cornet in a regiment of dragoons, and was

The late Lord Chatham and Mr. Pitt.

quartered in a small town in England. He discharged his duty with the strictest attention; but the remainder of his time he spent in retirement, without paying or receiving visits, in reading the best authors of Greece and Rome. His mode of living was extremely frugal, as he hoped by these means to subdue an hereditary gout, with which he was attacked at a very early age. His ill-health, probably, made him fond of Solitude, and certainly his youthful retirement laid the foundation of his future greatness.

Such characters, it may perhaps be said, no longer exist. In my opinion, it would be erroneous either to say or to think so. Was the Earl of Chatham inferior to any Roman? Will his son, who, while a youth, thundered forth in the British senate like Demosthenes, then captivated every heart like Pericles, and now, in his five and twentieth year, makes himself feared and respected as the prime minister of the British empire, ever think or act, under any circumstances, less nobly than his father? What men have ever been, they may always be. Neither Greece nor Rome, ever produced a sovereign or a warrior whose equal does not at this day exist in Germany. Wisdom and virtue, where an inclination for them exists, may flourish in a court, as well as in the profoundest obscurity of private life, in the palace as well as in the garret. Wise Solitude is no where so respectable as in a palace. There, in tranquillity, the statesman may meditate the greatest enterprises. Even repose, content, and felicity may be found there, if he perform his duty without ostentation, and avoid

Solitude favorable to the study of men and manners;

the infectious intercourse with men of frivolous and dissipated minds.

Solitude renders the mind superior to all the vicissitudes of life. He who does not find felicity in pleasure, riches and grandeur, may, with a book in his hand, learn to forget all his sorrows and vexations beneath the friendly shade of every tree. In Solitude he enjoys superior and more varied pleasures—pleasures ever pure and ever new. His mind acquires increased energy, not at the tables of the great, but in his own closet. There the exercise of his faculties fills him with an agreeable sense of his existence and of the excellence to which, if he pleases, he may one day attain. If he be animated by some great design, if his intentions be pure, the pleasures he enjoys in Solitude are the more refined; he learns to reject the poison of adulation, and to treat all empty and frivolous amusements with contempt.

He who avoids the society of men in order to obtain their love and esteem, he who rises with the sun to enjoy the converse with the dead, is certainly not booted at the break of day. His horses repose in the stable, and his door is closed to the intrusions of the loungers. But he studies men and manners; and though his window-curtains exclude the sun and prevent the enjoyment of the beauties of the surrounding scenery, yet he has the world continually before his eyes. He then takes a survey of all the knowledge that he has gained by reflection and experience. Every observation he has made in the world confirms a truth, or refutes a prejudice. Every object is there unveiled, stripped of its false lustre, and represented in its true

And to the propagation of Truth.

colors. The form of Truth always appears concealed in society ; here on the contrary she is seen in a state of naked simplicity. Ah ! how happy is the man who is not compelled to violate the sacred precepts of truth !

These pleasures of Solitude are not incompatible with any public duty ; for they are themselves the noblest exercise, in which the faculties of the mind can be employed for the public good. Is it criminal to honor, to adore and sacredly to adhere to truth ? Can it be a crime, to possess sufficient courage to declare in public what a common mind cannot think without trembling, and to prefer a noble freedom to servile dependence and submissive devotion ? Is it not by means of the press that truth is disseminated among the people and placed before the eyes of the great ? Do not good writers inspire the mind with courage to think ? Is not freedom of thought the cause of the progress of the human understanding ? It is for this reason that men withdraw into Solitude, to throw aside those fetters which confine them in the world. On this account, the solitary philosopher boldly avows things at which in society he durst scarcely hint. Timidity is not the companion of Solitude. He whose disposition and inclinations lead him into its tranquil shades, acquires, in no other situation, such courage to attack the insolence of the great, and to tear the specious mask from the face of despotic ignorance.

Solitude procures pleasures of the most sublime nature, at least, if the soul be not encumbered with a body entirely debilitated. These joys impart serenity in every circumstance of life, consolation in every calamity, are never exhausted, and at length

Solitude cherishes a love of philosophy.

become as necessary to our existence, as it is for the debauchee to be for ever inactive, or pursuing, from door to door, the pleasure which he can nowhere find. Of these pleasures Cicero says: "they nourish youth, delight mature age, augment our felicity, and are our consolation and refuge in affliction; they charm us at home, and are easy abroad; they shorten the tediousness of the night, and accompany us in our travels and in rural retirement."

"The Belles Lettres," says Pliny the younger, "are my delight and my consolation; I know nothing that is more agreeable, no calamity which they do not alleviate. Amidst my inquietude for the indisposition of my wife, the sickness of my domestics, and the death of my friends, I find relief only in my studies; and though I am fully sensible of the magnitude of my misfortune, yet they contribute to render it more supportable."

Solitude alone cherishes this love of letters, of philosophy, and all that affords the mind an agreeable occupation in retirement. It is impossible that all men of rank should possess this taste, as many of them entertain for it the highest contempt, and tell you with a sneer, "I know nothing of the subject!" The habit of thinking, a continual desire of making new observations, and acquiring new ideas, is an unfailing resource for him, who imagines himself enriched by observation, and who knows how to derive advantage from reflection. When Demetrius had taken the town of Megara, and had delivered it up to be plundered by his troops, he sent for the philosopher Stilpo, and asked him whether he had lost any thing amidst the general confusion. "No,"

Solitude brings men of genius into notice.

replied Stilpo, "for all that I possess I carry in my head."

Solitude alone draws men forth into notice from the undistinguished multitude. How many, possessing the fire of genius and endowed with every mental accomplishment, capable of diffusing the light of science and knowledge on all around them, live despised and slighted among the herd of ignorant and narrow-minded men, all of whom are esteemed superior to a character of this description. He has not yet written any thing, he has given no public testimony of his talents and judgment. On the contrary, he who has no reason to repent what he has written, who has invariably adhered to truth, whose whole soul is poured forth in his works and may be seen in them as in a mirror, is justly entitled to reputation. Rousseau wrote and concealed himself: "had any one seen me," says he, "they would never have known, nor even have suspected what I was capable of doing."*

Thus Solitude is the channel by which those ideas that lie concealed in society, are diffused. Literary composition soothes the heart of the man who is able and disposed to write. The pen must not be continually employed because we are alone; but, to write with success, it is indispensably necessary that we should enjoy retirement. The pleasure of diffusing his thoughts and ideas through a more extensive sphere than the limited circle in which he lives, is almost the only enjoyment of him, who is

* *Le parti que j'ai pris d'écrire et de me cacher, est précisément celui qui me convenoit. Moi présent on n'auroit jamais su ce que je valois, on ne l'auroit pas soupçonné même.*

An author should enjoy uninterrupted retirement.

not at liberty to utter his sentiments to those with whom he associates.

Every one may write in his own chamber. But the mind of a man, engaged in philosophical research, or the cultivation of the Muses, must enjoy perfect liberty; he must not be incessantly interrupted by the noise of his door, or the crying of his children. He must not be disturbed every moment by the entrance of his servant with messages of ceremony; in a word, he must be alone. He must follow his inclinations without control, must go whither he pleases and when he pleases; and whether seated in the shade of a spreading tree, or reclined at home upon his sofa, he must be at liberty to follow every impulse of his mind. To write with success, we must feel an irresistible inclination, an ardent passion, a zeal unaccompanied with compulsion or restraint. If he possess not all these qualities, if he be liable to continual interruption,* the writer should suspend the efforts of his mind, till the favorable moment arrives, when it is enabled to break through every impediment and to surmount every difficulty. An author can never write well, unless he feels a call within his own breast, and employs the propitious minutes, when his ideas are

* One of the most extraordinary faculties of the soul, is the facility of doing several things at once, and preserving the thread of ideas, notwithstanding continual interruption. Of this faculty Cæsar, Haller, Möser, Iselin, and Lavater afford uncommon instances. The latter, when in company with ladies of rank, and even princesses, keeps up the spirit of the conversation, while he writes letters by their side, upon every subject, and at the same time dictates a book, for instance, his *Messiad*.

Petrarch left the papal Court for Vacluse.

clear and his feelings are warmed. Revived by more cheering prospects, animated by nobler sentiments, steeled by the contempt of obstacles, the mind then embraces the subject in its full extent, but, at the same time, selects its ideas and weighs its expressions. The question no longer arises: "Shall I write or not?" The inclination is irresistible and must be indulged, even should the ruin of his family, the loss of fortune, friends and patrons, and of all he possesses, be the consequence.

Petrarch felt this inward impulse, when he withdrew from Avignon, the most vicious and corrupted city of the age, to which the popes had removed the sacred chair and the keys of heaven. He tore himself from the society of the holy father, the cardinals and princes, who were warmly attached to him; in the vigor of manhood and the ardor of youthful passions, he retired from the splendor of a court, and buried himself in his celebrated retreat at Vacluse, six leagues from Avignon, where he was attended by only one domestic, and possessed nothing but a small house and little garden. Charmed with the situation of the spot, he removed his books to it and lived there several years. There all his works were either completed, begun, or projected. Petrarch wrote more at Vacluse than in all the other places at which he resided. He likewise employed himself there in correcting his writings; and could not for a considerable time prevail upon himself to make them public.

Virgil* terms the leisure he enjoyed at Naples,

* Publius Virgilius Maro, the most admired of all the Roman poets, was born near Mantua, in the year of Rome

 Virgil.

ignoble and obscure: but during this leisure he wrote his *Georgics*, the most perfect of all his productions, every line of which attests, that Virgil knew he was writing for immortality.

684. He passed his early years at Cremona; but when the lands of that district were divided among the soldiers, after the battle of Philippi, he removed to Rome. In that city he formed an acquaintance with Mæcenas, by whose recommendation and his own extraordinary talents, he acquired the favor of Augustus, and obtained the restoration of his patrimony. On this occasion he wrote his first *Bucolic*.

"In the thirty-fourth year of his age," says Dr. Warton in his *Life of Virgil*, "the poet retired to a delightful privacy at Naples, where he laid the plan of his inimitable *Georgics*, a work which he undertook at the earnest intreaties of the wise and able minister Mæcenas, on a noble political motive, and to promote the welfare of his country. Great was the desolation occasioned by the continuance and cruelty of the civil wars: Italy was almost depopulated; the lands were uncultivated and unstocked; and a famine and insurrection ensued; Augustus himself hardly escaped being stoned by the enraged populace, who attributed this calamity to his ambition. Mæcenas, therefore, resolved, if possible, to revive the decayed spirit of husbandry, to introduce a taste for cultivation; to make rural improvements a fashionable amusement to the great. What method so likely to effect this, as to recommend agriculture with all the insinuating charms of poetry? Virgil fully answered the expectation of his polite patron; for the *Georgics* contain all those masterly beauties that might be expected from an exalted genius, whose judgment and imagination were in full vigour, and who had leisure to give the last polish and perfection to his incomparable workmanship."

But the production which has more particularly established Virgil's claim to immortality, is the *Æneid*, undertaken, as some have asserted, by the express desire of Augustus. Before the completion of this poem, Virgil is said to have read the sixth book to the emperor and some of the most distinguished characters of Rome, among whom was Octavia

Solitude necessary for a great writer.

Every great writer looks forward with enthusiasm to posterity, and has this presentiment of immortality. The writer of inferior merit is satisfied with a smaller recompence, and sometimes obtains what he desires. Both must withdraw from society, must seek the shade of the sequestered forest and retire into their own minds. Thus all their productions, all their fame and emolument are the effect of Solitude. To produce a work that will reach future ages, or is worthy of the attention of wise contemporaries, it is necessary that the soul should be completely occupied and absorbed by the love of Solitude. All the advantages of profound thought are procured by Solitude. There the author collects

the sister of Augustus, who had recently lost her son Marcellus, the favorite of the Roman people, and the adopted child of Augustus. The poet had inserted the beautiful lamentation beginning, *O nate, ingentem luctum ne quæretuorum*, without mentioning the name, till he came to the line—*Tu Marcellus eris*. Octavia, unable any longer to suppress her feelings, fainted away, overcome with surprise and grief.

Virgil died before he had revised his *Æneid*, though he had employed himself eleven years upon it. Returning from Athens, he was seized with a fatal distemper, which being encreased by the fatigue of the voyage, he expired at Brundisium, in the 52d year of his age. His remains were carried to Naples, according to his earnest request, and, at a small distance from that city, a monument was erected to his memory, which is still an object of curiosity to travellers. The purity of his words and manners procured him the name of *Parthenias* among the inhabitants of Naples. He is represented as being of such a bashful disposition, that, to avoid being publicly gazed at, he frequently ran into shops and houses: yet he was so highly honored by the Romans, that on one occasion when he entered the theatre, the whole audience rose, as a mark of respect. T.

What writers may expect future glory.

and reviews whatever made an impression upon his mind in the world ; there he points the shaft of satire against ancient prejudices and popular errors. The faults of mankind inspire the moral writer with the desire of correcting them, and his soul is as much exalted by it as many others by the desire of pleasing. But the wish for immortality is the highest that a great writer should allow himself to indulge. None can expect it who has not the genius of a Bacon, or is inferior, in his way, to a Rousseau, or a Voltaire ; none but those who write to give law to the public and not to adopt its prejudices. Theirs are the works destined for immortality. Such characters may say, " we felt ourselves animated by the sweet and consolatory reflection, that our names will live when we shall be no more ; by the flattering suffrages of our contemporaries, from which we learned what will be the opinion of those, to whose instruction and felicity we devoted our labors ; whom, though unborn, we esteemed and loved. We felt within us those seeds of emulation, which will snatch our better part from death, and rescue the only delightful moments of our existence from annihilation."

The desire of glory, as well by the feeble glimmer of the midnight lamp as upon the throne, through the ocean and in the field of slaughter, excites to deeds whose memory cannot die, nor is extinguished with mortality, nor buried with us in the tomb. The noon of life is then as brilliant as the morning. " The praises," says Plutarch, " which are bestowed upon great and exalted minds, only serve to rouse and excite their desire for more. Like a violent tempest, the glory they have already acquired

Cicero's desire of posthumous fame.

impels them to every thing that is great and noble. They do not consider themselves as sufficiently rewarded. Their former deeds were only a pledge of what may be expected of them; they would blush not to live faithful to their glory, and not to augment its lustre by still nobler actions."

The man to whom silly adulation and insipid compliment are disgusting, will feel his heart warmed at the enthusiasm with which Cicero says: "Why should we endeavor to dissemble what it is impossible to conceal? Why do we not rather candidly acknowledge, that we all aspire to glory, and that this desire is most powerful in the noblest minds? Even philosophers, who write on the contempt of glory, prefix their names to such works, and while they preach up a contempt for fame, they hope to obtain celebrity and applause. For every toil and every danger, virtue requires no other reward. Were this boon denied, what would remain for them in this short and miserable existence? Had not the soul a presentiment of immortality, had its ideas no wider scope than the narrow limits of mortal existence, man would not fatigue himself with such painful toils, he would not torment himself with so many cares and watchings, nor so often struggle for the preservation of life. But, in the most virtuous minds, there lives a noble impulse, that prompts them to the pursuit of fame; which shall not be extinguished with their mortal existence, but shall flourish to the latest posterity. Should we otherwise, who daily expose ourselves to so many dangers for our country, pass every moment of our lives in anxiety and inquietude; and weakly imagine, that we lose every thing with our expiring

Advantages of the desire of glory.

breath. Many great men have taken the precaution to transmit their busts and statues to posterity ; and why should we not rather leave them resemblances of our mind and heart ? For my own part, at least, in all my actions, I conceived that I was diffusing my fame among posterity, that I was transmitting it to the most remote regions and the latest ages of the world. Whether the consciousness of this shall accompany me beyond the grave or not, I here rejoice in the reflection and hope of future glory."

This is the enthusiasm with which, in this enthusiastic age, we ought to endeavour to inspire the bosoms of the young nobility. Ah ! were any one happy enough to kindle this flame in their hearts, and inure them by it, to unwearied application, they would then be seen to avoid the pernicious pleasures of youth. With what an heroic spirit would they be animated ; what deeds we might expect of them, what glory, what laurels ! The minds of noble youths become truly great, when they feel an aversion to every thing mean, when they are disgusted with whatever enervates the body or soul, when they shun the vile and detestable flatterers, who praise the pleasures of sense and endeavour to insinuate themselves into their favor, only by alluring them to criminal indulgence, by decrying all that is great, and inspiring them with a distaste for every thing that is good. But, the desire of extending our fame by virtuous deeds, and of increasing our credit by inward dignity and greatness of mind, is accompanied with advantages which illustrious birth and high rank cannot procure ; and which even the monarch on his throne cannot obtain without virtue and a continual attention to the suffrages of posterity.

Lavater.

None sows such abundant seed of future glory, as the bold writer, who excites the most indignation among his countrymen and fellow citizens, because he paints their follies and prejudices in permanent and glowing colours. He does not write for them; but his works may operate upon succeeding generations, and perhaps improve their minds. The author, whose judicious precepts, instructive example and well-earned fame, drew upon him, while alive, the malicious persecution of envy, reaps the advantages of them when his mortal part has descended to the grave. O Lavater! thousands of base and narrow souls will be forgotten, while thy name will be honored and beloved; thy little foibles, without which thou wouldst not have been truly great, will be overlooked, and thy excellencies only will be remembered. Then the rich variety of thy language, the boldness with which thou hast created and formed new expressions, thy nervous brevity of style, and striking pictures of human manners and frailties, will, as the author of the *Characters of German poets and prose writers* has predicted, cause thy *Fragments on Physiognomy* to be transmitted to posterity, as one of the few original German works that do honour to the present age. Nobody will then know that Lavater, the discoverer of so many truths, the creator of a new language, gave credit to the continuation of miracles and to the juggles of Gassner.

Such is the glory which awaits great writers. What Cicero so ardently wished actually took place. That approbation which Lavater predicted, notwithstanding the abuses lavished upon him in Switzerland and Germany, his work on physiog-

Of what persons a writer must seek to obtain applause.

mony will certainly receive. But if Cicero had been only a consul and Laetor merely a *thaumaturgus*,* little of either would have been recorded in the archives of time, which swallows up what is common, and preserves for eternity only what is worthy of everlasting fame.

The man of genius may ask the cold critic, the shallow wit, in return for their invectives and abuse: "why do you attempt to explain all that I write, since my finest strokes produce, in your mind, such frigid ideas? Who are you? By what title do you pretend to be the keeper of the archives of dullness and the leader of the public taste? What have you written? When and where has your name been announced to the world? How many distinguished characters do you reckon in the number of your friends? In what foreign country is it known that you exist? Why do you continually preach your *nil admirari* at the tavern? Why do you only there pour forth your invectives against all that is noble, great, and good, as if you felt your own deficiency, poverty and insignificance? Do you there seek the approbation of the weak and silly multitude, because you possess the esteem of no other company? If you despise lasting glory, because you are incapable of obtaining honest fame, then be assured, that the name which you endeavour to ridicule will live, when yours shall be lost in oblivion."

The desire of glory is natural and allowable in men of shallow minds. It is not, however, to them

* *Thaumaturgus*, in the Roman Catholic Church, signifies one who performs miracles. T.

Of what persons a writer must seek to obtain applause.

that a writer must look up for fame, but to those rational and impartial minds, those virtuous and unknown characters, for whose sake alone he soars above the vulgar herd, and whose hearts are opened willingly to a writer, when they observe with what confidence he wishes to pour forth his sentiments. It is to obtain their approbation that he seeks the tranquillity of Solitude. If they, who scribble their names on walls and panes of glass, are the humblest candidates for fame, in every age and country, I think him almost as little formed for glory who writes for the town in which he lives. He who, without being a member of any literary club, or dignified either by rank or title, seeks to establish his fame among his fellow-citizens, is a fool who sows seed upon a rock. They may perhaps be inclined to pardon mediocrity, but not severity, greatness, and freedom. Thus it is necessary to be discreetly silent before the vulgar: for publicly to avow sentiments that would do honor to the character, and would acquire the praises of others, is to irritate the malignant herd among whom he lives.

But a writer of sense and judgment knows, that impartial and reasonable men, in other countries, appreciate the merits of a work upon very different principles from his fellow-citizens. They ask: "Does the book relate to mankind? Is its aim useful and moral? Does it operate on the heart and understanding? Is it written with freedom and impartiality? Does it bear throughout the marks of candor and honesty? Does it abstain from the ridicule of all that is great and good? Is sound morality inculcated with wit, humor, and pleasantry? Does it develope new and useful truths? Does it

Value of domestic happiness.

inspire noble sentiments and virtuous resolutions? We need no other criterion to fix our opinion; the work is good, and its author a master."

In the ordinary intercourse of the world, that intercourse of flattery and falsehood, in which every one deceives and is deceived, in which each appears under an assumed form, professes an esteem that he does not feel, and praises that he may be praised; men bow to every villain, and style every silly woman *Your Grace*.^{*} But he who withdraws from this round of illusions, desires no compliments and pays none, excepting to merit. A thousand polite grimaces, with which we are honoured in society, are nothing when compared with the tranquil intercourse of a friend, who inspires our minds with a noble courage, steels them against every kind of injustice, leads us into the path of true honor, and accompanies us in it himself.

The gaiety of an assembly, the sprightly conversation of the social circle, are of no value, when compared to the domestic happiness we experience in the company of an amiable woman, who rouses all the dormant faculties of the soul, fills us with ardor and energy, overcomes every obstacle, that opposes the execution of our designs, by her encouragement and approbation; inspires us with the loftiness of her ideas, and the sublimity of her sentiments; who with judicious penetration weighs and examines all our thoughts, actions, and character; observes all our errors; reproves with sincerity, and chastises with tenderness; who by an affectionate

^{*} This title is given in Germany to all persons of quality. T.

Value of domestic happiness.

communication of her observations and ideas conveys new instruction to our minds; and, by pouring forth her whole heart into our bosoms, animates us to the exercise of every virtue; gives a polished perfection to our character, by the sweet allurements of love, and the delightful concord of her sentiments.

In such society we retain what is noble in our nature, while every evil propensity dies away. Our fellow-citizens see us as we are obliged to appear in the public intercourses of life, and not as we are in Solitude. In the commerce with the world we turn the polished surface of our character outward, and concealing every sharp point, pass through life without molestation, and even obtain the favor and approbation of our fellow-men.*

But some of our contemporaries view us in a very different light from our fellow-citizens. In our writings, among our good qualities, our defects likewise appear; for our writings frequently become evidence against us, if we are sincere in them. This is a consolation to our countrymen, to whom the voice of fame sometimes conveys our praises, and who are then tormented with the horrid idea, that there are people in the world sensible of our merit.

We are, it is true, a wonderful composition of virtue and passion, of strength and weakness, and why should we conceal it? Our foibles are consigned with our mortal part to the tomb; they perish

* The outside constitutes the highest merit of man, and to live in peace, we ought to be cautious not to suffer the other side of our characters to be perceived: thus a great man, and one of my dearest and most respectable friends, in Germany, once wrote to me.

Pleasures enjoyed by a writer in Solitude.

with the body that produced them. The nobler part survives, if we have performed any thing worthy of existence; we bequeath our writings to posterity.

But, independent of all the enthusiasm for glory, Solitude procures a writer a pleasure of which none can deprive him, and which is of more value than all the honors of the world. He not only anticipates the effects which his work will produce, but while engaged with it, he enjoys with delight the serene hours which his labours procure. What pleasure he derives from uninterrupted attention, and the tranquil enthusiasm which accompanies it! What sorrows are dissipated by this occupation, what pains are forgotten! Ah! I would not exchange a single hour of such repose for all Cicero's flattering prospects of immortality. Tranquillity, amidst continual sufferings, is an enjoyment which justly attaches the soul to the present moment, but which likewise exalts and renders it capable of every virtue.

The secret pleasure to have produced something, when we were persuaded that it was beyond our power, is unknown to men of vigorous constitutions, for they have confidence in their strength. But, to a writer afflicted with ill health, every difficulty overcome in style or arrangement, a happy moment seized, an harmonious period, a happy expression, but above all the cheering retrospect on the progress he has made, imparts serenity to the mind, is an antidote to melancholy, and one of the most precious advantages of Solitude. These advantages are infinitely greater and more substantial than all the dreams, presentiments, and visions of

Pleasures enjoyed by a writer in Solitude.

posthumous honor and fame. Who, for such enjoyment, would not willingly renounce that enthusiasm, to which reason makes so many powerful objections, and which, in my opinion, only satisfies the mind, when it is not satisfied with itself!

To be happy, without being dependent on the aid of others; to devote, to labors that may not be altogether useless, those hours, which otherwise sorrow, chagrin, and pain would blot from our lives; are the greatest advantages which an author procures for himself and others; and, with these advantages alone, I am perfectly content. Who does not rejoice in silence, when he sees how much he can do in a single evening, while, impelled by the rage for dissipation, the multitude roll along his street in their carriages, and make the walls of his house tremble to their foundation!

The singularities of some writers are sometimes the effects, and frequently the real advantages of Solitude. In long seclusion from the intercourse with society, men become less pliant and flexible. But even those who retain the fondness for society, are mortified by the necessity of appearing different from what they are; and seize the pen to indulge their spleen by giving vent to the feelings of their hearts.*

* This inclination is particularly powerful in Italy, where many, who are not immured in convents, pass their lives in Solitude and philosophic retirement, where they, without reserve, express their sentiments on every subject that strikes them in the world. M. Jageman, in his letters on Italy, printed at Weimar, in 1773, says: "There are no-blemen in Florence, who, since the extinction of the Medici family, have never been from home, so that very few are

Solitude of authors favorable to the progress of knowledge.

The light of philosophy has not penetrated into many recesses, because the popular opinion, the general mode of thinking, follows one uniform course. Every one listens and looks up to the other. None deviates in the least from the ordinary route. Men of the world, who nourish their minds with the most refined ideas of foreign writers, are obliged to conceal their thoughts and sentiments, and to follow the usual track. But when authors train themselves, in Solitude, to appear before the public without restraint ; when they paint the characters and manners of all ranks, from observation and experience ; when they boldly, and without reserve, call every object by its proper name ; when they treat, in their works, of every subject that reason does not forbid ; then, instruction will gradually circulate among the people, the philosophy of life will spread itself abroad, every man will learn to think for himself, and to shake off the shackles of public opinion. But to produce this effect in a nation, its writers must break forth from the limited sphere of their university, of their native town, or

acquainted with the first geniuses of Italy. They court the muses in silence, and by a long course of reading and reflection have acquired such extensive knowledge, that the prince, who accidentally becomes acquainted with such characters, and can draw them from their solitary retreat into his service, is really fortunate.---Hence arises the fondness for satire so general among the Italians. Men, dissatisfied with their fellow-creatures, resign themselves to meditation in solitary retirement, and are excited by their melancholy disposition to find fault with the actions and opinions of others. Thus almost all the satirical works of the Italians are distinguished for strength and keenness."

the house in which they were educated. They must form their minds by the commerce with men of every nation, and of every rank in life. They must not shun the society of the great, nor associate only with the inferior classes; but frequently withdraw into uninterrupted Solitude, renounce all the seductions of pleasure, all connection with society, and particularly all claim to approbation in the place where they reside; that they may not be compelled to advance falsehood or to disguise truth.

