VILLAGE

CONVERSATIONS.

VOL. I.

The Author of these Conversations is evidently a woman of much reading, and no slender talents. We can confidently pronounce her no ordinary woman, and there is clearly nothing wanting in her writings to render her extremely popular, but a popular subject.

Scottish Episcopal, Sept. 1821.

The reader of this eloquent and elaborate work will soon find that these Conversations are not by villagers. In Ethics, the Author dissects all the passions and delineates all the virtues; in mental philosophy, expatiates on all the intellectual powers, examines causes, physical and metaphysical, and finally leads her young pupils to the sovereign good, or the best interest of man.—*Baptist Magazine.*

The Third Volume of Village Conversations is an attempt to familiarize moral and political philosophy, by conversational dialogues. The design is very respectably executed, and will materially assist Parents in drawing out the minds of their children, with a view to the establishment of sound principles.—*Monthly Magazine.*

The Lady from whose pen this work proceeds, does not offer it as containing examples of conversational eloquence; but, desirous of benefiting the rising generation, has endeavoured to establish sound moral principles in the mind, and to demonstrate the importance of virtuous conduct to well being. The whole is written with the best intention, and manifests a mind of no ordinary reflection.

Monthly Review.

VILLAGE CONVERSATIONS;

OR,

The Vicar's Fire-Side.

DEDICATED TO MRS. HANNAH MORE.

BY

SARAH RENOU.

"Serene Philosophy!
Without thee, what were unenlightened man?
A savage, roaming through the woods and wilds,
Rough clad, devoid of every finer art
And elegance of life." THOMSON.

"Hail, universal Lord! be bounteous still,
To give us only good." MILTON.

How sweet the genial hour
Of social converse, when th' insatiate mind,
Expanding, opens to receive the stores
Of Wisdom, Sense, Experience, and Truth.

VOL. I.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, JONES, AND CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1823.

Dedication.

TO

MRS. HANNAH MORE.

Madam,

IMPRESSED with the most grateful recollection of the benefits, derived at a very early period of my life, from your productions, and inspired with the liveliest respect and admiration by your unremitting exertions in the cause of intellect and virtue, I asked the sanction of your name to the first effusions of a mind which, conscious of temerity in thus obtruding on the public eye, can only hope for indulgence through the desire of being pronounced in any degree useful to my contemporaries.

To you, therefore, Madam, as among the most distinguished Friends of Human Happiness, who, delighting to sow the genuine seeds of piety, have made it your chief study to promote the extension of knowledge and the dissemination of good,

THESE CONVERSATIONS,

designed to inspire the youthful mind with ardour in the pursuit of mental attainments, perseverance in the paths of virtue, and extended perceptions of Unbounded Benevolence, are most respectfully inscribed by,

Madam,

Your obliged and devoted Servant,

SARAH RENOU

Preface.

THE following Conversations are with deference submitted to the promoters of mental culture, not as specimens of composition, or examples of conversational eloquence, but simply in the hope, that the truths which the writer has attempted to inculcate, and the feelings of piety which her pages are designed to promote, may benefit her contemporaries, by exciting the vigorous exertion of their intellectual faculties, and by leading them to perceive the utility of knowledge, the beauty of virtue, and the deformity of vice.

If this production be calculated in any degree to improve society and serve mankind, the author will be abundantly gratified, and her labour amply recompensed.

Preface

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN presenting the Second Edition of this volume to the friends of Truth, the author begs to express her grateful acknowledgments for the very favourable reception with which her first attempt in the path of literature has been honoured. The greater part of the former edition of this volume was composed without any view to publication; and in the succeeding volumes, one Conversation was frequently sent to the press before the subsequent one was written, which in some cases prevented that minute attention which the author could have wished to

bestow, on subjects of such high importance as those which she has ventured to discuss. In revising this volume, she has not attempted to improve the style; but, trusting to the indulgence of the impartial and liberal-minded, she submits her work to the public eye, in the hope that by bringing subjects of the highest importance within the compass of a Conversation, free inquiry may be excited, and the progress of intellect advanced; and that, by raising the mind to the contemplation of the glorious cause of intelligent existence, the sublime feelings of Devotion may be inspired, and the cause of Truth and Virtue effectually promoted.

March 1st, 1817.

Errata.

Page 8, line 11. For 'when' read *whether.*
— 17, — 4. — 'or particularly' r. *particularly or.*
— 36, — 5. — 'attribute' r. *tribute.*
— 40, — 5. — 'and its' r. *and improves its.*
— 63, — 26. — 'a few of such' r. *a few such.*
— 65, — 23. — 'need' r. *needs requires.*
— 84, — 4. — 'to incite the' r. *to incite to the.*
— 85, the 4th line of the French verses should read thus,

Qui aggrandit l'esprit, et éleve le cœur.

— 110, line 4. For 'approaching,' r. *increasing.*
— 125, — 2. — 'emotions' r. *sensations.*
— 145, — 21. — 'capcity,' r. *capacity.*
— 155, — 17. — 'object of admiration' r. *individual.*

VILLAGE-CONVERSATIONS,

OR,

The Vicar's Fire-Side.

IN the formation of character, various circumstances are necessary to call forth the exertions of the active, and the display of those passive virtues which promote its improvement, and advance it towards its perfection; and an active exertion of the mental powers is equally necessary to the developement of the attainments and energies of the intellectual character.

It was from the conviction of the utility of early directing the youthful mind to subjects of investigation calculated to advance the progress of intellect, that the philanthropic Vicar of Edgeware instituted a little society which assembled around his fire-side two evenings in the week, for the avowed purpose of disquisition, or improving the reasoning faculties of the young people under his parochial care; as he frequently

expressed his opinion, that although goodness, or the practice of virtue, was the foundation of all human happiness, yet that the enjoyments of life were considerably increased, and its afflictions alleviated, by mental attainments. To what purpose, he would frequently ask, has the Author of Nature adorned his works with beauty, if our minds are not capable of perceiving and of properly appreciating the elegance, harmony, and admirable wisdom displayed in their creation? It is true, we all view the effects of creative power with our corporeal eyes; but how different are the sensations of the man who beholds a flower as merely a beautiful production, whose tints gratify his sight and whose fragrance yields a perfume which pleases only for the moment, to the delightful reflections which croud upon a cultivated understanding, from a scientific acquaintance with its nature and properties—when in this flower is beheld a receptacle that will produce its resemblance while nature exists, which furnishes the birds with food, insects with support, or contributes to the luxury of our repasts by affording the materials of a delicious substance, not only gratifying to our taste, but salutary to our health! and besides, when he considers the other purposes of this

insignificant plant, which, if it be not, as many are, serviceable by its medicinal qualties, or useful for animal nutriment, is at least of essential advantage to man, by the power given to its leaves, to absorb for its own nourishment the air which is injurious to us, to decompose its parts, and emit only that portion which is fitted to revive and sustain the languid respiration of animal nature. What grateful sensations arise from these views to the eye of perception and the mind of taste! What delightful enjoyments result from the feelings which are necessarily connected with one of the simplest and commonest productions of nature! Sensations like these have a tendency to exalt our ideas of the greatness of the Deity, to improve our sense of his goodness, and to increase our wonder at his wisdom. These are gratifications which the child of Ignorance can never taste—pleasures peculiarly combined with the cultivation of intellect, which must eventually increase and refine with every subsequent period of our existence, as our perceptions of the bounties of of the Author of Nature increase, and our mental faculties progressively unfold themselves.

With observations like these the worthy Vicar delighted to excite the ardour of application, and to observe the enthusiasm of youthful wonder, at the effects of Designing Wisdom; and in thus developing the intellectual faculties of his spiritual charge, he considered that he performed one of the principal duties of the sacred function to which, though possessed of an ample fortune, he had from choice devoted himself.

The Vicar's family consisted of his wife, Mrs. Wentworth, his son Charles, aged twenty-one, and two daughters, Harriet and Maria, one nineteen and the other seventeen years old. His social circle was generally composed of Sir Edward and Lady Berine with their four children, Mrs. Osbourne and her niece Eliza, Henry and Louisa Milford, and Sophronia, the protegé of a Mrs. Hartley. Sometimes it was augmented by other ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood.

In this agreeable *conversazione*, every one was allowed freely to express his sentiments, relate his observations, or enliven the scene by anecdote, tale, or incident; which frequently produced remarks from the elder branches of the society that tended to inform the younger, or

to call forth their abilities for disquisition in well-timed animadversions, criticism, and judicious inferences.

The little party being assembled at the commencement of a new year, the Nature of Evil was the first subject of discussion.

What, said Sir Edward, is evil? Let every young person favour us with a definition of the term.

Evil is a privation of pleasure, ease, or enjoyment, said George Berine.

Evil, said Charles Wentworth, is a deprivation of good, or an endurance of pain, from whatever cause it may arise.

Evil, said Hariet Wentworth, is the enduring of corporeal, and particularly of mental pain.

Evil is suffering, occasioned by any cause whatever, said Louisa Milford.

Evil is a cumpulsatory endurance of whatever occasions pain or prevents happiness, said Henry, her brother.

Evil, said William Berine, may be divided into positive and negative: positive implies actual suffering; negative, deprivation of enjoyment.

Whether evil exists in the deprivation of enjoyment, said Sophronia, or in the infliction of even positive pain, is in my opinion a matter of doubt; as I am inclined to say with the stoic, whilst suffering under a severe paroxysm of the gout, O pain, pain! torture me as thou wilt, still I will not allow thee to be an evil. The commission of error, or as it is termed in the Scriptures, sin, only is evil.

That evil certainly does variously exist, said Sir Edward, cannot be doubted; but whether designed to exist by the Author of Nature or not, is matter for argument. From the goodness and benevolence of the Deity, I am inclined think it was not, except as productive of good. For instance, corporeal pain is occasioned by a disorganization or disarrangement of the human frame; and this is often produced by our abuse or improper use of the gifts of providence. Our sufferings may teach us patience, fortitude, and moderation, and contribute to our advancement or establishment in virtue,

and therefore be the means of increasing our happiness and of promoting our final good. From this view of the subject, corporeal pain cannot be a positive evil. But that it is not an evil is difficult to maintain; as we all appear to consider it one, by the care we take to avoid it, our anxiety to obtain alleviation while enduring its pangs, and the sympathy we feel for others when under its influence.

For my own part, said the Vicar, I cannot conceive any evil equal to that which arises from the commission of error, whether in its effect upon ourselves or in its consequences to society. But to survey the subject more comprehensively, evils may be divided into physical, external, and civil. By physical evils, I mean those which are incident to our nature, and connected with this state of existence; as disease, which is generally the forerunner of death. Yet it cannot be doubted that this, which is an ordinance of the Deity, is intended for wise and beneficent purposes. By external evils, I would imply those which result from our particular situation in society, and the difficulties which in some instances accompany even our laudable pursuits; but these cannot be considered real evils, though

they may be the cause of much distress. The pains of disappointment excite to additional exertion, inure us to fortitude, and teach us at least to endure what we may not be able to prevent; and the pleasures which attend endeavours crowned with success may compensate for the pain of frequent disappointment. By civil evils, under which those I have denominated external more properly come, I would imply those which arise not only from our situation in society, but from the state of that society, when considered independently or unitedly. The greater of these are, war, excess of poverty, arbitrary or improper government, and those which proceed from the abuse of the free agency of man. But after all that can be said on the subject, which is capable of metaphysical investigation and might be resolved into laws which from our finite capacities we are incapable of comprehending, what concerns us chiefly to know for the proper direction of our conduct is, that the evils which we feel, or the sources from whence pain or suffering, either mental or corporeal, most generally originate, may be frequently traced to ourselves, excepting those which are properly denominated physical, as the death of our relative and social connexions. It is therefore of consequence to

us, in the proper government of ourselves, to consider the effects which may occur from every action, and the pain or evil which may proceed from it. For instance, if a youth whose quarterly allowance is fifty pounds expend sixty, he must in the ensuing quarter submit to some deprivations, to make forty pounds defray his expenses. If, while heated by violent exercise, he imprudently allays his thirst by a draught of cold water, he must expect the natural effects which will most probably ensue. If he hastily and indiscreetly form improper connexions, he cannot attribute to any cause except his own indiscretion, the unpleasant consequences that may follow. But as with the greatest possible caution, ignorance and inexperience will lead the best-disposed youth into innumerable errors, happy is he who finds a guide and instructor, to whose advice he may have recourse, and to whose direction he may yield himself!—Not that man, as a free agent, is to give up his judgment implicitly, excepting where the claims of duty may compel. Every man is to stand or fall by himself alone, and, as an accountable being, ought to exercise his power of reflecting or judging for himself; therefore he should early accustom himself to make those remarks which may conduce

to his future welfare, and endeavour to acquire discretion from the imperfections and sufferings of all within the sphere of his observation. But it seldom happens that we reap the advantages we might from the aberrations of others. It is a just remark, that a man may become learned by another's learning, but will seldom become wise by another man's wisdom. The best means of walking safely through the present world, is at all times to look up with humble confidence to that Being who alone can give wisdom; to have a single eye to please him, and to endeavour to secure his favour and protection, by devoting ourselves to his service, obeying his commands, and doing his will; which will lead us to the enjoyment of peace, happiness and contentment here, and of endless felicity when, unveiled to our sight, we shall contemplate his perfections in the regions of immortality, and experience still increasing pleasure, through the countless ages of eternity, in our nearer approach to the source of all good, knowledge and perfection.

Evil, said Sir Edward, under every modification of error, folly or vice, results from the nature of man, and his probationary state of existence. "The destination of man upon this

earth," says the Baroness De Staël Holstein, "is not happiness, but the advance towards moral perfection." His incapability of attaining that degree of perfection which constitutes happiness, must necessarily prevent its enjoyment. The advantages to be derived from the termination of this state, and our entrance into another by death, must be obvious upon this consideration only, that by it we shall be admitted into a superior order of being, where our faculties will progressively unfold themselves, and our advances towards knowledge and virtue constitute a degree of happiness of which we are now incapable. In this life, the progress we make is so small as only to be perceptible by the effects produced; in another, our rapid advances will alone occasion ineffable delight; and from the lowest chain of rational creatures we shall perceive ourselves rising to the highest order of celestial beings, until, allied by the percipience of knowledge to the source of excellence, we experience the beatitude of a union to the Author of Perfection.

These considerations should give us courage to endure, and resolution to surmount the difficulties of time, and induce us to submit without repining to the evils attendant upon condition,

which may always be alleviated by patient submission and implicit resignation to the will of the Supreme Director and Governor of the Universe

CONVERSATION II.

On Good. General, National, Philosophical, Moral and Theological Virtue considered.

THE next subject proposed for discussion, as in opposition to evil, was, What is Good, or what is the chief source of good, happiness or enjoyment, in this life?

The young people, who frequently gave their opinions first, that their friends might adapt their lessons to their different ideas, felt a degree of diffidence in entering upon an investigation which to them appeared particularly abstruse and difficult.

Charles Wentworth spoke first.

By good, in its most extended signification, I understand universal good, or that general enjoyment which is diffused throughout all creation. This most assuredly is life, but subject to so many vicissitudes, that to consider it a general good to

the human species must be impossible. To live in pain, misery, or want, cannot be good. A deprivation of the sense of suffering would in this case be desirable. To all kind of animals, excepting man, existence is certainly the chief good; and the pleasure which they appear to take in the exertion of their appropriate faculties, evinces the happiness they feel in possessing them. But to a human being, more is necessary for the enjoyment of life than the mere use of his faculties: a man may be able to walk, talk, and think, and to exert every other gift of nature, and yet be unhappy; consequently cannot be deemed the possessor of good. He may fix his heart at one time upon the attainment of a particular object, which he may consider to be his chief good or an essential requisite to his happiness, and when it is actually attained, no longer think it such, but find or imagine some other desired acquisition equally or more necessary to his well-being. Life, then, when considered as so subject to vicissitude and suffering, cannot be the chief good. I am therefore decidedly of opinion, that virtue is the chief good, or the only source of happiness to mankind.

Your argument will admit a little further investigation, said Sophronia. You allow that animals in the full enjoyment of their faculties are happy, or as happy as they are capable of being. So I conceive is man, when he properly exerts the faculties with which he is endowed. But in this view we must consider him as capable of freely exercising the faculties and powers of his mind, as well as those of his body; and these must enhance his enjoyments beyond those of animal nature, in the same degreee with the superior extent of his capacities. When in health of body and vigour of mind, what can exceed the pleasures attending the acquisition of knowledge, the investigation of the works of nature, or the developement of the powers of intellect? Though a woman, I must confess that the gratification I feel in solving a mathematical problem is greater than that which I enjoy in a dance. In the one case, truth bursts with delightful demonstration upon the mind; in the other, the exuberance of gaiety occasioned by the exercise is counterbalanced by the fatigue by which it is succeeded. Or had I the littleness of mind which I fear too many of my sex and age possess, to feel mortified at the superior beauty, elegance of dress, or proficiency in

the attainments of my companions, the effect would not admit of comparison. By this remark I would prove the superiority of mental over corporeal pleasures; and indeed all the happiness of man must be referred to the mind, and his capacity for enjoyment to its freedom from the influence of passion, sorrow, and particularly from the stings of remorse.

Before we proceed further with this subject, said Sir Edward, permit me to ask for a definition of the term Virtue, or what ideas we may affix to the expression.

By virtue, replied Charles, I would imply the constant influence of those principles of action which produce invariable attention to the performance of every relative and social duty, and prevent our yielding to the influence of passion, when our so doing might lead to the commission of error. Were it possible, I would not infer that we should extirpate, but only that we should regulate our passions; for

These mix'd with art, and to due bounds confined,
Make and maintain the balance of the mind—
The lights and shades, whose well-accorded strife
Gives all the strength and colour of our life.

To examine the subject in a more extended point of view, said Sir Edward, let us consider virtue generally, that is, as it respects the ideas and practice of mankind in general, or particularly in reference to the peculiar notions entertained of the term by different nations or societies, and individually or as it relates to individuals. This, it is true, were we to investigate the subject minutely, would be too extensive a survey for our present opportunity; but we can take a cursory glance of the more abstruse and speculative parts, and dwell more minutely on those which are most likely to contribute to our general improvement. Having the new year before us, we need not be intimidated by the diversified aspect which this subject presents, or at the length of time it may engross; as it may prove a source of pleasing and profitable employment; and from the retrospect of our intellectual progress at the termination of the year, we may hope we shall not have occasion to regret the loss of one of the days so occupied.

Your plan, my friend, said the Vicar, meets my warmest approbation, and I second it with all my heart; as by following it we shall survey

the respective duties of man individually, and therefore cannot fail to derive a considerable portion of moral improvement.

First, then, said Sir Edward, let us consider virtue generally, or the ideas universally entertained of it.

You have given us, Sir, said Henry Milford, a subject for discussion much beyond my abilities to investigate. Indeed I am absolutely lost in the immensity of our proposed undertaking.