The Germans condemned the Helvetic severity of all the works that I formerly wrote; and this severity was, certainly, the effect of my solitary life. Even my friend, the celebrated Wieland, accused me of laying on the colors too thick, and dipping my pen in gall, when treating of my countrymen and contemporaries. The Spectator of Thuringia, fourteen years since, defended me, with equal candor and spirit, against the very heavy reproaches: "that I was a peevish, splenetic philosopher, who never praised any thing; that my opinions on every object were almost invariably to its disadvantage; that nothing was secure from the severity of my criticism and the keenness of my satire; that my style was too licentious, and that the German nation was much too modest, too decent, too delicate and refined to read such compositions; in a word, that the English were insufferable to German delicacy, and the Swiss could on no account be endured."

But it appears to me that these critics confound the manners of the world with the style of books. Harshness is certainly disagreeable in society, but

Severity of style acquired in Solitude.

on the contrary, undisguised truths which we find in books, and sometimes in our correspondence with others, frequently strike the mind and produce an effect.--“I am modest,” said a poet, “but I acknowledge that my works are licentious:”---in the same manner, a writer may be polished in his intercourse with mankind, and yet severe in his works. Or is he obliged to write as he speaks, if he cannot speak as he writes? Is it not sufficient that, in the intercourse with society, he submits to all that the laws of politeness require; that he always yields, without entering into any unnecessary contest; suffers others to deliver their opinions, and conducts himself as if he only went into company to hear and to learn? Are not many *beaux esprits* insufferable in society, because they imagine that their writings are the most perfect models of urbanity and elegance? Is it not better to correct, in the commerce with the world, the errors of our pen, than to restrain our pens and not to check our tongues? Thus he, who in social intercourse is amiable and complaisant, may in his writings hazard a bold or even a harsh expression, and here and there introduce an unpleasant truth, while others are occupied in diffusing agreeable falsehoods.

Strength of thought is banished from the language of conversation, and in good company nothing is in fashion, but words which extinguish ideas, and ideas which operate like a sleepy potion. But, if the boldness of a writer's language be insufferable in the ordinary intercourse with society, the flattering language of the world would be ridiculous in literary composition. Truth must be spo-

It confers on the mind elevation and energy.

ken ; but in society a man must habituate himself to feel it, and to be silent when it is necessary. He must form his manners in the world, and his character in Solitude ; and it will soon appear where he learns complaisance, and where he acquires freedom, firmness, consistency, dignity and energy for every undertaking.

Solitude gives the mind elevation and power. The man who has not the courage to raise himself above prejudices and usages of fashion ; dreads nothing so much as the reproach of singularity ; forms and conducts himself after the example of others, who are generally men of the weakest minds and shallowest understandings, and will, certainly, never possess the courage to live in retirement, if no other motive lead him into Solitude. It has been justly observed, that Solitude is as indispensably necessary to give us a just, solid, firm and forcible way of thinking, as social intercourse is to impart to our ideas richness, precision and a useful and happy application.

When the mind is employed in some noble purpose, it loses all the vicious habits with which it is stained by indolence. Freedom and tranquillity impart to the soul a consciousness of its energy, and call forth powers which were before unknown. In Solitude we require much more of ourselves than in the world, because with the leisure, liberty and tranquillity we there enjoy, we possess the power and inclination for greater exertion ; our ideas are more luminous and extended, and we discover more clearly the variety of combinations of which they are susceptible. But, for the same reason, the tranquillity of the solitary man, must not be an idle re-

Interruption destroys the good effects of Solitude.

pose, mental apathy and stupefaction; he must not be continually gazing out of his window "for want of thought," nor be incessantly walking up and down his study in a ragged *robe de chambre* and worn-out slippers. External tranquillity elevates the soul to a consciousness of its powers, when it is deeply impressed with the idea, that Solitude is indispensably necessary for its happiness. 'Tis then that uninterrupted liberty points out to the reason and the imagination a new sphere of activity, whether in the silence of the rural mansion, or in the retirement we may procure, even amidst the busy scenes of the metropolis.

A dear and intimate friend assured me, that he never felt so strong an inclination to write as on review-days, when forty thousand persons left their homes on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, to see the manœuvres of a single battalion; he has written many excellent literary works, but pieces of wit and humor he never composed excepting on review-days. In my youth, I myself never felt so much disposed to serious contemplation as on Sunday mornings, and while all my neighbours were devoutly employed in frizzing and powdering to go to church, I was far retired in the country, listening to the solitary sound of the village bell.

Continual interruption destroys all the good effects of Solitude. Disturbance prevents us from collecting our ideas; for this reason, official duties are more frequently prejudicial than favorable to the powers of the mind. These duties, and the intercourse with the world, require a conformity to the will of others; in retirement we can follow our own inclination and the bent of our genius.

Solitude diminishes the number of our passions.

Thus, when a philosopher, a man of the most brilliant talents, omits something in the mechanical performance of official duty, they sometimes say of him: "He is a fool, he is fit only for writing a book; or, his writings are good, but he himself is an ass."

Solitude enables us to encounter prejudice and error with the same vigor and courage, as an athletic champion engages his antagonist. Repeated and close examination will sharpen our perceptions, and more deeply impress what we see upon our minds. A man, retired within himself, seizes truth wherever he finds it; with a smile of tranquillity and unconcern he meets the attacks of prejudice and envy; while secure of victory, he defies the united hosts of ignorance and stupidity.

Solitude diminishes the number of our passions; for, out of a hundred smaller, it forms one powerful passion. It certainly may, as will hereafter be shewn, produce dangerous effects on the passions, but, God be thanked, it likewise produces salutary consequences. If it disorder some minds, it is capable of applying a remedy. It draws out the various propensities of the heart, but it combines and re-unites them all into one. There, indeed, we feel the power, and become acquainted with all the influence of the passions. Like angry waves, they rise around and threaten to overwhelm us, but they are divided by philosophy. If we shrink not from the contest, but manfully oppose the foe, virtue and self-denial supply us with gigantic force, and enable us to exert with vigor, all the powers of the body and mind. Virtue and resolution are

Exhortation against libertinism.

equal to any task, when we know and believe, that passion can only be subdued by passion.

The mind feels a pride in the dignity of soul acquired by a commerce with ourselves, and disdaining every ignoble object, withdraws itself from all bad company. Though the sons of pleasure wallow in the filth of debauchery, though it be every where asserted that incontinence is one of the earliest necessities, that a brace of mistresses are as requisite for every young man who wishes to know life, as food and repose: yet the virtuous soul feels and sees that debauchery enervates the minds of youth, renders them incapable of virtuous actions, destroys every manly resolution, inspires timidity in the hour of danger, and prevents the application of their powers to any great or glorious purpose. In the indulgence of libertinism, the mind loses all its energy and enthusiasm, all its love and inclination for the sublime and beautiful. He, therefore, who wishes to appear in an honorable character in the world, must for ever renounce the habits of indolence. If he does not exhaust his powers in debauchery, nor seek to recover them by excess of wine and luxurious living, he will not have occasion to take the air so frequently, or to spend the whole day on horseback. All men, without exception, have something to learn; in the most dignified station they never can be truly great, but by personal merit. The more the powers of the mind are exercised in retirement, the sooner it will be perceived that you possess them. Should debauchery be your ruling passion, nothing will so easily subdue it, as constant emulation of great and virtuous ac-

Solitude inspires exalted ideas.

tions ; the hatred of indolence and frivolity ; the patient study of any art or science ; the frequent communion with your own heart, and a dignity of mind which disdains all that is vile and contemptible.

It is in Solitude that this generous pride appears in all its dignity and greatness. The passion for what is great no where operates with more freedom. The same passion which carried Alexander to Asia, confined Diogenes to his tub. Heraclitus resigned a throne for the sake of truth. He who wishes by his works to be useful to the world, must have seen it, but without acquiring a fondness for its follies or remaining among them too long. They enervate and destroy all the vigor of the mind. Cæsar, after a few days, tore himself from the embraces of Cleopatra, and became master of the universe. Anthony took her as a mistress, passed all his time in her arms, and by his effeminacy lost the empire of the world together with his life.

Solitude, it is true, may easily inspire ideas too exalted for the level of common life. But an attachment to grand objects and the ardor of enkindled passion prove, to solitary minds, the possibility of supporting themselves on heights, that would turn the head of the worldly-minded man. Surrounded, in Solitude, by all that enlarges the understanding, elevates the heart, and raises the man above himself, he feels that he is immortal. The votary of pleasure lives as if there were no future existence. He seems to think that all his happiness depends on being present at a club or assembly, running to admire this juggler or that dancer, or to see some shew of wild beasts, announced in the hand-bills of the day.

Solitude inspires exalted ideas.

I never recollect, without the warmest emotion, the passage in which Plutarch says: "I live entirely upon history, and my mind is filled with the representations of the greatest and most virtuous characters, while I employ myself in retirement in writing their lives. If the commerce with those whom I am obliged to see, produce any vicious, corrupt, or dishonorable inclination in my mind, I endeavor to remove and to rid myself of it. My soul withdraws from it, and free from every ignoble passion, I attach myself to those high examples of virtue which are so agreeable, so satisfactory, and accord so perfectly with our nature."

The soul fired, in Solitude, by these sublime images, breaking the bonds that tied it to the earth, soars aloft, and looks down, with disdain, on those worldly objects which tend only to debase and enervate. At this height its necessities and its powers are developed. Every man may, perhaps always, perform more than he does. It is therefore wise and glorious to attempt every achievement, of which we do not feel ourselves quite incapable. How many dormant ideas are thereby excited, how many early impressions, which we should else have forgotten, are revived, and present themselves to our pens! We are always capable of accomplishing more than we imagine, if we cease not to exercise our minds, if imagination feed the flame which passion has kindled, and if life appear insupportable when we do not feel ourselves animated with this genial heat.*

* "The force of the passions, (says a great philosopher), can alone counterbalance, in our minds, the force of indo-

Sketch of the author's sufferings from sickness and affliction.

A state of existence without passion, is, in Solitude as in every other situation, the death of the soul. To this dreadful condition, disease and inexpressible suffering reduced me, for several years, with very short intervals, since I ceased to breathe my native air. When all those among whom I lived, and who were unacquainted with the state of mind, imagined that I was irritated to the highest degree, and that I should seize the lance in my own defence, I pursued my course with tranquillity, and attended with assiduity, diligence and fidelity, to the benevolent duties of my profession. When the rage against me was general, I remained insensible, and preserved inviolable silence. Languishing under sickness, oppressed with the pangs of a broken heart, and overwhelmed with domestic afflictions, my mind was vanquished and rendered insensible to every other concern. For several years my brain remained as obdurate as a stone; I passed many hours without a thought, I frequently said the very contrary to what I meant; I lived almost without food, I could not endure what strengthens others; I thought I should sink at every step, and, when I sat down to write, experienced the most excruciating tortures. Nothing in the world had any interest for me, but the secret subject of my sorrows, which I concealed within my bleeding heart.

The passions are not called forth into existence till the corporeal organs are capable of executing

lence and inactivity, can snatch us from that repose and torpidity, towards which we incessantly gravitate, and at length endow us with that continued attention, to which superiority of talent is attached."

The intellectual faculties are strengthened in Solitude.

the inclinations of the heart. The organs must not be obstructed, that the action of the soul, which operates through them, may not be impeded. But, when the soul ceases to be depressed by these organs, then it enters upon a state of activity and enterprize, whether in the retirement of Solitude, or the hurry of the world.

We, alas! do not always possess the power of living in Solitude, and consulting our own inclinations. It is not the less true, that Solitude, at every period of life, procures happiness, and furnishes grand and sublime ideas. How passionately fond of Solitude every youth would be, were he capable of feeling and knowing how many lofty ideas, how many refined sentiments, and what profound knowledge he may there acquire, even in his tender years. A wise old age finds those days the happiest that are passed in Solitude. The mind there thinks with greater dignity and ease than amidst society. In retirement we see how things ought to be conducted; in the bustle of the world we only observe how they are performed. The noblest works of human genius are produced in profound thought, and uninterrupted meditation. In society the intellectual spirit evaporates by continual attention to frivolous objects. On the contrary, Solitude must possess powerful charms, since we know, that so many men withdrew into dreary deserts, forgot the common concerns of life, learned to despise every terrestrial object, suffered their houses to fall to ruin, their lands to lie waste, and to be abandoned as a prey to savage beasts.

We lose all consideration for trifling affairs as soon as we feel an enthusiasm for sublime objects.

Men of genius not suited to business.

Therefore persons of common sense * are far better adapted to little concerns than the man of genius. For the same reason, the mind which is so often depressed by the duties of office, can be restored to its proper tone, only by Solitude, leisure, and freedom. The philosophic observer, the profound writer, have no other resource, when surrounded and encumbered by business, misunderstood and ridiculed. Their souls sicken beneath the general pressure. They become, in a manner, extinct; for what encouragement have they to undertake any distinguished work, when they are convinced that it will be the mark for universal obloquy, as soon as it is known from whose pen it proceeded? When glory is no longer expected, the desire of it is extinguished. But remove such a philosopher, such a writer, from the multitude, give them leisure, liberty, pen, ink and paper, they vindicate their injured fame, and produce what will excite the admiration of nations. Innumerable men of genius remain, for life, in low stations, because their minds languish beneath employments that furnish them with no subject for reflection, and are therefore more suited to the ignorant than the profound philosopher.

Solitude places every thing in its proper situation. There the mind exults in the indulgence of its con-

* "A man of common sense, (says Helvetius), is a man in whose character indolence predominates. He is not endued with that activity of mind, which, in high stations, leads great minds to invent new springs, to set the world in motion, or to sow those seeds, at present, which are to produce future events."

The Dislike of the Multitude is sometimes desirable.

• contemplative powers, the writer rejoices at being disliked by those among whom he lives, because he in consequence saves so much valuable time. This general hatred is often an enviable happiness. How miserable would be his situation, who wishes to resign himself to silent meditation, were he daily interrupted by a hundred enquiries after his health ! Or, if in a moment of tranquillity, when a happy idea had just entered his mind, and he were sitting down to read, write and reflect, one carriage after the other should stop at his door, and the precious moments be consumed by visits of formal compliment and ceremonious insipidity. His ideas would be irrecoverably lost, and he would fall a prey to mortification and chagrin.

What mind, that is fond of reflection, does not wish, on this, as well as many other accounts, to be disliked by the multitude ? It would be, indeed, a great misfortune, for him, who is capable of executing a great undertaking in retirement, to be generally beloved. He would be eternally pestered with invitations to dinner, and in every company the first question would be : " Is he not coming ? " -- But fortunately, philosophers are, in general, not the favorites of the world. The rage of a whole town is never excited against a man of an ordinary mind. Confess, therefore, ye narrow souls, that it is a certain greatness in a man which raises the general outcry against him, draws forth all your obloquy, causes him to be vilified and calumniated in every company, and makes you endeavor to fix a hundred crimes on his character without being able to prove one. The state of a man of genius who remains unknown is enviable. He is suffered to

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enjoy tranquillity, and as it appears probable that he may not be understood, he does not wonder that very erroneous conclusions are formed respecting his life and actions, nor is he surprised that the efforts of his friends, to correct the public opinion of his merits, should prove ineffectual.

Such, with regard to the multitude, was the fate of the great Count of Schaumburg-Lippe, or as he was usually called, Count Bückeburg. A man less understood, and more universally ridiculed, I never saw in Germany; and yet his name is worthy of being placed among the most distinguished characters which have adorned that country. I became acquainted with him at the time when he lived almost continually in Solitude, and secluded from the world; but he governed his small domain with great wisdom. At the first view, there was certainly something in his appearance that excited disgust, and drew the attention from the excellent qualities of his mind. The Count de Lacy, formerly ambassador from Spain to the court of Petersburg, told me at Hanover, that he was General of the Spanish army, which advanced against the Portuguese, under the command of the Count Bückeburg, and that the Count's appearance struck all the Spanish generals so forcibly, when they first discovered him, in reconnoitering with their telescopes, that they exclaimed one after the other: "Is the Portuguese army commanded by Don Quixote?" But Count de Lacy, a man of liberal mind, spoke in the highest terms of the general conduct of Count Bückeburg in Portugal, of the greatness of his mind and the excellence of his character. He had, it is true, a romantic appearance at a distance; his heroic

gait, his flowing hair, his uncommonly tall and meagre figure, and particularly, the extraordinary length of his face, might, certainly bring back the recollection of the Knight of La Mancha : on nearer approach, however, a closer view produced a different opinion. The fire and animation of every feature announced the elevation, acuteness, penetration, kindness, benevolence and tranquillity of his mind. I never looked at, or conversed with the count, without thinking : " what goodness of heart, and what greatness of character are combined in thee !" Heroic ideas and elevated sentiments were as familiar and natural to him, as to the most distinguished characters of Greece and Rome. The Count was born in London, and certainly possessed a whimsical disposition. The anecdotes concerning him, which I heard from a German nobleman, a relative of Count William, are perhaps not generally known. In his youth he emulated the English in every thing. He laid a wager, for example, that he would ride from London to Edinburgh backwards ; that is, with the horse's head turned towards Edinburgh and his own face towards London. In this manner, he rode through several counties of England. He never travelled in that country but on foot ; and traversed great part of the kingdom as a beggar, in company with a German prince. Being told, that the current of the Danube was nowhere so powerful as below Ratisbon, and that no person had ever ventured to swim across it ; he made the attempt, and swam so far, that he was saved with the greatest difficulty. One of the greatest statesmen and most profound philosophers of

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Hanover * related to me, that during the war, when the count commanded the artillery of the army of Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, against the French, he one day invited several Hanoverian officers to dinner, and when the whole company were full of gaiety and in high spirits, several cannon balls passed over the tent. "The French cannot be far off," said the officers. "No gentlemen, (replied the Count), the French, I assure you, are yet at a great distance;" and he begged them to keep their seats. Two balls soon after carried away the top of the tent. The officers rose, exclaiming: "The French, are certainly, here." "No, (repeated the count), the French are not here; sit still, gentlemen, and rely upon my word." The firing continued without intermission; the officers, however, continued to eat and drink, without any inquietude, only whispering to each other, their conjectures on this singular entertainment. At length, the count rose and said: "I only wished to shew you, gentlemen, how well I can rely upon my artillery-men: for I ordered them to fire with ball as long as we continued at dinner, at the pinnacle of our tent, and they have executed my commands with the utmost punctuality."

The reflecting mind will discover, in these extraordinary traits, the character of a man, desirous of exercising himself and others in arduous enterprise. I was once standing with the count near a powder-magazine, which he had constructed be-

* My much lamented friend, the late privy-counsellor Strube, private secretary to the administration of Hanover, from the commencement of the war in 1756 till his death in 1777.

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neath his bed-chamber, in the fortress of Wilhelmstein. "I should not sleep there very comfortably, (said I), in the hot summer-nights:" the count proved to me, I cannot now recollect in what manner, that the greatest danger and no danger were the same thing. The first time I saw this extraordinary man, he entertained me in the presence of an English and a Portuguese officer for two hours, with a discourse on *Haller's Physiology*, which he knew by heart. The next day I was obliged to accompany him in a boat to Fort Wilhelmstein,* which he constructed, from plans which he shewed me, in the midst of the lake of Steinhut, where there was not a foot of land to be seen: he rowed the boat himself. One Sunday, on the great promenade at Pymont, among several thousand people, occupied with parading, dancing and gallantries, he kept me above two hours on the same spot, and with the

* "The present Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, (says a late intelligent traveller, M. Küttner), has made this fortress more remarkable than by its situation it ever appeared destined to be. Upon the death of the last Count of Bückeburg, the landgrave declared his son incapable of succeeding, entered the country with his troops, and took possession of it without opposition, till an aged lieutenant, who with one hundred men (many say only thirty, and some only twenty-five) commanded at Wilhelmstein put a stop to his farther progress. The landgrave was not prepared for this resistance, and had neglected to provide himself with things necessary for a regular siege, or for starving the fortress. Meanwhile the widow preferred her complaint to the council of Wetzlar, which decreed that the landgrave should restore the district of which he had taken possession, that he should pay a considerable sum of money, and make reparation for the devastations committed by his army upon the property of the peasantry.

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same tranquillity, as if there had been nobody in the world besides ourselves, recounting all the proofs that had hitherto been advanced of the existence of God, the defects of all these proofs, and how he thought they might all be surpassed. To prevent my escape from this lecture, he held me fast during the whole time, by a button of my coat. At his residence at Bückeburg he shewed me a large folio volume, in his own hand-writing, *On the Art of defending a small State against a powerful Force*. The work was intended as a present for the king of Portugal, and was completed.* He read me several passages relative to the defence of Switzerland. The count considered that country to be invincible. He not only mentioned all the important posts that ought to be occupied against an invading enemy, but likewise shewed me all the passes through which a cat would scarcely be able to creep. I think there cannot be a more important work for my country than this; for, to all the objections that a Swiss himself was able to bring, he shewed me in this manuscript the most striking answers. My friend, Mr. Moses Mendelssohn, to whom the count read the preface of this work, at Pyrmont, consider-

* In the year 1775, the count printed at Bückeburg, an extract from this work, under the title of *Memoires pour l'art militaire defensif*, in six small volumes. The whole edition consisted of only ten copies. All these copies, a short time since, were in a box, in the library of the reigning count at Bückeburg. Two of the volumes were, as I have heard, privately removed, and will be translated into German. But it is said that the plans of all the remaining copies, both bound and unbound, have been cut out and carried off, so that the value of the work is completely destroyed.

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ed it a master-piece of philosophy and language. When the count pleased, he could write French almost as well as Voltaire, but in German he was labored, perplexed, and diffuse. What adds to his praise, is, that upon his return from Portugal, he retained in his service, for many years, two of the most profound philosophers of Germany, first Abbé, and then Herder. Those who have observed this really great and extraordinary man with more penetrating eyes than mine, and who have had opportunities of knowing him longer and more intimately, might relate a thousand still more remarkable anecdotes of him. I shall only add one observation, that Count William of Schaumburg Lippe possessed an independent mind ; and avail myself of the words of Shakspear :

. He has a lean and hungry look--
 But he's not dangerous--
 He reads much ;
 He is a great observer, and he looks
 Quite through the deeds of men : he loves no plays,
 he hears no music :--
 Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
 As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit,
 That could be mov'd to smile at any thing.
Julius Cæsar, Act. 1, scene 2.

Such was the character, always so exceedingly misunderstood, of this solitary man. A person of this description may well indulge a smile, when he perceives that he is ridiculed by others. But how must such men be struck dumb with shame and confusion, when they behold the monument erected to his memory by the great Mendelssohn, or

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the most remarkable events of his life * penned by the hand of a youth of high talents, in which those occurrences are transmitted to the impartial judgment of posterity, with profound sensibility, in a noble style, and with equal truth and sincerity.

Those who laugh as I have seen them, a thousand times, at the Count of Schaumburg Lippe on account of his long visage, his flowing hair, his large hat and his little sword, may sometimes be allowed to smile, if like him they are heroes and great men.

Count Bückeburg, however, never laughed at the world or mankind but with good-humour. Untinctured by misanthropy or hatred, he often lived in the profound retirement of a rural mansion, embosomed in a forest, either quite alone or in the company of his amiable wife, for whom he did not appear to me to entertain much affection; but after her death, his grief for her loss, at length, brought him to the grave.

Thus the multitude at Athens laughed at Themistocles.† He was openly ridiculed, because he had

* *Memoirs of William Count of Schaumburg Lippe, by Theodore Schmaltz.* Hanover, 1783.

† Themistocles, a renowned Athenian general, patriot and admiral, was born about the year 530 before Christ. He commanded the Athenian fleet at the celebrated battle of Salamis, in which that of the Persians was completely defeated; being accused by his ungrateful fellow-citizens of attempting to aggrandize his own power and wealth, he was banished. Upon the invitation of Artaxerxes, he repaired to the Persian court; but, to avoid taking up arms against his country, he slew himself. Themistocles is said to have possessed such an extraordinary memory, that he never forgot what he heard or saw. When Simonides promised to teach him an art, recently invented,

Solitude fills the mind with sublime ideas.

none of the manners of the world, and was ignorant of those accomplishments which constituted the Athenian *bon ton*. Themistocles once replied to one of these railers with considerable asperity. "I cannot handle the lyre (said he), nor play upon the lute, but I know how to raise a small and insignificant city to grandeur and glory."

Thus Solitude and philosophy inspire sentiments, which are, in general, ridiculed by the world, but they banish every mean and sordid idea, and fill the mind with such as are great and sublime. He who is accustomed to study great characters and elevated sentiments in books, will easily acquire a romantic way of thinking, and frequently afford ample subject for ridicule. Romantic minds certainly view things differently from what they are or can be; but by habituating themselves to the contemplation of what is truly great and good, vice is rendered odious and insupportable. Such characters always retain a nobleness of mind, which, though not suited to the common intercourse with the world, is not, on that account, the less noble. Those Indian philosophers produced some advantage to the state, who annually quitted their Solitude, and went to the

for assisting the memory, he replied: "I wish you could instruct me how to forget; for I remember what I do not desire, and cannot forget what I wish." On another occasion, Simonides relying upon his intimacy with Themistocles, requested a favor of the latter, which he could not, with justice, grant. He accompanied his refusal with these words: "You, Simonides, would not be a good poet, if, in your productions, you transgressed the laws of poetic composition; nor should I be a good magistrate, if, for your sake, I were to transgress the laws of my country." T.

Plotinus.

palace of the king, where each of them in his turn, delivered his sentiments on the administration of the government, and on the modifications that it might be expedient to make in the laws. If any of them, for three successive years, communicated any frivolous or unjust observations, he lost for one year the privilege of speaking before the sovereign. Other romantic philosophers have pretended to do much more and have performed nothing. Plotinus * requested of the emperor Galienus, to confer on him the sovereignty of a small town in Campania, and the lands belonging to it. This town was to be called Platonopolis. Plotinus promised to reside there with his friends, and to realize Plato's idea of a republic. But Plotinus experienced the same treatment as philosophers, much less chimerical would receive at the court of most sovereigns. The courtiers ridiculed the proposal, told the emperor that the philosopher was a fool, and the experiment was never attempted.

The history of the greatness and virtue of the ancients, produces in Solitude, a powerful effect on minds, susceptible of the ideas and sentiments which it creates. Sparks from the bright flame are sometimes caught, when it is not suspected. To raise the spirits of a lady in the country, whose health

* Plotinus, a Platonic philosopher, was born at Lycopolis in Egypt, in the third century. At the age of twenty eight, he had a powerful desire to study philosophy, but of all the professors of Alexandria, he was satisfied only with the lectures of the celebrated Ammonius, under whom he studied eleven years. He afterwards visited the philosophers of India and Persia, and went to Rome, where he read lectures, and was treated with great respect. He died in Campania, in the year 270, aged 66. T.

Advantages of the study of ancient history.

was impaired by a nervous affection, I advised her to peruse the history of Greece and Rome. Three months afterwards, she wrote to me: "With what respect have you inspired me for antiquity! What a race of buzzing insects are we at the present day, in comparison to those characters! Formerly, history was not my favorite study; but now, I live entirely upon history. I wish to become intimately acquainted with all the transactions of Greece and Rome, which will be to me an inexhaustible source of health and pleasure. I never should have thought that my books would have been such an inestimable treasure; they are dearer to me than all I possess. In six months you will hear no more complaints. My Plutarch is far more valuable in my eyes than all the triumphs of coquetry, or any of the sentimental productions intended for the perusal of our sex, who wish to be all mind, and with whom Satan plays love-tricks with as much address as a virtuoso performs on the violin." Respecting her kitchen and poultry yard, this lady was silent. But she recovered her health, and I have no doubt that she now finds as much pleasure in the management of her garden, her poultry and domestic concerns, as she formerly did in her Plutarch.

The history of the greatness and virtue of the ancients cannot operate, even in Solitude, excepting after a considerable time, and upon few minds; but its effects are afterwards the more powerful. In his solitary walks, a man of genius has a multitude of ideas, that would appear contemptible and ridiculous to others, and yet the time may come when such ideas excite to deeds of never-dying

Lavater's Swiss songs.

fame. The Swiss songs, written by Lavater, appeared at an unfavorable period. The Swiss society of Schintznach, by whose desire that ardent genius composed them, was a thorn in the eye of the French ambassador in Switzerland, and consequently the society had to encounter the attacks of calumny from every quarter. Even the great Haller vented his spleen against this society in every letter which I received from him, because they had refused to admit his name into the list of the members. He considered me and the whole society as enemies to the orthodoxy of the state, and as disciples and associates of Jean Jacques Rousseau, whom he detested. I was told, at the hotel of the French ambassador, at Soluthurn, that all the mischiefs in Switzerland, of which France complained, originated at Schintznach. The president of the committee for the examination of books at Zurich, one of the chief magistrates of the republic, prohibited the Swiss songs of Lavater at Zurich, from this excellent motive, that it is not prudent to stir up an old dunghill. Yet no poet of Greece ever wrote with more fire and force in favor of his country, than did Lavater for Switzerland. I have seen children sing his Swiss songs with the highest enthusiasm; I have seen them draw tears from the most beautiful eyes; I have seen Swiss peasants, whose eyes sparkled, whose muscles swelled, and whose cheeks glowed with patriotic ardor, while listening to them. Fathers have, to my knowledge, travelled with their sons to the chapel of William Tell, there to sing in full chorus, the song which Lavater composed in honor of the founder of Swiss independence, I

Solitude tends to elevate the mind and fortify the character.

have myself, made the rocks re-echo, with singing these songs to the tune which my heart composed for them, in the celebrated fields and on the mountains, where our ancestors achieved deeds of immortal glory, where the shades of heroes slain in their country's cause hovered over me; where, with their knotty clubs, they shattered the crested helmets of the German nobility, and though inferior in numbers, forced their proud invaders to a precipitate and disgraceful flight.

This, I shall be told, is romantic, and only the breasts of those are inflamed with romantic ideas, who live in profound retirement and seclusion, and see things in a different point of view from the multitude, by which they are surrounded. But great ideas sometimes penetrate, in spite of the most obstinate resistance. In republics, they operate more extensively, they inspire sentiments, which, though many a magistrate condemns them, may yet become the safe-guard of the state, if attacked by a more powerful neighbor.

Every thing unites in Solitude to elevate the mind, and to fortify the character, because there we habituate ourselves much better than in the world to noble sentiments and heroic resolutions. The solitary man is proof against the shafts of ignorance, envy and malice. Resolved to think and to act, in every circumstance, in opposition to the sentiments of narrow minds, warped by prejudice and puffed up with vanity; he expects the consequences of this contrariety of opinion and ideas, and is not surprised at them. To the just and rational esteem of our friends, we ought not to be insensible; but, like our enemies, they generally

The philosopher, de Luc.

indulge their feelings to an excess; they are all partial, and therefore none of them is fit to be the judge in our cause. Just opinions of our merits and demerits we can expect only from strangers. What truth can be expected from a limited circle, who always consider the person and not the thing? It is to the world at large that we must appeal, and leave the decision to that impartial tribunal.

• Though Solitude elevates the sentiments, it is commonly thought to render the mind unfit for business; but this I do not believe. On the contrary, it must be highly beneficial to elevate the soul in retirement with dignified sentiments, and to exercise the mind in Solitude, that we may not sink under the events of life. The love of truth is better preserved in Solitude, and virtue acquires greater power; but, I confess, that in business, the truth is sometimes inconvenient, and that rigid virtue frequently suffers shipwreck in the affairs of life.

Virtue and the simplicity of manners, produced by Solitude, are revered by the great and the good of every country. It was these qualities, which in the midst of a war between France and England, procured the philosopher Jean André de Luc, the reception he experienced at the court of Versailles, and inspired the virtuous De Vergennes, with a desire to avail himself of the philosopher's aid, for the purpose of reforming the citizens of Geneva, in which attempt, he, though prime minister of France, had failed. De Luc was equally unsuccessful, and it was found necessary, as it is well known, to send an army to reclaim the Genevese. It was on his favorite mountains that this philo-

Pericles.

sopher acquired that simplicity of manners; and even now, amidst all the luxury of London, he has learned to endure every privation, to refuse all the indulgences and conveniences of social life, with unparalleled fortitude. At Hanover, I remarked only a single article of luxury, in which De Luc indulged: when any thing vexed him, he chewed a little morsel of sugar, of which he always carried a small supply in his pocket.

Solitude not only gives simplicity to the manners; but likewise strengthens the mind for the business of life. Trained in the bosom of retirement, the mind enters with greater activity into the transactions of the world, and from the affairs of life it retires into Solitude, to obtain repose and to prepare for new conflicts. Pericles, Phocion, Epaminondas, laid the foundation of their greatness in Solitude; they there acquired that style, which is not to be learned in courts, the style of their lives and actions. When Pericles * had formed the design of his future greatness, he never appeared in the streets, except to transact his business; he suddenly renounced all feastings, public assemblies, and other pleasures of that kind,

* Pericles was a noble Athenian, who distinguished himself as a general, a statesman, and an orator. His character is described by Plutarch, in the following words. "Pericles undoubtedly deserves admiration; not only for the candor and moderation which he ever retained, amidst the distractions of business and the rage of his enemies, but for that noble sentiment, which led him to think it his most excellent attainment, never to have given way to envy or anger, notwithstanding the greatness of his power, nor to have nourished an implacable hatred against his greatest foe." T.

● Phocion and Epaminondas.

in which he had been accustomed to indulge. During the whole time that he governed the republic, he only once went to sup with a friend, and departed at an early hour. Phocion * first resigned himself to philosophy, not out of the vain motive of being called a wise man, but to render himself capable of conducting the business of the state with more energy and resolution, upon any unexpected emergency †. The people were astonished, and asked each other, when and how Epaminondas ‡, who had passed his whole life in

* Phocion, a renowned Athenian statesman and general, was a disciple of Plato. After having resisted all the offers of Alexander the Great, and his successor Antipater, to induce him to desert the Athenian cause, he was, at length, condemned by his ungrateful fellow-citizens, on a false charge of treason, and put to death in the year 318, before Christ. T.

† Tacitus says the same of Helvidius Priscus: *Ingenium illustre altioribus studiis juvenis admodum dedit, non ut magnifico nomine otium velaret, sed quo firmior adversus fortuita rempublicam capesseret.*

‡ Epaminondas was a Theban general, of a distinguished family, equally celebrated for his talents and his virtues. In conjunction with Pelopidas, he delivered Thebes from its dependence on the Lacedæmonians, whom he defeated at the battle of Leuctræ. Being appointed general of the Theban forces on a subsequent occasion, he advanced to give battle to the Spartans, whom he engaged near the town of Mantinea. The enemy, thinking their welfare depended on his destruction, made a general charge upon that portion of the Theban army, where Epaminondas was fighting in person, and did not retire till they observed him fall. His men carried their expiring general to the camp, where coming to himself, he perceived that he was mortally wounded, and that he could not long survive, if the dart which remained in his body were extracted. He then enquired of his weeping attendants, whether the enemy

Petrarch.

study, had not only learned, but was capable of exercising the military art in such perfection. He was frugal of his time, devoted himself entirely to his studies, refused all public employments, and desired nothing more than to be exempted from them. But he was forced from his solitary retreat and placed at the head of the army.

Petrarch, a character on whom I never think but with love, formed his mind entirely in Solitude, and there rendered himself capable of transacting the most important political affairs. Petrarch was, doubtless, sometimes what persons frequently become in Solitude, satirical, peevish and cholerick. He has, in particular, been reproached with great severities, on account of his lively pictures of the manners of his age, and especially his description of the infamous vices practised at Avignon, during the pontificate of the sixth Clement. But Petrarch possessed a profound knowledge of the human heart, and extraordinary address in working upon the passions and directing them as he pleased. The Abbé de Sade, the best historian of his life, says, that he is scarcely known, but as the tender and elegant poet, who loved with ardor and sung in the most impassioned strains the charms of his mistress; and that nothing more is known of his character. Even authors are ignorant of the obligations which

were routed, and being answered in the affirmative, "then," said he, "I have lived long enough." He instantly ordered the dart to be extracted, and joyfully expired with the loss of blood, in the arms of victory. Ælian informs us, that this excellent man, was so poor, that he had but one coat; and Cicero says, that he was such an enemy to falsehood, that he never told an untruth even in jest. T.

Petrarch.

literature owes him; that he rescued it from the barbarism beneath which it had so long been buried: that he saved the best works of the ancient writers from dust and destruction, and that all these treasures would have been lost to us, if he had not sought and procured correct copies of them. It is not perhaps generally known, that he first revived the study of the Belles Lettres in Europe; that he purified the taste of the age; that he himself thought and wrote like a citizen of ancient and independent Rome; that he extirpated numerous prejudices, and paved the way to farther improvements, in the circle of human knowledge; that to the hour of his death, he continued to exercise his distinguished talents, and in each successive work always surpassed the preceding. Still less is it known, that Petrarch was an able statesman; that the greatest sovereigns of his age confided to him the most difficult negotiations, and consulted him on their most important concerns; that in the fourteenth century, he possessed a higher reputation, credit and influence, than any man of learning of the present day; that three popes, an emperor, a king of France, a sovereign of Naples, a crowd of cardinals, the greatest princes, and most illustrious lords of Italy, courted his friendship, and desired his company; that, as a statesman, an ambassador and minister they employed him in the most intricate affairs of those times; that, in return, he was not backward in telling them the most unpleasant truths; that Solitude alone supplied him with all this power; that none was better acquainted with its advantages, cherished them with such fondness, or extolled them with such energy, and

Petrarch.

at length, preferred leisure and liberty to every other consideration. He appeared, a long time, enervated by love, to which he had devoted the prime of his life, but he suddenly abandoned the soft and effeminate tone, in which he sighed at the feet of his Laura. He then addressed himself, with manly boldness, to kings, emperors and popes, and always with that confidence which splendid talents and high reputation inspire. With an eloquence worthy of a Tully, or a Demosthenes, he exhorted the Italian princes to maintain peace among themselves, and to unite their force against the common enemy, the barbarians, who tore to pieces the bosom of their country. He patronized, guided and supported Rienzi, who appeared to have been sent by heaven, to restore the city of Rome to her ancient splendor. He persuaded a pusillanimous emperor to penetrate into Italy, and as the successor of the Cæsars, to assume the reins of the empire of the world. He conjured the popes to re-establish on the shores of the Tiber their residence, which had been removed to the banks of the Rhone. At the very moment when he acknowledged, in one of his works, that his mind was filled with vexation, tormented by love, which he incessantly endeavored to subdue, disgusted with mankind and cities, pope Clement VI. who was doubtless a stranger to what was passing in his heart, entrusted to him the execution of a difficult affair at the court of Naples, and Petrarch undertook it. He confessed, that the life of a court made him ambitious, active, and impatient, and that it was laughable to see a hermit, accustomed to live in woods, and to rove about in the fields,

Petrarch.

now running through the magnificent palaces of cardinals, with a crowd of courtiers at his heels. When John Visconti, archbishop and prince of Milan, and sovereign of all Lombardy, a man of insatiable ambition and the highest talents, who threatened to swallow up all Italy, had the good fortune to fix Petrarch in his service, he was appointed a member of the council of that prince, and obtained every thing which a philosopher and man of letters, who loved and esteemed Solitude above every other object, could wish for. The friends of Petrarch exclaimed: "What! this haughty republican, who breathed no sentiment but that of liberty and independence; this untamed bull, who spurned even at the shadow of a yoke; who disdained any fetters but those of love, and even frequently found them too heavy: he who has refused the highest stations at the court of Rome, because he would not be enslaved in chains of gold, now voluntarily submits to the shackles of the tyrant of Italy! This misanthrope, who could live only in rural retirement, this apostle of Solitude, now resides amidst the tumult of Milan!" "They are right," said Petrarch, man has no greater enemy than himself; I have acted contrary to my sentiments and inclination; throughout our whole lives we do what we never intended, and what we proposed to do, we leave undone." But Petrarch might have told his friends: "I was inclined to shew you of what exertions a man is capable in the affairs of the world, who has long exercised his powers in Solitude; and what liberty, firmness, expression, solidity, dignity and nobility, retirement confers on all the transactions of public life."

Solitude inspires authors with the courage to bear injuries.

Aversion from all commerce with the world and the duties of public stations, inspires authors with the courage to support all the injuries they are obliged to suffer, among an exasperated people. This quality is rarely found, but among the votaries of Solitude. The commerce with the world, far from fortifying the soul, only weakens it; as too frequent enjoyment deadens the senses to every gratification, and renders them susceptible only of unpleasing impressions. How often are the best plans blasted by fortuitous circumstances, notwithstanding their excellence and accuracy! and how often are we astonished by the success of schemes broached by the ignorant and illiterate!

A torrent of abuse and obloquy is frequently poured forth against him, who ventures to differ in opinion from the leaders of the public taste. When he publishes a literary work, they pay no attention to the excellence of the matter and the elegance of the composition. His meaning is misinterpreted; he is accused of satire, where he never intended any; and even truths which he discloses, with the best views, and for which every honest mind silently thanks him, are mutilated and disfigured.

This the president Montesquieu * experienced,

* Charles de Secondat, Baron of Montesquieu, an eminent French writer, was born of a noble family, near Bourdeaux, in 1689. He became president of the parliament of Bourdeaux, and died in 1755. He is universally admired as a philosophical, political and satirical writer. His most celebrated productions are "*Persian Letters*," his work, "*On the causes of the grandeur and declension of the Romans*"; but the *Spirit of Laws* is the performance by which he has immortalized his name. T.

Montesquieu.

even in the clear and luminous horizon of Paris; for this reason, he says, in the vindication of his immortal work, *The Spirit of the Laws*,—"Nothing stifles knowledge more than covering every thing with a doctor's robe. Those who wish to be continually teaching, are great obstacles to learning; there is not a genius that would not be contracted when overwhelmed with millions of vain scruples. If you have the best intentions in the world, they will oblige you to doubt of your own sincerity. You can no longer attend to the propriety of your language, when restrained by the fear of expressing yourself ill, and instead of following the flow of your ideas, you are only anxious to employ such terms, as may escape the subtlety of criticism. They place a biggin on our heads and warn us at every word: *Take care not to fall! You wish to speak like yourself, but I will have you to speak like me.* Do you attempt to soar? they pull you back by the sleeve. Have you life and spirit? they instantly deprive you of them. Do you rise too high? they take out their rule, raise their heads, and desire you to come down, that they may measure you. Do you proceed with rapidity? they call your attention to all the grains of sand which the ants may have placed in your way."

Montesquieu says, that nothing is capable of resisting such pedants. But did he not himself resist them? Is not his book continually reprinted? Is it not universally read?

The writer who is acquainted with the character of men, and dares to paint them in their natural colors, ought, without doubt, to wear a three-fold shield before his breast; but a book that is not

Freedom of English writers on men and manners.

written in this style, is of no value. That work most assuredly contains truths, which incurs the general ridicule, obloquy, and indignation of the author's fellow-citizens. Why do the English so far excel us in their best writings on man? Why are we infants compared with them, or with the Greeks and Romans, in our delineation of men and manners? On account of the clamors raised against every author, who hazards any opinions on the philosophy of life, for the benefit of his countrymen. But we honor martial courage and with great justice; why then, like effeminate Sybarites, do we suffer the folding of a rose-leaf to disturb our repose? Why then do we vomit forth reproaches against that civil courage, the courage without arms, the *domesticas fortitudines* of Cicero?

A German patriot, has somewhere expressed his surprise, that no German writer has yet attempted to publish a translation of the English essayists in periodical numbers. On account of the boldness and keenness of the satires on all ranks of people, he cannot, he says, forbear envying the country where the press enjoys such liberty. Such works of foreign production, would, doubtless, find readers in Germany, and most of the observations relative to London are so exactly suited to the large cities of Germany, that the coincidence is truly surprising. But it would not certainly be adviseable, for any author to attack the follies of our courts and assemblies with equal asperity.

It is a false idea, that there is neither heart nor spirit but in republics; that under this form of government alone, the people are allowed to speak truth, without fear or reserve. In aristocracies, or

Some advantages of monarchical governments.

even in constitutions which enjoy a greater degree of freedom, where a single demagogue possesses the supreme authority, too frequently, alas! common sense is considered as a crime. This renders the mind timid, and constantly enslaves the people. In monarchical states, punishment is in general decreed by justice; in republics, sometimes by prejudice, passion and state necessity. Under republican governments, the first maxim which parents inculcate on the minds of their children is; not to make enemies. To this wise precept, I remember, I once replied when very young: "Mother, do not you know, that he must be a poor creature that has no enemies." In many republics the citizen is under the power and the jealous observation of a hundred sovereigns; but in a monarchy, the prince is the only person on whom his subjects are dependent. The multitude of masters in a republic, crushes the spirits; love and confidence in one, raise them under a monarchical government. But in every country, the rational man, who renounces all the useless connections with the world, lives in retirement, and independent of all that he sees and hears, forms his mind in the tranquillity of Solitude, by an intercourse with the noblest characters of Greece, Rome and Britain, acquires a free and noble way of thinking, and regardless of vulgar invective and caprice, may, perhaps, become instrumental in diffusing the light of truth among distant nations.

This is the whole of the observations which I had to make on the advantages of Solitude upon the mind; many are perhaps, not sufficiently digested, and many more are certainly not well expressed.

Conclusion.

• Dear youth, into whose hands this book may chance to fall, receive with kindness, the good that it may contain, and reject what is frigid and bad, all that does not touch and penetrate your heart; I shall sincerely rejoice, and consider myself richly rewarded for all my labor, if you thank me for my book, if you bless me and acknowledge, that it has enlightened, corrected and tranquillized your mind! If, in perusing it, you shall find yourself justified in your inclination for a wise and active Solitude; in your aversion from societies instituted for no other purpose but to kill time; in your opposition to the advice of all your acquaintance, that in order to obtain distinction, you must appear at all the places of public dissipation; I desire no other benediction for my work. If you dare not open your lips, if you are afraid of the ridicule of those who have assumed the monopoly of wit and taste, and, by virtue of this usurpation, obtain universal applause for the highest absurdities: ah! then think, that in such society, I am as silent as yourself.

In all that I have written concerning Solitude, I have been guided by the real sentiments of my heart. On this account, a lady of great talents; observed, on reading the two first parts of this work, that I expressed what I felt, and when I ceased to feel, I laid down my pen.

This method has certainly produced defects which a systematic philosopher would have avoided. But I shall be satisfied if this chapter afford but a glimpse of the advantages of Solitude upon the mind, character and understanding, and if that which follows shall excite a lively sensation of the true, noble and sublime pleasures which Solitude

Conclusion.

bestows, by the tranquil and affecting observation of nature, and by exquisite sensibility for all that is good and fair.



Charms of rural scenery.

CHAP. VI.

ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE

FOR THE HEART.

PEACE of mind is the highest good upon earth. Simplicity of heart procures this blessing to him who, withdrawing from the dissipations of the world, sets bounds to his pretensions and desires, cheerfully submits to all the dispensations of heaven, views those around him with charitable indulgence, but at the same time enjoys no greater pleasure, than that of hearing the hoarse murmur of the stream falling in cascades from the rocks, the rustling of refreshing zephyrs, and the melodious notes of the feathered songster aloft in the atmosphere.

How refined our sentiments become, when the storms of life have subsided, when all that afflicted and oppressed us is past, when we see around us nothing but peace and friendship, simplicity and innocence, liberty and repose! But, even if the heart be not in possession of that peace, it loves to pour forth its sorrows in silence; to enjoy sweet melancholy, we willingly renounce all other earthly pleasures, and would resign the universe for one single, soothing tear of affection.

Of such felicity the heart is susceptible, when it has learned to take delight in the sublime beauties of nature, in every flower that adorns the valley, in

● Pleasures of the imagination.

whatever expands the soul or fills it with soft emotion. But these pleasures are not the exclusive portion of great and energetic minds; they are not reserved only for those whose sensations are delicate and lively, and upon whom, for that reason, both good and bad make a powerful impression. The purest happiness and the most delicious tranquillity are likewise within the reach of men of a cold temperament, who, endowed with a less bold and lively imagination, always discover something extravagant in the energetic expression of a still more energetic sensation. In the pictures presented to such minds, the coloring must not be too high, nor the lights and shades too strikingly contrasted, for as the bad strikes them less, so likewise they are less susceptible of too lively enjoyments.

The greatest happiness enjoyed by the heart in Solitude, is derived from the imagination. The view of nature's beauties, the variegated verdure of the forest, the tortuous course of the murmuring streamlet, the gentle rustling of the wind among the foliage, the melody of the feathered tenants of the groves, and the charming imagery of a distant prospect frequently ravish the soul so entirely, and absorb every faculty in such a manner, as to convert all our ideas into sensations. The sight of an agreeable landscape excites within us soft emotions, and gives birth to virtuous sentiments; and all these effects are produced by the magic power of the imagination.

The imagination renders every object agreeable and interesting, when the mind possesses tranquillity and freedom. Oh! how easy it is to renounce noisy mirth and convivial pleasures, when we imagine

English gardens.

that every breeze is fraught with philosophic melancholy. Awful sensations and soft raptures are alternately excited by the deep gloom of the forest, the tremendous appearance of crags impending from the mountain's brow, and by a multitude of sublime and majestic objects, intermingled with the milder beauties of a delightful landscape. All sorrow is dispelled by these serious, yet agreeable sensations, and the pleasing reveries which the surrounding tranquillity inspires. Amidst Solitude and the silence of universal nature, every simple and sublime object makes a deeper impression on the mind. Our sensibility is more exquisite, our admiration more lively, and our pleasures more refined.

I had been long acquainted with the sublimest appearances of nature, when, for the first time, I saw a garden laid out in the English taste near Hanover, and soon after another, on a much more extensive scale, at Marienwerder, about a mile distant from the former. But I was yet ignorant of the art, which, by a new species of creation, converts barren sand-hills into an agreeable landscape. This magic art, makes a deep impression upon the mind. Together with a profound sensibility to the beauties of nature, it excites in the heart every joyful sensation, every delight that Solitude, rural tranquillity and seclusion from mankind can procure. With tears of grateful emotion, I recollect one of the days during the early part of my residence at Hanover. Torn from the bosom of my country, my mind was not susceptible of any other sensations, than those of the most gloomy melancholy. I entered the little garden of my late friend Mr. Von

English gardens.

Hinüber, near Hanover, and I forgot, for that day, both my country and my grief.

The charm was new to me, I was not then apprised that, in such a small place, it was possible to represent the enchanting variety and noble simplicity of nature. I had not, till then, felt that her aspect alone, is sufficient, at the first view, to banish all that oppresses the mind in the world, that it excites the purest pleasure, and every sentiment which attaches us to life. I still bless the day when I first learned this secret.

This new combination of art and nature, invented, not in China, but in England, is founded on the purest and most refined taste for the beauties of nature, and on the sensation confirmed by experience, of the action of a chaste fancy upon the heart. Hirschfeld, that great painter of nature, that mild and amiable philosopher, was the first German that taught us these things in his *Theory of Gardening*, and thus rendered himself one of the greatest benefactors of his country.

There are, without doubt, many German-English gardens, where the spectator is kept in a continual laughter; and even this is a benefit. Who can forbear laughing, to see forests of poplar trees, scarcely sufficient to heat a stove a single day; noble hills dignified with the appellation of mountains; menageries of wild and tame beasts, birds and amphibious animals, painted the natural size upon tin; bridges without number, and of astonishing magnitude, over immense rivers which a couple of fowls would drink dry: wooden fishes, swimming in ponds which are every morning replenished by the pump. All this is certainly much more unnatural

Effect of tranquil scenery on the imagination.

than the ridiculous taste formerly in vogue. But if, on the contrary, I can stroll in the grounds of Mr. Von Hinüber, at Marienwerder, where every look elevates the soul to God, every point of view affords sublime repose, and from every seat I discover scenes "ever smiling, ever new;" if my heart feel at ease whenever I see that enchanting spot; should I amuse myself with discussing, whether this or that object might be improved by alteration, or suffer the insipid pleasantries of cold professors of taste to disturb my pleasures?

Tranquil scenes, whether created by tasteful art, or by the hand of nature, always convey serenity to the soul by means of the imagination. If soft silence reign around, and every object appear in the most agreeable form; if my heart be deeply enamored of rural retirement, and it dispel every painful idea; if the loveliness of Solitude enchant and ravish my mind so as to fill it with benevolence, love and content; I thank God for my imagination, which has indeed frequently been the trouble of my life, but always leads me in Solitude to some friendly rock, where I reflect with silent awe on the tempests I have escaped. *

* A modern French writer has expressed this idea in an admirable manner. "There is no mind of sensibility," says he, "that has not tasted in Solitude, those delicious moments in which man, banishing the delusions of falsehood, retires within his own heart to seek the sparks of truth. What pleasure, after having been tossed for some time, on the ocean of the world, to gain some peaceful rock, and survey in safety the tempests and the shipwrecks that ensue! Happy the man who can then, for a moment, forget the paltry prejudices which enslave the mind; the miseries of human nature vanish from his sight, and august truth

Sensations produced by the view of the Alps.

A celebrated English writer on the sublime * says; "Solitude on the first view of it, inspires the mind with terror, because every thing that brings with it the idea of privation is terrific, and therefore sublime; like space, darkness and silence." In Switzerland, and especially near the city of Bern, the distant prospect of the Alps is inconceivably grand; but viewed nearer, the images they excited in my soul were sublime and terrific. By a kind of grandeur which borders on infinity, the eye is charmed, when viewing, in the remote distance, the endless chain of those immense mountains, those enormous masses rising one above the other. But the beautiful and brilliant colors temper the impression, and give to this prodigious range of rocks more of the agreeable than of the sublime. On the contrary, the mind of sensibility, cannot without awe, for the first time, take a near view of these mountains, their eternal snows, their perpendicular precipices, their obscure clefts, their impetuous torrents, the black forests of fir which cover their sides, and the huge fragments of rocks at their feet, detached many ages since from their summits. How my heart beat, when for the first time, I climbed by a narrow ascent to these sublime deserts, discovering new mountains above my head, and upon the least stumble menaced with inevitable death below! But, how soon the imagination is elevated, when you perceive yourself alone, amidst all this grandeur of

fills his heart with pure delight. It is only in such moments and in those which precede his dissolution, that man can learn what he is upon earth, and what the earth is to him."

* The immortal author of the treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful.

The Alps of Switzerland

nature, and reflect, from these heights, on the insignificance of human power, and the imbecility of the mightiest monarchs !