Do not be intimidated, replied the Vicar, by any attempt to unfold the powers of intellect, any more than by our endeavour to accelerate the progress of the arts. Indeed, in the common occurrences of life, we should always remember, that 'what man has done, man may do;' and this should encourage us in our inquiries and stimulate our industry.

Let us then, said Sir Edward, take a retrospect of virtue, as considered and practised by the Ancients.

In every period of the world, said William

Berine, man has appeared to entertain some notions of a Deity, or Supreme Power, who was the first cause of existence, or the source from whence it proceeded. His devotional worship (if idolatry may be so called) was occasioned by his consciousness of feebleness and dependence; and hence arose the necessity of looking for support to a stronger and more powerful being than himself. But from the imbecility of his untutored mind, he could not, until it had attained some degree of culture, affix the idea which the personality of the Deity implied, to an immaterial, self-created, self-sustaining cause. The most natural, and certainly the most grand representation of the Almighty, was the Sun; but how mankind could degenerate so far from the light of reason, and be so entirely blinded by ignorance and superstition, as to attach the ideas they entertained of the Creator to some of his less resplendent productions, is truly astonishing. Yet this we find was the case, from the history of some of the most enlightened nations, to whom we are indebted for the origin of science and the invention of many of the arts which adorn civilized society. For instance, the Egpytians, those fathers of science, to what a state of intellectual debase-

ment did their superstitions reduce them! The Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and even the polished Greeks and Romans, were enveloped in the same delusive mists of error, from which time, or rather the bright beams of Christianity only could extricate them. In this state of natural and universal darkness, very exalted notions of virtue could not be expected; and we find that the vices which abase our nature were attributed to their deities. But even then, some general ideas of virtue appear to have been entertained, as respect and veneration for their Gods, duty and obedience to parents, and estimation of individual property.

Hospitality is a virtue which ever glows with the most refined lustre in states of uncivilization or barbarism. The more polished or enlightened the nation, the less perceptible, in its primitive simplicity, is this virtue to be found. Philanthropy extends in civilization its diffusive influence, but the individual blessing of cheering hospitality is withdrawn. The effects of civilization in other respects are similar: the most exalted virtues diffuse a lustre which adorns and ennobles human nature, while at the same time vices, unheard of in savage life, sink the human far below the merely animal creature.

The love of country, of home, or attachment to the nation or community to which we belong, is natural to mankind. To this we may attribute the virtues of courage and obedience to the chief who for individual benefit is chosen to govern the whole community. These virtues were generally known and practised by the ancients, in an equal if not a superior degree to their display amongst the moderns. Hence I would infer, without entering upon a strict enquiry, that the virtues generally practised by the ancients were, worship, respect and veneration for their deities; courage in defending their country, possessions, and families; obedience to parents and rulers; attention to individual property, and a sacred regard to the duties of hospitality, which is perhaps an innate quality of the human mind, originating in a natural perception of the common wants, rights and duties of our nature. These likewise I think may be considered as the virtues most commonly diffused amongst mankind, as we find them frequently displayed by the nations with whom modern discoveries have made us acquainted, and have therefore the greatest claim to be esteemed general or universal.

Amongst the virtues of the Ancients, said Maria, you have omitted some which in my opinion claim the highest rank. Fortitude, or that inflexible adherence to what is felt or believed to be right, which is esteemed the certain characteristic of a great mind, was very usual amongst them, as well as a strict regard for justice and integrity.

I have purposely avoided noticing the instance we may refer to of those, replied William, because they properly belong to individual, and not to general or national virtues, which only we are considering.

Your definition of fortitude, my child! said the Vicar to Maria, is not quite accurate: fortitude implies actual suffering. That inflexibility of mind which you describe, more properly denotes negative than positive suffering; to the firm endurance of which alone the term fortitude is applicable.

I am incapable, Sir! replied Maria, of properly explaining the virtue I so much admire; but it is that which prevents a man from enjoying what he may think the greatest good in life, and

which he may conceive to be absolutely necessary to his happiness, and easily attainable if he could step aside in a very small degree from the strict path of rectitude or the rule of right which is the standard of his mind; and though perhaps this may be dictated by too high a notion of honour, yet rather than deviate from his exalted ideas of virtue and propriety, he patiently endures much unhappiness and affliction.

The boundaries of virtue, said Sir Edward, are not always readily discernible. Virtue extends but to a certain point, and beyond that it ceases to be virtue. Firmness may degenerate into obstinacy; the one being constant adherence to a good, the other to a bad cause. As we are at present contemplating the subject philosophically rather than morally or theologically, we may observe, that what is considered to be virtue in a state or kingdom at one period, may cease to be so in another; which leads us to remark upon the different ideas affixed to the same term by various nations or societies.

As individual virtue, said Charles Wentworth, consists in the constant or habitual performance of actions which terminate in the final good or

happiness of the performer; so virtue, as it regards nations, communities, or societies, is comprised in a systematic attention to the performance of those actions which are useful or beneficial to the nation. Hence arise the various ideas of virtue entertained by different nations, or by the same nations at different periods.

Virtue is the desire of universal happiness. This desire, brought into actual exercise, constitutes moral perfection, or the most exalted virtue. As individual virtue delights to extend its invigorating beams, and to spread a genial influence around all who are within its sphere of action; so national virtue constitutes the good or happiness of the community, and promotes the general interest and well-being of the people at large. The principal public virtues of nations may be resolved into justice, or adherence to treaties, fidelity to allies, humanity to the vanquished, and firmness in opposing invaders and defending natural rights. But particular virtues, or those which contribute to the internal well-being of a community, differ, philosophically speaking, according to the condition, progress in civilization, or advancement in the arts of life, which the country may have attained at one or another period.

The ideas therefore conceived of the term by different communities, vary according to their diversified interests, necessities, and situation in the world. Christianity, it is true, every where inculcates the same truths, and inspires the same sentiments; but at present we are considering human nature without the aid of this sacred light. Therefore, though the principle of virtue is always the same, the actions it may give rise to will differ, according to the necessities, situation, ignorance, or policy of the particular state; all of which we should be acquainted with, before we attempt to form an estimate of the virtue of any particular nation or society, at any precise period or time.

Your observations, Charles! said Sir Edward, are in my opinion just; and we may observe that virtue, in its most extended signification, may be divided into philosophical, moral, and theological.

May I request, said Harriet, a particular explanation of the terms philosophical, moral, and theological virtue?

Certainly, replied Sir Edward. Philosophical

virtue proceeds from enlarged views of general good, or of virtue as it respects mankind extensively: it surveys human nature unconnected with situation, circumstances, or attainments; it considers man as a being existing on the earth, capable of enjoying its productions and of appropriating them to his own use and service; it is impartial and unbiassed, beholding mankind with a discriminating, general and indulgent eye, attaching no merit to a man for the attainment of qualifications under the most favourable opportunities, and in the neglect of which he would most shamefully have abused the advantages his situation afforded. The philosophic mind doth not affix indiscriminate censure to the individual who is destitute of virtues or acquirements which he had not the means of obtaining—being neither entranced with admiration at the elegant accomplishments of affluence, nor chilled with horror at the misconduct of the unenlightened children of error, ignorance and barbarism; considering both to result chiefly from the effects of circumstance, situation and association. Let the proud possessor of brilliant intellect, the admired improver of the arts, or cultivator of the elegant refinements of life, reflect for a moment upon the reverse of his boasted station in society, had

he been born in the wilds of Africa, or educated in the cottage of penury. His present superiority ought not to excite an overweening self-estimation; since it is not so much to individual merit as to a happy concurrence of circumstances, that his superiority is to be imputed; and were it really otherwise, no excuse would be afforded for vanity or pride, his superior abilities being derived from Him who distributes as he pleases the blessings to be improved. Let the possessor of five talents recollect, that he is no less accountable for the improvement of the five, than the more humbly invested being, to whose care an all-dispensing providence has only committed one.

This consideration, instead of occasioning pride, should inspire the possessors of superior talents with additional humility and greater caution, lest by thoughtless inattention and inconsiderate conduct they should abuse or fail properly to improve the important trust committed to their charge; which they ought always to remember, was not designed for their own individual enjoyment alone, but for the more extended and general good of all the children of their common Father and Benefactor.

Moral virtue relates to manners or conduct: it considers the good derived by society from the cultivation of the moral virtues, and their effects on social life. The principle upon which it is founded is a love of mankind, and a desire to promote individual happiness and general well-being, by invariable attention to the means necessary for the extensive dissemination of virtue and good. It is the foundation of ethics, and the basis of every moral and political system.

Theological virtue, said the Vicar, has different tendencies. It is entirely connected with, and proceeds from, religion; it produces the same effects as moral and philosophical virtue, but springs from the most exalted source, a desire to please, serve, and glorify the Creator. The man of philosophic or moral virtue only, is not capable of enjoying the supreme gratifications resulting from the desire of serving Him from whom every good proceeds. He cannot feel his soul equally elated with the dignity of the service in which he is engaged. Disappointment must frequently attend his most favourite schemes and extensive projects, since they originate in and are devoted to man; but he who engages in the service of God, is sure of deriving the most ex-

quisite gratification, the most refined and sublime pleasure. His recompence is certain, from the sweet delight of internal peace experienced on earth, and an unclouded certainty of increasing bliss through every period of subsequent existence. Who would not dedicate himself to such a master, be desirous to spend his life in such a service, and enjoy his favour through every state of eternal being? The man who can boldly claim his master, his maker, his God, as his friend, can have few sources of real sorrow, and may patiently endure every affliction which is denominated ill or evil in the world; since from his enlarged perceptions he does not appreciate it as such, being convinced that the design of his heavenly Father can be only good, though possibly its evidence may not be exactly consonant with his own ideas, sensations, and wishes.

The various branches of theology, as contemplating the nature and attributes of the Almighty, though capable of extending our conceptions and enlarging our ideas of His unbounded benevolence, are not absolutely necessary for our present consideration; as it is from the influence of proper principles on the heart and affections that moral virtue proceeds; and although these

undoubtedly result from the perceptions of the understanding and the conviction of the necessity of attending to their cultivation, to promote happiness, yet they may exist unconnected with general knowledge or extensive erudition. It therefore does not follow that he who is the most capable of expatiating on the various perfections of the Deity, is the most exemplary in the performance of his moral, relative, and social duties. The reverse of this is sometimes observable; but in this case, how great is the criminality of the man who, possessing clear and full views of ineffable benevolence, is yet so weak as to prefer the fleeting gratifications of the moment, to the enjoyment of those refined feelings which result from devotion, and the sacred pleasures proceeding from a communion and intercourse with the Source of Good!

Knowledge, said Sir Edward, should always be subservient to the cause of virtue; and we may safely assert that in the history of man, or of the human mind, ignorance has been the cause of more errors than positive vice has of crimes, and indeed is the source from whence vice most frequently springs. It is difficult to separate intellect and virtue, although it is a lamentable

truth, that a considerable degree of intelligence is sometimes connected with much depravity. Yet this is seldom the case when mental expansion is fully possessed. If there be any thing in this life, the extirpation of which is most devoutly to be wished, it is ignorance; which, as the author of The Ponderer justly observes, in his essay on the probable perfectibility of the human species, " is generally the source of " vice, and vice is always the parent of misery; " consequently the extermination of ignorance " and vice, should be the object of the highest " ambition with every friend to human happi- " ness." Ignorance, considered as a positive evil, deepens the gloom of mental darkness, enchains the mind with the fetters of superstition, and by its pernicious influence, nips the buds of genius, and blights the fairest hopes of moral greatness. How studious, then, should every one be, who feels the pure delights of intellectual enjoyment, is cheered by the rays of mental expansion, while he drinks with unrestrained and insatiable pleasure at the streams of knowledge, to diffuse as far as possible the beams of felicity which glow around him, to diminish the empire of ignorance, and encrease to the utmost of his ability the means of enjoy-

ment in those who have been less favoured than himself with the advantages of instruction! I do not mean that we should endeavour to make every one within the sphere of our influence a scholar, or impart acquisitions which may be injurious or are not likely to be actually beneficial; but only that we ought to direct their minds, as far as we are able, to the Deity in his works, to his goodness in his providence, and his benignant mercies in our preservation. It is by means like these, that in every situation of life man may do good to man, may essentially serve society, and possess the divine power of disseminating virtue and increasing the sum of human happiness.

CONVERSATION III.

On Individual Virtue. Observations on Religion, Genius, and Sensibility.

WE now come, said Sir Edward, at their next meeting, to the consideration of virtue as it relates to individuals.

The contemplation of virtue in its most extended signification, may enlarge our ideas and expand our minds; but it is not calculated to instruct us in the duties of private and social life in an equal degree with the particular investigation of the virtues we are daily called upon to practise, and by the possession of which we render ourselves and those around us happy. Were every person properly impressed with the duties of self-government, forbearance, and those lesser virtues on which so much of the happiness of life depends, what a different world would this be, or rather what different beings would inhabit it! How much would the

sum of general happiness be increased! how greatly would our enjoyments be augmented, and our sources of pain lessened! It is not from natural but from artificial misery, that so many of the afflictions of life proceed. Physical evils are trifling when compared with moral evils: the former may occasion pain for a time, but the latter will arise unceasingly, pervade every age, every situation, and every state of society, and will do so until their cause be entirely extirpated.

What are the virtues which every individual ought carefully to cultivate, for the promotion of his own and the increase of others' happiness?

Were we, said William Berine, properly to attend to this subject, it would be necessary to expatiate on the diversified situations in which an individual might be placed. But the general virtues which, from a cursory glance of mankind, we may consider as most necessary for the promotion of universal good, are derived from Religion, the root from whence every virtue springs; which inculcates integrity, meekness, faithfulness, obedience, filial affection, and in short, all the virtues that can be named. I

would therefore propose a short examination of this important principle, which is so frequently misapplied, and so little understood by many who profess to be well acquainted with it.

Religion, exclaimed the Vicar, sweet source of every sacred and sublime enjoyment which can expand the heart and improve the feelings of mankind, how delightful is thy name to those who have tasted thy joys and experienced thy blessings! Without thee, what is man?—a creature—an animal, possessing no refinement, no exaltation, no perception. Enjoying thee, how ennobled is his nature, how sublime his conceptions, how exalted his ideas! Inspired by thee, he soars into the realms of futurity, and anticipates the pleasures of eternity. Without thee, lost to himself, his nature, and his God, he becomes unworthy of associating with animals devoid of intellect, since he degrades their nature by not raising his mind and affections to Him whose dictates they all implicitly obey, and who has created man their superior in faculties and understanding, to offer a free and more exalted homage—a homage sanctified by gratitude, admiration, reason, and devotion to the great Creator of the Universe!

Religion is not, as it is sometimes defined, the assent which the mind gives to certain propositions, particular doctrines, or speculative points; but it is more properly the worship we offer to the Deity, or the attribute of adoration voluntarily rendered, unconnected with any particular mode of faith. Religion is an active principle, a divine essence: the irradiation is always similar, the effects produced by it are invariably the same, though the different notions entertained of it may vary according to the diversity of our sentiments, the solidity of our judgment, and the acuteness of our perceptions; or this diversity may, perhaps, with more precision, be referred to the effects of an early association of ideas; as we are naturally tenacious of opinions which we have imbibed and cherished, but with difficulty admit new ones, although to an unprejudiced mind they may be of more easy comprehension, and more in unison with our general perceptions. Man is acknowledged to be the creature of habit and association. Error may creep into the best-disposed minds, and retain its place with invincible tenacity. Truth is rarely allowed to exercise its influence and to enjoy the place usurped by delusive falsehood; and from the weakness of under-

standing inherent to our nature, even in our most enlightened state, we are in many respects almost incapable of accurate discrimination.

These reflections should inspire us with liberality in regard to the religious sentiments of our fellow-probationers: we are all travelling the same road, and have the same end in view; and provided the means we pursue of virtue and goodness are the same, the speculative parts do not possess the importance assigned to them by ignorance and superstition. The more enlightened the mind, the more generous will be its conceptions—the more ignorant, the more confined. This is an axiom to which there is seldom an exception; therefore, if we would exalt our perceptions of the Deity and his attributes, increase our acquaintance with his goodness, and our knowledge of his power, we must study Him in his works, in his word, and in his providence, and meditate upon his unbounded benevolence, astonishing mercy, and general and particular government of the world.

I have always considered religion, said Mrs. Osbourne, as the source of the sweetest consolation to man. Without this sacred irradiation,

where could we fly for support in the time of trial and affliction? or from whence could we derive comfort in distress and disappointment? In the hour of prosperity, we feel its restraining power; but in adversity alone we fully enjoy the benignity of its consolatory influence, and learn properly to appreciate its value. For my own part, I do not think the man who is surrounded with all the elegancies and luxuries of life, half so enviable a being as he who, in the midst of want, distress and sorrow, can look with a steady eye and unbending faith to his heavenly Father, for consolation, deliverance and support; and who, when suffering the most poignant anguish, says, "it is the Lord: let him do what seemeth to him good." Cowper beautifully expresses a similar idea:

> Happy the man, who sees a God employ'd
> In all the good and ill that chequer life!

And Thomson:

> From seeming evil still educing good,
> And better thence again, and better still,
> In infinite progression.

These are the views which Christianity affords. Happy is he who properly appreciates them, and doubly happy he who enjoys them!

A great man, said Lady Berine, never appears
o truly exalted, as when in the time of affliction
nd distress, he relies with humble and unshaken
onfidence upon the Governor of the Universe,
nd with firm unrepining fortitude and patient
ubmission, evinces the support he derives from
he consolations of religion, and his implicit re-
iance upon the Author of Good.

These are some of the advantages, said
he Vicar, which religion affords in this life.
Every man, in his training for eternity, is called
o endure a certain portion of sorrow, trial, and
ain: it is the natural lot of all mankind; and
onsidered in this light, Reason teaches us to
ndure with unrepining fortitude, the sufferings
nseparable from this infancy of our existence.
But Reason, unaided by Religion, cannot pro-
luce that tranquil resignation which arises from
he conviction that "all things work together
or good."

To endeavour to derive good, said Mrs.
Wentworth, from every circumstance that oc-
urs, is a certain proof of a well-directed mind:
'*per essere un grand uomo, bisogna profittare di
utta la sua fortuna;*" and is, besides, a quality

generally connected with a superior degree of mental expansion.

As the character, said Sir Edward, is formed by a concurrence of circumstances, so the mind acquires its energies by exertion, and its intellectual capacities by attentive observation. Many among the human species pursue the journey of life with their eyes closed, but few with them properly open. Now, every person who possesses powers of vision, whether mental or corporeal, uninjured and unimpaired, may certainly exercise those powers if it pleaseth him to exert them; but if he prefers darkness because the light dazzles his organs of vision, or chooses rather to recline in the supineness of sloth than to employ the gifts of nature, he cannot expect to enjoy the same pleasures and derive the same advantages with those who shake off the love of ease and rouse themselves to useful exertion.

But, my dear Sir, said Henry, you would not infer that all men have from nature the same vigour of understanding or powers of intellect, or that genius is not a peculiar gift bestowed upon man.

That genius, replied Sir Edward, in its most extended signification, is a peculiar gift, cannot be doubted; but in the sense in which the term is frequently applied, as it relates to the attainments and even to the mental energies of the individual, I conceive that more is owing to the situation in which he may be placed, to the active employment of intellect, to application and persevering industry, than to any extensive endowments given by nature, or superior enlargement of faculties derived from any physical cause.

I am of your opinion, said the Vicar. The natural powers of well-constituted minds are generally similar, though they may not, by the concurrence of circumstances, be called to the same degree of exertion; consequently the vigour of some minds will increase, and that of others decrease, in proportion to their supineness or aversion from the fatigue of self-impelled exertion.

I have frequently remarked, said Harriet, in the most illiterate persons, a quickness of perception and readiness of comprehension which, if improved by the advantages of education,

might have raised their possessors above the common level of mankind.

It is the peculiar characteristic of real genius, said Charles Wentworth, that whatever its situation may be, or the restraints or incumbrances with which it is surrounded, it will burst the chains of ignorance, break the fetters that confine its powers, and soar into the regions of intellect, with a vigour which astonishes an unreflecting world; while the children of science can only wonder and gaze at powers they are unable to imitate. Genius discovers new paths, or considerably increases the boundaries of those that are old. But greatly as we are indebted to genius for the light of science, the invention of the arts, and the means of enjoyment we possess from the splendour of its rays, it is to application and persevering industry that our tribute of gratitude should be paid, which smooths the paths struck out by genius, and makes the intricacies of science plain to the commonest understanding.

But all men, said Henry, do not equally derive the same advantages from the same degree of mental exertion; and to what cause

can this inequality of natural ability be attributed, but to a diversity in the original powers of the mind?

This, replied the Vicar, is certainly the case. As the statures and persons of men differ, so do their minds. I would only maintain that the difference in the gifts of nature is not so disproportionate as we may be led to believe, from observing the intellectual characters of men, without seeking for the causes which occasion the effects we perceive. The utmost labour will not produce, in common stone, the beautiful veins we admire in marble; but though these veins exist naturally in the marble, friction or labour is necessary to render their beauty conspicuous. So in respect to the mind: its energies must be excited by circumstances, before we are able properly to estimate the extent of its powers.

I have frequently remarked, said Sophronia, that persons of the greatest abilities possess most susceptibility of mind or acuteness of feeling. Our passions have frequently been considered as the source of genius, or the cause of that mental expansion which we usually denote by that expression.

This observation is, I believe, just, replied the Vicar. Uncommon vigour of intellect, great susceptibility, and strong passions, are commonly united. Hence the frequent aberrations of genius, and the lamentable deviations of the child of sensibility. The knowledge of this truth should induce those who are possessed of acute feelings and ardent passions to be more watchful over themselves, and prevent them from yielding to that susceptibility which may, even in the best-disposed mind, if not properly directed and restrained, be the occasion of much sorrow and distress; and which has often, through its natural tendency to weaken the mind and soften the heart, and the too powerful delusions of designing sophistry, plunged many unfortunate victims into the abyss of vice, from whence irretrievable misery, agony and despair, have ensued.

Extreme sensibility, said Sir Edward, is not likely to increase individual happiness, but will most assuredly augment our sources of pain. Sensibility, to a certain point, is to be desired; as without it we should be deprived of our most exquisite gratifications, and enjoy few of the pleasures peculiar to rational beings; but I am

decidedly of opinion, that where this quality exists, it ought in a great degree to be the business of education to repress its powers, to allay, if possible, the poignancy of its effects, and to endeavour to lessen the hours of anguish to which its victim is irrevocably doomed. A state of apathy cannot be desirable, because it necessarily implies total incapacity of properly appreciating every sublime and exalted source of enjoyment. But that excessive sensibility which augments the natural afflictions of life to a degree of agony which they might not otherwise produce, is certainly no less to be deprecated; and though the possessor of it would rarely be found willing to exchange its thrilling transports and pensive pleasures, intermixed as they are with the most excruciating mental anguish, for the cold indifference of unenjoying apathy; yet, upon an impartial enquiry whether the proportionate degree of suffering attendant upon, were balanced against the enjoyments of, sensibility, it is not improbable but that judgment would be against its possession. It is certain, that by diminishing this extreme sensibility, we decrease the spring of the most acute and poignant anguish incident to our nature and attendant upon this state of existence.

Were I, said the Vicar, to delineate the mental portrait of the man who has the greatest capacity for the enjoyment of the most exquisite and refined pleasures intermixed with the fewest pains, I should say it was he who, inheriting from nature a strong and tender sensibility, had in his intercouse with the world so tutored, governed and restrained it, as to make it subservient only to his will, and the medium of his pleasures, without permitting it to increase his sorrows. Could such a person be found, he might justly be ranked among the most happy of mankind; but since a proportionate degree of suffering is annexed to this quality of the mind, with its adequate share of enjoyment, it should be, and indeed is, the business of every truly wise man, to diminish its painful effects as much as possible, by combating against it, whilst he at the same time enjoys as much as possible the delightful sensations it can produce, and every rational gratification it is capable of bestowing. I say rational, because no pleasures can be pure or permanent, or proper for a reasonable being to enjoy, except those which come under this denomination. I by no means agree with those austere moralists, who would spread a gloom around the path of

youth, and inculcate morality by prescribing deprivations from those enjoyments of life that are designed by the beneficent Creator, who gives that we may enjoy, and only forbids us to abuse his bounties. On the contrary I would say,

Catch fleeting pleasure as it swiftly flies.

But we must always remember that those which we pursue and so denominate, should be innocent, allowable, and not derogatory to the exalted dignity of man.

We have made no remarks, said Lady Berine, upon that false sensibility which induces us to refrain from affording assistance to others, that we may avoid the distress which their sufferings might impart to our feelings. True greatness of mind teaches us to be nobly regardless of ourselves, to alleviate pain at the expence of our own feelings, and to yield our inclination and enjoyments to the comfort and gratification of our connexions and associates.

To bless mankind with tides of flowing wealth,
With power to grace them, or to crown with health,

Our little lot denies; but Heaven decrees
To all, the gift of ministering to ease,
The gentle offices of patient love,
Beyond all flattery and all price above,
The mild forbearance of another's fault,
The taunting word suppress'd as soon as nought;
On these Heaven bade the bliss of life depend,
And crush'd ill-fortune when he made a friend.

HANNAH MORE.

CONVERSATION IV.

Integrity. Meekness.
On the influence of Woman in the formation of character.

OF individual virtues, said the Vicar, the first proposed for our examination is Integrity. Where this virtue is wanting, we need not take the trouble to search for others. If any are to be found, they are spurious, and not of the genuine growth of vital Christianity. This virtue may be referred, in its effects, to the mind, the words, and the actions. Actions are the most commonly depreciated, though perhaps they do not most justly incur our detestation. Actions alone excite the cognizance of the legislative power, and their consequences are obvious to the meanest capacity. But it is in the mind that every vice originates; and from its impulses both words and actions proceed. If we wish the streams to be pure, we should take care to

preserve the fountain-head from contamination. Integrity has a more extensive signification, and a more powerful ascendancy over the moral conduct, than is usually imagined. Were we to trace the source of almost every vice and imperfection, we should find that they frequently originated with a mental defect in this particular. The mind must undergo a considerable portion of depravity, before it can stoop to the degradation of endeavouring to deceive others; but, possessed of purity and innocence, it may easily impose upon itself. It is against this proneness of our nature to self-deception, that we should particularly guard. We may notice this propensity in the most trifling incidents of life. To-day we may give very good reasons for a particular mode of conduct; to-morrow, other motives may appear to us equally just, for the very reverse. We may suffer our behaviour often to be dictated by our wishes, our hopes, or our fears, and delude ourselves with the belief that we are solely influenced by a proper regard to propriety or rectitude. Where this virtue exists in its purity, duplicity in words or actions cannot be found. The mind blessed with spotless innocence, recoils with sensations of horror at the very idea, and prefers suffering

every species of humiliation and mortification, rather than degrade its dignity by duplicity or falsehood. But it is lamentable, that in the present boasted state of society, this virtue is so seldom properly cherished. To promote private interest or advantage by the contrary practice is by no means uncommon. How the blessings of Providence can be expected to attend such deviations from the principles of honour and integrity, is to me astonishing; and how men, possessing in other respects general accuracy of perception, can permit themselves, for the sake of private interest or emolument, to debase their moral and intellectual character by dissimulation and falsehood, is unaccountable, and in my opinion totally irreconcilable with any degree of mental expansion.

The effects arising from the want of integrity in the lower orders of society are too obvious to need elucidation. I confess that I feel as much commiseration for the consequences arising from the want of this virtue in the uninstructed child of ignorance, as I do contempt and detestation at the frequent deviations observable in the children of elegance and refinement. Is it not possible to reconcile sincerity with politeness, and integrity with good-breeding? If this

cannot be, happy are those who, in the shades of solitude and retirement, avoid aberrations so painful to the feelings of philanthropy, and so totally inconsistent with the obligations of Christianity!

Meekness being a virtue which more peculiarly adorns the female character, said William Berine, and as we of the other sex have latterly engrossed a far greater share of the conversation, we will now, if you please, leave the subject entirely to the ladies.

We are much obliged by your proposal, said Sophronia; but as meekness is scarcely less becoming in the masculine than in the feminine character, we should be glad to be also favoured with your sentiments upon the subject.

We can have but one opinion, replied William, namely, that it is the virtue of all others which should be the most carefully cultivated by your sex.

And ought it not, returned Sophronia, to be in an equal degree the object of man's cultivation?

Perhaps not, said William: firmness is a masculine, meekness a feminine virtue.

But should these not, replied Sophronia, be of equal participation with both sexes?

Not equally: a man should possess a greater portion of firmness—a woman more of meekness.

In my observations on mankind, said the Vicar, I have frequently found these qualities united in the same person. Firmness of mind is by no means irreconcilable with meekness of character, any more than softness of manner is incompatible with vigour of intellect; and their union forms one of the principal outward attractions of a superior character.

I must confess, said Sophronia, that I consider firmness of mind to be equally necessary to my sex as to yours, not only as it relates to that decision of character which it is so necessary for every one to attain, but as it enables us to support the trials and afflictions incident to human life. And is it less proper for us than you, to present examples of fortitude under domestic cares and anxieties?

I admit, replied William, it is not less proper; but from the physical weaknesses of your frames, you are not equally capable of the same exertion.

Not of corporeal exertion, I acknowledge, said Sophronia. But search the annals of history and the records of biography, and see if we have been deficient in the display of fortitude; or if there are not innumerable instances of our capacity to resist the allurements of temptation, and to support both mental and corporeal pain in an equal degree with your sex. And do not our own remarks on private life confirm the truth of this assertion? How many men, to free themselves from the distress of pecuniary embarrassments, plunge their families into the keenest sorrow, by depriving themselves of life, and thereby overwhelm with misery, those whom they were bound by the ties of nature and of duty to cherish and protect; while the woman, possessed of no less acuteness of feeling, is left to stem the torrent of affliction alone, which he who should have supported her, was unable to sustain.

Sophronia is always a champion for feminine excellence, said George Berine; and had she

the power, would with much satisfaction place her sex at the head of the creation.

I would not, replied Sophronia, place my sex in a station which they were not designed by nature to fill, nor contend for that superiority with which nature has invested man; but at the same time, I would properly estimate the power which females possess, of disseminating happiness, sowing the seeds of virtue and excellence, and strewing with flowers the path of human existence.

Indeed, Sophronia! you are very liberal of panegyric. I do not know whether our general observations on the benefits conferred by your sex, in a survey of society generally, would entirely acquit you of partiality, or justify your assertion.

Independently of the rules of gallantry and politeness, which my son, said Sir Edward, appears a little to forget, I must espouse the cause of Sophronia. No woman of sense or understanding will contend for the superiority given to man by nature, and which the Creator intended we should possess, or he would not have created woman subordinate; but at the same time, the

influence of woman on society has ever been great, and will continue so while the world remains, and indeed is likely to increase with the progress of intellectual advancement: for I am convinced, both from the researches of biography and repeated observation, that the influence of a virtuous woman is imperative upon the mind of man, in proportion to the degree of mental cultivation and expansion which he has attained, and the exaltation of character by which he is distinguished. From this quality of the mind, to appreciate properly what it is capable of discerning extensively, arises the superiority of power which woman possesses in civilized, over her general ascendancy in savage life. The unenlightened savage cannot properly estimate the merit and intrinsic worth of that ornament to creation and best charm of social life, a virtuous and amiable woman: he is incapable of enjoying the delights resulting from her engaging vivacity and innocent cheerfulness; but when every native grace and irresistible fascination is heightened by the charms of a refined and well-directed education, who can wonder that the soul of susceptibility and enlightened son of science is enslaved by attractions which must ever be proportionably great, as we are capable of feeling their power and estimating their value?

I too, said the Vicar, must render my palm of praise to the ladies; since it is by their care and attention in early life, that the seeds of religion and virtue are most frequently sown, and the foundation of a great character laid. And it is remarkable that few men have signalized themselves in the world, who have not been in some respects influenced by or indebted to the fair sex. Mothers possessed of intelligence and piety, sow the seeds in infancy which blossom in youth and bear the fairest fruits in maturity, and which are culled with gratitude and delight by admiring posterity. Nor is the ascendancy of the softer sex less apparent in more advanced than in early youth. The elegant and accomplished Cicero acknowledged, that it was by associating with intellectual and accomplished women, that he formed his soul to virtue, and acquired the perfection and graces of his elocutionary powers. The influence of woman in our days is not less perceptible. Investigate the early associations and youthful acquaintance of those who have imbibed a contempt for the sex and depreciate their value, and you will find that they had early in life formed connexions which were not to their honour, or that from their deficiency in mental acquirements or

moral conduct, they had never been admitted into the society of well-educated and intelligent females. Look, on the contrary, at the man of discernment, elegance and taste, and you will find that he has acquired the perfection of his powers and attainments from associating with women of superior excellence, and learnt from the advantages of their intercourse to appreciate their worth and estimate their power, not only from the charms of its diffusive influence and its cheering irradiations in the hour of social converse, but from its capability of refining his feelings and enlarging his conceptions of moral excellence.

But, to return to our subject, What are the advantages or the good derived by society from the practice of the feminine virtue, meekness?—for I must allow that it more peculiarly belongs to females, though no less an ornament in the character of the greatest hero, and an essential in that of a great man.

To be able properly to estimate the advantages of this virtue, said Mrs. Osbourne, we should consider the consequences produced by the want of it. They are too obvious, from a slight intercourse with the world, to need elucidation;

and the painful effects arising in domestic life from a deficiency in its practice, increase the sources of what have been denominated external evils, perhaps beyond any other cause. The principal charm in the female character is that good-humoured ease which diffuses around perpetual serenity; and this cannot be acquired without possessing meekness in an eminent degree. The little vexations that daily occur should never be suffered to cloud the brow of cheerfulnesss, nor invade the hour of social converse. There is nothing more annoying than the long catalogue of family-grievances with which some women think proper to entertain their associates, and which, as they exist more or less in every domestic establishment, and in every state of society, are by no means deserving particular attention, any farther than as it may be possible to procure their redress or effect their diminution.—But this cannot be accomplished by complaint, peevishness, or ill-humour; which only tend to augment our unpleasant sensations without lessening the cause. The vexations experienced by man in the world may be greater, though not so incessant as those which arise in a family; and how can a woman be expected

to sooth the cares of her husband, who is continually irritated by the trifling unpleasantries of life, which frequently originate in herself, and might probably be redressed, if not prevented, by a stricter observance of her own duty, or a better superintendance of her domestic concerns; which are too often neglected as of less importance than the routine of fashion, the pursuit of pleasure, or attention to sources of amusement frivolous in themselves, and incapable of producing or dispensing happiness.

Anger is a passion which ought never to pervade the countenance of a woman: it is totally inconsistent with every idea annexed to the consideration of feminine excellence; not that we are less alive to a sense of injury than man, or less capable of feeling indignity and disdain: perhaps we are naturally, from our greater delicacy of organization, more so; but an angry woman is a species of monster in the creation—a being whom I sincerely wish to become a total stranger, at least in this land;

> Where Beauty should in virtue's lustre shine,
> And gild life's chequered path with peace divine—
> Disperse the clouds of gloomy care away,
> And be the sunshine of the mental day.

CONVERSATION V.

Fidelity. Friendship. Love.

THE subject for discussion this evening, said the Vicar, according to the cursory arrangement of our young friend, which for the sake of regularity we may as well follow as any other, is Faithfulness or fidelity. What are we to understand by the term?

Fidelity, said Charles Wentworth, implies a constant adherence to the performance of our various engagements, whether civil or social, natural or voluntary, necessary, or entered into with any view whatever. It is of very extensive signification, and refers to some of the most important duties in every station of life; since there is not a situation in which an individual can be placed, wherein he is not called upon in some respects to the practice of this virtue.

What, said the Vicar, are the most general points of view in which we may consider this virtue?

The most obvious in public life, replied Charles, are those which relate to princes, subjects, magistrates, and servants; and to friendship and love, in the general connexions and associations of private life.

We will first glance at this virtue, said the Vicar, as it respects princes, though not likely to be particularly useful to us, otherwise than as the consideration may produce additional contentment, and inspire our hearts with livelier sensations of gratitude to the Almighty, for placing us in a more humble sphere, not surrounded by the splendid fascinations of delusive pomp, which too frequently spreads its alluring charms, and by its pernicious influence and fatal tendency, leads the possessor of sovreignty to forget the end of his creation as a man, and the objects of his exaltation as a prince. When the mind has been enervated by improper indulgence, and education directed to the attainment of accomplishments rather than to the acquirement of mental vigour and self-restraint; the seeds of virtue cannot have been properly sown, nor judi-

ciously cultivated. We view with pity the crimes committed through ignorance and poverty, but with contempt and abhorrence the apparently lesser aberrations of the possessors of affluence and exaltation, without perhaps attaching proper importance to the power and influence of habit and example. Man is still man, in whatever situation he may be placed: he is still the creature of habit and association. Let this consideration have its proportionate weight with all, and it will give the possessors of wisdom, learning and worth, additional humility, inspire them with livelier gratitude to the Disposer of circumstances which have contributed to endue them with such invaluable acquisitions, and lead the unfortunate inheritors of exalted rank, whose native vigour of mind enables them to see, and whose love of virtue teaches them to lament, the delusions of error in which they have so long wandered, to break the shackles of habit and example, shake off the love and influence of dissipation, and nobly exert the privilege of free agents, to act as accountable beings, and give to an admiring world the inestimable example of "daring to be wise." What an accession of good would society derive from a few of such patterns, in persons ennobled by their rank and admired for

their accomplishments! And independantly of their own individual and eternal advantage, how delightful must be their reflections, when, instead of languishing on the couch of lassitude and ennui, wearied with a painful and unprofitable pursuit of the delusive phantom, pleasure, which still eludes their grasp and flies before them, they enjoy the pleasing and divine sensations arising from the consideration that they have essentially benefited their contemporaries, by an ensample as rare and brilliant as meritorious and praiseworthy!