The history of Switzerland shews, that the inhabitants of these mountains are not men of a common stamp, but that they possess elevated sentiments and warm feelings. Their courage is innate ; liberty gives wings to their souls ; they trample upon tyranny and tyrants. But the genuine spirit of liberty flourishes only in the Alps. All the Swiss are not free, though they all have notions of liberty, are all attached to their country, and all return thanks to the Almighty for that peace, which suffers each citizen to live quietly under his vine and under his fig-tree.

The Alps of Switzerland are inhabited by a people sometimes ferocious, but yet in the bottom of a generous disposition. The severity of their climate makes them hardy and robust, but their pastoral life softens their character. An English writer has said, that he who has never witnessed a storm among the Alps cannot form any idea of the roaring, the reverberation and continuity of the thunder, rolling awfully around the whole horizon of the immense mountains ; and therefore the inhabitants of the Alps, who never saw better houses than their own cabins, and no other country than their native rocks, conceive the universe to be formed of the same rude materials and subject to incessant tempests.

But as the sky becomes serene after the most tremendous tempest ; thus like their climate the heads and hearts of the Swiss are alternately furious and benevolent, as I can prove by history and facts.

A native of these Alps, General von Reding, born in the canton of Schwitz, had lived from his youth among the Swiss guards at Paris and Versailles, rose to the rank of lieutenant-general in the French service ; but remained a Swiss through life. The new regulations made in 1764, by the court of Versailles, with regard to the Swiss in the service of France, were imagined, in the canton of Schwitz, to be prejudicial to the ancient liberties and privileges of its inhabitants, who were greatly discontented and threw all the blame on General Reding. Meanwhile the wife of the general who resided in the canton, continued to raise recruits. But the sound of the French drum had suddenly become disgusting to the citizens of Schwitz, who saw with indignation, the white cockade in the hats of their brave countrymen. The magistrates, fearing this fermentation might produce an insurrection of the people, forbade Madame Reding to raise any more levies. The lady desired a written prohibition ; but the magistrates durst not yet proceed to an open rupture with France ; and the wife of the general continued to levy recruits. Her boldness irritated the people of Schwitz : a general diet was summoned, and Madame Reding appeared before the four thousand persons who composed it. " The drum," said she, " shall not cease to beat till you give me a prohibition in writing, which may justify my husband to the court of France, if he cannot complete the number of his men." The certificate was granted, and the general was, at the same time, enjoined to exert all his influence at court, in behalf of the interests of his country. The men of Schwitz

• now expected more favorable news from Paris ; but unfortunately very dissatisfactory accounts arrived. Those who possessed credit and authority declared that their liberty and religion* were endangered by the new regulations. The general discontent was now converted into fury. The diet was again assembled : it was publicly decreed that the canton should henceforth furnish no troops for the service of the king of France ; the treaty of 1715 was torn from the archives of the state, and General Reding was ordered to return home with his men, upon pain of being for ever banished from his country. Reding obtained a discharge from the king for himself and his regiment, and they returned in obedience to the diet. The general at the head of his soldiers, marched into Schwitz, the capital of the canton, with drums beating and colours flying, and proceeded to the church. Reding placed the colours by the side of the high altar, kneeled down and offered up thanks to the Almighty. He then took leave of his men, who wept with him ; paid their

• † Liberty and religion are the watch-words in the democratic cantons of Switzerland ; but should their interests happen to clash, those of religion must give way. Two peasants in the canton of Schwitz had once fought with such animosity that one of them died a few days afterwards. The priest, who came to prepare him for his dissolution, told him that he must forgive his enemy and murderer. "That I never will : " replied the peasant. "Then," rejoined the priest, "you cannot go to heaven." "That does not signify ;" said the peasant, "I will not forgive him." "Do you wish to go to hell ?" asked the man of God, rather angrily. The patient, collecting all his strength, raised himself up, struck his breast and cried, "I am a free Schwitzer ; I can go whither I please : " and in a few moments he expired.

arrears, and presented them with their arms and accoutrements. The people now had in their power the man whom the whole country regarded as a perfidious wretch, a traitor who had favored the new regulations at the court of Versailles, and had assisted in giving a mortal blow to the interests of his country. The members of the diet were inspired with increased fury. Reding was summoned to give an account of all the proceedings, that they might know on what terms they now stood with France; and be apprized of the extent of the traitor's crimes, so that they might grant him a pardon, or inflict punishment. Reding, well aware that all his eloquence would make no impression on the heated spirits of his countrymen, contented himself with saying drily and in a few words, that the assembly was fully acquainted with the affair, that he was innocent both of the new regulations and of his dismissal. "The traitor will not then confess; hang him on the next tree; cut him to pieces!" Such were the menaces that resounded from all quarters, and the cry was repeated by the voices of four thousand men. Reding remained tranquil. A troop of furious peasants ascended the platform, where the general was standing by the side of the magistrates. It was then raining. A young man who was Reding's god-son, held an umbrella over his head; one of the enraged multitude broke the umbrella to pieces with a stick, exclaiming "let the traitor stand uncovered!" Rage filled the bosom of the youth: "I knew not," said he, "that my god-father had betrayed his country; since that is the case, bring a cord immediately that I may strangle him!" The members of the council formed

a circle round the general, and entreated him with uplifted hands, to step forward for God's sake, and, in order to save his life, to confess that he had perhaps not exerted himself with sufficient ardor at Versailles, against the new regulation; that in this respect he had failed in his duty; and that as a reparation for his fault, he offered to sacrifice his whole property, provided they would spare his life. Reding then walked out of the circle with a slow step and solemn air, beckoned with his hand, and universal silence ensued throughout the assembly. All awaited with impatience the confession of the repentant culprit, and many bosoms indulged the hope that they should be able to pardon. "My dear countrymen," said the general, "you know that I have served the king of France two and forty years. You are not ignorant, and many of you who were with me can testify, how often I have faced the enemy, and in what manner I conducted myself in many battles; each of those bloody days I considered as the last of my life. But I here protest to you, in the presence of the omniscient God, who hears my words and will judge us all, that I never marched to meet the enemy with a conscience so tranquil, so pure and so innocent as at this moment, when I am ready to submit to death, if you think proper to condemn me for not confessing an infidelity of which I am not guilty."

The dignity with which the general uttered these words, and the rays of truth which at the same time beamed from his countenance, calmed the assembly, and he was saved. But soon after, both he and his wife left the canton; she went into a nunnery at Uri; the general retired to a cavern in the rocks,

• Character of the Swiss.

where he lived two years as a hermit. The fury of his countrymen having at length subsided, Reding returned to his native land, and repaid the ingratitude he had experienced with the most signal services. The whole country acknowledged his integrity, regretted the injustice he had received; and as a compensation he was created landamman, or chief magistrate of the canton; and, what very rarely occurs, he was three times successively confirmed in that dignity.

Such are the pastoral inhabitants of the Alps of Switzerland, alternately mild and violent. Their character, formed in Solitude and influenced by an ardent imagination, is subject to the same vicissitudes as their climate. But I must acknowledge, that I would rather live in Solitude among the rocks of Uri, than be landamman of Schwitz.

But, though the continual aspect of the wild but sublime scenery of the Alps, renders the Swiss rude; yet, as in every other country, the tranquillity of the fields and the view of the smiling beauties of nature inspire the heart with kindness and benevolence. English artists have said, that the majesty of nature in Switzerland is too great and too sublime for the pencil of the ablest painter. What exquisite enjoyment is afforded by its romantic hills, its lovely vallies, and the happy borders of its numerous and pellucid lakes!* There every

* I was gratified and rejoiced to observe in professor Meiners' Letters on Switzerland, with what amiable sensibility that philosopher seated himself on the banks of the lake of Biel, and how the various impressions imparted the sweetest tranquillity to his mind.

Scenery of Switzerland.

beauty with which nature is decorated in that country, is brought nearer to the view, and appears in all its loveliness and splendor. If the sight of the oak, the elm, or the other lofty inhabitants of the forests convey no pleasure; if the view of those trees excite no agreeable sensation, but they only appear venerable and majestic; there still remain the lovely myrtle, the almond-tree, the jessamine, the pomegranate, and the vine-covered eminence. Recollect, that in no country of the globe the beauties of nature are so rich in variety as in Switzerland; and that it was the scenery around Zurich and its lakes which inspired the idylls of the immortal Gesner, the most agreeable of all the poets of nature.

The sublime in nature elevates and expands the

“When I am tired,” says Mr. Meiners to his friend at Göttingen, “or take a fancy to consider more attentively the objects that surround me, I sit down on the first terrace or wall of a vineyard with which the road is almost everywhere bordered. I never do so without feeling an inexpressibly delicious tranquillity of mind. The last time I indulged in this disposition, the sun sank as early as half past five o’clock, behind the summit of the Jura. The dark firs which entirely cover the mountain to a certain height, the oaks of a lighter green that succeed them, the still livelier tints of the vines among which I was seated, and a considerable portion of the lake that kept gradually increasing, were in the shade; the greater part of the lake, the opposite shore, Nidau, Biel, and the snow-clad mountains in the back-ground were still illumined by the sun. Above me I heard the lowing of cattle, which always excites in me the agreeable idea of Arcadia; below, I heard the voices of laborers and fishermen, whose boats I could scarcely discover, and the soft soothing murmur of the lake, extending farther than the eye could reach, rolling its waves against the steep, rocky shore.”

View in Italy.

heart and strikes the imagination more powerfully than the milder beauties of rural scenes, as night is more solemn and sublime than day. In coming from Frascati to the small transparent lake, Nemi, situated in a deep valley, so encompassed with mountains and forests that no breath of wind ever ruffles its surface, it is impossible to refrain from exclaiming with the English poet, that here

“ Black melancholy sits, and round her throws
A death-like silence and a dread repose :
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades ev’ry flow’r and darkens ev’ry green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.”

POPE, *Eloisa to Abelard.*

But how the soul expands, how serene and free the mind becomes when, from the garden of the Capuchin convent near Albano, you discover just before you the little melancholy lake, with all the mountains and forests which surround it, together with the castle of Gandolfo; but on one side is Frascati with all its rural villas, and on the other the charming town of Albano, the village and palace of la Riccia, and Gensano seated on their vine-covered hills; beyond these an uninterrupted view of the Campagna, in the middle of which rises Rome, with the proud cathedral of St. Peter; and lastly, to bound the prospect, the hills of Tivoli, the Appenines and the Mediterranean sea.*

* The Countess of Stolberg, a lady possessing a truly poetic imagination, once made the tour of Italy for the sake of her health. Her strength increased every day. But when she found herself on the spot near Albano, above

Effects of sublime and beautiful objects on the heart.

Thus the view of sublime and beautiful objects produces different effects on the heart; the sublime exciting awe and terror, and the beautiful giving birth to sweet and agreeable sensations. Both enlarge the sphere of our imagination and increase the enjoyment we derive from our own minds.

But in order to experience such sentiments it is not necessary to retire to the solitudes of Switzerland and Italy. Every man, even though he may not go like Kleist to enrich his mind with poetic images, but quietly traverses the mountains with his gun, must feel how powerfully the view of nature, aided by the imagination, affects the heart. Should he not see visions like Lavater and Rousseau, yet the prospect of a pleasing country, the continual change of scenery, the purity of the air, the serenity of the sky, a good appetite, impart such a sensation of health that each step seems too short. The absence of every object that reminds him of his dependence, his house, his duties and occupations gives him a certain freedom of thought, and a warmth of imagination, because he sees himself surrounded with ravishing images, and his heart is intoxicated with delicious sensations.

With a fine imagination a man would be more happy in a gloomy dungeon than without imagination in the most delightful country. But, even without this happy faculty, the tranquillity of rural life alone, the bare sight of the hay harvest performs wonders for the heart. How often has the

described, and attempted to express to her companions the rapture excited by this view, she lost her voice and remained several days without being able to speak.

Charms of rural retirement.

female heart, bereft of every joy, experienced the magic effects which the sight of the rustic's pleasures is capable of producing, and how fondly it participates in his joys! With what freedom, cordiality and good nature the mourner takes him by the hand and listens to his honest tale! How soon does then every object around her become interesting and amiable! How are the most secret affections elevated, expanded and refined! Rural scenes never fail to afford delight to those who in cities are strangers to pleasure.

A French officer, upon his return to his native land, from distant seas and quarters of the globe, said, "it is only in rural retirement that a man can enjoy the delights of the heart, himself, his wife, his children and his friends. Thus in every respect the country has a great advantage over towns. The air is pure, the views are charming, the walks pleasant, the life comfortable, the manners simple and men more virtuous. There the passions are developed without injuring any person. The lover of freedom is there dependent upon heaven alone. The avaricious man receives endless presents from the inexhaustible bounty of nature. The warrior may follow the chase, the voluptuary may plant gardens and the philosopher is furnished with the best materials for reflection." O how powerfully the same writer moves and interests my heart by that admirable passage where he says, "I should prefer my native fields to all others, not because they are the most beautiful, but because I was reared among them. The spot where we pass the first years of our lives possesses a secret charm, an inexpressible enchantment, which no other enjoyment

Charms of rural retirement.

afford; and for which no other country can compensate. Where are the sports of early infancy, those busy days devoid of care and inquietude? The catching of a bird filled my heart with the highest joy. What pleasure I experienced in caressing a partridge, in making it peck at me, in feeling its feathers quiver and its heart palpitate against my hand! Happy he who returns to the place of his first love; where his attachment was fixed on every thing around him, where every object appeared amiable in his eyes; the fields in which he used to run and the orchard that he plundered!"

These delightful sentiments indelibly engrave upon the heart the recollection of our residence in the country and of our rambles among the solitudes of our native land. But, at every period of life and in every country however remote, the shady grove, the freedom and tranquillity of rural life will ravish the soul and cause us to exclaim in the words of the preacher: "With what exquisite sensations the human mind is filled in the silent enjoyment of real internal perfection and dignity entirely independent of exterior objects! How much preferable are they to the participation in the noisy follies and dazzling splendor of the fashionable world! How many pure, noble and generous sentiments are produced and unfolded in retirement, which, amidst the incessant bustle of business and dissipation, are concealed in the bottom of the soul, fearful of the scorn and ridicule of thoughtless and wicked minds!"

O! my beloved Zollikofer! in the bosom of rural retirement and in domestic life, I have felt the force of those doctrines which you taught at

● Charms of rural retirement.

Leipsig—doctrines flowing not from a cold and sterile theology, but inculcated in the warm language of the heart. In the bowers of retirement, the man of business forgets the vexation and perplexity of his concerns, or, if he cannot completely banish them from his mind, he pours forth his cares into the bosom of friendship. The heart is expanded and enlivened by the charms of encouragement and consolation; the countenance is brightened up with hope; anxiety and inquietude are suspended till he acquires strength to support or a remedy to dispel them. There, too, the learned man, resigning the thread of his laborious investigations, escapes from the labyrinth in which he was involved, and frequently finds, in the innocence of domestic enjoyments and the engaging simplicity of his family, more happiness and mental pleasure than in the pursuits of literature and the arts. There each obtains that portion of praise and approbation which he deserves, and obtains them of those whose praise and approbation it is his highest ambition to deserve. There the dejected are raised, the wanderer is put into the right track, the indolent are stimulated, the anxious soothed, and every brow is gradually brightened by the smiles of satisfaction and content.

Sometimes, indeed, a sweet melancholy pervades the mind in the bosom of rural retirement, at the sight of the beauties of nature. The soul at such times is not suited to the sensation of pure, unmingled joy; but, for this reason, we repose with increased delight in the friendly bower or beneath the refreshing shade. Thus the happy indolence of the Italians who, beneath a genial sky are poor but

Character of the Italians.

never miserable, is accompanied with important advantages for the heart. The mildness of their climate, the fertility of the soil, their peaceable, religious, and contented disposition compensate for every thing. Doctor Moore, an English writer, whose works I read with infinite delight, says, "the Italians are the greatest loungers in the world ; and while walking in the fields or stretched in the shade, seem to enjoy the serenity and genial warmth of their climate, with a degree of luxurious indulgence peculiar to themselves. Without ever running into the daring excesses of the English, or displaying the frisky vivacity of the French, or the stubborn phlegm of the Germans, the Italian populace discover a species of sedate sensibility to every source of enjoyment, from which perhaps they derive a greater degree of happiness than any of the others."

In this pleasing exemption from every thing that torments and afflicts the heart, it is perhaps impossible to avoid indulging romantic ideas and sentiments ; and though this state may be attended with many disadvantages, it likewise has its fair side. It is possible that romantic speculations may lead us by a perilous path into forbidden ground ; that they are, in general, connected with some base passion, and habituate the mind to an extravagant and flighty mode of thinking, and that they render it unfit to apply with zeal and activity to rational pursuits, or take delight in the humble and simple occupations of life. It may be that the soul returns with reluctance to the society of mankind from the ideal world in which it fondly hoped to exist, contracts a decided aversion from the ordinary duties of life,

Romantic sentiments encouraged by Solitude.

and becomes incapable of enjoying its pleasures. Romantic sentiments and ideas are, however, not always productive of unhappiness; for it is alas! impossible to taste, in reality, such exquisite delight as we sometimes experience in imagination.

Rousseau, in his childhood, read a great number of novels, and, hurried away by the love of imaginary objects with which these compositions had inspired him, together with the facility of amusing his mind with them, he disregarded those objects by which he was surrounded. Hence arose that love of Solitude which he retained to an advanced period of life, that apparently gloomy and anti-social disposition, which he attributed to the irresistible impulse of a heart too tender, too loving, and too affectionate, which, for want of similar sentiments in others, was compelled to live in the region of fiction.

There are many wanderings of the imagination in Solitude, which we can indulge with benefit to the heart and without injury to the understanding. In the various changes of my life, I have always found some one to whom my heart has been fondly attached. Oh! if the friends whom I left in Switzerland knew how often they occupy my thoughts in my sleepless nights; if they knew that neither time nor absence can erase from my mind the recollection of our mutual endearments in childhood, in youth and in maturer age; if they knew how the fond retrospect charms my sorrows, and makes me forget my misfortunes; they would perhaps likewise rejoice that, though dead to them in reality, I continue to live with them in imagination.

Rousseau's enjoyments in Solitude.

I cannot, therefore, consider the solitary man unhappy, whose heart is warmed by any virtuous or affectionate sentiment. The vulgar, indeed, imagine, that he who lives in Solitude is consumed by corroding melancholy, that his heart is a prey to the most gloomy ideas, while, on the contrary, he is enjoying inexpressible pleasures. The French imagined the good Rousseau to be of a gloomy disposition. He was not so during a considerable portion of his life; nor most assuredly when he wrote to M. de Malesherbes, son of the Chancellor of France: "I cannot express to you, Sir, how much I was affected to find that you consider me one of the most unhappy of mankind. The public will, without doubt, form the same opinion, and that idea distresses me. Oh! that the felicity I have enjoyed were known to the whole universe! Each would then endeavour to follow my example, peace would reign upon earth, men would no longer contrive how to injure each other, wickedness would cease, because none would have an interest in being wicked. But wherein could I find enjoyment when alone? In myself, in the whole universe, in all that does and all that may exist, in all that the eye finds beautiful in the real world, and the imagination in the intellectual. I collected around me every object capable of affording gratification to my heart: my desires were the rule of my pleasures. No, the greatest voluptuary never experienced equal delight; and a hundred times have I derived greater enjoyment from my chimeras than all their realities can afford."

This is certainly the language of enthusiasm; but who would not prefer being an enthusiast with

Pastoral poetry.

Rousseau to the cold commerce with the world? Who would not cheerfully renounce the inanity of all your enjoyments, your boasted politeness, your noisy pleasures, your card-tables and prejudices? Who would not exchange these for a contented mind and a tranquil life, for domestic felicity in the bosom of simple nature, beneath the shade of the majestic forest, or on the smiling borders of the placid lake? Who would not prefer pleasures that leave behind the most delightful impression, joys so pure, so affecting and so different from yours?

Pastoral poems are likewise fictions, but of the most pleasing kind, and in my opinion the purest and most sublime descriptions of rural happiness. In retirement, where the soul, disengaged from the torments and afflictions of the world, is free from those artificial wants which render us equally unhappy, both in the prospect and gratification; where it is filled with the love of nature, and takes delight only in her pure and simple pleasures: there dwells felicity. He who, exempt from pain and affliction, leads a life of love and innocence, contented with little, satisfied with all, lives in the golden age of the poets, the loss of which we so unjustly regret. But love, tranquillity, a taste for the beauties of nature, were not peculiar to the bowers of Arcadia: we may all live in the golden age if we please. Days of heart-felt enjoyment, and innocent pleasures may be found in the flowery meadow, beside the crystal spring and beneath the shady grove.

Pope attributes the origin of poetry to the age that immediately succeeded the creation. The earliest occupation of mankind was the care of their flocks, and therefore pastoral poems were, probably,

Gessner's Idylls.

their first compositions. These shepherds doubtless sought some method of diverting the leisure of their happy lives; and in their solitary situation what could be more agreeable than singing? And what more natural subject of their songs than the celebration of their felicity? Such, Pope conceives, was the origin of pastoral poetry, descriptive of those tranquil and happy times and designed to inspire our bosoms with a love of the virtues of former ages.

These fictions communicate happiness, and we bless the poet who wishes to impart to others the felicity he himself enjoys. Sicily and Zurich produced two of these benefactors of mankind. Nature never appears arrayed in such resplendent beauty; I never breathe with such freedom, my heart never beats with such soft emotion, and I am never so happy as when perusing the pages of Theocritus or Gessner;* and this, my beloved Gessner, is

* No writer perhaps, in Europe, has formed a juster opinion of Gessner's Idylls than the incomparable Blair in his "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres," where he says, "Of all the moderns M. Gessner, a poet of Switzerland, has been the most successful in his pastoral compositions. He has introduced into his Idylls, as he entitles them, many new ideas. His rural scenery is often striking, and his descriptions are lively. He presents pastoral life to us with all the embellishments of which it is susceptible, but without any excess of refinement. What forms the chief merit of this poet is, that he writes to the heart, and has enriched the subject of his idylls with incidents which give rise to much tender sentiment. Scenes of domestic felicity are beautifully painted. The mutual affection of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, as well as of lovers, are displayed in a pleasing and touching manner.

● Character of Gessner.

my only gratification when reflecting on the delight I experienced in your society at the foot of the Hapsburg !*

Thus I have briefly shewn that the view of nature operates upon the heart by the aid of imagination, that rural retirement inspires the soul with tender sentiments, that Solitude elevates the fancy and disposes the mind to the sensation of happiness ; that, under the influence of all these agreeable images, we cannot always avoid resigning ourselves to the illusions of romance, which amend the heart without injury to the understanding ; and that the fictions of poetry, and the recollection of past delight, are capable of communicating the highest degree of felicity.

The heart very often cannot find repose, that supreme good upon earth, excepting in Solitude.

From not understanding the language in which M. Gessner writes, I can be no judge of the poetry of his style ; but in the subject and conduct of his pastorals, he appears to me to have outdone all the moderns."

* This immortal poet, in the familiar society of confidential friends, was one of the most amiable companions. The sight of him conveyed instant relief and pleasure to my heart. To strangers who visited him out of impertinent curiosity, or to pay him compliments which he did not want, he was cold and reserved. In the fund of humor which he possessed, he found resources against terror and dejection, even in circumstances where other men are terrified and dejected. He once requested my attendance at the baths of Schintznach, where he was attacked with a violent colic. I hastened to him with a sorrowful heart ; but I had scarcely been with him a minute, when he made me laugh more heartily than I had perhaps ever done in my life, by a description of his pains in caricature.

What occupations should be preferred.

But, by repose must not be understood perpetual indolence or lounging in the shade. The transition from pain to pleasure, from the restraints of business to the pursuits of philosophy, is likewise repose. On this account Publius Scipio said, that he was never less at leisure than when at leisure, nor less solitary than when alone. Energetic minds are not lulled to sleep by leisure and retirement, but are stimulated to new exertion ; and while they rejoice at the successful completion of one task they may immediately begin another ; they are desirous of repose, not for the mind, but for the heart.

It has been said, alas ! with too much truth, that he who seeks a state exempt from all inquietude, pursues an empty shadow. To enjoy life, repose should not be pursued as an end, but only as a mean of exerting greater activity. Those occupations, which employ us in a manner commensurate with the extent of our capacity, and promise compensation and enjoyment only after trouble and labour, should therefore be preferred to such as leave our powers inactive, lull us into a state of torpidity and promise pleasure or advantage without exertion.

We must not seek to derive repose from inactivity ; but immediately take advantage of the first impulse to action. If the misfortunes of those we love have rendered us unhappy ; if the afflictions we witness rend our hearts ; if sympathy for others poison every source of pleasure, conceal the world from our eyes in melancholy obscurity, destroy all the comforts of existence, deprive us of every mental stimulus and the power of exercising our faculties ; if we have vainly attempted for months and years to obtain an alleviation of the most cruel suf-

● A Swiss landscape. ●

ferings ; then, my beloved reader, Solitude is our only refuge ; but the partner of our retirement must be a female angel, and, in our descent to the vale of death, must conduct us by her wisdom and preserve our minds in a sublime tranquillity.

Amidst all the misfortunes of which I was the victim, I knew no happier hours than those in which I forgot and was forgotten by the world. These hours of repose I found in every solitary spot. There all that oppressed me in the crowded city, every object, that drew me either willingly or with reluctance and constraint into the general vortex, was far removed. I admired and enjoyed the silent aspect of nature, while my bosom was filled with the most delicious sensations.

How often have I enjoyed this pure and ineffable delight in spring, when admiring the beautiful valley where, on the summit of a wood-clad mountain exhibiting every possible tint of verdure, rise the majestic ruins of the residence of Rudolf of Hapsburg ! There I saw the Aar, now forming a capacious basin between lofty shores, now rushing impetuously through narrow passages in the rocks, now with a slow and placid current winding its course through smiling plains, while on the other side, the Reuss and lower down the Limmat roll their tributary streams and peaceably unite with its waters. In the enamelled fore-ground I beheld the royal Solitude* where the remains of the emperor

* The convent of Königsfelden, situated at the distance of a mile from my native town, Brugg, between the Aar and the Reuss. The consort of the Emperor Albert the First, assassinated in 1303 by his nephew, Duke John of

A Swiss landscape.

Albert the First repose in monastic silence, among so many of the illustrious descendants of the house of Austria, and among the German princes, counts, knights and gentlemen, who fell in battle with the Swiss. Before me, in the distance, were the extensive valley where once stood the celebrated Vindonissa,* and the ruins upon which I have so often sat

Swabia and a few nobles, erected a chapel on the spot where the murder was committed. The dukes of Austria, sons of the unfortunate emperor, in the year 1311, founded there a convent for nuns, and another for monks, which stood so close to each other as to be enclosed by one and the same wall. This institution was richly endowed by these dukes of Austria and their sister Agnes. Not only the property of those nobles who had conspired the death of their sovereign, but likewise the estates of all who were related to them were given to these religious houses. The management of all their possessions and the inspection of all the monks and nuns in the convent of Königsfelden were committed to the Abbess. The great altar in its magnificent church stands upon the spot where the Emperor, overcome with pain and weakness, fell from his horse and expired. Elizabeth, the widow of the Emperor, and her daughter Agnes, queen of Hungary, ended their days at Königsfelden, and are interred in the same vault with many other princes and princesses of the house of Austria. By the desire of the Imperial Ambassador this vault was opened in the year 1738. I descended into it with the company, wandered among the remains of all these illustrious persons; and though only a child of nine years, I felt the most lively joy, when I discovered the coffin of Duke Leopold of Austria, who, with a great number of the German nobility, fell in the year 1286 at the battle of Sempach, so glorious to the arms of Switzerland.