The duties of a prince, said Charles Wentworth, are too extensive to admit of our particular notice. I will only observe, that to promote the good of his subjects ought to be the chief aim of a sovereign: he should therefore, as with paternal care, watch over their interests, happiness and well-being; endeavour to increase their commerce, as thereby he will augment their wealth and means of occupation, and give to his people the productions and improvements of other countries. He should attend to the improvement of the legislature and the proper enforcement of the laws, ameliorate as much as possible the condition of the poor, promote

the advancement of agriculture and all other useful arts, encourage morality, industry and science, discourage vice, and thus be a powerful instrument in the hands of providence of increasing individual happiness and public good. The proper performance of these duties requires a considerable degree of information, discernment and judgment, qualities which cannot be attained without application, attention, and habits of propriety and industry, which are more difficult to be acquired and retained by those who are born to affluence and royalty, than by persons in a less elevated station; and this is the reason why we so seldom find eminence of talent united with high rank and exalted birth; not that the possession of these by any means implies a deficiency of natural ability to attain superior excellence, but that persons in the higher sphere of life are less impelled, generally speaking, to the degree of exertion necessary for the acquisition of mental superiority.

The virtue of fidelity, as it regards subjects, need no particular comment; but it should be united with attachment, support, obedience and respect. As it relates to magistrates, the duties prescribed are similar, though subordinate, to those of princes; and in regard to servants, to

fidelity should be added, respect, obedience, reverence, attention and affection."

The consideration of this virtue, as most likely to be beneficial to us, is in reference to private and social life. Fidelity or faithfulness in friendship, first appears to command our attention.

Friendship, exclaimed the Vicar, with enthusiasm, sweet soother of each care and heightener of each joy! it is thine to cheer the gloomy path of life, and charm with variegated verdure each flowery scene. Without thee, man, in the midst of society, is as it were in a desert. With thee, the most barren moor ceases to be cheerless, and becomes capable of increasing and ever new delights.

Friendship, sweet charm of life, to man is given,
To yield on earth the sacred joys of heaven—
To warm the soul, refine that better part,
To sooth each woe, and bless the kindred heart.

Friendship, in every age, said Sir Edward, has been esteemed the best cordial of life, the greatest alleviation of our sorrows and heightener of our joys; and its ascendancy has always been found proportionably great, according to the susceptibility, refinement, and exaltation of the mind. Acuteness of feeling does not imply

mental weakness, as is sometimes supposed: the reverse is more generally observable; and among those who have come under my observation, I have not unfrequently found the greatest natural sensibility in persons from whose external appearance and manners we should least expect to find it. I have frequently observed, too, that those who from nature are the most capable of enjoying the delights of friendship in its fullest sense, are more cautious in yielding to its softening impulse; which is probably occasioned, either by having been themselves at some period of their lives fatally deceived, or from remarking the arrogant assumption of the sacred denomination friend, by children of the sordid world; who, incapable of feeling and appreciating its power, make its name subservient to interest, selfishness, pride, or the basest motives. This may induce many well-meaning people to doubt the existence of genuine friendship; but history proves the capacity of the human mind for the highest degree of attachment which this term, in its most extended signification, implies. How beautiful is the account transmitted to us of the friendship of David and Jonathan! Profane history is by no means destitute of similar examples. Castor and

Pollux, Damon and Pythias, and many others, might be adduced.

I am not surprised, said Mrs. Osbourne, that people of prudence and discernment are more careful than others in the choice of their friends; and that those who possess the greatest susceptibility, when combined with that foresight which is acquired from a knowledge of the world, are more cautious in yielding to the delightful influence of friendship; as nothing is more certain, than that many continually suffer perhaps some of the most severe and excruciating mental pangs, from the faithlessness of those who have abused the title of friend. Still I cannot admire that cold-hearted prudence which would deprive us of this delightful source of enjoyment. The principal pleasure derived from friendship, is the privilege it allows of unreserved communication, or what has been styled thinking aloud: unless we can enjoy this pleasure, unchecked by fears or apprehensions, the most exquisite charm of friendship is withheld. Reproof and admonition are among the benefits conferred by genuine friendship, and constitute its most essential value. The man of real integrity fears not the most rigid investigation of

his conduct; as the closer it is examined, the brighter will it shine. It is true that the most perfect amongst us have many weaknesses and imperfections, which an intimate acquaintance has opportunities of discovering, and which are perhaps unperceived by the rest of mankind; but every wise and good man, who is acquainted with human nature, will make allowance for the failings of others, pity their infirmities, and despise him who endeavours to dim the lustre of virtue, and lessen our desire of attaining the perfection of moral goodness, by contending for the difficulty of its acquisition, or depicting with sarcasm and ill-nature the errors and frailties which, in our most perfect state, are connected with mortality, and which serve to keep us humble, and watchful over ourselves, and incite to the attainment of additional self-knowledge and self-restraint; for

"To wish more virtue, is to gain."

Love, said Sir Edward, the most noble, exalted, and refined passion that can possess the heart of man, is subject to the same usurpations and misconceptions as friendship. How often do we find interest, ambition, pride, vanity, and many other base impulses, degrade for a

time the sacred power, by assuming its name! Hymen may unite, but can never bless those who approach his altar from such unworthy motives. Improper connexions are not so generally to be imputed to love, as to some other passion or inducement usurping its place. Love admits of no deliberation as to person. This is the criterion by which the genuine feeling may be known: fidelity is its pride, its glory, and delight; it cherishes the beloved idea of its faithfulness, which affords a soothing consolation in the sufferings to which this passion is generally subject; for, as Shakespeare observes,

The course of true love never did run smooth;

otherwise, exalted attachments would not be distinguished from the affection of common minds, or the changeable sensation, occasioned by a variety of motives, which is sometimes distinguished by the appellation of love. And it is generally remarkable that the power of love is proportionate to the strength of the feelings, passions, and intellects of the individual. According to this idea:

"'Tis the brain of the victim that strengthens the dart;"

although in this, as in every other respect,

reason must gaide, principle direct, and judgment regulate; otherwise exaltation of character cannot be displayed, nor elevation of sentiment discerned.

I think, said the Vicar, the Antients deviated from the discernment displayed in many of their emblems, when they represented Cupid blind: he certainly aims his arrows with discrimination and judgment, when love is truly an affection of the mind. The shafts of Plutus, the impulses of ambition, of vanity, or some other unworthy motive, occasion so many to select improper partners, and the miseries that frequently follow, form the proper punishment which must be expected to ensue. Love, in its simplicity, purity, and native exaltation, scorns such motives, and only seeks a kindred mind, a congenial soul: its choice is the effect of the sympathy produced by a more considerable degree of mental attraction than constitutes friendship, though it necessarily implies and indeed may be considered as its perfection or zenith. The obligations of marriage we are not now called upon to consider; but I flatter myself that our young friends of the present party will never entertain an idea of forming so sacred an engagement, without particularly

acquainting themselves with its attendant duties; otherwise, though love may unite them, happiness cannot attend their union; and I believe, unhappiness in the connubial state frequently originates less in a deficiency of inclination to perform, than in unacquaintance with, or misconception of, the duties enjoined. To the ladies I would say,

> "Think not, the husband gain'd, that all is done:
> The prize of happiness must still be won."

And to the gentlemen,

> Cherish, with tender, constant, generous pride,
> The worth and love of your well-chosen bride:
> Let no tyrannic power, imperious sway,
> Make her lament, her duty's to obey.

CONVERSATION VI.

Charity. Industry.

THE term Charity, said the Vicar, has a very extensive signification. It is by no means confined to the giving of alms, or promoting the temporary convenience and comfort of our distressed fellow-creatures, though this may be its common acceptation. But to the mind capable of surveying man generally, and considering him in this infancy of existence as receiving the rudiments of an education to prepare him for a more exalted state, this appears the most narrow and limited meaning of the term; for as much superior as the soul evidently is to its habitation, of so much more importance is the good imparted to the mind, than that which is administered only to the body; although they are so inseparably connected, that

benefits conferred on the body bestow in many instances a salutary influence upon the mind. Pecuniary relief or assistance cannot be dispensed by every one who with sympathetic feeling participates in the sufferings of afflicted humanity. Many may sigh at the view of sorrows which they cannot alleviate, and at distress which they are unable to relieve; but though the power of supplying the wants and administering to the necessities of the children of penury be confined to the possessors of affluence, yet all are able in some degree to benefit the mind. It is true that every one has not the same ability to instruct, or capacity to amend, by mild and conciliating exhortation, the wandering or deluded child of error; but all may give to those around them the advantage of a good example, may endeavour by gentle admonition to reclaim the dissolute and sooth with the consolations of religion the sufferings of indigence, sorrow and pain. This is the most noble light in which we can consider the exercise and benign influence of charity. He who prevents another by exhortation, remonstrance, or reproof, from committing a crime, effects more essential good than he who extricates the friendless and destitute from the severest miseries that poverty can inflict; as the

one only relates to the perishable body, but the other to the immortal mind.

Charity, said Sir Edward, according to the common acceptation of the term, as it applies to relief of the temporal wants of the poor, might in my opinion be much better employed in supplying them with the means of providing for themselves, than by enabling them to live under a partial suspension of active industry. Man is born to labour: no one, however exalted his station, is exempted from this duty of humanity, which is rendered, by the wisdom of our Creator, indispensable to our well-being. Amongst mankind, none are so needlessly unhappy, have so few enjoyments, and so many unpleasant sensations, as the idle and unemployed. Idleness is the soil in which vices spring, and grow with unrestrained exuberance. To check their growth and diminish their effect is the business of industry, which is as fertile in the production of virtues, as idleness of vices.

The truth of this observation should be known and felt by those who would better the condition of the poor. It is not by temporary assistance that real good can be done, but by preventing the necessity of administering such

relief for the future—by enabling the poor to provide for themselves, and giving them, if possible, that laudable pride and generous independence of spirit, which shall induce them to prefer the most laborious employment to assistance or support through any other medium; and I am decidedly of opinion that the man who should establish an extensive manufactory, which might enable some hundreds of people to furnish themselves and their families with the necessaries of life, would more essentially serve society, than the founder of an hospital. To relieve individual suffering, and lessen the general sum of human misery, must afford a delightful sensation to the philanthropic mind; but to prevent an increase, or to diminish the prevalence of vice, which frequently originates in the extreme of indigence and idleness, is certainly no less deserving the attention of the benevolent and affluent.

I agree with you, my friend, said the Vicar. To decrease, alleviate, and if possible relieve the distresses incident to mankind, is an employment honourable to the highest intellectual and moral attainments; yet, to prevent the more extended dissemination of vice, and to diffuse the love and

practice of virtue by every practicable means, particularly by endeavouring to instil it into the breasts of the rising generation, enforcing its power by exciting to its acquisition in early habits, is an occupation no less calculated to ennoble the higher faculties of that being who views himself, by a progressive chain of immaterial creation, united to the fountain of good, the Author and source of all perfection.

It appears to me, said Mrs. Osbourne, that the miseries of mankind would be most effectually alleviated by particular attention being bestowed on the education of the children of the poor; I do not mean so much in regard to their general instruction, as to the manner in which they are brought up, and the early habits they should be led to acquire. Children who are born with the prospect of gaining their maintenance by manual labour, should very early be trained to habits of industry, and not allowed to pass their time in any manner that may hereafter render them averse to corporeal exertion. Every person born in a country like England, ought to be able to learn his duty from the Bible; but I think it injurious to the morals and real interest of the poor, that so many of their children are

not earlier placed in occupations adapted to their natural love of exercise; which is too often omitted, until habits, unconnected with useful industry, have taken root, and vices have been engendered which embitter and disgrace their existence. Let them, while young, be taught the advantages to be derived from determinate application, not as an irksome task or a hardship, but as a pleasing source of independence, from which alone they are to derive the comfort and happiness of their future lives.

If we may judge of the superior excellence of any method from the effects usually produced, said Harriet, the manner of educating the Scots peasantry must claim a high rank in our estimation. After labouring the whole of the day, they are instructed in the evening only, by an itinerant teacher; and amongst the rustics of what country can we find a more general superiority of intellectual and moral character? To Scotland may be particularly applied this couplet of Mrs. Barbauld:

> Man is the nobler growth our realms supply,
> And souls are ripened in our northern sky.

Our obligations to Scotland, for historians,

poets, moral and instructive essayists, &c. prove the justice of this observation.

The advantages we derive from industry, said William Berine, are indeed incalculable. The mind is lost in the immensity of the effects of this single virtue. What would man be without it, raised little above animal nature, and susceptible of few enjoyments, at the same time rendered by the natural activity of the mind, which loves to employ its powers, unhappy, even in the fullest possession of his beloved state of idleness? That there are enjoyments in ease cannot be doubted: the term is sufficiently expressive of the idea; but ease is properly a cessation from labour, and not the duration of sloth and inactivity. The pleasure of ease is derived only from previous exertion, without which it becomes lassitude, and, so far from being a gratification, amounts almost to a positive pain, being the chief source of peevishness, fretfulness, caprice, and many other like ornaments and graces that sometimes adorn the fairest of the creation. While reclining on the couch of indolence, the hands of assiduous attention and the gifts of fortune are incapable of affording any except transient alleviations to the incessant sufferings of weariness and ennui.

When, said Sophronia, oppressed with the effects of unceasing toil, under the scorching rays of a vertical sun, 'Heaven's last best gift,' formed to be the consolation, the delight, the friend, the companion of man, enters with humble gaze and lowly tread the habitation of her husband, instead of being allowed to recline at ease, to rest from labour and recruit her exhausted strength by refreshment, she is first obliged to prepare the repast and attend the lordly nod of him who, while she toiled, had indulged himself in the cooling shade, in all the delights of idleness. She then receives the scanty remains of his sated appetite, to satisfy the cravings of nature and protract her miserable existence. This is the treatment which woman receives in the torrid zone, and in most countries where the climate tends to increase the natural love of indolence, of him who was designed to be both her cherisher and protector, of man.

I expected, said William, some such vindication of her sex, from Sophronia; for whom she is ever a warm champion.

To vindicate the innumerable follies and imperfections of my sex, said Sophronia, would

be as impossible as improper: no one can regret more sensibly than myself the weakness and vanity too frequently conspicuous amongst women, even in the higher spheres of life. I protest only against indiscriminate censure, and general sarcasm, from those who are not themselves uniformly faultless, and whose duty it is, from their boasted superiority, to impart the benefits of a superior example.

My dear children, said the Vicar, general, any more than particular recrimination, is not subservient to the cause of virtue. To make women feel their inferiority in the scale of creation, is as illiberal and ungenerous in our sex, as an improper assumption of superiority is unjustifiable in theirs. We were created for the mutual assistance of each other; and the performance of the relative duties of our station, which, to the end of our being, can only partially distinguish either sex. It is in this reciprocity of good-will that real superiority consists; and though it be observable that in climates rendered unfavourable to both mental expansion and corporeal exertion, either by intense heat or excessive cold, women are compelled to greater labour and enjoy fewer privi-

leges than in more genial climes, yet the consideration of the superior blessings, individually and generally possessed by ourselves, should excite to a stricter performance of every attendant duty, inspire the soul with sensations of the liveliest gratitude for the additional favours bestowed in the providence of our benignant Creator, and promote unceasing attention to the happiness of those, to whose industry and considerate kindness we are indebted for an exemption from toil, and for our superior portion of comforts and luxuries.

The advantages afforded to man through the medium of industry, said Charles Wentworth, are almost beyond calculation. Without it, notwithstanding the unbounded liberality of our beneficent Creator, we could neither properly appreciate nor enjoy in their full extent the benefits of his gifts. Industry is the source of civilization, refinement, and elegance. To it we are indebted for the perfection of the arts, and the improvements of science. Without industry, the human mind, like the soil of a country, however favourable its climate, would become comparatively barren and unfruitful, or fertile only in the production of weeds. The necessity of

culture must be equally necessary to promote the real good of both, and the effects proportionably beneficial. It is of the first importance to the internal well-being of a state, that the legislative power should incite to the practice of this virtue, by encouragements and rewards. It was an excellent law of the Athenians, instituted by Solon, which declared a man infamous, the first time he was convicted of idleness; as it enforced the practice of industry, until a habit was acquired which could not fail of being beneficial to the state and advantageous to the individual.

In whatever point of view we consider industry, said Sir Edward, it appears calculated to be only productive of good; but the inducements to it must be of superior weight to the natural love of indolence, for excitement to its practice. I believe there are few persons who, uninfluenced by any expectation of subsequent pleasure, advantage or emolument, would only for the reputation of industry, compel themselves to the necessary degree of exertion which the term implies, in opposition to the contrary habit. But if the idle would reflect upon the effects of sloth, the misery which it produces,

and the gratifications it prevents, their beloved repose would certainly yield to the desire of increasing enjoyment; and if they possessed no natural activity of mind, to incite the acquisition of intellectual attainments or personal accomplishments, yet the weariness of lassitude should be a sufficient inducement, if not to render them useful to others, at least to prevent them from being a burthen to themselves.

CONVERSATION VII.

Patience. Forbearance. Obedience. Observations on Education.

THE virtues of patience and forbearance next claim our attention, said the Vicar. Patience implies a resigned and actual state of suffering; Forbearance, considerate indulgence for the failings and weaknesses of others, and unresenting endurance of the little unpleasantnesses arising from the imperfections of our relatives or associates. The attainment of both ought to be particularly attended to, as a means of diminishing external evils by patient and unrepining submission, and of increasing the happiness of our social connexions by consideration and charitable allowance for infirmities which might be natural, or which may have become so from the effects of habit on the mind

or actions, and to which we ourselves might very probably have been liable, had we been placed precisely in their situation. A common but very good remark should be constantly remembered by the friends of human happiness, which implies that "the young should be cured, but the old endured." You will observe that I am not speaking of vices, but only of the lesser defects and imperfections, which form shades and blemishes in the intellectual, and tarnish the lustre of the moral character, and which are more conspicuous in persons eminent for virtue and talent, and might perhaps be scarcely observable in individuals of inferior attainments; as the smallest blemishes are discernible in a beautiful painting, that pass unnoticed in an inferior production. All who desire to promote the cause of virtue, ought to be particularly careful, and invariably watchful over themselves, lest by any little petulance of temper, or unguarded expression, they injure the cause which they wish to serve, and diminish the admiration of virtue, or retard the progress of those who look up to them as the standards of moral excellence, without the necessary share of discrimination to estimate justly the infirmities of humanity. It is remarkable that

persons who have attained the greatest exaltation of character, are the most ready to make allowances for the errors and imperfections of mankind, as Cato is said to have excused in others what he would not have pardoned in himself. But as I believe we are all sensible of the importance of these acquisitions, let us hasten to the consideration of a virtue which cannot be too highly appreciated; and though the individual practice of our young friends exemplifies their high estimation of it, and acquaintance with the duties it enjoins, yet as our enforcement of it upon others through their medium may possibly contribute to the good of posterity, we cannot too minutely examine its beneficial tendency in the formation of character, and the rank it deservedly holds in the scale of moral virtues; I mean, obedience.