* Vindonissa was a very large and well fortified Roman town, and served as a fortress to the Roman emperors against the incursions of the Alemanni. A numerous garrison was maintained there to over-awe these formidable

A Swiss landscape.

contemplating the vanity of human greatness. In the remote distance, beyond this splendid country* and behind charming hills crowned with antique castles rise the Alps in towering majesty. In the midst of this magnificent scenery, my eyes were cast from the lofty forests in which I stood over the vineyards, and were fixed upon the little town where I first drew breath; in which I could distinguish every house, and every window of that which I inhabited. When I compared the sensations I then felt, with those I had experienced, I exclaimed

neighbours, who frequently crossed the Rhine and plundered the Aargau, notwithstanding all the forts erected by the Romans upon that river. At length, in the year 297 the Emperor Constantius Chlorus defeated them between the Rhine and the Aar; but at the beginning of the fourth century, when the Roman power declined in this country, Vindonissa was taken and destroyed by the Alemanni. It appears, however, that Vindonissa was rebuilt; for, during the monarchy of the Franks, the episcopal chair was established in this city, which, upon its second destruction in 579, was removed to Constance. On the ruins of this famous Roman station resided in the tenth century the Counts of Windisch and Altenburgh, the ancestors of the Counts of Hapsburg. Of all its former magnificence nothing now remains but ruins, and on these are situated the small town of Brugg, the place of my nativity, and the villages of Altenburg and Windisch.

* After Pococke the celebrated English traveller had seen and traversed the finest countries on the face of the globe, all Greece, Lesser Asia, Constantinople, Sicily and Italy, he visited Switzerland and saw Windisch, Konigsfelden, Brugg, and Hapsburg. Of the former he acknowledges: "Windisch is one of the finest situations I have seen; and the castle of Hapsburg, (he says,) is a very fine summer situation, commanding a glorious view of a most beautiful country."

Soliloquy of the Author.

to myself: Alas! why is my soul so contracted amidst so many objects capable of inspiring the sublimest ideas? Why does the winter, elsewhere so serene and chearful, there appear so dismal? Why do I there experience such languor, vexation and disgust, whereas here the view of these romantic objects fills my heart with love and tranquillity, makes me pardon the errors of a perverted judgment and forget the injuries I have sustained? Why is this handful of men, collected at my feet, so turbulent, so discordant? Why is the virtuous man there treated with such contempt? Why is he who governs so haughty and he who is governed so servile? Why is there, in this place, so little liberty and courage? Why does it contain so few who know themselves? Why is one so proud, and another so base and groveling? Why, among beings who are born equal are arrogance and envy so prevalent, while the feathered tenants of the groves place themselves indiscriminately, and their myriads unite their melodious strains in one general concert to celebrate the praise of their creator?"—After this soliloquy, I descended from the mountain with a peaceful and contented mind, made profound reverences to the magistrates of my native town, extended my hand with the most amicable sentiments to the meanest of my fellow-citizens, and preserved this happy disposition of mind till I had again forgotten the majestic mountains, the smiling valley and the peaceful birds, in the society of mankind.

Thus rural Solitude dissipates the vexations we experience in society; frequently converts the bitterest feelings into the most delightful emotions;

Rousseau.

inspires many sublime ecstasies and imparts many inferior pleasures that the world cannot afford. The view of tranquil nature purifies the heart from vicious inclinations, fills it with love, benevolence, candor, and confidence; assists our progress in the paths of virtue, if we direct our passions to a good end and, do not suffer the imagination to afflict us with fancied woes.

- It is certainly more difficult to attain these advantages in the retirement of cities. It may appear
- easy even there to withdraw in the solitude of our chamber, from all surrounding objects. Few, however, possess the requisite energy of mind; for at home our ideas are checked by a thousand things, and they are interrupted incessantly by external accidents when abroad; while, in every company, gloomy and painful sensations, instantly and unexpectedly overwhelm the heart and weaken the mind, which never attains a due degree of fortitude to oppose them.

Rousseau was always extremely unhappy at Paris.* This great genius indeed wrote his immortal works during his residence in that city, but whenever he went abroad he was overpowered by a multitude of disagreeable sensations; his talents forsook him, and this profound philosopher, this brilliant writer who was so well acquainted with the labyrinths of the human heart, sank almost into childish imbecility.

In the country we leave home with greater cou-

* "I can declare with truth," says he, "that during the whole time I lived at Paris, I was employed only in seeking the means of being able to live out of it."

Peace of mind essential to happiness.

rage, cheerfulness and affability. When tired of meditating in his chamber, the solitary man needs but to leave his house and walk abroad ; tranquillity attends his steps, and every turn is productive of new pleasures. He extends his hand to every person he meets ; he loves and is beloved by all around him. Nothing there presents itself to excite his spleen. There no fortunate upstart drives his carriage over him. No imperious female, proud of her nobility, no haughty baron, no right honorable courtesan, or right reverend blockhead rouses his indignation.

But no man, either in Paris or any other city, who withdraws from the tumults of life, can experience such sensations, if he lives in peace with his own heart and possesses sufficient strength of nerves. Without these we become the sport of unmanly passions. With feeble nerves every object disgusts and irritates.

Even amidst the busy scenes of active life, though we may languish under a weakly constitution and be surrounded with the most disagreeable objects, our days will flow in a placid current if we are at peace with ourselves. Our passions are the gales by which man ought to steer his bark through the ocean of life. The passions alone give motion to the soul ; but when they become impetuous, the vessel is in danger and founders. Pain and grief are easily subdued if we banish every criminal desire. For this purpose we must forget the past, form no idle speculations on the future, nor murmur at our situation for not being better than it is. Every thing is better than we imagine. Satisfaction is incompatible with ardent desire, for even

Petrarch.

fruition is then accompanied with discontent. The source of pleasure exists in ourselves, in the earnest wish to know what is good, the determined resolution to seek for and to enjoy it, however small may be the portion.

Thus we attain repose in retirement, not merely by staring idly around at every object that presents itself. He who, without employment or any fixed and well-arranged plan of conduct, hopes to enjoy happiness in Solitude, will yawn at his country-seat just as he did in town; and he would do better to employ himself in cleaving wood than lounging the whole day in boots and spurs. But he who, in the most profound Solitude, applies himself with ardor and resolution to some useful occupation, attains through labor true repose and internal satisfaction.

Petrarch would have found this tranquillity in his Solitude at Vacluse, but that Laura proved a thorn in his heart which he could not extract. He was perfectly acquainted with the art of enjoying himself. "I rise," says he, "at midnight, and go out by break of day; I study in the fields as if in my chamber; I read, I write, and indulge my imagination. I endeavour to conquer indolence; I drive away sleep, effeminacy and sensuality. I traverse the whole day arid mountains, humid valleys and profound caverns; I frequently ramble along the banks of my river, accompanied only by my cares. I meet not a creature to divert my attention. Men become daily less troublesome to me; I place them either far before or much behind me. I call to mind the past and deliberate on the future. I have discovered an excellent method

of inducing myself to withdraw from the world. I accustom myself to the place of my residence, and I am convinced that I could accustom myself to any place excepting Avignon. Here, at Vacluse, I find Athens, Rome or Florence, according as it suits the disposition of my mind. I here enjoy all my friends, as well those with whom I have lived, as those who have entered the vale of death long before me and whom I know only by their works."

With such resolution, and possessing such resources within ourselves, we can accomplish what we please. But love prevented Petrarch from making all the exertion of which he was capable, and his heart enjoyed not repose, which, as Lavater justly observed, is the mean by which we are enabled to be virtuous and to exercise virtue.

Employment produces tranquillity even in the most dreary Solitude. The Emperor of Japan banishes those nobles who have the misfortune to incur his displeasure to the island of Fatsisio. This island has no other inhabitants, and its shores are of surprising height. It has no haven; is sterile and so difficult of access, that the exiles and the provisions with which they are supplied, are drawn up by means of a crane. The only employment of these unfortunate people, in this melancholy residence, consists in manufacturing stuffs of silk and gold, of the greatest beauty; and which, for that reason, are never sold to foreigners. I confess I should not like to fall under the displeasure of the Emperor of Japan, but yet I believe there is more internal tranquillity on the island of Fatsisio than he and his whole court possess.

Rousseau's love of Solitude.

We should preserve every thing that conveys a spark of comfort to the soul. We must not, however expect to produce from it a steady, lasting flame; but only take care that the last spark be not extinguished. Thus we shall find in the country that repose which flees from towns, and those blessings to which worldly-minded men are strangers.

What monarch, in the midst of the most splendid entertainments, ever felt that content which Rousseau enjoyed at his frugal repast? "I returned slowly," says he, "from my solitary walks, with a mind somewhat fatigued, but with a contented heart; I experienced on my return, the most agreeable repose, resigning myself to the impression of objects, but without thought, without reflection, or doing any thing but feeling the tranquillity and happiness of my situation. I found my table ready spread upon my terrace; I supped with a good appetite among my little family; no appearance of servitude or dependence disturbed the affection by which we were all united. Even my dog was my friend, not my slave; he never obeys me, for we have always the same will. My gaiety during the evening testified that I had passed the whole day in Solitude; I was very different when I had seen company, being at such times seldom contented with others and never with myself. In the evening I sat either grumbling or silent: this remark is my house-keeper's, and since she mentioned it to me, I have from my own observation invariably found it to be true. At length, after having taken a few turns in my garden, or sung some tune which I accompanied on my spinette, I found in my bed a re-

View from Lavater's house.

pose of body and mind a hundred times sweeter than even sleep itself."

Nature and a tranquil heart are a far more beautiful and majestic temple of the divinity than the cathedral of St. Peter's at Rome or St. Paul's at London. The immensity and omnipresence of the Almighty sanctifies every hill upon which a pure and peaceful heart offers him its silent sacrifice. He whom all the worlds that compose the universe are incapable of containing, cannot be inclosed within walls by worms. He knows the most secret thoughts of our hearts and always hearkens to the prayers of him whose invocations are sincere. Whether we climb the mountain or descend into the valley, we find no particle of dust that is not filled with his power. But no places are more capable of kindling the fervor of devotion than those happy scenes of nature, in which the sublime and beautiful ravish the heart at every look, and dissolve all our sensations in admiration, love and tranquillity.

I never call to mind without the sweetest emotions the sublime and inexpressibly magnificent scene, which presented itself to my eyes, when in the year 1775, I ascended with my friend Lavater to the roof of the house he then inhabited, and in which he was born and brought up. The day was very fine and serene, and whether I walked or sat still I experienced nearly the same sensations as Brydone on the summit of *Ætna*.* I embraced in a

*Brydone says: "In proportion as we were raised above the habitations of men, all low and vulgar sentiments are left behind; and the soul approaching the ethereal regions,

View from Lavater's house.

single view the whole city of Zurich, the happy country around it, the transparent lake with its smiling shores, and beyond this mirror, the loftiest of the snow-clad mountains, towering in resplendent majesty. Divine tranquillity filled my soul at the view of this scene.

On the roof of Lavater's house I could easily comprehend how, with a sensation of his existence and his energies so unclouded and serene, he can walk calmly through the streets of Zurich, exposed to the invidious observation and incessant attacks of the critics of that city, of whom he so humbly begs pardon for his blameless life, which, according to the laws at least, they are unable to destroy.

On this spot I likewise discovered how he was enabled to entertain such unfeigned tenderness and inexhaustible love for the same implacable enemies, the learned critics of Zurich, whose rage is excited by the bare mention of his name, who behold with repugnance whatever is praise-worthy in his character, but rejoice at the sight of his foibles and defects; who feel the sincerest sorrow when his good qualities are praised or he is vindicated from the unjust charges that are brought against him; who reject with aversion every truth in his favor, and with joy and triumph propagate every calumny injurious to his reputation; who are humbled by his glory as much as they are degraded by their own infamy; who have the accomplishment of his disgrace as much at heart as the preservation of their own good name; to whom every circumstance that ap-

shakes off its earthly affections and already contracts something of their invariable purity."

View at Richterswyl.

appears fortunate for Lavater is a misfortune; who studiously conceal every thing to his advantage, and take a malicious delight in exaggerating his failings, which they circulate with indefatigable industry; whose conduct stamps their own disgrace and augments that fame which they are so eager to destroy; who insidiously intreat every impartial stranger to see the man and to judge for himself, and commonly find, to their extreme mortification, that the opinion formed of Lavater is diametrically opposite to the representations of the envenomed pens and tongues of his honored and esteemed foes, the critics of Zurich.

In the village of Richterswyl, a few leagues from Zurich, in a situation still more tranquil and delightful than Lavater's habitation, amid the most varied, romantic and charming scenery of Switzerland, stands the residence of a celebrated physician. His soul is tranquil and sublime as the objects by which he is surrounded. His house is the temple of health, friendship and every milder virtue. The village of Richterswyl is situated on the lake of Zurich, at a place where two promontories form a natural haven about two miles in extent. The opposite shore of the lake which here does not exceed four miles in breadth and runs from north to east, is bordered by pleasant, sunny hills, covered with vineyards intermingled with meadows, orchards, corn-fields, thickets and groves, while populous villages, churches, villas and cottages enliven the scene.

A vast and magnificent amphitheatre, which no painter has yet attempted to delineate but in small detached portions, is expanded from east to south.

View at Richterswyl.

The view of the upper extremity of the lake, which on this side is sixteen miles in length, presents to the eye points of land, scattered islands, the small town of Rapperschwyl situated on an eminence, and the bridge which extends from one side of the lake to the other. Beyond these rises in a semi-circle the stupendous amphitheatre. In the fore-ground, at the distance of half a league, is the hilly promontory, behind which rise more elevated eminences, covered with trees and verdure, interspersed with villages and detached houses. In the distance are discovered the lofty and fertile Alps, entwined one among another, increasing in magnitude the farther they recede, and exhibiting the lightest and darkest shades of azure. In the back-ground rocks covered with eternal snows, rear their rugged heads towards heaven. The amphitheatre opens to the south, where new ranges of mountains tower in uninterrupted succession. Such a view must ever remain new, striking and incomparable.

Chains of mountains likewise extend from south to west; at their feet, on the shore of the lake, is situated the village of Richterswyl. Black forests of fir-trees cover their sides, while the nearer hills are decked with innumerable fruit-trees, and houses interspersed among fertile corn-fields and blooming meadows. The village of Richterswyl is neat; the streets are paved, the houses are of stone and painted. Around the village on the shore of the lake are walks leading through alleys of fruit-trees, or through the shady forests upon the hills. The sublimity and beauty of the scenery on every side arrests the foot of the enraptured wanderer; he is all eye, his breath is for a moment suspended, as if

View at Richterswyl.

fearful of interrupting his delight. Every foot of this charming country is in the highest state of cultivation and improvement ; every hand is at work ; even infancy and hoary age are employed in useful industry.

The two houses of the physician, situated in the midst of this village, are surrounded with gardens and are as tranquil and retired as if in the profoundest Solitude. Beneath the window of my dear friend, by the side of his garden runs a murmuring stream, beyond which is the high road, where for centuries multitudes of pilgrims are almost daily passing to the convent of Einsiedlen. Both the windows and the gardens command a view towards the south of the majestic Ezelberg ; black forests conceal its summit, and its foot is only a league distant from these houses and gardens ; midway hangs a village with a beautiful church, gilded every serene evening by the sun's departing rays. In the front is the lake of Zurich, which is secured from the violence of tempests, while its crystal surface reflects the beauties of the delightful shore, or is gently agitated by the breath of sportive zephyrs.

In the silence of the night if you repair to the window, or in a lonely walk through the gardens inhale the refreshing odors of the flowers, while the moon, rising above the mountains, throws a stream of light upon the expansive bosom of the lake ; you hear amidst this death-like silence the sound of the village clocks on the opposite shore, and the echoes of the voices of watchmen, mingled with the barkings of faithful dogs. At a distance you hear the oars of the waterman whose little boat slowly cuts the liquid mirror, you see it cross the moon's translucent

Dr. Hoze.

beam and play with the sparkling waves. At the sight of the lake of Geneva in its whole extent, who would not be struck dumb by the majesty of such a sublime picture, and imagine that he beheld the masterpiece of the whole creation? But here, near the lake of Zurich at Richterswyl, in the house of my friend, every object is nearer, more agreeable, more soft and touching.

Luxury and riches are no where seen in the habitations of this philanthropist. His chairs are made of straw, his tables of wood the growth of the country; and his friends are entertained on a service of earthen ware. Neatness and convenience prevail throughout. A large collection of painted and engraved portraits are his only expense. The first beams of Aurora illumine the small apartment where this sage reposes, and waken him with gratitude and joy, to new life. At his rising he is greeted by the cooing of doves, and the morning song of the birds that sleep in an adjoining chamber.

The first hour in the morning and the last at night are sacred to himself. All the intermediate moments are devoted to the relief of a diseased and afflicted multitude, who daily come to consult him. The exercise of his benevolent profession engrosses his whole time; but it is likewise the joy and pleasure of his life, and the supreme delight of his heart. The people from the mountainous cantons of Switzerland and the vallies of the Alps, resort to his house, and in vain seek for language to express their ailments and distress. Persuaded that he sees and knows every thing, they answer each question with simplicity, frankness and truth, attentively listen to every word, treasure up his advice like grains of

Dr. Hotze.

- gold, and return home with as much consolation, hope, and virtuous resolution as from their confessor at Einsiedlen. After a day spent in this manner, must he not feel that he is a happy man ! When a simple and ingenuous female, who had trembled for the life of her husband, enters his apartment, seizes his hand with rustic ardor, exclaiming : “ Oh ! Sir ! my poor husband was so ill when I got home ; and in these two days he is so much recovered ! Al what obligations I owe you, Sir ! ”—then this philanthropic character feels the same sensation that a monarch must experience who confers happiness on a whole nation.

Such is the appearance of that part of Switzerland, where doctor Hotze, one of the greatest physicians of the present age, resides ; a philosopher whose luminous understanding, profound judgment, and extensive experience entitle him to rank with the friends of my heart, Tissot and Hirzel. It is thus that his days are spent in happy uniformity. He lives in retirement indeed only two hours each day ; but the remainder is devoted to the relief of the multitudes, who repair to him in this heavenly spot. His active and vigorous mind knows no repose, but his bosom is pervaded by celestial tranquillity ; such as he would not have experienced at courts.* Persons of every description may enjoy

* Dr. Hotze many years since refused an invitation to reside at the court of the Margrave of Baden, in the beautiful palace of Carlsruhe, and in 1781 I was charged by a great and powerful German prince to offer him the post of first physician to his person, with many other advantages, and a liberal salary ; but with as little success.

Solitude disposes to content.

the same degree of tranquillity, even if they do not live amidst scenes of equal beauty with those of my beloved Hotze, at Richterswyl, the convent of Capuchins near Albano, or the residence of my sovereign at Windsor.

Happy is he, who wishes not for more than he possesses. Such felicity is easily found at Richterswyl, on the lake of Zurich, and likewise more easily than would be imagined in the chamber where I am now writing this book upon Solitude, where, during seven years, I had nothing to look at but the ruined roofs of some miserable houses, and the top of an old church-steeple.

Content must always have its source in the heart; but in Solitude the bosom is more disposed to receive it, with every virtue by which it is accompanied. What cheerfulness and good-humor we feel by the side of a murmuring stream, or after a sweet slumber beneath the shade of a lofty pine! The tranquillity of nature easily inspires the heart with content; for, in society, we have more reason to flee from ourselves than from mankind. Peace with ourselves is peace with all the world. With a tranquil mind we always view men and things on the favorable side. In rural Solitude, where the heart is open only to agreeable sensations, we learn to love our fellow-creatures. On the contrary, in the Solitude of monastic institutions, amidst cold, watching, fasting, and a thousand unnatural and disagreeable sentiments, the heart is inspired with hatred to the species. When all nature smiles upon us, and our bosoms overflow with benevolence, we want nothing but a congenial soul to partake of our felicity.

Rousseau's sentiments on a rural life.

By sympathetic mind, therefore, domestic felicity is relished, in a much higher degree, in rural retirement, than in any other situations. The greatest honors and fortune, that the most splendid courts in Europe are able to confer, could not assuage the grief of him, who is dragged, against his inclination, from the bosom of rural and domestic felicity, into the palace of a metropolis, and obliged to conform to the frivolities of fashionable life, which is confined to gaming and yawning, the reciprocal communication of languor, and the indulgence of hatred, envy, adulation and calumny.*

No situation tends so strongly as rural retirement to promote real, internal content, love, fidelity, and the simple manners of our ancestors, Rousseau, therefore, with such sincerity, tells the inhabitants of cities, that a rural life affords pleasures to which they are strangers, that these enjoyments are less unpolished, less insipid than they imagine, and, that a correct and delicate taste may likewise prevail there; that a man of merit, who retires with his family into the country, and cultivates his own estate, finds his days pass as pleasantly as in the most brilliant assemblies; that a good housewife may be a charming woman, adorned with every agreeable qualification, and possess graces much more captivating than all the affected females whom we see in cities.

* Madame de Maintenon wrote from Marli to Madame de Caylus: "We pass our lives here in a singular manner. We make attempts at wit, gallantry and invention, but are utterly destitute of all those qualifications. We play, yawn, reciprocally communicate languor and vexation; we hate, envy, caress and calumniate each other."

Solitude the best refuge against oppression.

Beneath the refreshing shades of solitary and delightful vallies, we forget all the unpleasant circumstances we have encountered in the world. Even in cities we feel no hatred to the most wicked and profligate, if we do not see them. It is only amidst the tumult of social life, and under the oppressive yoke of subordination, that the continual clashing of truth and reason, with the stupidity of those in power, proves the abundant spring, from which so many miseries inundate human life. Fools in power embitter the lives of their inferiors, poison their peace, reverse all order in society, cover with thorns the path of every one who possesses more genius than themselves, and make this world a vale of affliction, vexation and tears. Alas! that the virtuous statesman, the brave and skilful officer, the man of talents, should be justified in exclaiming with the prophet: O that I had the wings of the dove, that I might fly away and fix my abode where chance might direct! Distant should be my flight, and I would seek the Solitude of the desert. I would hasten to escape the rage of the tempest; for I see that at court, in the army, the college, and the city, falsehood and malice, hypocrisy and deceit, discord and hatred, preside.

Stupidity, when it possesses authority and credit, becomes more hurtful and dangerous, because it wishes to reduce every thing to a level with itself, gives a wrong name to every object, and takes every character to be the reverse of what it really is; in a word, stupidity always calls black, white, and white, black. Candid, independent and honest minds, in order to avoid its persecutions, must be as well acquainted with all its tricks and artifices, as the fox

of Saadi the Indian fabulist.—A person one day observing Reynard running in great haste towards his hole, asked him: “What hurry, Reynard? Have you done any mischief for which you are fearful of being punished?” “No, (replied the fox), my conscience is clear; but I have just overheard the hunters wish they had a camel to take along with them, and saying they would go and catch one.” “Well, what does that concern you? you are not a camel.” “Oh, Sir! (said the fox), honest people never want enemies; if one of the party were to point at me and cry:—*there runs a camel*,—the fellows would take and bind me, without ever examining whether I were actually the kind of animal the informer had described me to be.”

Reynard was right. But if men were as wicked as they were stupid, or wicked out of envy only; if I found it impossible to escape their persecutions and indignation, because they conceived that I enjoyed more happiness than they; my only revenge should consist in shewing them that no living creature is an object of my aversion.

No man is an object of envy or aversion, in the eye of him, who wishes not for more than he possesses. The charms of simplicity, order and tranquillity, which, in Solitude, are exhibited to the view, preserve the heart from every inordinate desire. A constant intercourse with ourselves convinces us, too clearly, of our demerits and our deficiency in those qualities, which we are supposed to possess. All the blessings we enjoy, all the happiness we experience then appear an undeserved favor; and, for this very reason, we cannot possibly repine at the felicity of others. Thus, universal be-

Charms of domestic felicity.

névolence is produced in the bosom of him, who examines his heart with sincerity and candor, by the reflection on his own defects, and the just estimation of the superior merits of others.

“ I should wish to end my days in the solitudes of Louisiana,” says a French historian of that country, “ far from avarice, deceit, and the tumultuous scenes of the world. There we may enjoy innocent pleasures, which are renewed without end ; there we are secure from the shafts of calumny, jealousy, envy, and malice. In those smiling meadows, the extent of which the eye is incapable of measuring, we cannot behold, without admiring the bounty of the Creator, so many animals wandering peaceably together, so many birds making the woods resound with their songs, so many wonders of nature inviting the mind to silent contemplation.”

But, in Germany, or any other country, whichever way we turn our eyes, we find in every peaceful family, as well as in the solitudes of Louisiana, more pure and genuine pleasures than in the dissipation of fashionable life. The industrious citizen, returning at night from his honest labor, feels more tranquillity and content in the company of his wife and children than falls to the lot of the courtier. If a man, in the intercourse with the world, do not experience from his fellow-citizens that justice, honor, and esteem which he merits ; if his services be rewarded with neglect and his favors with ingratitude ; how soon he forgets his vexations, when he returns to the bosom of his family, by whom he is received with extended arms and heartfelt pleasure ! From them he obtains the praise and approbation he deserves, and he feels the full value

Charms of domestic felicity.

of their love and affection. If the ostentation of fashionable life, the splendor of a court, the triumphs of grandeur and power have chilled his heart, if the base practices of dissimulation, cunning, falsehood, and puerile vanity have fatigued and soured his mind; no sooner does he return to the circle of those he loves, than a genial warmth is diffused through his dejected heart, his bosom is soothed and expanded with sweeter, nobler sentiments, and the truth, candor, probity, and innocence by which he is surrounded, again reconcile him to mankind. On the contrary, let a man possess a situation however elevated, let him be the favorite of the minister, the companion of the great, let him be loved by the women, and admired in the most polished societies as the leader of fashion; let him enjoy titles, riches, and power; yet, if his dwelling be the abode of discord and jealousy, if the bosom of his family deny him that repose which the wise and virtuous there enjoy; his external dazzling pleasures are a wretched compensation for the absence of real and internal delight!

Such are my sentiments on the advantages of Solitude in reconciling us with mankind and the world; but they are the words of another; of a public teacher of my religion and my tenets; not of a religion that seeks dominion, nor of tenets revolting to the heart. They are extracted from his incomparable Sermon on Domestic Happiness, which, like all Zollikofer's sermons, men of every description ought to read.

"Solitude," says the same great divine, "guards us from the ridicule of the thoughtless, and the unmerited contempt and vile aspersions of the envi-

Solitude extinguishes malignant passions.

ous ; it spares us the melancholy view of the follies, the crimes, and the miseries which so frequently disgrace the theatre of actual and social life ; it extinguishes the fire of every base, unruly passion, and establishes tranquillity in our bosoms." The truth of my dear Zollikofer's words I have myself experienced. When my enemies imagined, that my repose was disturbed by some unpleasant circumstances ; when I was informed how heartily they rejoiced at my distress, that even fine ladies leaped for joy and formed a circle round the man who could tell them what injuries I had undergone, and those which it was intended I should yet suffer ; I said to myself : " Although my enemies had sworn to inflict on me a thousand deaths, what harm could that do me ? What is proved by their epigrams, pleasantries, witticisms and ridicule ? What sting is inflicted by those satirical engravings which they circulate gratuitously through every part of Germany and Switzerland ? "

The thorns and thistles upon which the hardened foot walks unhurt, or which it kicks aside with indifference, only wound and injure persons of a more delicate make, to whom a small evil is a serious misfortune. Such characters, like tender plants, require to be treated with care and delicacy, and must never be touched with rude and violent hands. But he, who has exercised his powers in the greatest dangers and severest trials, whose mind is superior to opinion and prejudice, is not affected by such insignificant injuries. He resigns trifles to the narrow minds which are occupied with them, and meets the vain boastings of those miserable insects with courage and contempt.

Genuine liberty enjoyed only in retirement.

Gentle zephyrs, crystal springs, well-stocked rivers, shady woods, cool grottoes, verdant banks, and flowery meadows, are not always indispensably necessary to make us forget the persecutions of our enemies. No; they may be forgotten in every situation where the mind enjoys tranquillity. All the vexations of life, calumnies, injustice, every low and trifling care, vanish like smoke before him who possesses the courage and power to live according to his own taste and inclination. What we do voluntarily is always more agreeable than what we are obliged to do. The constraint and servitude of social life poison the pleasures of independent minds, rob them of all repose, satisfaction, and energy, even in a sphere of elegance, affluence, and ease.

Solitude, therefore, not only procures tranquillity for the heart, not only inspires it with benevolent sentiments, and renders it superior to the malignity of wickedness, stupidity, and envy; but affords advantages more numerous and more valuable.

Liberty, genuine liberty no where exists, but in retirement from the tumults of men, and every involuntary connection with the world. It has been justly observed, that there man recovers from the distraction which had torn him from himself, has a clear and intimate knowledge of what he is, and the qualifications he possesses, and lives more within himself and for himself than in external objects; that in Solitude he returns to a state of nature and freedom; no longer plays an artificial part, and represents a strange person, but thinks, speaks, acts in his proper character, according to the sentiments

Genuine liberty enjoyed only in retirement.

he feels ; that there he is actually what he appears to be and nothing else ; that he is no longer menaced by the insolence of office and the persecutions of tyranny ; he ridicules none, and is offended by nothing ; that there he is not disturbed by the constraints of business or ceremony ; but breaking through all the shackles of custom and servile officiousness, his mind can indulge in uninterrupted reflection, and his heart resign itself to its own sensations.

Madame de Staal considered it a great error for the inmates of a court to imagine themselves free ; there, on the contrary, in the most minute actions, it is necessary to observe a hundred precautions, and beware of expressing our ideas ; there our sensations must be regulated by the objects with which we are surrounded ; there every thing that approaches seems to possess the right of tempting us, and we never enjoy ourselves. “ The enjoyment of one’s self,” says she, “ is no where found but in Solitude ; it was in the Bastille that I first became acquainted with myself.”

Men of independent minds are as little qualified to be chamberlains, and to preside over the etiquette of a court as women for the confinement of a cloister. The courtier looks around with timid eye, listens perhaps at many a key-hole, is tormented by continual suspicion, yet preserves a countenance perfectly cheerful and serene ; and, like the old woman, always lights one taper to Michael the archangel, and another to the devil ; because he knows not for which of them he may have occasion.

Genuine liberty enjoyed only in retirement.

Such caution and constraint are intolerable to every man who is not born to be a courtier. But, even in situations much less connected with the world, free, candid, independent and active minds break all their fetters. To find pleasure in the enjoyments of fashionable life it is necessary to have been brought up in courts; the want of judgment and of higher ideas, there confer importance on trifles; and, in consequence of the long constraint which the soul endures, many things appear easy, which, for want of habit, would convey torment to the bosom of another. Who has not experienced what it is to be confined to a chair a whole evening in common society, and be obliged to speak, without knowing on what subject to converse, and consequently without saying any thing to the purpose? Who has not likewise met with characters that willingly listen to conversation, but never contribute a single idea to promote it themselves? Who has not seen his ideas fall on minds so barren as not to produce others, and glide through the ears of his auditors like water over oiled cloth?

How many men of contemplative minds are slaves, when confined to the society of fools and madmen! How many sensible females pass their lives in servitude under the unreasonable restraints of a convent? How many men of genius perform a pitiful part in many small towns! We cannot long endure a society in which all that we love, esteem and venerate is treated with contempt. There are no worse tyrants than the prejudices of mankind; and the chains of slavery are the most oppressive in those places where we are least understood. It is not sufficient to resolve seriously to please in society; to

● Petrarch's love of liberty.

succeed in such an endeavor we must resign all thought, we must sacrifice all sentiment ; we must despise what all rational minds esteem, and esteem every thing that a man of sense and understanding despises : or, by singly opposing the torrent of ignorance, we hazard content, repose, and happiness.

Rural retirement, or even a tranquil, domestic life, amidst the bustle of a city, secures us from these constraints. There is no other method of rendering ourselves free and independent of all that oppresses the heart and is repugnant to the understanding. But, to render Solitude free from constraint, we must neither assume the monastic cowl, nor, like the Doge of Venice, wear the diadem of sovereignty. This unhappy slave cannot dine with a friend, or visit a foreign ambassador without the special permission of the senate. His life is a state of such degradation, that Solitude and dependence are universally acknowledged to be the highest prerogatives of his crown.

The soul, relieved in Solitude from torment, vexation and constraint, becomes sensible of its own powers, obtains a clear and intimate knowledge of its energies and perfections : and thus, liberty and leisure render a contented and active mind indifferent to every other kind of earthly happiness.

Solitude, and the love of liberty, inspired the breast of Petrarch with hatred of the pleasures of the world. At an advanced period of life he had been solicited to officiate as secretary to several popes successively. It was left to himself to fix his salary, and every possible inducement was held out

Petrarch.

to turn his views that way. "Riches," replied Petrarch," obtained at the expence of liberty, are a real misery ; a yoke of gold or silver is not less oppressive than one of lead or wood." He represented to his patrons and friends " that he could not resolve to resign his liberty and his leisure, which he considered as the greatest of earthly blessings ; that he could not renounce the pleasures he derived from the sciences ; that he had despised riches at the time he most needed them, and it would be disgraceful to seek them now, when it was much easier for him to dispense with them ; that the provisions for a journey should be proportionate to the distance we have to travel, and that he, who already began to approach the end of his course, ought rather to think of the inn than of his expences on the road."

Disgust, with the life of a court, led Petrarch when only three-and-twenty years of age, into Solitude ; though, in his outward appearance, his attention to dress, and even in his disposition, he possessed all the requisites of a complete courtier. The beauty of his figure was so great, that people stopped in the streets and pointed him out as he walked along. His eyes were full of fire, and his whole countenance proclaimed his extraordinary understanding. The freshest color glowed upon his cheeks ; his features were strong and manly, and his person graceful, tall, and dignified. The warmth of his constitution, the genial climate of Avignon, the fire of youth, and the charms of so many female beauties, assembled at the papal court from most of the countries of Europe, but, above all the dissolute manners of that court, led him into the

Petrarch.

society of women, and the gratification of those desires which they excite. He spent a great portion of the day at his toilette in the decorations of dress. His habit was always white, and the smallest spot, or an improper fold, caused him the greatest uneasiness. Even in his shoes he studiously avoided whatever was inelegant; they were so tight, and cramped him to such a degree, that they would soon have made it impossible for him to walk, had he not at length been convinced, that it would be better to offend the eyes of the ladies by his shoes, than make himself a cripple. In the streets he screened himself from the wind with the utmost caution, not fearful of taking cold, but of disordering his hair. But a much more powerful and ardent love of the belles lettres and of virtue always counterbalanced his passion for the sex. Out of respect for the fair, he, indeed wrote all his poems in Italian, using the language of the learned only for grave and important subjects; but, notwithstanding the warmth of his constitution, he was chaste. He held in abhorrence every deviation from virtue; the slightest indulgence with the sex was instantly succeeded by remorse, and he inveighed bitterly against the sensibility, by which he had been betrayed. "I would rather be as obdurate as a stone," said he, "than be tormented by such seducing passions." Among the beauties of Avignon, there were, however, some, who endeavored to subdue the heart of Petrarch. Seduced by their charms, and led astray by the facility of being happy in their company, he complied with almost all their wishes, but the pangs and inquietudes of love alarmed him to such a degree, that he shun-

Rousseau's love of liberty.

If all that I have said of Petrarch be collected into one point of view, it will be seen what important sacrifices he made to Solitude. But his mind and his heart were capable of enjoying their advantages in a very superior degree; and all this happiness he obtained in consequence of his disgust with the manners of a court and his love of liberty.

The love of liberty was also the cause of Rousseau's disgust with society, and the source of all his enjoyments in Solitude. His letters to M. de Malesherbes are as remarkable for the insight they afford into the real character of Rousseau, as his Confessions, which have been no better understood than his character. In one of these letters he says: "I myself mistook for a long time the cause of that unconquerable disgust which I always felt in the commerce with society: I ascribed it to the mortifica-

himself says: "My book on Solitude contains nothing good but the title;" and he is not much mistaken. But both his poems and prose works contain many excellent passages on Solitude. The Carthusians of Montrieux were the occasion of his Tract *De Otio Religiosorum*. Petrarch had a brother in that convent with whom he once passed a day and a night, the first time he saw him after assuming the habit. The Carthusians had heard that Petrarch was the greatest genius and the most eloquent man of his age, and therefore flattered themselves that he would compliment them on their retired life in a moving and elaborate address. In this expectation they were disappointed; but, at his departure, he promised soon to send them a treatise on the happiness of seclusion from the world. Upon his return to Vacluse, he immediately wrote this little work, in which he attempts to prove, that the happiness enjoyed in monastic retirement is greatly superior to that experienced in the world: but the manner in which he treats his subject is not calculated to make many converts.

Rousseau.

tion of wanting that quick and ready talent, necessary to shew, in conversation, the little understanding I possess, and in consequence, to that of not occupying in the world the station to which I thought myself entitled. But after scribbling a great deal, I was convinced that even if I said stupid things I should not be taken for a fool; when I perceived that I was sought after by all the world and honored with a greater portion of regard than my ridiculous vanity ventured to expect; when, notwithstanding this, I felt my disgust rather augmented than diminished; I concluded that it proceeded from some other cause, and that these were not the kind of enjoyments I required. And what was in fact the cause? No other than that invincible spirit of liberty, which nothing can overcome, and in comparison to which, honors, fortune, and even reputation are to me of no value. I am convinced that this spirit of liberty proceeds less from pride than indolence; but this indolence is incredible; it renders the minutest duties of social life insufferable; to be obliged to speak a word, to write a letter, to pay a visit, are, from the moment they become obligations, severe punishments. For this reason, though the ordinary intercourse with mankind is disgusting, yet the pleasures of intimate friendship are dear to my heart, because they impose no duties; we follow the feelings of the heart, and all is done. In a word, the kind of happiness which I want, consists not so much in doing what I please, as in not doing what is contrary to my inclination. Active life has no charms for me; I would a hundred times rather do nothing than do what I dislike: I have often thought I should not

Rousseau.

have been very unhappy in the Bastille, if I had been subject to no other constraint than that of remaining within its walls."

The advantages of independent leisure were never felt more profoundly than by Rousseau ; but this felicity is within the reach of every individual. " When pain," says the amiable philosopher, " makes me count the tedious hours of the long and cheerless night, and the violence of my fever prevents me from enjoying a moment's repose, I frequently forget my present condition, in reflecting on the various events of my life ; and sweet recollections, repentance, regret, and soft emotions combine to divert my attention for a few moments from my sufferings. What portion of my life, do you suppose, Sir, I most frequently, and with the greatest pleasure, recal to mind in my meditations ? Not the pleasures of my youth, they were too few, too much mingled with bitterness, and are now too distant from me ; but the pleasures of my retirement, those solitary walks, those transient but delightful days, which I passed alone with myself, with my honest, simple housekeeper, my beloved dog, my aged cat, the birds of the fields and the stags of the forest, with all nature and its incomprehensible Author. Leaving my bed before day-break, I repaired to my garden, to contemplate the rising sun, and when I observed the appearance of a fine day, my first wish was, that neither letters nor visits might interrupt my delight. After having devoted the morning to various cares, to which I attended with pleasure, because I could postpone them till another time, I dined in haste, to avoid the importunity of visitors, and thereby procure a

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longer afternoon. Before one o'clock, even in the hottest weather, I set off with the faithful Achates, while the sun shone with meridian splendor, hurrying along for fear some one might seize me before I had made my escape; but when I had once turned a certain corner, with what palpitation of heart, with what lively joy I began to draw my breath, when out of danger, exclaiming to myself: 'Now I am master of my time for the remainder of this day!' I then walked, with more tranquil steps, in search of some sequestered spot in the forest, some lonely place where no traces were to be found of human hands, where nothing announced servitude and domination; some retreat, of the privacy of which I could imagine myself the first invader, and where no impertinent intruder might intervene between nature and myself."

For these joys of the heart, this rational liberty, who would not renounce all the pleasures of the world, the splendid but oppressive slavery of society! I am perfectly sensible that circumstances will not permit every individual this high degree of enjoyment of himself; but let those who are so fortunate as to live in the retirement of the country, only make the attempt, and the happiness they will receive from one day of liberty, one hour of repose, will certainly preserve them from all anxiety for the shews, the finery, the dissipation and lassitude of the metropolis.

Pope Clement the Sixth offered Petrarch not only the office of apostolic secretary, but likewise several considerable bishoprics. Petrarch positively rejected them all. You refuse every thing I offer you, said his holiness, ask and you shall have what-

ever you please. Two months afterwards Petrarch wrote to one of his friends: "Every promotion awakens my suspicion, because I perceive that it must be succeeded by a fall. Let them give me that happy mediocrity which is preferable to riches and which has been promised me, and I will accept it with joy and gratitude; but, if they wish to invest me with an important office, I refuse it, shake off the yoke, and am determined to live poor rather than be a slave."

An Englishman somewhere asks: "Why are the inhabitants of the rich plains of Lombardy, where nature pours her gifts in such profusion, less opulent than those of the mountains of Switzerland? Because freedom, whose influence is more benign than sun-shine and zephyrs; who covers the rugged rock with soil, drains the sickly swamp, and clothes the brown heath in verdure; who dresses the laborer's face with smiles, and makes him behold his increasing family with delight and exultation; freedom has abandoned the fertile fields of Lombardy, and dwells among the mountains of Switzerland."

These are poetic ideas expressed in the language of prose. But Dr. Moore's assertion is not the less true with regard to the cantons of Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden, Zug, Glaris and Appenzell. For he who possesses more than his wants require, is rich, and the man who can think, speak, and employ himself as he pleases, is free.

Competency and liberty, therefore, impart a real zest to life. That happy state of mind so rarely possessed, in which we can say: *I have enough*: is the highest attainment of philosophy. Happiness consists not in possessing much, but in being

 Anecdotes of Frederic II. of Prussia.

content with what we possess. Kings and princes are unhappy, because they always want more than they have, and are continually expected to grant more favors than it is within their power to confer. The greatest and best sovereigns, therefore, are not to blame, if they sometimes say: "My son I am deaf to day on my left ear."*

* When M. Fromme, the chief magistrate of the district of Fehrbellin in the margravate of Brandenburg, once spoke to Frederic II. of Prussia at an unseasonable time concerning a mortality among the cattle, and remitting the taxes; that great monarch replied: "My son I have taken cold in my left ear, I cannot hear distinctly to day."

On another occasion, however, Frederic could hear perfectly well. In the year 1783 a wheel of his carriage broke, in a village in Silesia, and he went to the parsonage house, which stood close by the spot, till the damage could be repaired. The pastor, who was in his morning-gown, darted like lightning out of the room upon the king's entrance. His two daughters remained and endeavored to amuse the monarch in the best manner they were able. They requested permission to play on the harpsichord, if it were agreeable to his majesty. The king listened with great complaisance, while the girls played and sung, and bestowed high encomiums on their performance. At length the pastor entered in complete clerical paraphernalia, and a wig as white as snow. Frederic immediately went towards him and said: "Do you expect, Sir, to be saved?" "No, Sir," replied the parson.—"Why not?" asked the monarch with vivacity. "Because the scripture says: *Thou shalt not enter the kingdom of heaven till thou hast paid to the uttermost farthing.* Now, Sir, my debts amount to four hundred dollars, which I am convinced I shall not be able to pay during my whole life, and therefore, I cannot hope to be saved."

The king turned round, left the room without saying a word, stepped into his carriage and drove away. But when he arrived at the next post-station, he packed up four hundred dollars and sent them with the following note to the

Petrarch.

Mer, in general, wish to appear happier than they are, and whatever is subtracted from this appearance they consider a loss. But happiness, from whatever source it be derived, should be carefully concealed, excepting from the most confidential friends. Hide all that you possess and enjoy; for jealousy seldom pries into the conduct of those who pass their days in tranquil retirement, and few there find the sun-shine of life obscured by the baleful blast of envy.

He who wants little always has enough. "I am contented," says Petrarch in a letter to his friends, the Cardinals Taleirand and Bologna, I wish for nothing more, I have set bounds to my desires. I possess every thing that is necessary for life. Cincinnatus, Curius, Fabricius and Regulus after having conquered nations and led kings in triumph, were not as rich as I am. I should always be poor were I to open a door to the passions. Avarice, luxury, ambition, know no bounds; cupidity is a fathomless abyss. I have clothes to cover me, food to nourish me, horses to carry me; land to lie down and walk upon and to receive my remains when I die. What more did the Roman emperors possess? My body is healthy, and the flesh, subdued by labor, is less rebellious against the spirit. I have books of every kind; they are to me an invaluable treasure; they cherish in my soul a delight that is never accompanied with disgust. I have friends whom I should consider the most precious of blessings, if their counsels did not tend to deprive me

clergyman: "Sir, I send you four hundred dollars, to remove your doubts concerning your salvation."

Anecdote of a Swiss clergyman.

of liberty : against that, however, I shall be upon my guard. I know of no enemies, but those whom envy has raised against me. I despise them sincerely, and perhaps, it would be a misfortune to me not to have such enemies. Among my riches I likewise reckon the love and kindness of all good men, dispersed through the world, even of those whom I have never seen and probably never shall see."

From this passage we find, indeed, that envy pursued Petrarch even in Solitude. He frequently complains of it ; but in this letter he treats his envious enemies with the contempt they deserve, and declares that he should be sorry to be without them.

Solitude discovers to man his real wants. Where great simplicity of manners prevails he is satisfied with little. Ignorant of those things which others possess and require, the mind cannot form an idea of the utility to be derived from them. An old country curate residing on a lofty mountain, near the lake of Thun, in the canton of Bern, was once presented with a moor-cock. The good man, unacquainted with the rarity he had received, consulted his cook, who was equally ignorant with himself, how they should dispose of the animal. The pastor and his cook agreed to bury it. Ah ! if all the clergy were as ignorant of moor-cocks, they would all be as happy as the simple, honest curate of the mountain near the lake of Thun.

He who confines himself to real wants is more wise, more rich, and more contented than we all. His system of life is like his mind, simple and noble. He finds happiness in the most obscure and

Pope's Ode on Solitude.

profound retirement from the world. The objects of his most ardent love are truth, simplicity, and that philosophy, which, avoiding useless disquisitions, has few wants, and teaches him to seek his highest felicity in a contented mind.

Pope, when only twelve years of age, wrote a charming and affecting ode, which contains the very essence of this philosophy.

ODE ON SOLITUDE.

Happy the man whose wish and care
 A few paternal acres bound,
 Content to breathe his native air
 In his own ground:

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
 Whose flocks supply him with attire,
 Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
 In winter, fire.

Blest who can unconcern'dly find
 Hours, days and years slide soft away,
 In health of body, peace of mind,
 Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night, study and ease,
 Together mix'd, sweet recreation !
 And innocence which most does please,
 With meditation.

Thus let me live unseen, unknown,
 Thus unlamented let me die,
 Steal from the world, and not a stone
 Tell where I lie.

To him who delights in a tranquil life, sensuality becomes more simple, peaceful, and less alarming. To the worldly-minded the field of sensuality is full.

Petrarch.

of barren and savage places, full of tumult and noise; here are likewise observed vineyards, scenes of debauchery and intoxication, wanton dances, graves over which droop the faded roses, and shady bowers, where the bards of love seek the divinity by whom they are inspired. But to him who shuns every tumultuous joy, every incitement to the gratification of criminal desire, even the pleasures of sense are of a more exalted nature, soft and sublime, innocent and pure, permanent and tranquil.

The disgust proceeding from superfluity disappears in the simplicity of rural life. We there feel very different sensations from what we experience in the world. All our sentiments become more pure, more free; they are not extinguished by profusion and incessant satiety. Petrarch once invited his friend, Cardinal Colonna to visit his retirement at Vacluse, and wrote to him: "If you prefer the tranquillity of the country to the tumults of the town, come hither to enjoy it. But be not alarmed at the simplicity of my table and the hardness of my beds. Monarchs themselves are sometimes disgusted with the refinements of luxury, and require a more frugal repast. They are pleased with variety; by interruption, pleasure is rendered more lively. If you think otherwise, what should prevent you from bringing with you the most exquisite delicacies, the wines of Vesuvius, dishes of silver, and every thing that is capable of gratifying the senses? Leave the rest to me. I promise you a shady couch of the finest verdure, a concert of nightingales, figs, grapes, water from cool springs, in a word, every genuine pleasure that is presented by the hand of nature."

Content produced by the pleasures of nature.

Ah ! how willingly we renounce those pleasures which produce inquietude for those which render the heart contented ! By a slight diversion of our imaginations, tastes and passions, we invariably procure new and heretofore unknown enjoyments, pleasure without pain, and gratification unaccompanied with remorse. The senses revive from the torpor of indulgence to new delights. The twitter of the birds and the murmur of the brooks, convey more exquisite pleasure to the ear, than the singing of the opera, or the execution of the most accomplished musician. The eye reposes with greater satisfaction on the azure concave of heaven, on an expanse of waters, on chains of craggy mountains, than on assemblies, balls, and routs. The mind accustoms itself, in Solitude, to objects that were before insufferable, and, in the bosom of simplicity, renounces every vain delight. Petrarch wrote from Vaucluse to one of his friends : “ I here make war upon my body, because it is my enemy. My eyes, which have led me to the commission of so many follies, are now confined to the view of a woman, wrinkled, black, and sun-burnt. If Helen and Lucretia had possessed such a face, Troy would not have been reduced to ashes, nor would Tarquin have been driven from his kingdom ; however, none can be more faithful, submissive and industrious. She passes whole days in the fields ; her hard skin braves the burning heat of the dog-star. Though my wardrobe still contains fine clothes, yet I never wear them. You would take me for a day-laborer or a shepherd, me, who was formerly so particular in my dress. The reasons which then prevailed no longer exist. The fetters which en-

Solitude destroys vain ambition.

slaved me, are broken; the eyes I was desirous to please are closed; and if they were still open, perhaps they would no longer possess the same power over my heart."

Solitude destroys all vain ambition, by stripping worldly objects of the false splendor in which the imagination arrays them. The mind of a wise man arrives, through the enjoyment of rural pleasures, at such a happy state of indifference, that honors and emoluments are not worthy of his desires. A Roman shed tears when he was invested with the consular dignity, because it would deprive him of the pleasure of cultivating his fields himself; and Cincinnatus who was called from the plough to the command of the Roman army, defeated the enemy, took possession of his provinces, enjoyed the honor of a triumph in Rome, and, in the space of sixteen days, returned to his plough.

It is by no means a matter of indifference whether we live in a humble cottage, and are obliged to earn our daily bread by labor, or inhabit a spacious and splendid mansion where we find a provision made for all our wants. But let him, who has experienced both situations, be asked, in which period of his life he enjoyed the most content. Who can enumerate all the cares of a palace from which the cottage is exempt? Who can deny that discontent poisons every pleasure and converts the highest splendor into disguised misery? No prince in Germany digests all the palatable poison prepared by his cooks, so well as the peasant on the heath of Lüneburg, his black bread. Those, who differ from me in this opinion, must however acknowledge, that there is much truth in the answer

Solitude destroys vain ambition

of a pretty country girl to a young and amiable nobleman, who solicited her to leave her lonely, rural retreat and accompany him to Paris: "Ah! *Monsieur le Marquis*, the farther we remove from ourselves, the greater is our distance from happiness!"

A single passion, which we are desirous but unable to gratify, frequently embitters our lives. There are moments in which the mind is dissatisfied with itself, is weary of existence, disgusted with every thing, and incapable of relishing either Solitude or dissipation; lost to all repose, and dead to the sense of pleasure. Our labor does not prosper; time appears horribly tedious, and yet we make no use of it. We cannot penetrate through the chaos of sentiments and ideas; the present affords no enjoyment, and we await the future with impatience. In a word, we want the true salt of life, without which existence is insipid.

Is love this salt? Love, indeed, frequently preserves life and sometimes imparts new animation; but a passion which consumes cannot afford permanent tranquillity, content, and energy; and life again becomes insipid. Love, says one who possessed a profound knowledge of that passion, to acquire permanent vigor and durability, must be refined into pure, genuine friendship, otherwise it consumes itself and its object with subtle, devouring flames, and reduces the lover and the beloved to ashes. Therefore only that passion, can be the salt of life, which requiring no extraneous aid, feeding and nourishing itself, increasing in strength the longer it continues, and being independent and free, rises superior to every thing that surrounds it.

Solitude affords felicity to statesmen in retirement or disgrace.

Solitude and circumscribed desires afford true felicity to the statesman, whether only removed from office, or exiled and disgraced. Every great minister does not, indeed, like Necker, retire from his station through the portals of immortality. All of them, however, should raise their grateful hands towards heaven, when they see themselves suddenly escaped from the tempestuous ocean of public life, and securely enjoying the pleasures of rural retirement, among their own flocks, and beneath the trees planted by their ancestors. But, in France, when a minister incurs the displeasure of his sovereign, and is ordered to retire, that is, to go to his estate, which he has embellished and made a most delightful retreat; this charming spot is, alas! to him a place of exile. He cannot endure it, his appetite fails him, sleep forsakes his eyes the moment he becomes his own master. Leisure and liberty render him an impatient hypochondriac, offending, and offended by, all around him. Disgrace frequently proves fatal to a Frenchman.* In England, on the contrary, a minister is congratulated upon his retirement, like a person who has just recovered from a dangerous illness. He can rely upon having more and better friends than before; those whom he retains after his dismissal being attached to him by sincere regard, while those, whom he had when in power, adhered to him only from

* "Few of our ministers," says a French historian, "have long survived their disgrace. The credit, authority and consideration they before enjoyed, resemble those transient meteors, which shine during the night. Vanishing on a sudden, they only render the darkness and solitude in which they leave the traveller, more perceptible."

Solitude affords felicity to statesmen in retirement or disgrace.

• Interest. We are indebted to the English for having afforded us examples of men sufficiently independent to weigh every thing in the scale of reason, and to assign to every object its intrinsic value. Notwithstanding the madness with which many Englishmen revolt against the Almighty, notwithstanding the ridicule with which they frequently insult virtue, morals, and decorum, there are many among them, particularly in maturer years, who perfectly understand the art of living by themselves, who, in their tranquil and delightful country mansions, think with greater manliness, freedom and sublimity than any presumptuous declaimer in the zenith of his parliamentary career.