Obedience, said Sir Edward, indeed deservedly claims our most attentive consideration. To be well acquainted with the importance of this virtue, and the conduct it enjoins, is of the greatest consequence to every one who would properly perform the duties of his station, and contribute to the good of society by promoting that subordination which is so essential to our general welfare.

The duty of obedience extends from the highest to the lowest class of society: no individual is entirely exempt from its obligations. The monarch on his throne owes no less obedience to the laws, and the imperious necessity of securing the public welfare, than all ranks of his subjects owe towards himself. To urge the necessity for a constant enforcement of this virtue in the subordinate ranks of military, naval and other public institutions, though of the first importance to their well-being and the good of the community at large, is of less consequence to us than attention to those individual duties which are connected with our relative situations in life. I therefore propose that we consider the necessity of inculcating the duty of obedience in youth, its consequences in education, and the effects that may result from its acquisition or non-performance in future life. Let us first, however, have an accurate definition of the term Education.

Education, said the Vicar, in its most extended signification, implies a process of intellect, that commences with our capacity for observation, and only terminates with our existence. It is, divisible into the education we

receive in early life, or for which we are indebted to the instruction of others; that which we subsequently derive from our constant pursuit of knowledge and assiduous attention to the cultivation of our mental faculties; and that education which we receive in the world, which is generally of a compulsory nature, little suited to our inclination or wishes, but best calculated to generate or call into action the virtues which distinguish character and eventually promote our final good and permanent well-being.

We will first consider the benefits which we derive from education, in the common acceptation of the term, or that which we receive in early life, from the instruction of others.

The benefits resulting to the individual, said Charles Wentworth, from the general foundation of virtue and excellence, a good education, are incalculable. Those only can appreciate it properly, who have enjoyed its advantages; and those most feel the importance of its acquisitions, who labour under its deprivations.

The civilized part of mankind generally agree in acknowledging the importance of a good education, both as it relates to the good of the

individual, and its proportionate influence on society at large; but the different ideas attached to the means of effecting the desired object, are as diversified as the inclinations, pursuits and dispositions of the persons who, in various situations, differently appreciate the importance of particular acquisitions. The real end of the attainments conferred by education, should be to qualify the individual for the proper performance of the duties annexed to his station in life; but as moral obligations are indispensable with all, this is a point which should invariably be kept in view, as the basis on which the superstructure is to be raised, whether designed for utility or for ornament.

Our occupations in society exclude us, said the Vicar, through the obligations of what are called higher duties, from the performance of that lesser one, the early care of our children; but were we minutely to examine the point, the epithets might with propriety be changed. I must request the ladies present, who have with so much honour to themselves and advantage to our young friends, performed the obligations of maternal duty, to give us their opinion. None can too highly appreciate the benefits derived

from maternal cares, nor can we who enjoy the felicity arising from the successful exertions of unwearied affection, too much esteem the beloved authors of our present delightful gratifications; who, after having themselves smoothed our path of life, strewed our way with flowers, heightened our enjoyments, soothed our cares, and constituted our highest earthly felicity, have crowned our declining years with the blessing of good, amiable, and affectionate children. Who, my friend, that experiences sensations like ours, can depreciate the value of woman, or refrain from offering those dear companions the tribute of heart-felt gratitude? Let the cold, insensible, ungrateful heart, boast its inability to feel and appreciate the extent of obligations which we know how to estimate, and are proud to acknowledge!

My heart, replied Sir Edward, confesses the justice of your tribute; but with unbounded affection for the beloved objects, let us not forget the Giver of such inestimable blessings.

The eyes of the delighted mothers glistened with the dew of Heaven-descended affection, at this meed of acknowledgement and approbation

from their beloved partners; and all parties having wiped the tear of mingled gratitude and delight, Mrs. Wentworth proceeded with this most interesting feature of the discussion.

It has always appeared to me, that the principal error to which the common defects of education may be imputed, originates in not properly considering the early capacity for observation possessed by the infant-mind, the force of example and the influence of custom. The most amiable and intelligent mothers often err in this respect: they imagine that attention is requisite only to the health of their infants: the dawnings of reason, or powers of observation, discernible at a very early period of their lives, are held of secondary importance. A child who from its infancy has been accustomed to witness the effects of an irritable temper in its nurse, cannot, as it advances in years, be readily conscious of its criminality, and especially when such an example, acting upon natural propensities, has succeeded in forming a similar habit. Hence arise the difficulties which must attend the subsequent precepts of restraint and self-command; and it rarely happens that a mother's utmost ingenuity is equal to the cure of what early care might have prevented. The first and

most essential point should be, to inculcate and enforce obedience. Establish this, and a foundation will be laid on which can be erected whatever superstructure may be desirable. Neglect this, and a door is left open for certain trouble, too often terminating in irremediable folly, vice and misery. Oh! if mothers, instead of yielding to the tenderness of their nature, to the ardent love of their almost adored offspring, would restrain themselves from indulging in their feelings of fond affection, when their doing so is likely to be injurious to the beings whose welfare it is their duty to promote, I am persuaded that the business of education, which is often so difficult, painful and laborious, would be easy, pleasant and delightful. I am no less convinced of the difficulty attending the early and invariable enforcement of obedience, than of its necessity and importance; but this is the curb which alone will enable us to restrain every subsequent evil propensity, the director that must infallibly lead to every valued acquisition and every useful habit, the foundation of all moral excellence and intellectual eminence. My dear girls! should you ever be called to the performance of maternal duties, consider and constantly attend to this essential point. You

may not now be sensible of the difficulties attendant upon its observance, but you will then feel them; and upon your adherence to this rule, the future happiness of your lives, and that of your children, will probably depend.

The grand principle in the business of education, said Mrs. Osbourne, is certainly at all times to have in view the future good of the persons educated. Every present attention should be directed to this end; therefore we should first consider their good as it regards the virtues of the mind; then the health of the body; and thirdly, the attainment of what is generally understood by the term accomplishments, though these are too frequently considered primary requisites.

This rule, said Lady Berine, is of the highest importance, and should never be forgotten by those who are engaged in the business of instruction. In the education of girls, we should always remember that they will one day be women, and endeavour accordingly to give them habits that may enable them to fill the sphere of usefulness for which woman was designed. No one can admire, more than myself, elegant

and accomplished females; and I always feel pleasure in observing the graceful carriage and dignified ease which adorn some women of rank, and at first sight inspire a prepossession in their favour, and, when united to other attainments, occasion the warmest admiration even in common beholders. But this is not sufficient for woman: it is infinitely more necessary that she should be able to inspire her family, and her relative and social connexions, with love, respect and esteem, than common observers with admiration; that she should live in the hearts of those who know her, than charm the eyes of those who behold her. Let both these ends, if possible, be accomplished; but in all considerations let the least important yield to the greater, that the attainments which make a woman useful and truly valuable may not give place to those which render her merely ornamental. We soon become familiarised with exterior graces, and discover the extent of superficial accomplishments, but are never weary of the benefits to be derived from a capacity of usefulness, in some women; for a deficiency in which, no personal elegance nor other exterior attractions can compensate. I believe that if women in the superior ranks of life were

generally better instructed in their duty, and a little more acquainted with the minutiæ of domestic concerns, we should not hear of so many families being suddenly plunged from splendour and magnificence into comparative poverty, nor of domestics revelling in the spoils of those who adorn a ball-room, but are incapable of regulating the concerns of a family.

Before we proceed, said William Berine, to enquire into the general business of education, as we are on the subject of women, will the ladies present pardon the liberty of one proposition, and allow me, for the good of Sophronia and my sisters, to request a definition of the term obedience, as connected with the matrimonial vow?

There is no occasion for soliciting pardon, said Sophronia, upon the introduction of a topic so highly important to our sex, individually; who are desirous of properly performing the duties annexed to the most arduous and difficult of all stations. It may not become me to give an opinion; but I must beg to be allowed the observation, that no woman, who justly values herself, knows her importance in the scale

of creation, and her power to dispense the comforts of domestic society, will give herself a master whose will she may have reason to dispute, or whose judgment she may be likely to deprecate; nor would she yield herself to a tyrant, devoid of generosity and sentiment, who may delight to make her feel her inferiority and dependence, and triumph in a superiority for which he is only indebted to nature. Having professedly introduced the enquiry for the sake of your sisters and myself, permit me, for your gratification, to read some lines, not mal-apropos to the subject.

La vraie generosité est une essence divine,
Qui n'allume que les ames les plus pures:
C'est un sentiment noble, une delicatesse sublime,
Qui agrandit l'esprit, et eleve le cœur.
C'est pourquoi les Anciens, avec jugement profond,
Firent ce principe une forme feminine;
Et les observations qu'on fait dans le monde
Nous confirment qu'elle est vraiment une femme.

Very well, Sophronia!—a spirited conclusion truly, exclaimed Sir Edward; and my son deserved the stroke which I suppose you designed to give him. But for what purpose did the Ancients, in their emblems, give most of their virtues a feminine form?

From observing, I suppose, the superior capacity of the female mind, for the attainment of the most dignified elevation of virtue.

And was it for the same reason, said William, that they gave the Vices and the Furies the form of females?

The power possessed by the female mind to attain the summit of moral excellence, said Sophronia, on being perverted by improper motives, makes them liable to greater deviations than your sex. This proceeds from the physical weakness of their frame, the tenderer susceptibility of their nature, and the influence of strong passions, which, if not combated with proportionate strength, and united to the inflexibility of virtuous principles, may produce an equal degree of moral degradation, as on the other hand, of superior excellence or perfection.

It is a lamentable truth, said Mrs. Osbourne, that vice, in its most horrid shapes and powerful influence, is frequently found joined to a feminine form. This should make women invariably attentive to the impulses of their mind, the government of their passions, and the direction of their

actions; since vice may so soon enter, and produce moral depravity in minds no less capable of angelic purity. But Mrs. Wentworth will favour us with her sentiments on early education.

In regard to the early instruction of children, said Mrs. Wentworth, the first lessons they receive should always be accompanied with a trifling reward. A child will seldom ask a mother for a lesson, on account of the pleasure taken in repeating it; but, induced by the certainty of a recompence, will frequently voluntarily leave its sports, and submit cheerfully to the irksomeness of receiving instruction. But early lessons should never be tedious or wearisome, otherwise a disgust at application may follow, which it will be difficult to eradicate, and which may deprive the individual of the pleasures and advantages subsequently to be derived from self-impelled and solitary study. As the faculties of the mind expand, the child should read only such books as may be readily comprehended, or at least none that can have any tendency to infuse erroneous ideas, improper sentiments, or to enervate the mind, which education ought invariably to endeavour to strengthen. When the pupil is farther advanced in years, and

lessons become necessary which, from their nature, are abstruse to its yet unexpanded faculties, care should be taken to smooth the rugged path as much as possible, to prevent listlessness and dislike, and to give the child a degree of confidence in its own powers. But this must be done with judgment, on account of the proneness of the mind to vanity and self-conceit. A little knowledge naturally produces pedantry in the same degree as extensive attainments generate humility; it is, however, better that the self-importance derived from the first consciousness of mental acquisitions should be felt in early youth; and though it may appear more ridiculous, it is really more excusable than in advanced age, is cured with less difficulty and greater certainty, and leaves open a clearer field for the future culture of intellect.

The rudiments of grammar, which are commonly incomprehensible and disgusting to children, might with a little attention be made easy and pleasant. Even when very young, the mind can clearly conceive, if it be properly explained, that the name of the stool upon which the child is seated, or of the book in its hand, is a noun; that the colour of the morocco in which the book is bound, is an adjective;

that if three apples of different sizes be placed in view, the degrees of comparison are exemplified: that if it jumps, sings, or walks, an action is produced, which comes under the denomination of a verb; and so in other respects. But the instructor must not expect to raise the level of the child's understanding to her own: she should reduce her explanations as nearly as possible to the standard of the pupil's comprehension; otherwise adequate improvement cannot be expected. And if similar attention were paid to the study of History, Geography, and Chronology, I am of opinion that proportionate advantages would be derived.

What, my dear Madam, said Miss Berine, is the method you recommend for communicating information under the last-mentioned heads?

I am decidedly averse from all artificial means, replied Mrs. Wentworth, as I believe them to be injurious to the cause they are intended to promote. Instead of contributing to the increase of learning, they really retard its progress, by impairing every better faculty of the mind, and employing the judgment to assist the memory, when the memory ought to be instrumental in

forming and improving the judgment. It is not by becoming acquainted with the variety of occurrences which have transpired in the most remote ages, the various revolutions which have overthrown states, enveloped empires with desolation, or raised them to eminence, that real advantage is obtained. Without a capacity for reflecting upon the causes and consequences of the numerous events imprinted on the memory, the knowledge of circumstances is of little use. The study of History naturally inspires these reflections; but it should be the business of the instructor to lead to observations calculated to produce the greatest possible benefit to the individual, both with respect to the formation of the mind and the direction of the conduct. Unless such effects are produced, the acquisition of knowledge is of little utility.

The plan which, in the study of History and Chronology, I think would be most likely to be attended with the greatest advantage, is to unite and assimilate them as much as posssible. Thus, History is divided into Sacred and Profane, Ancient and Modern: pursue a course of study, which will nearly in one view bring to the mind of the pupil the revolutions, occurrences and remarkable events which have trans-

pired in one period of time throughout the world. For example, let the pupil make himself acquainted, not superficially, but by abstracts, or at least by notes, with the events which occurred in the first century, for the sake of elucidation, say after the Christian era. Let him know what particular nations flourished in that century, what revolutions happened, what eminent men were contemporaries, what discoveries in the arts were made, what improvements in science, and so forth. This plan could not fail of laying a good foundation for future enquiry into historical facts; and at any subsequent period, the youthful mind could with ease retrace the important events which took place in that century. System in every thing is desirable, and should be followed as much as possible, to lessen the difficulties of acquisition. Similar observations may be applicable to the study of Geography: a regular systematical method would lead the student, by easy steps, from an acquaintance with places of the greatest, to those of lesser importance, and with like facility, from Modern to Ancient Geography, giving at the same time, a knowledge of the government, religion, extent, population, military resources, manufactures, natural productions, political revolutions, &c. of the

several countries, with the memorable events which have occurred, and eminent characters who have flourished, in different places.

Such methods would doubtless facilitate the attainment of knowledge, evidently smooth the path for superior natural capacities, and assist the most retentive memories. I would observe further, that all who are engaged in the instruction of youth should be careful not to suffer the memory to be burthened with useless or unimportant details, while there are so many other branches of knowledge, the rudiments of which would be highly beneficial to the pupil, prospectively; in particular, a little insight into the arcana of chemistry ought not to be omitted in the education of either sex, as an acquaintance with this all-prevading science must ever be an infallible medium for enlarging our perceptions of the wisdom of the Creator, as displayed in the formation of his works. Who, that perceives the truth of these lines, can be insensible to the goodness of the Deity, or incapable of feeling the most elevated and devout admiration?

> Organic forms with chemic changes strive,
> Live but to die, and die but to revive;
> Immortal matter braves the transient storm,
> Mounts from the wreck, unchanging but in form.
>
> DARWIN.

" Mark how oxygen with azote gas,
Plays round the globe in one ærial mass,
Or, fused with hydrogen, in ceaseless flow,
Forms the wide waves which foam and roll below."

Allow me to repeat also the verses of Prior, quoted, as are the preceding, in that useful production. Parkes's Chemical Catechism, which every young person should attentively peruse.

".....Water, restrained, gives birth
To grass and plants, and thickens into earth;
Diffused, it rises in a higher sphere;
Dilated, drops and softens into air;
Those finer parts of air again aspire,
Move into warmth, and brighten into fire;
That fire once more by denser air o'ercome,
And downward forced in earth's capacious womb,
Alters its particles, is fire no more,
But lies, metallic dust, or ponderous ore."

My dear Mother! said Charles, I wish you would condescend to speak oftener: we have all, I am persuaded, much pleasure in listening to you; and knowledge or instruction is never so delightful, as when imparted from a female tongue, and especially a maternal one.

Do not you know, Charles! that one essential requisite in the character of a female, is to know how to be silent? and as I do not wish my girls

to be babblers, I do not love to indulge in the loquacity of an old woman, and present an example which I should not wish them to follow.

I recollect once hearing you say, replied Charles, that it was allowable for a woman to strew the flowers of Folly around her own fire-side, though they ought on no account to be scattered out of her own family.

Properly speaking, my dear boy! Folly can have no flowers. I suppose my meaning was, that innocent gaiety, mirth and cheerfulness, should assemble round the social hearth, and constitute the ease and festivity of the family-circle, according to the description of woman, in these lines.

"There woman reigns, the mother, daughter, wife,
Strews with fresh flowers the narrow path of life;
While round her brows domestic duties meet,
And fire-side pleasures gambol at her feet."

Give me leave, said Sophronia, to repeat two lines that occur to my recollection, in the verses on the Love of Country and Home, from whence your quotation is made.

"Where man, creation's tyrant, casts aside
His sword and sceptre, pageantry and pride."

How emphatical is the expression, Man, creation's tyrant!

You are not attacked now, Sophronia! said William, and therefore, in this instance, you do not stand forth as a champion, but as an agressor.

Indeed, Sophronia! said the Vicar, the habit of recrimination in which you indulge, is by no means amiable, or consistent with the effects of your general good sense; and as William observes, it is at present entirely without provocation.

I beg pardon, Sir. I confess my error; but it is a defect, I believe, inherent to my nature, and which I shall never be able to cure.

No errors, my child, can be pronounced inherent to our nature. We certainly have the power to conquer habits, and subdue natural propensities, if we will give ourselves the trouble and take the necessary pains.

To make some atonement for my offence, said Sophronia, I will repeat the two following lines.

"While in his softened looks benignly blend,
The sire, the son, the husband, brother, friend!"

And observe that however amiable woman may appear, when performing with pleasing satisfaction and unwearied attention, the duties annexed to her station, either as daughter, wife, or mother, man appears no less so, when, in the cheerful hilarity of the domestic circle, he condescends to amuse or be amused, delights to instruct those whom he labours to support, and gives, in the dignified example of his own conduct, a pattern for his sons to follow, and his daughters to look up to with veneration.

CONVERSATION VIII.

Education continued.
Observations on Providence, Prosperity, Adversity, and Filial Affection.
Remarks on Riches.

LET us now consider the second idea suggested, said Sir Edward, on the education that we give ourselves, or which we derive from our voluntary exertions in the pursuit of knowledge.

Primitive education, or that for which we are indebted to the attention of others, said Charles Wentworth, must have been defective, if it has not produced the habit of self-instruction; since its acquisition is of the highest importance, being productive of both pleasure and advantage to the individual in every subsequent period of his existence, and must be equally beneficial in its

general effects to society; for it is to solitary study and application we are indebted for the present advanced state of knowledge, and must look for future discoveries in science and the approaching perfection of the arts. The enjoyments to be derived from the habitual employment and proper exercise of the mental powers, are beyond estimation, and can only be appreciated by those who have experienced the pleasures derived from the culture of intellect, and suffered under their deprivation.