It has been said that out of twenty ministers who have been dismissed or have voluntarily retired to enjoy repose, twelve or fifteen devote themselves to gardening or agricultural pursuits. So much the better for these ex-ministers; for like the excellent Chancellor de la Roche at Spire, they certainly find more tranquillity with the shovel and the rake, than in the most brilliant period of their administration.

This, it is added, furnishes an excellent subject to those who are unacquainted with the world and mankind to moralize and extol the contempt of human greatness; but yet the pleasures and innocence of rural life, the delight inspired by the beauties of nature, and the enjoyment of repose, are, with the majority, the smallest inducements to this boasted retirement. On the contrary, the reason must be sought in this consideration, that the man who, when in office, had to contend with innumerable difficulties, and was obliged sometimes to employ

Solitude affords felicity to statesmen in retirement or disgrace.

art and at others cunning to obtain his ends, now feels himself what he never could be before, master and sovereign. He can create and destroy, plant and root up, and make alterations when and where he pleases; he may cut down an orchard and raise an English grove on its site; make hills where hills were never seen, and level eminences; cause the stream to flow as he shall direct; train his trees high or low, prop and support as he may think proper; open and shut out views; construct ruins where ruins never existed; temples in which he himself officiates as priest, and hermitages where he may seclude himself at pleasure. This is not only a compensation for the constraint he before endured, but the indulgence of a natural propensity, since now he may command without being obliged to obey; for a minister retains a fondness for command and dominion to the end of his life, whether presiding at the helm of a mighty empire or directing the management of a poultry-yard.

It would certainly prove an ignorance of the world and mankind, and would be a wretched method of moralizing, to suppose, that, in order to enjoy the pleasures of Solitude, it is necessary to renounce all human passions. What is implanted in the bosom of man must remain in man. If, therefore, a minister who has retired from office be not satiated with the exercise of authority, if he still retain the weakness to wish to command, let him issue what orders he pleases concerning his chickens, provided he derives happiness from that gratification, and is weaned by it from the desire of again venturing upon the tempestuous ocean and exposing himself to those storms and shipwrecks, which he escapes

Petrarch's residence at Vaucluse.

in the harbor of rural life.* Sooner or later an ex-minister must certainly learn to despise all human grandeur, when he perceives, that true greatness frequently consists in what statesmen are apt to consider too insignificant for their notice ; when he finds that regret at being unable to do any more good is only ambition in disguise ; and feels that he who cultivates his garden or his fields, who is occupied with his cabbage, his asparagus and his poultry, may enjoy incomparably greater happiness and content, than the most powerful minister.

All that we require under such circumstances, is, to be content with ourselves ; by learning to dispense with superfluities, the little we possess is rendered palatable. During the first year of Petrarch's residence at Vaucluse he was almost always alone. He had no other company than his dog, and no other domestic than a neighboring fisherman who performed every thing he wanted. The servants by whom he had been attended at Avignon, being unable to accustom themselves to his simple manner of living, left his service. Besides, he was badly lodged, having for his residence a miserable cottage, which he afterwards rebuilt in the simplest manner only to render it more habitable. Of this edifice no traces now remain. His fare was coarse and frugal ; nothing that flatters

* " The Marechal de Boufflers is gone to cultivate his fields," said Madame de Maintenon, " but I do not think this new Cincinnatus would be sorry to be fetched from his plough. He charged us to think of him if any thing should be wanted during his absence, which is intended to last about a fortnight."

Petrarch's residence at Vacluse.

the senses was to be seen in his dwelling. On this account his best friends visited him but seldom and remained with him a very short time; others went to see him only out of those feelings of christian charity, which induce men to visit the chamber of the sick or the dungeon of the prisoner. To his friend Philip de Cabassole, bishop of Cavaillon, who was then at Naples, he wrote: "Let others seek riches and honors; let them be princes and kings, I shall not impede their progress. I am a poet, and with that character I am contented. And you who are a bishop, will you continually wander from place to place in search of the road to preferment? You are acquainted with the courts of princes, the snares which are there laid, the cares which corrode the heart, the dangers that are incurred, and the storms to which life is there exposed. Return to your diocese, return to tranquillity; you may do it with honor, while fortune continues to smile on you. There you will find every thing you require; leave superfluities to the avaricious. If our rooms be not decorated with tapestry, our clothing is comfortable and convenient. Our table, though not luxurious, affords sufficient to satisfy hunger. If our beds be not embellished with gold and purple, our slumbers will therefore be but the sweeter. The hour of death approaches and warns me to avoid sensual indulgence. My highest pleasure consists in cultivating my gardens. I there plant fruit-trees, in hopes that when I am fishing among my rocks they will cover me with their shade. The trees which I have are old and require to be replaced; I therefore request that you will desire your attendants to bring me some peach and

Picture of the felicity to be enjoyed by a village pastor.

• pear-trees from Naples. "I labor for my old age, and
• in the hope of tasting future pleasures, which I will
participate with you alone. Thus, in the bosom of
a forest, writes the hermit of la Sorgue."

Content would have been my wealth, and independence of all religious constraint my ambition, had fortune made me a country curate. With a proper disposition of mind, the felicity of a village pastor may exceed the happiness that is to be found in any other station. Such felicity exists in huts of wood and clay; where you run the risk of breaking your neck every time you go down stairs; where, without the utmost precaution, your head is in danger from the low door-ways; where you are obliged to climb over the dung-hill into the house, to pass through the stable to the study, or to the apartment of the pastor's wife. The coarsest fare affords a dainty repast to these patriarchs; their beverage is milk or beer, and they are strangers to the cholic; their windows are but ill adapted to exclude the air, yet they never take cold. The mistress of the house, whose imagination is not inflamed by the pernicious productions of false sentiment, is unacquainted with the nervous complaints with which our delicate females are tormented. Her domestic occupations are her delight; her children, her husband and the unfortunate are the only objects of her love. The pastor inculcates the practice of virtue both by precept and example. Ignorant of all religious controversies his opinions are just and temperate; Christ is his rock, Reason his guide by day and Faith his polar star by night. When the tempest ravages the fields of his neighbors, he rejoices when himself is the greatest suffer-

Content essential to happiness.

er. Such a pastor never wants while his parishioners have a morsel to divide with him. His pockets are often empty but his heart is never sad; he is happier than the mitred prelate or the monarch on his throne.

Solitude, however, though attended with such numerous advantages will not procure us felicity, unless we renounce the disposition to refine upon our happiness. By the continual reflection on those circumstances which might be better than they are, we forget all the comforts we actually possess. If we always view objects on the worst side, and wish every thing to be made right that is wrong and must remain wrong, we ought not to measure the objects we meet with by our own standard; for without so many *wrong-heads* in the world life would not be half so diverting as it is.

It is an excellent and infallible method of living happily, to be content with every thing as we find it, or adopt with a celebrated German philosopher, as the basis of all morality, the maxim that we ought to do as much good as possible, and to be satisfied with things just as they are. This principle is certainly the result of moderation and good-nature, but it is apt to degenerate too easily into the morality of monastic institutions;* it is not suited to men of independent minds, nor does it tend to inspire nations with sentiments of freedom. It is however,

* "To let the world go as it pleases," says an ingenious French writer, "to do one's duty tolerably well, and always to speak in praise of the prior, is an old maxim of the monks, but it may lead the convent into a state of mediocrity, relax its discipline, and consign it to contempt."

Competency and content lead to the enjoyment of happiness.

true, that nothing is productive of greater discontent than when every individual is continually finding fault with all that he sees.

My barber at Hanover when he was one day going to shave me, exclaimed with a deep sigh: "It is terribly hot to-day!" "You place heaven," said I, "in real embarrassment; during these nine months past you have said every other day: 'It is terribly cold to-day!' Cannot then the Almighty any longer govern the earth as he pleases without being found fault with by the gentlemen barbers? Would it not be much better for us all to be contented with whatever weather it may be and to receive from the hand of God the summer's heat and winter's cold?" "O, certainly!" replied the barber.

I may, therefore, with confidence assert that competency and content lead men to the enjoyment of all earthly happiness, and that in many cases Solitude is favorable to both.

Solitude imparts happiness, even by accustoming us to dispense with the society of men. As it is impossible always to enjoy agreeable company, we soon resign the desire to obtain it and console ourselves with the reflection, that it is incomparably easier to drive away languor in retirement than in the world. If we very seldom bring home good humour with us from numerous companies, it is natural we should resolve to relinquish such society. Thus, the less connection we have with others, the more we are qualified for the intercourse with ourselves, and the more independent we are rendered of the world.

How difficult it is sometimes to find a tender and amiable character to whom we can attach ourselves,

Advantages of useful employment.

to whom we can freely communicate our ideas and confide our sorrows ! He who would not sink beneath such a situation, must not lose his time in digging wells which afford no water, he must not permit himself to delay what he can and ought to do ; he must not loiter at the window and thoughtlessly gaze on the objects that surround him, nor hunt for ideas while those communicated to him are incapable of producing any in his mind.

The man who is unemployed, cannot yawn away his languor. Only the indolent expect from the coming days and weeks what the active find in the present moment. The coldness of indolence freezes the heart, and aversion from labor destroys every pleasure ; but the man who seriously adopts some useful course of life, and performs immediately whatever he is obliged to do, always possesses a contented mind. The day to him appears too short, and the night too long. Lassitude and vexation are banished from the mind of one who never postpones till to-morrow what may be performed to day, and who, placing no dependence on an uncertain futurity, imagines himself master only of the present moment.

In villages, and in the retirement of the country, we find ourselves most capable of this kind of employment. The great world is in motion from morning to night, but, strictly speaking, nothing is done during the whole day. In a village, or in rural Solitude, we think and act with far greater interest and pleasure. We do not read like the world, to say that we have read, but to enjoy the excellencies of the productions we peruse. Every thing we read and enjoy in tranquillity and retirement is more

Effects of rural retirement on the female mind.

deeply engraved on the mind, is more intimately interwoven with our ideas, and operates more powerfully upon the heart. A judicious employment of time in villages, or amidst the silence of the fields, weakens the inclination to society, so that at length we esteem ourselves happy because we have none.

To the female mind rural retirement is frequently the school of true philosophy. In England where the face of nature is so beautiful, and where new embellishments are daily added to her charms, a country life procures inexpressible delight; but, among that restless people, the real love of Solitude is, upon the whole, perhaps, much stronger among the women than the men. A nobleman who employs the whole day in riding over his estate or in the chace, does not derive from Solitude enjoyment equal to that of his lady, who devotes her hours to needlework, or in her romantic pleasure-grounds reads some useful or entertaining book. In England, where ideas circulate so freely, the love of reflection is in general much stronger; the calm of retirement is more desirable, and the enjoyments of the mind of higher value. The information which begins to be so widely diffused among the ladies of Germany, certainly owed its origin to rural life: and among those who pass a great portion of their time in the country, who lead a sequestered life and make no parade of their reading, we in general find much more sentiment and good sense than among the same class of persons in towns.

The inhabitants of the country would abridge the time of their residence in town, if they considered and felt the advantages of a rural situation. It is scarcely possible that the frivolous enjoyments of

Pleasures derived from the recollection of absent friends.

the metropolis should not fill them with languor; that they should not soon be disgusted with men, who pay so little attention to themselves, running after every thing that is strange, spending all their time in affectation, dress, visiting and gaming, and so seldom encouraging reflections that elevate and improve the heart. Good-humor, candor, confidence and simplicity impart such charms to rural retirement, that after having lived in town it is impossible to experience lassitude there, provided we are neither indolent, sick, or in love, or perhaps unhappy only because we imagine ourselves to be so.

What pleasures we derive in the tranquillity of retirement from the remembrance of absent friends ! Ah ! this recollection alone fills our breasts in Solitude, with all the delight we formerly experienced in their society : “ You are far removed from me, but I am always near you. There, upon that very chair, you were used to sit. That picture, that charming, tranquil landscape you gave me. With what sweet conversation, what a reciprocal interchange of sentiment and affection we enjoyed, the view of that engraving, those images of happy repose ! ” And can we imagine ourselves unhappy as long as we can write to each other ? We never live with higher joy, with more cheerful hope than when we await with ardent expectation the arrival of every post. By the aid of these artifices of the imagination that are suggested by Solitude, and convey such delight to the heart, two friends create a world between them and blend their existence together, even though separated by oceans ; when they can no longer hear the voice or distinguish the footstep of the object of their respective love.

Friendship.

- Friends whom fate has separated from each
- other, no where feel their sentiments so ennobled,
- and their mutual regard so strengthened, as in those situations where nothing interrupts this sweet recollection, and where the world never intervenes between their hearts. Mutual ill-humor, and the vexations occasioned in the tumult of the world by so many trifling accidents, frequently lessen the delight which the company of the dearest friend would otherwise afford. In these unhappy moments the mind, reflecting only on the present circumstance, does not recur to the mutual aid afforded in every important occurrence of life, and which each is, and ever will be, anxious to render to the other. “He who till this moment treated me with affection now repulses me with petulance; and how many delicious sensations, how many exquisite enjoyments would be lost were I to forget the past in the present, and to return his peevishness with equal ill-humor! Discontent and vexation which so easily affect the mind, may occasionally obscure for a moment the bright image in which my friend is accustomed to appear before me, and to fill my heart with delightful sensations. He diffuses happiness over my life, charms all my griefs, and it is only at the present moment that he does not conceal from me his own ill-humor. This is indeed a consequence of our intimacy: but friends ought not to wreak their discontents on each other; friends who have hitherto shared all the misfortunes of life, who have participated in each other’s sorrows, and mutually exerted themselves for each other’s relief.” Friendship requires sincerity; but for mutual enjoyment it requires also mutual indulgence and ac-

Friendship.

commodation ; it demands that mildness should be opposed to petulance, and gentleness to ill-humor. This, however, cannot always be practised at the moment when each, stung by the asperities of life, indulges the peevishness of his temper, and continues many successive hours offending and offended. But, how every provocation vanishes in Solitude, which sanctifies the memory of those we love, and dissipates the recollection of every circumstance that did not contribute to the enjoyments of friendship ! Constancy, fortitude and tried fidelity are again raised to that elevated rank, which they deservedly maintain in affectionate hearts. Here all is harmony ; I understand my friend, and am understood by him. Though at a distance, his beloved figure hovers around me at every idea and every sensation I wish to communicate to him. I preserve as sacred all the flowers that he strews over the path of my life, and those which I see I gather for him.

It conveys great consolation to the heart to know that Solitude procures us friends, of whose affection nothing can deprive us, from whom no accident can separate us, and to whom we never extend our arms in vain.

Petrarch's friends sometimes wrote him apologies for not visiting him. " It is impossible to live with you," said they ; " the life which you lead at Vaucluse is repugnant to human nature. In winter, you sit like an owl over your fire, and in summer, you are continually rambling in the fields ; seldom are you to be found seated in the shade of a tree." Petrarch smiled at these representations : " these people," said he, " consider the pleasures of the world as the supreme good ; they do not con-

ceive how it can be renounced. I have friends, whose society is highly agreeable: they are of every country and of every age; they have distinguished themselves in war, in politics and in the sciences. They are easily satisfied and are always at my service. I call for their company and dismiss them whenever I please; they are never troublesome and answer all my questions. Some relate to me the events of past ages, and others disclose the secrets of nature; these teach me how to live happily, and those how to die in quiet: some dispel every care by their vivacity and increase my gaiety by their wit; others fortify my soul against sufferings, teach me to limit my desires and to endure myself. In a word, they open me an avenue to all the arts and sciences, and I rely upon their assistance in every necessity. In return for these great services, they require only a chamber in one corner of my little habitation, where they may repose in security. Besides, I likewise take them with me into the fields, with the tranquillity of which they are more highly delighted than with the tumult of cities."

Love, the most powerful passion of the human heart, appears to merit a distinguished rank among the enjoyments of Solitude, if we manage it in such a manner as to be enabled to account it an enjoyment.

Love willingly associates itself with the aspect of the beauties of nature. The tender female bosom is disposed to love, by the view of a pleasing prospect, as well as by agreeable sensations of every description. The susceptibility of the female heart is increased in the silent shade, on the summit of the lonely mountain, or by the mild radiance of the

Lovers no where so happy as in retirement.

moon. As every violent emotion always operates most powerfully on the feeblest part of the human system, so rapturous enthusiasm sooner or later finds its way to the female bosom.

Women certainly feel the pure pleasures of rural life with greater sensibility than men. They enjoy in a much higher degree the beauty of solitary walks and shady forests; they admire with more rapturous astonishment the grandeur and charms of nature. Hearts apparently invincible in the metropolis frequently yield in the retirement of the country. The return of spring for the same reason fills many a tender breast with love. "What more resembles love," says a celebrated German philosopher, "than the sensation excited by the view of this splendid valley, illumined by the mild radiance of the setting sun!" Rousseau experienced inexpressible delight at the appearance of the early buds; the arrival of spring gave new life to his heart, increased his sensibility, and he assimilated the charms of his mistress with the opening beauties of the vernal year. His heart long oppressed by sorrow, immediately expanded at the sight of a pleasing prospect, and he sighed with pleasure beneath the blossomed trees of the orchard.

Lovers are no where so happy as in retirement. They seek the tranquillity of Solitude in order to indulge the only idea that renders life desirable. Of what importance to them are the occurrences of cities? Every thing that does not tend to promote their passion is unworthy of their notice. Dark chambers, black forests of fir-trees, placid lakes are the only confidants of their souls. In the gloomy shades of the forest resounding with the eagle's tre-

Happiness of lovers in Solitude.

mendous cry, they find as much pleasure as in the smiling fields, where a lonely shepherdess is offering the breast to her infant, while at her side her beloved partner, eating his crust of dry bread, enjoys greater happiness than those who wallow in luxurious indulgence. Love renders the man of a cultivated mind susceptible of every impression, which the sublime, the beautiful or the agreeable are capable of exciting. Nothing supplies the deficiency of natural endowments like love.

Love's tenderest images are renewed in Solitude. The first blush, the first gentle pressure of the hand, the first anger at the interruption of a delightful conversation by some unexpected and unwelcome intruder, leave behind them indelible impressions. These we may frequently imagine have been erased by time; but there remain sparks in the soul which may long appear to be extinguished, but which the first breath of wind fans into a flame. This observation is applicable to the whole circle of our youthful sensations, and particularly to all the recollections of our first passion, which we are so fond of retracing. The impression is indelible; indelible as the remembrance of that supreme degree of extatic delight, which, as a philosopher has said with equal truth and energy, is experienced at the inconceivably happy moment, when two lovers first discover their mutual attachment.*

* No writer has described the recollection of these precious moments with such harmony, tenderness and sensibility as Rousseau: "Moments so precious and much regretted! oh! begin again your delightful course; flow more slowly in my remembrance if it be possible, than you did in reality in your fugitive succession!"

Wieland.

The mind that is fond of reflecting in Solitude on love, and has experienced the passion, finds in this inexhaustible recollection the highest enjoyment of love. Herder says, he does not know which of the Asiatic nations it was, whose mythology thus divided the epochs of the most remote antiquity: the human species who were still in a state of innocence loved each other for ages, at first by looks only, then by a kiss and afterwards by a simple touch." Wieland's bosom, during the warmest period of youth, was filled with a passion equally noble and sublime for a lady of Zurich, handsome, amiable and tender: for that great genius well knew that the mystery of love expires, in a certain degree, with the first sigh, with the first embrace. I once asked this young lady when Wieland had kissed her for the first time. "Wieland," replied the lovely girl, "kissed my hand, for the first time, four years after the commencement of our acquaintance."

But all young persons even enjoying the advantages of Solitude, do not adopt such refined sentiments of love as Wieland. Following the impulse of their sensations, less familiar with their metaphysical system, and their minds less occupied, they feel much earlier in retirement the irresistible impulse to the union of the sexes. A lady of my acquaintance who lived on the banks of the lake of Geneva, solitary and secluded from the world, had three daughters, very amiable, beautiful, black-eyed girls. The eldest was fourteen years of age, and the youngest nine; they were presented with a tame bird which hopped the whole day about their room. The children, placing themselves on their knees, offered the bird for hours together with unwearied

Absence and retirement favorable to love.

delight a piece of biscuit, in the hope that their dear little favorite would perch upon their fingers; but the moment the rogue had got the biscuit he flew away. The bird died. A year afterwards the youngest sister said to her mother: "Ah! the sweet bird, Mamma! if we had but such another!" "No," replied the eldest sister, "what I should like better than any thing else in the world is a little dog. I could at least touch him, hug him in my arms and take him upon my knees. The bird was good for nothing; he perched upon our fingers but we could not catch him. A little dog, how charming!"

I shall never forget the poor nun at Hildesheim in whose cell I found a breeding-cage of canary birds; but I shall never forgive myself for having burst into a loud laughter at the sight of this aviary. It was, however, nature, and who can resist nature? On the contrary, the mystic notions of religious minds, that celestial epilepsy of love, that abortion of Solitude, is a foolish application of a natural impulse to the most exalted of beings.

Absence and retirement appear so favorable to the tender passion, that lovers sometimes leave the beloved object to bury themselves in Solitude. Who does not recollect the story in Rousseau's Confessions, related by Madame de Luxemburg, of a man who quitted his mistress only to enjoy the pleasure of writing to her! Rousseau told Madame de Luxemburg, he wished he had been that man. His observation was very just; for who has loved, and does not know that there are times, when the pen describes the feelings of the heart infinitely





Love more happily expressed in Solitude than in other situations.

better than the miserable organ of speech, which is incapable of expression, and that no eloquence is equal to that of the silent extacy with which two enraptured lovers gaze on each other.

The passion of love is not only felt more powerfully, but is likewise expressed more happily in Solitude than in any other situation. No fashionable lover ever painted his passion for his haughty mistress with such felicity, as the sexton of a village in Hanover, for a young and beautiful country girl. She died, and the sexton placed over her grave in the church-yard a sepulchral stone, engraving upon it in an artless manner a rose, and underneath the words: *Such was she.**

Under the rocks of Vacluse, or in still more solitary retirements, Petrarch composed his finest sonnets, lamenting the absence of his Laura, or complaining of her cruelty. On the subject of love, in the opinion of the Italians, Petrarch is superior to all the writers before or since his time, either in the Greek, Latin, or Italian languages. "Ah! that

* Some years since I inserted this anecdote in the Hanoverian Magazine and incurred the ridicule of our *beaux esprits* for saying, in the introduction prefixed to it, that the monument of this country girl, though less grand, had affected me as powerfully as the view of one of the noblest *chef d'œuvres* of sculpture, the monument of Cardinal de Richelieu in the church of the Sorbonne at Paris, the recollection of which is indelibly impressed on my mind. Richelieu is represented sinking down, expiring; one of the Muses at his feet appears in violent agitation; above him stands Religion who, with a majesty that baffles description, raises the dying statesman. This view is doubtless more sublime, but that of the Rose is more tender and affecting."

Romantic character of love in religious minds.

- pure and tender language of the heart," say they,
- " was familiar only to Petrarch, and to the three
- graces he added a fourth, the grace of delicacy."

But in retired, rural situations, in ancient and romantic mansions, love, assisted by the ardor of a youthful imagination, frequently assumes the most extravagant character. Religion, love and melancholy produce the most sublime, and at the same time the most whimsical compound of feelings and ideas. The languishing youth selects for his first declaration of love some text from the book of Revelations. When he desires his mistress not to laugh, because love is an eternal melancholy, when in the violence of his passion he threatens to put a period to his life and his sufferings, her inflamed mind views in him the fairest model of every perfection. The passion of two lovers of this angelic kind placed in some lofty antique castle, soars far beyond that of less pure, less noble minds; disdaining the cold and vulgar expressions of prose, it resorts to the glowing language of poetic enthusiasm. Surrounded by rocks, in the mild lustre of the moon's midnight beam, the beloved youth is not merely mild, sensible, polished and amiable; he is exalted to the rank of a God.* The ardent mind of the fond female considers her whole being as the

* " When the passion of love is at its height," says Rousseau, " it arrays the beloved object in every possible perfection; makes it an idol, places it in heaven: and as the enthusiasm of devotion borrows the language of love, so the enthusiasm of love borrows the language of devotion. The lover beholds nothing but paradise and angels, the virtues of saints and the bliss of heaven."

sanctuary of love, and her passion for the gentle, tender youth as an emanation from heaven, a portion of the deity. Ordinary lovers indeed, however distant, are fond of blending their existence, they write by every post and seize every opportunity of speaking or hearing of each other: but our enamored female, raised to the highest degree of sublime enthusiasm, introduces into the romance of her passion every butterfly she meets with, every feathered songster of the grove, every angel in heaven, God and all nature. Cherubim and Seraphim regard her kisses with complacency. All the Evangelists, Prophets and Saints loudly applaud the purity of her love, which she, however, keeps a profound secret from her friends. She sees no object in the world as it really is, excepting, perhaps, her husband. Freed from the controul of sense, she is purity itself. She tears the world from its poles and the sun from his axis, to prove that all her actions and all her wishes are virtuous; she creates a new gospel, a new system of morality for herself and the youthful object of her hallowed flame.

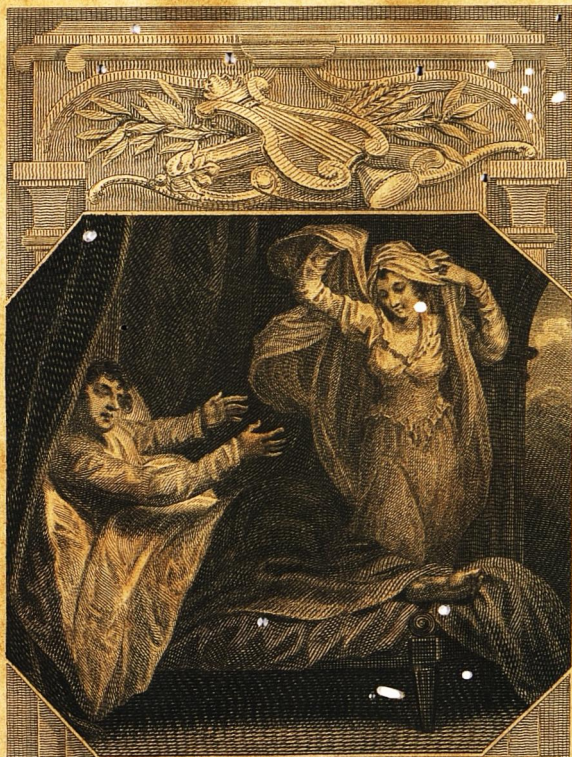
Such effects of love do not belong to the advantages of Solitude. Love, even of a tranquil kind, which raises no chimeras in the mind, nor resigns itself to the delirium of an ardent imagination, at length consumes the lover and renders him miserable. Occupied with a single object whom he adores beyond every other, by whom all the faculties of the soul are absorbed, he cheerfully retires from the world which he heartily despises. But if he finds himself separated for ever from the lovely object who, for him was content to make the greatest sacrifices, who was his consolation in every vicis-

solitude of life, his only felicity amidst the deepest affliction; in absence the object of his most anxious desire; his support when forsaken by all the powers of his soul, his best friend when deserted by every other, when oppressed by domestic sorrows and incapable either of thought or action; then, indeed, to languish in slothful Solitude becomes his only pleasure. He passes the nights in sleepless anguish; a disgust of life, a desire of death, a hatred of society, a longing for the most dreary deserts, prey upon his heart and impel him to wander in cheerless Solitude far from the hated footsteps of mankind. Were he, however, to wander from the Elbe to the lake of Geneva, to seek repose from the west to the north, even to the confines of the ocean, he would still be like the hind of Virgil:

“ Stung with the stroke, and madding with the pain,
She wildly flies from wood to wood in vain;
Shoots o’er the Cretan lawns with many a bound,
The cleaving dart still rankling in the wound.”