Is it possible, said Harriet, for the same person to experience both these sensations?

I believe it is, replied her brother: the best-directed and most actively endowed mind may, from various causes, as excess of grief, the influence of strong passions, the bitterness of disappointment, &c. feel itself for a time deprived of its powers of application, and this must doubly augment the effect of every precursory source of affliction.

> The soul of man was form'd to walk the skies,
> To pierce th'etherial bounds, and view with eyes
> Unveil'd by intellect, the Glorious Cause
> Of teeming Nature and her changeless laws.

The God who form'd Creation taught the Soul,
On wings of Science to regain its home,
T' explore her fields, to range the bounds of space,
The vast designs in Wisdom's plan to trace.

Fair Science, radiant light, best boon of Heaven,
The sacred torch by Truth to Genius given,
Oh! how can mortals estimate thy rays,
Or human tongue presume to tune thy praise?

'Tis thine to fill the soul with heavenly love,
To raise thy votaries in life above
Each sublunary trifle, to inspire
The rapt enthusiasm, the holy fire
Which lights life's gloomy path, makes clear the road
That leads from Nature up to Nature's God.

Let us proceed, said the Vicar, to the consideration of education in its third point of view, or in reference to the general tendency of incident and association in the formation of character.

The capacity of the human mind for the attainment of infinite accessions of virtue and happiness, is one of the most delightful considerations that can fill the soul. For my own part, I cannot separate the idea of our increasing perfection in virtue and progressive advancement in knowledge, from the most felicitous contemplation of the enjoyments that await our immaterial state. To use a natural and simple

elucidation, let us suppose a chicken endowed with the powers of reason previously to emancipation from its shell; having exhausted the provision designed for its support, it feels itself incapable of continuing longer in its narrow habitation: in a moment of weakness and despair, it bursts from its confined abode, and views with astonishment the beauties of nature. What extatic sensations thrill its conscious frame, when, instead of the gloom and confinement of its encrusted habitation, it beholds the cheering light of heaven, and contemplates the wonders and varying beauties of creation! Can we suppose that the re-animated, enlightened, invigorated being would regret its escape from prison, sigh for a diminution of its extended powers and enjoyments, and again return to the darkened spot which it quitted with so much reluctance? Impossible: on the contrary, its sensations of delight, admiration, and gratitude, must increase in proportion to its participation in the inexhaustible enjoyments of this still-improving state of existence. Who, then, can regret that the beings we love, freed from the fetters of mortality, are admitted into the enjoyment of bliss transcending all the powers of human comprehension? To mourn our departed friends is

natural, but it is selfish; and if yielded to in excess, becomes criminal; being a tacit arraignment of the wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Ruler, whose pleasure is to diffuse continual accessions of good to his intelligent creation.

The most acute sufferings, said Mrs. Osbourne, attendant upon our natural dissolution, in my opinion, originate in the pain of an unavoidable separation from those we love. No one capable of discriminate reflection can seriously regret a change so evidently advantageous to the individual; we should therefore be careful not to augment, by excessive and obvious grief, the severity of his affliction. For who that has a heart alive to tenderness, a soul still warm with affection, for beings who perhaps not only looked up to the expiring object for support, but were accustomed to derive their chief happiness from his approving smiles, could regard with calm indifference the sorrows that oppress the soul of the surviving spectators? In this moment of awful trial, it should be the business of fond affection and sincere regard, instead of augmenting by clamorous lamentations the pains of dissolution, to assume true magnanimity and subdue every rising emotion and selfish feeling,

to endeavour to inspire the departing mind with additional confidence in the goodness of the Supreme Judge, and lead to the sublime views arising from the contemplation of the approaching change. This, it is true, very few, at least of my own sex, could be able fully to effect; but we should at least make the attempt, and endeavour to give the most exalted proof of affection, at a time when it may be most necessary and beneficial. But we will change the subject: my poor Sophronia, I perceive, is too much affected. I am truly sorry for thus bringing to her recollection the loss of her parents.

Do not apologize, my dear Madam! Though so many years have elapsed, I cannot entirely forget the beings to whom I am indebted for existence, and for their tender care of my infancy. I have a soul incapable of envy, but must confess that I have experienced a similar sensation, when observing the proofs of affection and kindness lavished by a father upon his offspring, and have often been tempted to repine that such could not be enjoyed by myself.

The conviction of the goodness of the Deity, my child, said the Vicar, should inspire resig-

nation to the dispensations of his will, however afflicting they may be. The existence of a universal providence is not frequently doubted, nature and observation attesting its truth beyond the possibility of contradiction; but considerations of a partieular providence are not so universally admitted; yet it is the firm persuasion of this great directing principle which constitutes one of the most delightful and consolatory doctrines of Christianity. The man who perceives the finger of Omnipotence in the incidents and occurrences of life, dares not murmur at the most severe ordinations, nor repine under the acutest sufferings, but will patiently submit to affliction in its most distressing forms. The tendency of Adversity to amend the heart, to correct unamiable dispositions, and produce a proper regulation of the passions, is generally acknowledged; but amidst the enjoyments of Prosperity, we are not always aware of her gilded baits, nor do we sufficiently guard against the delusive snares which lie concealed under the flowery verdure. How anxiously do we often sigh for the smiles of this syren, and mourn the chilling frowns of Adversity! but did we properly reflect upon the influence and power of both, I am persuaded that we should the less

regret the severe discipline of our best friend, nor so readily rejoice in the flattering delusions of our fascinating enemy.

The most painful sufferings of adversity, said Mrs. Osbourne, connected with our circumstances in life, originate less in the deprivations attending a change of situation, or the diminution of our temporal enjoyments, than in the unkindness of our ordinary associates, or of those who, in the familiar intercourse of life, have designated themselves by the appellation of friend. How far they merit the name, or have minds capable of the expansion which genuine friendship requires, their subsequent conduct is sure to evince. It is natural for the wounded spirit to be peculiarly susceptible of slight or insult; and the gentlest touch will occasion a pang, which the mind in a state of convalescence would scarcely feel. This consideration should make superiors either in situation, rank, or talents, particularly cautious in their conduct towards inferiors, and above all, in their treatment of the unfortunate. True nobleness of mind is in such cases conspicuously evident; and it is worthy of remark, that the conduct prescribed as constituting the *ne plus ultra* of good

breeding, is precisely in unison with the precepts of genuine Christianity. The power of communicating happiness to others must afford the most exquisite gratification to the soul; being a participation in the prerogative of Heaven. To make others happy, by attention and kindness, is the art and aim of true politeness; and to render them worthy of being permanently so, is the privilege and design of Christianity.

We come now, said Sir Edward, to the discussion of that most interesting duty, the practice of Filial Affection. This, like every other virtue, glows with superior lustre in exalted minds; it is, I was about to say, the criterion of excellency; the evidence of an amiable, pious, affectionate soul. Those who are deficient in its practice, whatever may be their attainments and qualifications, cannot fail of being despicable in the eyes of all who are capable of appreciating real worth; and those who are eminent for filial piety, are ever proportionably valued by all whose approbation is really desirable. How many elegant and accomplished young women have I met with in the world, who appeared upon a superficial intercourse truly amiable; but, when viewed nearer home, in their

deportment towards their parents, how contemptible have they proved! Every grace has vanished, every charm has presented only delusion; while, on the contrary, girls endowed with no remarkable exterior advantages have excited the liveliest admiration, by their invariably pleasing, affectionate, and respectful attentions to the authors of their being. This is a virtue so intimately connected with the heart and mind, that we may generally form an accurate judgment of both, from the general practice of the individual whose character we would estimate. We cannot with reason expect an undutiful child to be a faithful friend, an affectionate partner, a good parent, or indeed to perform any of the duties of life from proper motives.

Filial piety particularly adorns the softer sex, but shines with dignified and superior lustre in men; as where, with us, it becomes conspicuous, the pleasing sensations of admiration it excites are stronger than those which follow similar examples among females; because, perhaps, more is expected from the tenderness of their nature; and its general indications in our sex are less obvious.

In regard to those of my own sex, said Mrs. Osbourne, what can be so delightful an employment, at least to the mind of sensibility and refinement, as to soothe by affectionate attentions the declining years of a parent! How exquisite the gratification, to witness eyes glistening with affection at the cheerful performance of every filial duty, and beaming with delight at the alacrity with which every wish is anticipated and every injunction obeyed. Soft as is the pillow smoothed by the hand of a beloved daughter, the pleasure she experiences at finding that no one can place it so comfortably as herself, amply repays her, not only for hours of anxious watching, but compensates for expressions of petulance and caprice, extorted perhaps by suffering and wearied patience. It is not in the ball-room, in the splendid circle, or gay intellectual conversation, that woman shines to most advantage: in the apartment of sickness, in the house of mourning, her virtues emit a mild and steady light, and there her attentions diffuse a satisfaction which the most elegant performance of the etiquettes of fashion cannot impart.

I am often astonished, said Mrs. Wentworth, at the value generally attached to the possession

of Riches, and the consciousness of importance they seem to inspire. For my own part, I am more inclined to pity than to envy the owners of immense wealth, from the extreme difficulty which must attend its proper use and employment. The middle station of life claims a decided preference to that of opulence; which, though desirable from its means of gratifying every laudable and generous impulse, is still dangerous, in its tendency to create pride, vanity and self-conceit. This, however, is chiefly observable in persons of narrow, uninformed minds, among such as have risen from the lowest stations in life; but these effects are never to be perceived in superior characters, who value themselves as men, and not as the possessors of gold.

Extreme indigence is less to be deprecated for its temporal deprivations, than its restraint upon the cultivation of the mind. A bud of superior beauty will not unfrequently raise its head; but the flowers of intellect seldom blossom in the shady vallies of penury; and if they happen to excite the notice of a patron more remarkable for wealth than discrimination, the tender plant is prematurely drawn into the full sunshine of luxurious habits, which, instead of gradually

opening its sources of healthful vigour, dries them up, or forces the production of bitter fruit, poisonous to the branch that bears it, and baleful in its counteracting influence upon the attractions of contemporary plants of the same species, that would otherwise have commanded for themselves and society, the benefits proceeding from more judicious cultivation.

CONVERSATION IX.

Taste. Gratitude. Observations on the Passions.

HAVING attended to the arrangement of the proposed plan, in our investigation of general good, said Charles Wentworth, permit me this evening to lay before you some ideas on Gratitude and Taste. The former were suggested by our deficiency in elucidating this generous and divine impulse of the soul, in our observations on filial affection, and the latter by observing the frequent abuse and misconception of the term, even amongst the possessors of affluence, accomplishments and refinement. Taste appears, to me, to be a principle of the mind, inherent to the soul of susceptibility, and capable, like all other natural gifts, of improvement by cultivation, of expansion by exercise, or almost total eradication by restraint,

or deficiency of opportunities for profitable observation.

What are your reasons, said William Berine, for supposing the principle of taste to reside intuitively, and to be a natural rather than an acquired perception of the mind?

I am of opinion, replied Charles, that where taste has not in some degree a primary existence, no education can give it; but the principle must be improved considerably by education, observation, intimate acquaintance, and extensive knowledge, before it can fully merit the denomination of taste.

> Say what is Taste, but the internal powers
> Active and strong, and feelingly alive
> In each fine impulse, a discerning sense
> Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
> From things deform'd? AKENSIDE.

The standard of taste is by no means fixed, nor the criterion by which an accurate judgment can be formed. It may be remarked, that persons possessing the greatest refinement of mind, accuracy of discrimination, and delicacy of perception, are generally those who furnish

us with the purest examples, and whom we may most safely take for patterns. A warm admiration and ready discernment of the beauties of nature, is the primary attribute of taste. There are not many persons who do not possess this, in a greater or less degree; consequently, few are incapable, with proper attention and profitable opportunities, of improving their taste so as to be able to derive pleasure from the perfection of the arts, as well as from the beauties of nature. Beauty consists in harmony, elegance, proportion, unity, variety, and the nameless graces which constitute the delight occasioned by the contemplation of a beautiful object; and when grandeur and magnificence are combined with our perceptions of beauty, the mind is conscious of a superior pleasure, and exults with a kind of native pride in the lofty ideas inspired by elegance, harmony and sublimity. Nor is the pleasure which proceeds from the contemplation of Ecclesiastical Architecture the least of the enjoyments afforded by the capacity of the mind to discern and appreciate the admirable productions of art and industry; and the sensations which naturally arise from the sublime and awful considerations inspired by every surrounding object, produce a

soothing melancholy, which occasions, perhaps, some of the most refined and exquisite emotions which the soul is capable of feeling. The author of The Ponderer, speaking of the same pleasures, appropriately observes, that "he who has felt his attachment to the world diminished, and his devotion elevated to the sublimest exercises of piety, by worshipping the Deity amidst the scenes of these solemn impresions, has obtained access to a source of pleasure, in a higher degree exquisite, because more refined, and rendered sacred by virtuous recollections."

Your observations are doubtless just, Charles, said Sir Edward; and we may remark that taste, intellect, and sensibility, are generally proportionably and inseparably connected.

The consideration of Gratitude, continued Charles Wentworth, leads to very extended and exalted views. It is a principle which inspires some of the most generous impulses of the soul, is a frequent source of great and noble actions, being inseparable from real magnanimity or true greatness; it is constantly combined with the most refined and exquisite feelings of true religion; and the exalted sensations inspired by

devotional gratitude, deservedly claim the first rank among the highest mental enjoyments.

The man who is incapable of feeling gratitude to his Creator, to whom he is indebted for "his creation, preservation, redemption, and all the blessings of this life," cannot be expected to estimate properly the obligations conferred on him by his fellow-creatures; who, although they are only agents or secondary causes, influenced by the great first cause or primeval source of good, are yet entitled to our warmest gratitude, respect, and affection; and no succeeding events which may occur in life should be allowed to efface the recollection of benefits received, or to lessen our sense of the obligation. Every incident of life is a link in the great chain which is to raise us to our destined sphere, whether viewed in regard to our temporal situation or our intellectual *ne plus ultra*.

The warmth of gratitude, or the liveliness of the feelings inspired by that sensation, like perhaps every other impulse of the mind, may be referred to the strength of the passions, tender susceptibility, and powers of intellect possessed by the individual: we must have hearts to feel, minds to esteem, and understandings to appreciate the obligations conferred,

before the soul can be inspired with gratitude. Consequently we may infer, that benefits bestowed on persons in whom are perceptible these general capacities of the mind, are more likely to be properly estimated, than proportionate favors dispensed to those of less natural sensibility. Hence the source of ingratitude, so generally deplored in the world, which, although not peculiar to any class, has been frequently deprecated in many of the lower order of society.

The minds of persons in every class, said Harriet, must naturally be the same. The degree of cultivation only constitutes the difference; and amongst whom are the effects of strong passions so obvious as in the lower order of people?

Of ungovernable passions you would say, Harriet. To this I agree; but their want of regulation is rather a proof of the natural weakness than strength of the mind. It does not follow, that the man who possesses strong passions must degrade his nature by yielding to every ardent impulse; on the contrary, the person who feels within himself the seeds that produce effects so contrary to his perceptions of

right, will be the more anxious to guide himself with a stronger curb, to restrain feelings which may produce effects that are derogatory to his dignity as a man, and inimical to his enjoyments as a Christian.

The feelings inspired by gratitude in this life, said the Vicar, though often the cause of highly meritorious actions, yet in their greatest degree produce a sensation of pain: the mind, labouring under an oppressive sense of obligation, feels its inability to make a suitable return, and sinks into the consciousness of comparative insignificance. This may originate in an innate conviction of the natural equality of mankind upon earth, that cannot prevail in a future state. Gratitude will then inspire only sensations of enthusiastic delight, augment the rapture of every celestial enjoyment, and increase the exquisite perceptibility of the highest fruition of bliss. Let us, then, cultivate the sacred principle, and beware lest the storms of adversity or the delusive rays of visionary prosperity, extinguish an impulse capable of producing the most refined augmentations to every source of sublunary happiness, and a foretaste of joys inexpressible, in the mansions of eternal bliss.

Thus down life's stream may we serenely glide,
And seek each fleeting moment to improve,
Till mental vigour glows in towering pride,
And fruitive knowledge prove that GOD is Love.

CONVERSATION X.

The Physical, Moral and Intellectual Superiority of Man investigated.

SOPHRONIA being always so obliging, said William Berine, as to give our sex unbounded superiority, I wish to request an explanation of the term, that we may be able to judge how far her ideas are consistent with reason, nature and the good of mankind.

Were I inclined to criticise, replied Sophronia, I might make some remarks upon the terms in which your proposition is clothed: ideas that are consistent with reason, must be equally so with nature and the general good of mankind; therefore ideas that are not consistent in

these points, must be absolutely and obviously inconsistent.

This is an excellent evasion, Sophronia! You wish to draw us into metaphysical abstraction, to avoid the plain, direct researches of truth.

I know no other purpose of metaphysical investigations, replied Sophronia, than that of enabling us more clearly and easily to discern truth, to ascertain the boundaries of virtue and vice, knowledge and ignorance, and to open to our view, with plainness and precision, those speculative points which might otherwise be involved in impenetrable obscurity.

This is a mere play of words, Sophronia! to enable you to avoid the proposed discussion; but I hope my request will be acceded to, and that we may this evening be allowed to examine the real or assumed superiority of man, which must be either natural or acquired, given or usurped; as to understand our proper place in the order of creation, as well as our rank in society, is certainly desirable, and indeed essential to the adequate performance of our duties and

the particular regulation of our conduct. Does man really possess superiority? is he only equal to woman? or is he inferior? One of these points I am desirous of ascertaining, that I may for the future know precisely the rank I hold in the scale of creation, and not arrogantly assume a prerogative to which I am not justly entitled, although so obligingly yielded to me by Sophronia.

The superiority of man, generally, replied Sophronia, as connected with the good of society at large, it is proper to admit; otherwise that subordination which is equally necessary to the well-being of a family as to that of a state, would be wanting, and anarchy would inevitably ensue; consequently an admission of the superiority of your sex is essential to the leading topic of our consideration, the more extended dissemination of good. But although unable to enter into metaphysical disquisitions, may I, for the better elucidation of argument, enquire into the nature of the soul, whether it possesses, in its primeval state, an inherent difference, that conveys its influence to the frame which it inhabits, or if its subsequent advantages arise from the physical powers of that frame, or from any other cause?

If we may presume, said the Vicar, to enquire into the nature of the soul in its infantine state, we cannot possibly admit the smallest distinction with reference to a superiority in either sex. It it is totally inconsistent with the attributes of the Deity, to believe that he communicates a larger portion of the ætherial light, or a more capacious soul, to man, than to woman. We cannot, however, form any definite idea of its nature: it must suffice that we feel the expansion and contraction of its powers, and that by its impulses we govern and direct our actions, it being the seat of judgment and the sensorium of intellect. But we are lost in any further researches, and sink into a painful sense of comparative ignorance and weakness of conception. The most simple exemplification of its nature appears in the comparison of a spark of fire: in the same manner as a spark partakes of the nature of the Sun, so does the soul partake of the Divine Essence, with this distinction, that the soul cannot be extinguished or extirpated, though its powers may be diminished, impaired or weakened. It exists for ever; and as a flame ascends to its primeval source, the Sun, so does the soul aspire to its origin, the Author of Creation, and in its progress through time, finds no repose or

substantial enjoyment unconnected with the hope of a happy futurity:

> The soul, uneasy, and confined from home,
> Rests, and expatiates, in a world to come.

Although there may be no difference in the nature or inherent properties of the soul, said Mrs. Wentworth, there is a great difference in the propensities of children; and from my remarks upon infancy, those propensities appear to be peculiarly appropriated to the sexes. Girls are generally better pleased with light and frivolous amusements, boys with active diversions; and that this difference arises from inclination rather than from imitation, a little attention would plainly demonstrate. Habit and youthful connexions may confirm and strengthen, but do not give that different bias to the mind, which is so apparent in boys and girls, in the earlier stages of life.

That there is a vast difference between the sexes, said Sir Edward, must be apparent to the most superficial observer; but that it arises from the superior endowments of man, by his Creator, is by no means obvious. In my opinion the minds of each are the same originally: the

difference principally proceeds from the superior opportunities of cultivation and improvement enjoyed by males. The minds of females remain inert, because they have not, generally speaking, the same motives to exertion; otherwise they might not be inferior to our sex in mental attainments.

My dear Sir, said William, with due respect to your opinion, allow me to remark, that it appears the Creator intended males in general should possess positive superiority; otherwise, why were they invested with superior strength, both for attack and defence? The difference is remarkably conspicuous in most domestic animals: in the males we behold strength and vigour; in the females, grace and beauty; and why does woman, in the hour of danger, fly to man for protection, if his equal or superior?

No one can deny, said Sophronia, that your sex enjoys positive superiority in regard to corporeal vigour; but the point to be determined is, does physical strength impart mental vigour? if so, the most athletic man must possess the most superior powers of the mind. But our observations on mankind prove the contrary, as

a great degree of bodily strengh is often found connected with much mental weakness, or incapacity for vigorously exerting the faculties of the understanding.

Bodily strength, said the Vicar, certainly does not communicate mental vigour; yet the body and the mind are so intimately connected, that the one cannot be injured without the other being proportionably affected; but this is more particularly the case in regard to the mind, which, when diseased, is more likely to injure the body than sickness to weaken the mind. Grief, for instance, that cruel destroyer of the happiness of life, what obstructions does it frequently make to health, and what ravages upon the constitution!

True, replied Mrs. Osbourne; but from the acuteness of our own sufferings, we learn to sympathize in those of others. The heart that has never learnt to suffer, knows not how to feel.

Yet nothing enervates the mind more than grief, said the Vicar: it impairs the faculties, clouds the understanding and fills the imagination with gloomy instead of pleasing images. If you value the strength of your faculties or the vigour

of your understanding, beware of giving way to grief: he is an insatiate monster, preying upon the most luxurious food without being ever satisfied, engulphing every better portion, and leaving the complaisant host scarcely vigour to regret having entertained such a guest.

There is no state of mind more distressing, said Charles Wentworth, than that which admits of contending sensations: when the superior faculties of the mind struggle against the acuteness of feeling and the violence of passion, reason, in gaining the victory, inflicts many a severe pang and poignant wound; and in the contest between judgment and inclination, the health frequently suffers, and the constitution is impaired.

The conclusion we may draw from the remarks that have been made, said William, is, that man possesses a decided advantage in point of physical strength; and in this respect his superiority is indisputable; and so far also as strength of body occasions vigour of intellect, the advantage is ours. May we not presume thus far, Sophronia?

Certainly; but physical strength only gives a

partial, and not a positive superiority; otherwise I must acknowledge the robust of my own sex to be my superiors; and such a supposition would be preposterous, as superiority in moral conduct is evidently the effect of principle or mental character, and not of personal strength.

But in a moral point of view, replied William, wherein does our inferiority consist? Survey mankind impartially, and you will find the greatest of moral evils originate in those patterns of perfection, those exemplary, angelic beings, women.

Recrimination, my children! is not argument: we now wish to ascertain from common observation the difference between the moral conduct of the sexes generally, or the obligations peculiarly assigned by nature to each.

The moral obligations of woman, said Mrs. Osbourne, certainly claim the pre-eminence, not only from their importance in domestic life, and to individual happiness, but from their prevailing influence upon society at large. In communities generally, the more virtuous the woman, the more courageous the man; the

more elegant, and accomplished the one, the more refined and polished the other. The most depraved libertine puts on the mask of modesty before the woman of worth, and the lips of licentiousness are dumb in her presence. How careful, then, ought woman to be, to restrain, at least in public, the volatility of youth, and the exuberance of gaiety connected with health, generous feelings, and pleasing associations; as common observers are frequently incapable of discriminating properly between the levity of licentiousness and the native cheerfulness of innocence. To the man of discernment, the difference is obvious; but few men possess sufficient liberality of sentiment or delicacy of perception, to assign female conduct its real motive, if that motive be not exactly in unison with the tenour of their own sentiments, ideas, and common estimate of the female character.

I fear, Madam, said William, we shall have reason to accuse you of Sophronia's fault, too great partiality for the ladies, and unmerciful sarcasm on the gentlemen. Her eyes, I observe, sparkle with pleasure at your espousing her cause.

By no means: truth is the object of our enquiry, and truth alone should be the end of our researches. Had you desired my opinion on the positive and general superiority of man, I should have decided in your favour; but if the moral superiority of the sexes be the subject of our discussion, I must give the palm to the females.

Not without proving they are entitled to it, I hope, replied William.

Certainly not. Consider the moral obligations entailed upon woman from her birth: her duty to her parents, subordination to her husband, and attention to her children. These, if properly examined, would appear to be greater than nature prescribes to your sex, at least in their obvious effects. Man labours for the maintenance of his family; but to woman belongs the formation of the morals and the direction of the minds of their offspring. Moral worth is therefore more particularly necessary in woman, than in man; besides, the same conduct which by the world is either disregarded or viewed with indulgence in man, would tarnish for ever the reputation of a woman, and render

her an outcast from her family and virtuous associates.

All this, replied William, is true; still it proves not the superiority of moral character in woman, but only the necessity for her possessing it.

In our observations upon social life, said Mrs. Osbourne, we may remark, notwithstanding the philanthropy of some of your sex, that greater good is frequently derived from the exertions of our own. It must be allowed, generally speaking, that we have more time for attention to others, and it often happens that we have more inclination; and highly as I respect the station and duties of a wife and mother, yet, how much incalculable good is conferred on society, by those who, having no such obligations to perform, devote the greatest part of their time to the care and instruction of indigent youth, to lessening the ills of life, and alleviating the sufferings of humanity. It is these and a variety of similar considerations which induce me to claim the palm of moral worth for the ladies.

This is a fruitless contention, Madam: I find that now, as in all other disputes, the ladies contrive to gain the pre-eminence.

Does this arise, said Mrs. Osbourne, from our superior capability of discerning, judging, or reasoning?

If I may be allowed to speak freely, replied William, it does not proceed from any of these causes, but from the force and volubility of the female tongue; which, in all arguments, flows like a rapid and never-ceasing stream, and if even turned from its course, still goes forward, carrying with impetuosity every thing that would impede its progress or restrain its violence.

The allusion, William! is not entirely inapplicable, as it seldom happens that women prevail in an argument by their powers of reasoning, or ability for abstruse investigation. We often gain the advantage, when I confess we do not merit it, merely from our readiness of utterance, or, if I may so term it, from the eloquence of nature. Your sex are accustomed to philosophical researches and profound reasonings. We compensate for our deficiency in these respects,

by our quickness of perception, which enables us frequently, by a witty allusion or happy turn of thought, to overthrow the mighty fabric of proud philosophy, and stand superior to those who will not allow us the privilege of equality.

I think the ladies have no reaon to complain, said George Berine. I am sure that in England, they reign paramount in every circle, treating us, poor fellows, as only born to wait their pleasure and bow to every wayward inclination and caprice.

You bring to my recollection, said Sophronia, a remark in Hume's Essay on the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences, which I will repeat. "As nature," says he, "has given man "the superiority above woman, by endowing "him with greater strength both of mind and "body, it is his part to alleviate that superiority "as much as possible, by the generosity of his "behaviour, and by a studied deference and "compliance, for all her inclinations and "opinions. Barbarous nations display this "superiority by reducing their females to the "most abject slavery, by confining them, by "beating them, by selling them, by killing

"them. But the male sex among a polite "nation, discover their authority in a more "generous, though not in a less evident manner, "by civility, by respect, by complaisance, in a "word, by gallantry."

If the superiority of endowments derived from nature be admitted, continued Sophronia, it does not appear consistent, that a superior should pay a studied deference to all the opinions of an inferior, or yield a blind compliance to one less capable of judging than himself.

The generous behaviour described by Hume, said Sir Edward, and prescribed by good breeding, is the same that is dictated by affection, and adopted by every man of refinement and liberality. We should not blindly conform to the opinions of any one, but we ought to study to promote the happiness of all around us, and comply in every respect with the inclinations of those who look up to us for happiness, when our doing so is not inconsistent with propriety, or the rule of right. But when a man, to gratify the wishes of his wife, launches into expences beyond his income, and deprives the beings who are entitled to his support, of their natural and

legal claim to his property, he forgets his station, his duty, and his prerogative.

It certainly is not consistent with reason and judgment, said Sophronia, for the weak to lead the strong, or the blind to conduct him who is capable of discerning his way: all I contend for is, that weakness of perception or intellect is not peculiar to either sex. The mind of woman is equally capable of expansion with that of man; and her general inferiority arises more from defective associations than from nature, otherwise she could not be a proper companion for rational man.

The opinion, said the Vicar, frequently entertained by our sex, of the vast inferiority of beings who were designed to be our helpmates, associates, and rational companions, is not only unjust to the most amiable part of the community, but derogatory to ourselves, and the chief cause of many of the existing evils of society. Were women considered as they really are, equal in intellectual capcity, and inferior only in those non-essential requisites to judgment and intelligence which constitutes the happy equilibrium of the rational creation, the

pleasures of social intercourse would be augmented and refined, and many existing evils proportionably diminished. The qualifications of each sex are so peculiarly distinct and wisely appropriated by nature, that no rivalship can exist between them, without destroying the character becoming to each.

CONVERSATION XI.

Observations upon the Causes which have retarded the progress of Intellect in Women.

IN the delineation of character, said the Vicar, there is perhaps no topic connected with the science of the mind, or mental philosophy, of equal importance with the causes of its diversity amongst the human species. That this difference does not entirely arise from propensities inherent in the mind, or more peculiarly attached to one person than another, may be ascertained by attending a little to the early periods of youth. A diversity of inclination and disposition is certainly evident; but this more frequently proceeds from circumstances than from natural endowment. Nature must

have done her part and given ability; but the direction the mind takes generally arises from incidents which, by their impressions on the senses, influence the inclination and govern the will. Genius, in its most unlimited signification, may be considered as an exception to this remark.

Children, said Mrs. Wentworth, in the earlier stages of infancy, are invariably pleased with the same things. The man of genius, the warrior, the politician, and the buffoon, have all been amused by the same insignificant trifles; but equal attention is not excited, nor is the same degree of observation, discernible, in every child at the same age; and this may proceed from a variety of causes, independent of the natural powers of the mind, which are not in all equally strong.

At what time, or precisely how, the character is formed, it is impossible to decide. Nature may give a strong inclination, but circumstances confirm the propensity. The man who is attached to study, would not have devoted his solitary hours to poring over the classic page, had be been born in a country where the use of letters was unknown. The active energy of his

mind could not probably have been restrained; but instead of being the first scholar, mathematician, poet, or historian, of his age, it is most likely he would have been the most expert huntsman, or the greatest warrior. Nature gives, but circumstances direct the faculties of the soul; and whatever be their bias, cultivation and industry are absolutely necessary to bring them to perfection. It is the love of ease, and aversion from assiduous application, which occasion so many to rest satisfied with mediocrity, when by a vigorous exertion of intellect and persevering industry, they might have attained the zenith of excellence, or the pre-eminence of which they were naturally capable.

This remark proves the truth of a former observation, said Charles Wentworth, that the disappointments and sufferings of life, denominated external evils, are only partial, and not positive ones; for pregnant as they are with pain, and teeming with distress, they are frequently productive of good in their consequences to society at large, if not to the individual. How many talents would have remained dormant, had their possessors remained buried in obscurity, if the necessity for exertion had not compelled

them to overcome the diffidence of dawning genius, to encounter the eye of the world, and become candidates for fame, in the pursuit, perhaps, of the mere necessaries of life.

I have frequently remarked, said William Berine, that when a person, and particularly a female, steps out of the common path, or on her introduction into life is in any degree distinguished for accomplishments or superior personal attractions, the shafts of envy, with their envenomed points, are immediately cast at the innocent victim; and if unfortunately she offend one whose mind is pervaded by the principle of malevolence, the injury she may sustain through life, by the effects of malignity and falsehood, can scarcely be compensated by the honours of the world, the smiles of fortune, or even the approbation of her own conscience.

The consciousness of innocence, said Mrs. Osbourne, will afford peace and consolation superior to the pleasures derived from a fortunate coincidence of circumstances, or from the general enjoyments of life. This alone ought to support the mind under every injury, and enable it to rise superior to every unjust aspersion.

This consciousness, said Lady Berine, must afford the only consolation. Spotless purity of reputation is the richest treasure of woman; and she who robs another of it by either malignant falsehood or the specious wiles of hypocrisy, is in my opinion equally as deserving of punishment, as the man who deprives a fellow-creature of life; since the hapless victim of slander loses all that can make existence desirable.

This is in some degree true, said Mrs. Osbourne, but the clouds of detraction are sure to be dispersed by the light of truth: no sooner does the sacred torch approach, than Envy "hides her diminished head," Malignity conceals her envenomed sting, Falsehood is unveiled, and artful invidious Hypocrisy detected; while Innocence is raised to a more elevated rank in virtue than that which she before possessed.

Women, said Sophronia, labour under many disadvantages. Their limited education, in early youth, prevents them from having so good a basis laid for subsequent improvement. Confined or dissipated habits subsequently operate

against mental expansion, and the aim of female education seems more generally to be directed to the attainment of external accomplishments, than to the acquisition of mental qualifications.

The vanity and frivolity of our sex, said Mrs. Wentworth, are frequent subjects of animadversion and ridicule. Can we wonder, if weeds arise in soil which has not had the advantage of cultivation, or that it remain barren, if destitute of the seeds necessary to produce useful or valuable fruit? The richer the soil, the more liable is it to be overrun with the spontaneous productions of uncultivated nature, and it therefore demands our greater attention.

The sphere of a woman's observation, said Mrs. Osbourne, is more contracted that that of man. Intercourse with the busy world is more productive of opportunities for improvement than the limited connexions of domestic life, or the fruitless circles of fashion. Scenes of dissipation are not pregnant with instruction, nor stored with the nutriment upon which the insatiate soul of opening intellect loves to feed. In private life, the mind soon attains the know-

ledge to be derived from family intercourse; and confined to one spot, busied in an unvarying succession of domestic duties, unless an inclination for mental improvement has been imbibed, great advancement in knowledge cannot be expected. And even if the habit of self-instruction has taken root, a woman can only improve the opportunities she possesses; and if those opportunities are fewer than those enjoyed by your sex, equal advantage cannot reasonably be expected.

The most useful knowledge a woman can possess, said William, is that which may best promote the proper regulation of her family. It often happens that learned ladies are so devoted to their studious avocations, that their family-duties are neglected, and their domestic concerns left to the management of servants.

This may be the case, replied Mrs. Osbourne, with women of mere learning; but not with women of sense or general information. The understanding of a woman is more obviously displayed in the regulation of her family-concerns, than in any other branch of employment, and this totally independent of learning, which

being rather the evidence of retentive memory than comprehensive judgment, does not always imply good sense or strength of intellect; otherwise a woman would not neglect positive duties for the gratification of her inclination, however laudable, in other respects, that inclination may be.

It is by no means just, said Sophronia, to suppose that a superior degree of mental cultivation renders a woman incapable of properly performing the common duties of life. The idea is as preposterous as to imagine, that because a girl has learnt to dance, she is disqualified for walking gracefully.

I have frequently observed, said Lady Berine, that women who possess the best natural understandings and the most cultivated minds, generally best perform the duties annexed to their station. Can a knowledge of the obligations connected with any particular situation in life or rank in society prevent their performance? The reverse is most likely to happen, otherwise the individual most lamentably abuses the advantages she possesses, and the superior favours conferred by providence.

One of the principal causes which have retarded the progress of intellect in women, said Sophronia, is the importance which is almost universally affixed to personal attractions and external accomplishments. The desire of admiration which, though strongly discernible, is not peculiar to the female sex, naturally excites to the attainment of those qualifications and advantages which are the most likely to inspire it; and if in the social world more attention were generally paid to virtues and amiable qualities, than to beauty and accomplishments, it is more than probable that the time which is devoted to the embellishment of the person and the acquisition of graceful manners, would be employed in a way more useful to society and beneficial to the object of admiration.

Attention to these points, said Lady Berine, is by no means reprehensible, provided the time engrossed by them could not have been more profitably employed. In female education, utility and elegance, intelligence and accomplishments, ought to be combined. *Mais l'utile est toujours préférable à l'agréable.*

Cela est vrai, Madame, said William; but the

love of admiration is generally the great first cause, the ruling passion in woman. It is this which influences her conduct and forms her character, unless we admit Pope's observation to be just,

> That most women have no characters at all;
> Matter too soft, a lasting mark to bear,
> And best distinguish'd by black, brown, or fair.

In quoting Pope, said Sophronia, you express the opinion of a being whose social circle was too confined to enable him to form a proper judgment of the female character. I have no doubt but that he described the ladies with whom he was acquainted; but I pity the man, whose intercourse with women of worth was so limited as not to admit more examples of virtue and excellence than he witnessed.

The illiberality of Pope towards our sex, said Mrs. Osbourne, is acknowledged by all impartial readers and attentive observers of mankind, excepting those whose acquaintance has been confined to the frivolous and vain, and who are of course incapable of enlarging their ideas beyond the bounds of their respective circles.

Vanity, said Sophronia, is by no means confined to one sex, and is perhaps equally discernible in both. Milton has evinced a considerable share of it, in his account of our first parents. Eve, in his Paradise, is a pretty, engaging, weak creature, incapable of judging, though, like all weak persons, self-willed and obstinate. At one time she says,

> What thou bidst, unargued I obey:
> God is thy law; thou mine. To know no more,
> Is woman's greatest glory, and her praise.