ÆNEID, book 4, line 110.

Petrarch experienced the pangs of love in a more powerful degree than before, in his new residence at *Vaucluse*. Scarcely had he arrived, when the image of *Laura* pursued him incessantly. He saw her in every place, and at all times and in a thousand different forms. “Three times,” says he, “in the dead of the night, when every door was shut, she appeared by my bed with a look of confidence that announced her dominion over me. Fear spread a chilling dew over all my limbs. My blood rushed from my veins towards my heart. If any person had entered with a light he would have found me



PETRARCH'S DREAM

Effects of love on Petrarch.

as pale as death, and with every mark of terror on my face. Before the dawn of day I arose, trembling, from my bed, hastily quitted my house, where every object filled me with alarm, and climbed to the summits of the rocks. I then ran through the woods, looking round on every side to see whether the figure which had disturbed my repose still pursued me. No situation appeared secure. In the most sequestered places, when I flattered myself that I was alone, I frequently beheld her issue from the trunk of a tree, the current of a brook, or the cavern of a rock. Fear deprived me of motion; I knew not what I did or whither I went."

For such convulsions of the imagination Solitude certainly affords no remedy. Ovid has, therefore, very justly said:

" But Solitude must never be allow'd ;
A lover's ne'er so safe as in a crowd.
For private places private griefs increase ;
What haunts you there, in company will cease ;
If to the gloomy desert you repair,
Your mistress' angry form will meet you there."

Ovid's Remedy of Love.

Petrarch found from the first paroxysms of his passion, how vain is the attempt to flee from love. In vain he buried himself among rocks and in forests. There was no place however wild or dreary to which love did not pursue him. The cooling, limpid stream of Vaucluse, the shady woods, which there surrounded the little valley traversed by the stream, appeared most capable of abating the fire which consumed him. The most frightful deserts, the most gloomy forests and the mountains most

Solitude a remedy only for virtuous love.

difficult of access were his favorite retreats. But love every where pursued, and allowed him no repose. His soul constantly flew back to Avignon.

Thus Solitude is no remedy for love, when prejudicial to virtue. To a virtuous mind, love, in the presence of the beloved object, is not dangerous, even if the passion have taken a criminal turn in the heart. Solitude and absence give life and activity to the most secret inclinations of the soul. The sight of the beloved object removes, in a virtuous breast, even the tendency to forbidden desire; while, in Solitude, the lover, thinking himself secure, indulges his imagination without restraint. Solitude, more than any other situation, paints, in glowing colors, every image of voluptuousness, every thing that animates and inflames desire; there, apprehensive of no danger, the lover boldly proceeds in the path of agreeable illusion, and, under such circumstances the passion becomes dangerous.

The heart of Petrarch was frequently inflamed with fierce desire among the rocks of Vacluse, where he sought an asylum from love and Laura.*

* In a variety of books, now no longer read, it was asserted that Petrarch lived with his Laura at Vacluse, and that he had constructed a subterraneous passage from his house to Laura's habitation. Petrarch was not so happy. Laura was married and lived with her husband, Hugues de Sade, at Avignon, the place of her nativity and where she died. She was the mother of eleven children, which so impaired her constitution that at the age of five and thirty she retained no traces of her former beauty. She also experienced much domestic sorrow. Her husband, ignorant of the purity of her virtue and the propriety of her conduct, was jealous without cause; and, what is generally still more mortifying

 Petrarch and Laura.

But he soon banished all sensual ideas, his love became refined, and still glows with heavenly purity in the immortal sonnets he composed at the foot of those rocks. The city of Avignon, where Laura resided was, however, too near, and his visits were too frequent. Such a passion cannot be called a state of tranquillity; it is a fever of the soul, which afflicts the body with many painful disorders. But let the lover, who is yet able to controul his passion, seat himself on the banks of yonder stream and reflect that love, like the river he beholds, at first rushes impetuously over rocks, but afterwards winds its gentle and placid current through the plain among enamelled meadows and solitary bowers.*

fyng to the sex, he was jealous without love. Petrarch, on the contrary, loved Laura twenty years, but was never permitted by her husband to visit her at her own house. He could only behold his beautiful and beloved Laura at church, at assemblies, in the public walks and never alone. Her husband even forbade her to walk out with her female friends, and was rendered furious whenever she ventured to disobey. If Laura were not actually grieved at being denied the innocent pleasure of seeing Petrarch, who composed all his sonnets for her, and to whom the pleasure of these compositions alone rendered life supportable; yet the cruel and unmerited treatment of her husband, the incessant vexations she endured, his continual prohibitions, together with her numerous labors, broke her spirits. Laura was born in 1307 or 1308; she was three or four years younger than Petrarch. She died of the plague on the eighth of April, 1348; and seven months after her decease, her husband married again. Petrarch survived her till the year 1374.

*The river Sorgue rises in a tremendous, rugged cavity in the rocks of Vaucluse, over which it is precipitated with a dreadful noise, at a very small distance from its source; it

Necessity of submission to the dispensations of Providence.

Love and tranquillity are combined, if we humbly submit to all the dispensations of the Almighty. If, when death snatches from a lover the object of his affection, all the world is to him a desert, if he resolves to confine himself to the spot where she used to dwell, death only can stop his tears. To indulge unceasing sorrow is incompatible with resignation to the will of the Almighty. The afflicted lover constantly attaches himself to the object that is no more and that never can return. He seeks what he can never find; he listens but can hear nothing; he fancies that he sees the much loved form alive and breathing; while his heated imagination gives life and action to the inanimate canvass, to the perishable representation of his departed charmer. He gathers roses from the tomb of her who constituted all the happiness of his life; he waters them, cultivates them with tender care, places them in his bosom and enjoys with transport their delightful fragrance; but even this last living memorial vanishes, the roses droop and wither. It is not till the lover has long struggled with the rigors of fate, has long extended his arms in hopeless agony towards the dear, departed shade, or vainly desired a joyful re-union with the beloved object; that by exercising the powers of his mind he learns to endure affliction with fortitude, and by endeavouring to conquer every weakness, tranquillity is restored to his heart.

At the foot of solitary mountains, in dark, narrow

then flow, in a tranquil stream through the valley, becomes navigable, proceeds in several branches to Avignon and falls into the Rhone.

Advantages of indifference to the female mind.

and dreary vallies, we feel greater satisfaction at every conquest over ourselves, at every victory over our passions, than in the gilded palace, the universal applause of mankind can impart: we there cultivate our little garden with more real pleasure, than the great world can either afford or enjoy.

In the fashionable life of the metropolis, love, on the contrary, is converted into indifference, when the ladies cease to give those charms to their persons which nature has denied them. The female, who no longer wishes to inspire love, makes no display of her charms, sighs only for peace and repose, and avoids every danger. All the happiness of love is happiness only at first, and is afterwards converted into torment. Love constantly refines our pleasure into pain. Indifference alone can restore the debilitated nerves of a female to their proper tone. Even the tears, sacred to compassion, cease to flow, when the heart that often melted at other's sorrows, becomes insensible to its own. The rankling wound that before bled at every touch is gradually closed; tranquil nights are succeeded by agreeable days. The remainder of life is passed in a state of partial content, the mind being satisfied with partial approbation.

In this case, however, the cure is only partial; for love may be extinguished but coquetry never can. Ah! how many a prudent female in fashionable life has renounced the trammels of love, and is yet by no means indifferent to the opinion which others entertain of her face and her person, or to the impression she makes upon them. She is indifferent, indeed, to the silly tattle of the world and of her sex, which gives her no inquietude. She is no

Coquetry.

longer anxious to please and to captivate every heart, but she still retains the desire of making a conquest worthy of herself. Females, in general, even if they be not coquettes, are not totally indifferent to the impression they make. At every time, in every place and at every period of life, they wish to appear as interesting as possible.

A German lady once said: "Ah! my daughter would be an excellent girl were she not addicted to that accursed vice, coquetry!" This lady had formed a mistaken notion; for, when the attention is divided among various objects, the mind is attached with less ardor to one. Many a female who predicts her death as the certain consequence of disappointed love, becomes a coquette, probably, for no other reason than to avoid such an honorable exit.

These considerations, however, have no weight in Solitude. Both love and coquetry are there converted into indifference; and, inspired with the hope of subduing them entirely, the mind, if acquainted with the proper mode of treating the passion, habituates itself to derive happiness from sources where heretofore it was unaccustomed to seek it. Hence arises a real and invariable indifference towards the world. These cures, however, can be effected only in energetic minds, which possess the power to accomplish what they undertake, and to which alone Solitude imparts what the world, with all its pleasures and dissipations, is unable to procure.

It must afford pleasure to every mind, to observe the success which crowned Petrarch's efforts to subdue his passion. When he had taken refuge in Italy from love and Laura, his friends in France

Petrarch conquers his passion in Solitude.

employed every endeavour to persuade him to return to that country. One of them wrote to him: "What demon possesses you? How could you abandon a country in which you passed your youthful years, and where the graces of your person, which you cultivated with such assiduity, procured you so many pleasures? How can you live so far distant from your Laura, whom you love with such tenderness and who is deeply afflicted by your absence?"

Petrarch replied: "Your endeavours are vain; I am resolved to remain where I am. Here I am at anchor, and neither the rapid current of the impetuous Rhone nor your eloquence shall drive me from it. To persuade me to alter my determination, you place before my eyes the deviations of my youth, which I ought to forget; a passion from whose torments I could find no other relief than in exile; the paltry merit of a handsome person, to which I devoted too much attention. I must no longer think of all those follies; I have left them behind me, and am rapidly approaching the end of my career. My mind is at present occupied with more serious and more important objects. God forbid, that in compliance with your unfriendly counsel, I should again entangle myself in the snares of love, and submit again to a yoke by which I have been so severely galled! This was suited to the period of youth. Now I blush, because I am a subject of conversation to the world, and to see myself pointed out as I walk along. I consider all your proposals and all you say to seduce me as a severe censure upon my conduct. Here, when the love of Solitude revives in my bosom, I quit the

Petrarch.

town, and wander about the fields, without care or inquietude. In summer, I seat myself in the shade, upon the verdant turf, or on the banks of a river, and defy the heat of an Italian climate. In autumn, I join the Muses' train, and repair to the groves. I prefer this mode of life to a life at court, composed only of ambition and envy. I tread with joy the classic soil of Italy, where the air is more pure, more serene. When death terminates my labors, I ask no greater consolation, than to repose my head in the arms of a friend, who will close my eyes, while his own are suffused in tears, and whose hands will consign me to a tomb in the bosom of my country."

Such were the sentiments of Petrarch the philosopher; Petrarch the man, however, soon afterwards returned to Avignon, whence he occasionally retired to Vacluse.

Petrarch himself confessed, with the most ingenuous frankness, that his unsettled soul wavered between love and reason. He once wrote to his friend Pastrengo from Vacluse: "When I perceived that there was no other method of effecting my cure, than to leave Avignon, I resolved to abandon it, notwithstanding the endeavors of all my friends to dissuade me from my determination. Alas! their friendship but rendered me unhappy. I sought this Solitude as an asylum against the storms of life, and to live here a short time in retirement, before I die. I perceived that I had nearly attained my purpose; I felt, with extreme delight, that my mind possessed more freedom; my life seemed like that of the blessed in heaven. But, observe the power of habit and passion; without having any

Petrarch.

business at Avignon, I frequently returned to that detested city. I voluntarily ran into the same net in which I was before caught. I know not what wind drives me from the haven I had entered, into that tempestuous sea, where I have so often suffered shipwreck. No sooner have I arrived there than I fancy myself in a vessel tossed by the storm ; the heavens seem on fire, the billows rage, and rocks surrounding me on every side, threaten inevitable death : but what is worse than death, I turn from the present life with aversion, and dread that which is to come."

Pastrengo replied like a friend, who not only knew what Petrarch did, but wished likewise to shew him what he ought constantly to do. "With pleasure, I learn, says he, that you have burst open your prison-doors, broken your fetters, and shaken off your chains ; that after a violent tempest you have at length reached the desired port, where you enjoy a life of tranquillity. Though separated from you, I see every thing you do at Vaucluse from morning till night. Awakened at the earliest dawn of day, by the warbling of the birds and the murmur of your spring, you climb your dew-bespan-gled hill, whence you behold beneath you cultivated plains, and perhaps the distant sea covered with vessels. You have your tablets continually in your hand, to note down your ideas as they occur. When the sun rises above the horizon, you return to your humble habitation, to take your frugal repast, and to enjoy undisturbed repose. To avoid the noon-tide heat, you then repair to the valley, where your delicious spring, precipitating itself over the rock, with a tremendous noise, produces

Petrarch.

- the charming river that waters the vale of Vaucluse,
- I see the awful cavern, which the water, issuing
- forth, sometimes in a low and tranquil stream, permits you to enter, and where, even amidst the meridian rays of the summer sun, you enjoy an atmosphere so cool and so refreshing. I perceive you seated in the shade of the grotto that overhangs the crystal surface of the stream, feasting your ravished eyes on the enchanting view; your imagination warms, and you produce your choicest compositions. There you consider the pleasures of the world as a flitting shade, and renounce them to employ your time in more useful purposes. When you leave the grotto, your tablets are full. Do not, however, imagine, that you alone enjoy these treasures of your genius; my soul, which never forsakes you, participates in a gratification fraught with such utility and delight."

Such was the happiness, which, amidst so many dangers, Petrarch tasted at Vaucluse. A passion, which Solitude is incapable of soothing, cannot afford this felicity; but retirement, if judiciously employed, dissipates and affords full compensation for the pangs endured by a heart deprived of the pleasures of love. Thus in Solitude the unhappy lover is not bereft of all the enjoyments of life; thus he reflects, without regret, on the delights of love that are past never to return. Thus he ceases, in time, to weep and to suffer; and, upon the bed of death he exclaims with tranquillity: "Oh! lovely object, when you hear my fate, let love like mine claim the tribute of a tear, and extort one sigh from your heart: but forget my faults, and while my

Petrarch.

virtues live in your breast, let my follies die with me !”

It was in struggling with his passion, that Petrarch acquired the sublimity of character, the honorable ascendancy, to which I have already adverted. Even at that period, he obtained an influence over the age in which he lived, superior to that of any individual, since his time. He possessed a happy facility of passing from gay to grave ideas ; and on every occasion could adopt the boldest resolutions, and perform the most courageous actions. Petrarch, who wept, sighed and sobbed like a child, at the feet of a woman ; whose compositions, when inspired by love, breathed the most languishing softness, no sooner turned his eyes towards Rome, than he wrote in a style of manly dignity, not unworthy an ancient Roman. Monarchs,* while reading his lyric poetry, forgot the calls of hunger and sleep ; but, for many years, he was not only the amorous poet chanting his verses at the feet of his relentless fair ; no longer, the slave, kissing the chains of an imperious mistress, who treated him with apparent aversion and contempt : but with republican intrepidity, he diffused a spirit of liberty, throughout all Italy ; he himself sounded an alarm against every species of tyranny. As a statesman and a minister of the highest talents, he was consulted in the most important transactions in Europe, and was employed in the most delicate affairs. He was a philanthropist, who endeavored on

* Robert, king of Naples, frequently relinquished the most important affairs, to read the works of Petrarch till late at night, without thinking of his meals or his bed.

Love is refined and sanctified in Solitude.

every occasion to extinguish the torch of discord; an uncommon genius, whose company was solicited by the greatest princes, that they might form their minds by his precepts, and learn, from him, the great art of rendering their subjects happy.

Hence we perceive, that, notwithstanding his passion, Petrarch enjoyed all the advantages of Solitude. He retired to Vacluse, not, as many writers have asserted, that he might be nearer to Laura, for Laura lived at Avignon, but to avoid his mistress and the court. In his little garden, seated on a lofty rock, and surrounded by a limpid stream, his soul triumphed over the afflictions of fate. He had, indeed, a restless disposition; he was discontented in every situation, but where he was not, and where it was impossible for him to be; he was frequently unable to accomplish what he desired, and as often was averse to do what was in his power; he was continually seeking what it was impossible to find; in a word, Petrarch possessed all the failings that usually accompany genius. But his exquisite sensibility and superior discernment, enabled him, in moments of good humor, to enjoy all the pleasures of Solitude, in as high a degree, as any mortal that ever existed before or since. At such times Vacluse was, to him, a temple of peace, the abode of tranquillity, a safe harbor against all the tempests of the soul.

Love, therefore, though it can never be completely subdued in Solitude, is, however, refined and sanctified. The passions implanted in the nature of man, must there remain; these we must not endeavor to extirpate, but to direct to their proper ends. If, therefore, you wish to live more happily

Delight enjoyed in Solitude with a beloved companion.

than Petrarch, share the pleasures of Solitude with an amiable being, who, by the charms of conversation, will beguile all the cares and torments of life, better than the precepts of philosophy. A very wise man has said, that the presence of one rational being like ourselves, whose heart glows with sympathy and love, so far from diminishing the advantages of Solitude, greatly augments them. If, like me, you are blessed with the fond affection of a wife, by the unreserved communication of her most secret thoughts and sensations, she will detach you the more easily from the society of mankind. The more varied are the occupations, the circumstances, the vicissitudes of life, the more numerous opportunities are afforded for confidential discourse and domestic converse. The divine, who speaks so incomparably upon this subject, must have experienced, with deep sensibility, the pleasures of domestic felicity. "Here," says he, "every kind expression is treasured up, every action produces reaction; every idea is remembered, every testimony of affection is returned, every pleasure is shared, and there is no feeling which is not communicated to the heart of both. To beings thus united by the tenderest affection and the closest friendship, every thing that is said or done, every enjoyment, every wish and event must be mutually important. None but they can regard, with satisfaction, untinctured by envy, the advantages they severally possess; and they alone can reprove each other's foibles and defects without ill-nature. They alone point out each fault with unoffending tenderness; they understand every look, anticipate every want and every desire; all their views are assimilated, all

Delight enjoyed in Solitude with a beloved companion.

"their sentiments correspond, and each rejoices with heart-felt pleasure at the smallest advantage which the other obtains."

Thus the Solitude that we share with a beloved object is not inconsistent with tranquillity, content, and delight ; but renders the humblest cottage the abode of the purest pleasure. When the disposition and the feelings of the heart are in unison, love, in the retreats of Solitude, is capable of maintaining the noblest sentiments in the soul, of elevating the understanding, of filling the bosom with benevolence, of rooting out every vice, of fostering and strengthening every virtue. Thus the attacks of ill-humor are subdued, the violence of passion is moderated, and the bitter cup of life is sweetened. It is thus that happy love renders Solitude serene, alleviates every affliction, and scatters flowers upon all our paths.

Solitude, in some instances, not in all, converts deep dejection into a soothing melancholy. Every thing that operates with mildness upon the soul, is a balm to the wounded heart. To the man, suffering under bodily disease or mental affliction, the sympathy, tenderness, and affectionate care of a female, are, for this reason, highly consolatory. When, alas ! every thing else in the world displeased me, when discontent had taken complete possession of my mind, and destroyed all the vigor and energy of my soul ; when it had extinguished every hope of relief, blinded me to the beauties of nature, and converted the universe to a lifeless tomb ; the kind attentions of a female always conveyed the balm of consolation to my heart. Nothing soothes

Solitude often productive of tender melancholy in youth.

our afflictions so sweetly as the conviction that an amiable woman is not indifferent to our sufferings.

As the sympathy and kind attention of a tender wife soothe a sick or suffering husband, so the dejected mind derives tranquillity from the view of the varieties of rural scenery; all its affliction is then converted into soft grief and pleasing pain.

Tender melancholy is frequently produced by Solitude in the earliest period of youth. In rural retirement, young females, from fifteen to eighteen years of age, endowed with tender sensibilities and lively imaginations, experience this soft melancholy, when, with bosoms glowing with love, they are yet unconscious of any particular object of their affection. I have frequently observed this species of melancholy, unaccompanied with any other symptoms of indisposition. Rousseau felt it at Vevay, when he there strolled along the picturesque shores of the lake of Geneva. "My heart," says he, "rushed with ardor into a thousand innocent felicities; melting into tenderness, I sobbed and wept like a child. How often, stopping to indulge my feelings, have I seated myself on a large stone, and amused myself with beholding my tears drop into the water!"

When transcribing these lines, I could not refrain from tears at the pleasing recollection, how, in my seventeenth year, impressed with similar sensations, I frequently seated myself in the peaceful shades on the same romantic shores. Love relieved my pains; love, among the groves that decorate the banks of Geneva's lake;* love, which Solitude can-

* There is no native of Switzerland, nor indeed any fo-

Solitude cannot afford relief to every kind of affliction.

not cure, and which, in that situation, we willingly endure without seeking relief. To suffer such soft, such pleasing pains, to feel melancholy, without knowing the cause; and yet to prefer retirement; to love to be alone on the margin of a limpid lake, upon rugged rocks, in deep caverns, and gloomy forests; to take delight only in the sublime and beautiful of nature, which the worldly-minded man despises; to desire the company of only one other being, to share all these pleasures with us, forgetting and forgotten by the world; this is a condition for which every young man ought to wish, because its pleasures fly from the approach of old age.*

It is not to every species of affliction, without exception, that Solitude can afford relief. My tears flowed abundantly, my beloved Hirschfeld, when, in your excellent work on a rural life, I found the following affecting passage, which penetrated my heart: "The tears of affliction are dried up by the compassionate breeze, the heart is dissolved in tranquil sorrow. The pleasures of nature present themselves on every side; the enjoyment of them soothes

reigner of sensibility, that ever beheld the delightful banks of the lake of Geneva, the enchanting scenery around it, and the vast, majestic horizon which borders this expanse of water, and does not feel the tenderest emotion at the recollection of this spectacle; or who, upon leaving it, did not turn his eyes from this interesting picture, with the same pain that we experience, at parting from a friend whom we have no hope of ever seeing again.

* Petrarch's observation is very affecting and very just: *Illos annos egi tanta in requie, tantaque dulcedine, ut illud ferme tempus solum mihi vita fuerit, reliquum omne supplicium.*

Persons of strong passions insensible to consolation.

and alleviates our woe. Sorrowful ideas gradually disappear. The mind no longer rejects consolatory reflections and a happy tranquillity, like the evening sun breaking through the gloom after a rainy day, dissipates the troubles of the soul, while enjoying the peaceful delights of a country life."

There are persons whose bosoms are so alive to affliction, that every remembrance of those who once were dear to their hearts fills them with inexpressible anguish; whose blood is frozen when they behold a line written by the hand they loved, who would sink into insensibility at the sight of the tomb which has swallowed up all their earthly happiness. On such, alas! the sun smiles in vain. For them the early violet, the melody of the feathered warblers proclaiming the spring, and universal nature, have no charms.

The garden's variegated hues and the bowers to which they were allured to soothe the violence of their grief, they regard with horror, during the remainder of their lives. They push aside the hand that is kindly extended to lead them from the abode of sorrow into the verdant plains. Such characters generally possess strong passions; their situation is a real malady, which requires to be treated with constant tenderness and affection.

Solitude, on the contrary, has powerful charms for softer minds, whose loss is equally great. They are equally sensible of the magnitude of their misfortune, but they share it with the whole inanimate creation; they plant the weeping willow and the fragrant rose around the fatal tomb, design and erect monuments, compose funeral dirges, and array death in a thousand agreeable forms; their minds

Ill-humor more easily banished in Solitude.

are invariably occupied with those whom they deplore, and thus exist, under sensations of the most genuine and unaffected sorrow, in a middle state between earth and heaven. Such, provided their sorrows are undisturbed, I call happy mourners, though my heart is deeply sensible of the extent of their misfortune. But, to say their grief is not sincere, or that it is less sincere than the afflictions of those who fall into a kind of phrenzy, or possessing too refined sensibility, sink beneath the pressure of accumulated anguish ; would be a species of stupidity, an enormity of which none but a monster could be guilty. But I call them happy mourners, because their constitutions are so formed, that their grief and distress deprive their understanding of none of its energy. They enjoy what the others avoid. They feel celestial delight in the continual recollection of the beloved objects of their sorrows.

Many calamities of life, both great and small, are overcome with greater facility, in Solitude, than in the world, if the soul will pursue with ardor any different object. In Solitude, ill-humor and impatience are chased away by the most trifling pleasure of the heart, by every shadow of domestic or rural felicity. Ill-humor is an unpleasant and uncomfortable situation, into which the soul is easily led by a multitude of petty vexations usually arising out of the ordinary concerns of life ; but we need only to shut our doors in order to avoid this bane of happiness. Impatience is a stifled anger which men silently express by looks and gestures, and which the fair-sex sometimes betray by a shower of complaints. No grumbler, whether male or female, ought to appear

Many afflictions sooner relieved in Solitude than in the world.

in company ; for such characters Solitude is the only asyllum.

Many afflictions are much sooner relieved in Solitude, than by all the dissipations of the world. When the sufferer enjoys external tranquillity, when he meets with nothing to irritate, thwart, and sour the temper of his mind ; when he is satisfied with himself, he soon becomes reconciled to all the world ; his melancholy disappears together with his disgust of life. The progress of recovery is, indeed, much more rapid in women, than in men. The mind of a young female soars, while that of a melancholy man can scarcely creep. The tender bosoms of the fair are easily depressed, but also easily elevated, not, it is true, by Solitude, so well as by less abstracted means ; by something that strikes their senses, and with their assistance engages their hearts. The mental diseases of men, on the contrary, are of slow growth, take deep root, and are firmly fixed in the breast ; to eradicate them, the most efficacious remedies must be administered with unwearied assiduity, for feeble applications are here of no service. We must likewise invariably endeavor to reduce the body to dependence on the mind, which frequently dissipates impending evils, and proves a powerful shield against all the shafts of fate. Great minds disregard things by which others are irritated, oppressed, and tormented ; and heroically turn their eyes from the present and fix them on the future. A vigorous mind will as certainly impart strength to the body it animates, as a weak mind will destroy that which it inhabits.

Places and circumstances should, however, always be suited to the peculiar disposition of the

Solitude the best remedy for hypochondria and melancholy.

soul. To most men, the gaming-table, luxurious feasts, and splendid assemblies, afford the most delicious entertainment; but the bosom that sighs for Solitude, conscious of the advantages it procures, finds tranquillity and genuine pleasure in no other situation than in retirement.

Let us, therefore, banish from the moral system, as from medicine, all those general maxims and universal prescriptions, which the accurate observer finds to be improper, in the particular case for which they are recommended. Some there are, who prescribe dissipation as an infallible remedy for hypochondria. Should a man, whom bodily infirmity, a love of liberty or inclination has led into Solitude who, in his sequestered habitation, avoids all inquietude and constraint, be advised, as a specific remedy for hypochondria, to give splendid routes, to invite the whole circle of gaiety and fashion, to provide luxurious entertainments, and reversing the order of nature, to turn the night into day and the day into night; he might perhaps be cured of hypochondria by the indignation which such a view of mankind excites, or the laughter it deserves. Of the generality of men oppressed by hypochondria and melancholy, it may with truth be said: "Leave them alone and they will find amusement."

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