And yet, notwithstanding this ostentatious display of obedience, she could not comply with the wishes of her husband, expressed in the kindest and most gentle manner, when her doing so was contrary to her own inclination. However an affected blind submission may gratify the vanity of a man, it does not accord with the perceptions of sound judgment, and can never render a woman truly estimable. Let her obey, if it be her duty, but not give up the privilege of judging, which reason allows and no human ties can restrain. I must confess, continued Sophronia, that I do not think women have been fairly treated by the poets, who have so

frequently assumed an unwarranted degree of pre-eminence. How vast is this assumption in these lines of Thomson.

> And as angels look on dying saints,
> His eyes compassion shed.

Celadon was the angel, and Amelia the dying saint; the one a perfect, immaterial, celestial being; the other, only a poor, weak, frail mortal.

When Sophronia is in a sarcastic vein, said George Berine, she affords abundant scope for criticism. These lines are only a comparison: Celadon is not represented as an angel, but only described as looking on Amelia with the compassion which a dying saint would excite in one. There is no personification expressed: it is only a simple allusion.

Which is designed to infer, replied Sophronia, the immense difference between the persons described. A thousand similar instances might be adduced in the authors, and particularly the poets, of all ages.

Modern authors, Sophronia! are more complaisant.

For a very obvious reason: because they are more enlightened. This accords with an observation we formerly made, on the superior influence which a woman possesses in civilized society, and over a refined and cultivated mind.

There is nothing more injurious to the good of society, said the Vicar, whether considered partially or collectively, than insubordination. Proper regulation is necessary in every state, in every community, and in every family, otherwise confusion must ensue, and the sum of general happiness be diminished. It is highly derogatory to our perceptions of right, for any individual to deviate from the duties prescribed by their station; consequently, it must be improper for a woman to assume to herself privileges to which she is not entitled. "Who made "man the exclusive judge, if woman partake "with him the gift of Reason?" He is not to be the exclusive judge, because woman does positively partake with him the gift of reason; but that reason, if properly exercised, will not induce her to place herself in a situation for which she was not designed. It is her privilege, her glory, and should be her happiness, to diffuse around the lustre of virtue, to

augment the enjoyments, the comforts, and the bliss of life, but not to assume a superiority over him to whom she is created subordinate, and on whom, in the scheme of a general providence, she is made dependant.

CONVERSATION XII.

The Sources of Pleasure productive of Good. Devotional and Intellectual Pleasures considered.

ALLOW me, said Charles Wentworth, to propose for our consideration, the sources of Pleasure most capable of contributing to individual enjoyment, and of increasing general happiness. These naturally divide themselves into mental and corporeal. Mental are those which are only perceptible by the mind, and corporeal those which convey a proportionate influence to the body, through the medium of its organization or external senses.

Indeed, Charles, said Henry, you are so fond of abstruse points and metaphysical disquisitions,

that I scarcely dare raise my mind to the consideration of subjects so much beyond my comprehension.

My dear young friend, said the Vicar, indisposition to mental exertion is a defect which, if not corrected, may produce a lamentable degree of real weakness of mind and conduct, and prevent you from acquiring that intellectual vigour which is so necessary even to deduce the probable consequences of common events or causes. This aversion, which in you originates in that most amiable virtue, humility, if not overcome, may prevent your future advancement in the path of science. I therefore seriously advise you to trust a little more to yourself—not to mount on others' pinions, but boldly try the strength of your own. The degree of confidence and self-possession which I recommend, is totally distinct from arrogance, presumption, and self-sufficiency, those disgusting effects of ignorance and vanity, so frequently conspicuous in youth, which every friend to human happiness must sincerely wish to see extirpated, and particularly from minds whose natural susceptibility in early life is more particularly adapted to receive the seeds of every

moral excellence. And you, my dear boy! who will probably soon launch into the world without a director or guide, should especially endeavour to acquire this activity and independence of mind, without which you are liable to be easily deceived, and to fall into innumerable errors. It would be unreasonable to expect that a man who is born without legs should walk; but it is equally incompatible with the perceptions of reason and judgment, to behold one who is well organized by nature creeping on his hands and knees, because he imagines that he has not sufficient strength to walk erect; yet this is the case with many in the world who have numbered twice eighteen years.

The justice of this observation is too often verified, said Sir Edward; otherwise those who were capable of deducing the generally attendant consequences of improper actions would not commit them. To desire pleasure and avoid pain, is natural to man; and every action contains in itself the seeds of good or evil that result from it. Minds which do not possess inclination for the vigorous exercise of their natural powers, are led and directed by the

opinions of others; hence the prevailing influence of fashion, and the foundation of erroneous sentiments. Strong minds may be influenced, but are not blindly guided: they know how to derive every possible advantage from the sentiments of their associates, without yielding their judgment implicitly, and giving up the privilege of accountable beings to think and judge for themselves. While the youthful mind possesses docility to admit the precepts of those who are interested for their happiness, I would almost prefer their forming a wrong judgment to none at all; but when to the natural ignorance and inexperience of early life is added the tenacity and self-conceit of presumption and vanity, without proper respect and deference to those who have travelled the path which they are only commencing, we allow little excuse for improper sentiments and erroneous opinions.

The sources of our mental pleasures, resumed Charles Wentworth, vary according to the habits, inclinations and attainments of the individual. Exalted and refined enjoyments, which communicate the highest delight to the percipient mind, and produce sensations amounting almost

to heavenly rapture in some persons, are scarcely felt by others. The diversified, natural or acquired capability of deriving different degrees of enjoyment from the same cause, may be exemplified in two men of different statures walking by the side of a hedge, which is too high to admit a view of the scenery it hides by him who is short, but is easily looked over by the other, who is tall, and who, charmed with the contemplation of his extended and variegated prospect, is filled with sensations of delight to which his companion is a stranger.

May I, said Louisa, be permitted to obtrude a remark?—Is not the man deserving of pity whose diminutive stature prevents him from enjoying the pleasures alluded to?

Certainly, said Edward; no blame is attached to him who cannot, but only to him who will not see. We commiserate the man who is not sufficiently gifted by nature to perceive her beauties, but contempt and indignation must follow him who holds down his head or closes his eyes, that he may not behold what is so capable of affording him rational gratification. It would be unjust to censure those persons,

if any there be, whose faculties are too contracted to admit of enlargement; but reprehension is deserved by those who choose to creep rather than walk; who linger away the prime of their life in a barren unfruitful moor, when by a little exertion they might arrive in a fertile vale, inhale the perfume of the most odoriferous plants, cull the fairest flowers, and the choicest fruits. Absurd as this conduct seems, it is that of thousands of the human species, who loiter away their time in the wilds of Ignorance, and recline on the lap of Indolence; who, with pretended kindness, to gratify a vitiated palate, feeds her children with pleasant poison, and withholds from them wholesome and nutritious food. O fly the infectious breath of deluding Indolence! Beware of the pestilential contagion which surrounds her habitation. Drink not of her cup, lest you become enamoured with the mellifluous juices, that contain so inebriating a quality as to destroy the seeds of every moral excellence.

What a picture you have drawn of Indolence! said Mrs. Wentworth. How just and how distressing! Could but the young and thoughtless behold her for a moment, without her deceptive

mask, how few comparatively would fall victims to her snares!

It is much to be regretted, said Mrs. Osbourne, that the smaller intervals of time are not more valued. In the life of most individuals, a very large portion, if not lost in positive idleness, is at least squandered away in trifles, or absolutely wasted in useless employment. Few have attained eminence in the fields of literature, or acquired superior skill in the arts, who neglected the improvement of minutes as well as the appropriation of hours. The weakness of the human mind, and its proneness to self-deception, may be remarked even in the time frequently taken to lament a deficiency in those accomplishments which, by a judicious appropriation of the hours passed in such lamentations, might have led to their acquisition. And as time advances, the energy to commence and ardour to persevere in the race of usefulness is more and more liable to decay, as is frequently experienced and regretted even by the good and the wise.

To return to the consideration of the chief sources of mental pleasure, said Charles

Wentworth, that which claims pre-eminence, from the exquisite sensations it produces, the superiority of moral character which it imparts, and the constant augmentation of its enjoyments, is most assuredly Devotion; and amongst the pleasures afforded by religion, those which proceed from devotional gratitude claim the first rank. It is this sacred impulse which warms the heart, elevates the soul, refines the feelings, and approximates the mind towards its final perfection. Source of extatic bliss, celestial influence, which can thus raise from earth to heaven, O may we ever experience the ineffable benignity of thy Divine radiance, yielding in time, a foretaste of the pleasures of eternity! The soul irradiated by such divine emanations, admits with reluctance the obtrusive conviction, that it is still an inhabitant of earth, confined in a prison which restrains its powers, diminishes its perceptions, and prevents it from soaring into the regions of such transcendant felicity.

Next to devotional pleasures may be ranked those which result from the cultivation of intellect; of which the mind, at a very early period, is susceptible. Mark the gratification the child feels in reciting its little tale. Observe the profound politician, amongst the laborious

class of society, with what pleasure he expatiates on the probable causes of events which are the topic of the day, and the subjects of his partial disquisition! Remark, too, the illiterate among the different denominations of Christian professors, with what pleasure they inculcate the doctrines of their sect, which they believe to be true, from the opinions of others, although unable accurately to investigate their nature and tendency. These observations alone are sufficient to prove the pleasure derived from even a very limited degree of mental cultivation. But follow the child of intellect into his closet: see him forgetting, whilst storing his mind with the treasures of science or the occurrences of preceding ages, the sorrows and vexations with which he may be surrounded, and bury in the delightful exercise of his mental faculties, those sources of affliction which might otherwise overwhelm with grief his lingering hours, and deprive his soul of every serene enjoyment.

The pleasures of intellect, said the Vicar, are too diversified to admit of our particular investigation. No one who has experienced the toil of intense application will affirm that intellectual pursuits can always be followed with

equal pleasure or advantage; but every good is valuable, according to the difficulty of its attainment. If we would gather the rose, we must not be intimidated by the thorn which may wound our fingers; and if we would obtain the rewards generally annexed to assiduous study, we must not be disgusted or discouraged by its fatigues.

Next to intellectual pleasures, said Charles Wentworth, we may place those which proceed from a cultivated Taste. These indeed cannot be separated from intellect, as they are combined with, or derived from it, and inspire perhaps some of the most exquisite sensations resulting from devotional feeling.

We have already discoursed a little upon taste; I will therefore only observe, that its enjoyments are derived from a lively admiration of the beauties of Nature and an acquired capability of appreciating the perfections of Art. The effects of taste in the pleasures derived from literary productions, are inseparable from judgment; since we must be capable of perceiving the merits and general utility of a performance, before we can properly estimate its value.

In works of imagination, the nearer their proximity to Nature, the greater is the degree of pleasure which arises from their perusal. In this and every other respect, Nature is the root from which Taste, in all its branches, must proceed. The greater the deviation from her laws in every instance, the greater will be the offence given to the perceptions of taste.

Fancy may adorn and embellish, but cannot produce, this principle. To constitute what is denominated good taste, an ability to discriminate, investigate and combine the perfections of art and the beauties of nature, must be united. The enjoyments of taste, as well as the exquisiteness of our intellectual and devotional pleasures, are almost peculiarly confined to civilized life. The mind, in its uncultivated state, is not susceptible of the sublime and refined feelings which proceed from extended mental attainments, nor capable of the degree of expansion necessary to a ready perception of the union of harmony, elegance, and the delicate combination of beauty, symmetry and variety, that inspire those lively emotions which constitute the perfection of the pleasures of taste.

The diversity of enjoyment experienced by

different persons from the same cause, said Mrs. Osbourne, merits our particular observation; as by attending to this capacity of the mind, which is perhaps connected with habit and association as well as every other, we may increase our capability of enjoying or communicating pleasure, and proportionably of diminishing painful or unpleasant sensations.

I have frequently remarked that some minds, like the bee, possess the inestimable quality of being able to extract pleasure or derive instruction from the most common incidents of life, and are capable of laying up a store of delicious materials, which supply an inexhaustible source of gratification. Others, like the surly wasp and diminutive fly, hover about the richest ground without improving themselves or increasing their usefulness to others; whilst some, like the venomous viper, impregnate with poison the brightest and sweetest flowers, from whence the most exhilirating and salutary juices might have been extracted. Thus, the possessors of only superficial attainments weary and annoy, with the incessant buz of arrogance and folly, those whom they are unable to edify or amuse; and too many of the human species, from the invidiousness of their own malevolent dispo-

sitions, are incapable of reaping either moral or mental improvement from the fairest opportunities, impregnating with the noisome vapour of ill-humour and the gloom of dissatisfaction the most fruitful sources of temporal enjoyment.

This observation claims particular attention from our sex, said Lady Berine. It is as easy to make good-humoured and pleasant, as ill-humoured and unpleasant remarks; and by doing so, we render ourselves more agreeable acquaintances and more desirable companions.

It is much more amiable, when we cannot form a judgment of the real motive of an action, to impute it to a good than a bad principle. If we err, our mistake cannot injure, but will most likely amend the disposition of the person whose actions it may be our duty to censure; and indeed I am inclined to think, that the common grievance of bad servants might be redressed, or at least lessened, by attentive, kind, and yet decisive conduct in the superiors of a family.

Servants, who have no positive character, are frequently more or less assiduous in the performance of their general duties, as they find a master or mistress attentive or neglectful on their part. The necessity for a good example,

therefore, becomes greater, in proportion to the superiority of our rank in life, and the number of persons who are influenced by our conduct, or who may be our inferiors in station or ability.

CONVERSATION XIII.

Observations on the peculiar enjoyments of Civilization and Uncivilization. National Poverty, &c. considered.

IN enumerating the chief sources of mental pleasure, said William Berine, you considered, I believe, the sacred enjoyments and exquisite sensations, resulting from devotional gratitude, to arise principally from a cultivated taste, (of course as combined with proper principles of action,) and that the readiness of the mind, to discern and appreciate the productions of Art, which we denominate taste, arose from a natural capacity of perceiving and feeling the beauties of Nature, improved by education, and heightened proportionably by mental expansion; which necessarily precludes the uncivilized or unenlightened part of mankind from similar

gratifications, because they do not possess the means of intellectual culture which we enjoy. These, I think, are the ideas inferred; which induce me to offer a short analysis of what is denominated refined or civilized, and savage or uncivilized life.

The enjoyments of civilization and of barbarism, are as disproportionate and diversified, as the habits and acquisitions of the inhabitants of the different countries under their influence. We cannot doubt but that civilization admits a vast preponderance of enjoyment, from the refinement, sublimity, and diversity of its resources.

But Nature, kindly benignant to all her children, more equally dispenses her favors than from a superficial view we may suppose. To elucidate this position, let us consider the diversity of enjoyment derived by individuals of different degrees of cultivation, from the same cause, and this totally unconnected with any difference in the organization of the individual, or in the nature of his mental powers, possessed in common with the human species, and only to be imputed to the various circumstances which have contributed to the formation of his mind and consequent connexion of character.

The natural inclination of men, independently of the peculiar propensities inspired by the physical effect of climate, as of excessive heat or intense cold, is every where nearly the same; but the generally acquired habits and consequences arising from a combination of occurrences, are as various as the circumstances which occasion the subsequent effects. These only are obvious to us: we perceive the consequence, but do not trace the cause. Every observation is connected with utility, as capable of affording matter for investigation, in the important science of the mind; therefore we cannot too minutely examine the tendency of incident in the formation of character; nor ought we to depreciate nature, or blame the individual for not having arrived at the zenith of moral or mental perfection which he might have attained, had he been favoured with the necessary opportunities.

The mind of philanthropy and refinement can receive no delight from the ferocious pleasures of the chace, nor experience any rapturous percussions at beholding its exhausted prey in the agonies of dissolution; but the inhabitant of regions which we perhaps most justly in this respect denominate barbarous, feels the liveliest

sensations of joy in such a scene, not from the love of cruelty implanted in his nature, or that the sufferings of any object are calculated to excite pleasing instead of painful sensations, but for the reason that he has deprived an animal of the power it possessed of destroying him, or by its capture provided the objects of his tenderest solicitude with the means of subsistence. Both these ideas are capable of imparting a degree of pleasure, which we could not from the same reason enjoy, because the existing circumstances of the habits, manners and general associations of the individuals of the different countries, vary so considerably, and so effectually influence and direct the feelings.

Nor could the inhabitant of an uncivilized country derive equal gratification from the acquisition of wealth, with the peasant in England, whose family, we will suppose, was languishing in sickness, or enduring the severest deprivations of poverty, when he discovered a considerable sum of money. Such an event would naturally excite in his mind the most lively sensations of joy and delight; which the other could not experience, because the possession would not equally administer to his comfort or necessities. But were such a discovery made by

the possessor of wealth, how much less lively would be the satisfaction resulting from it!

The same diversity of enjoyment, from the same cause, exists in other respects. Place the illiterate cottager in a magnificent edifice, ornamented with the most splendid specimens of art, and finished in the most exquisite style of workmanship. He would express greater wonder and astonishment, but less admiration, than the man of education and refinement. A proclamation of peace affords pleasure to the labourer, the original source of which is an expectation of the advantage attending a reduction of the price of provisions that will enable him and his family to obtain a more abundant supply, and by thus increasing their comforts, proportionably augment their enjoyment and general means of happiness. The mind of the philanthropist, which, from a difference in circumstances, this consideration does not equally effect, expands with the idea of the scenes of joy that await thousands of the human species—sees the sorrowing wife receive again her long-lamented husband, the happy children embrace with rapture their returning parent, the mother caressing her child, the father his son. The soul of sensibility participates in this pleasure of

the imagination, and in some degree even forgets his own particular sources of uneasiness. No blame can attach to the peasant; nor can he justly be accused of selfishness, or of narrow and contracted views; since

> ..... "The human soul,
> Must rise from individual to the whole.
> Self-love, thus push'd to social, to divine,
> Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.
> Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
> His country next, and next all human race;
> Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
> Take every creature in, of every kind;
> Grasp the whole worlds of Reason, Life, and Sense,
> In one close system of Benevolence,
> Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
> And height of bliss but height of charity."

From these remarks I would draw the inference, that although the most exalted, refined and sublime pleasures of life, proceed from mental expansion, which is almost peculiar to civilization, yet there is no situation, however low, but affords enjoyment, nor no mind, however uncultivated, but can admit happiness.

Your conclusion is just, said Sir Edward. Our beneficent Creator has not excluded any of his creatures from the enjoyment of pleasure, but

refines and augments the sources from whence it is derived, proportionably to the individual capacity for that clearness of perception and sublimity of sensation which a knowledge of Him and his works alone can inspire.

Allow me to inquire, said Harriet Wentworth, what are the causes of the Poverty so frequently discernible in cultivated life, which does not equally exist in less improved countries.

A more general equality subsists among unpolished communities, replied Sir Edward; which prevents such a disproportion of situation and temporal enjoyment, as exists in civilization. Poverty being only a relative term, what is generally understood by it cannot be readily discernible under such circumstances. If the ordinary wants of nature are supplied, a man cannot properly be called poor; but it is not generally a deprivation of the necessaries of life which constitutes poverty, so much as the loss of its comforts and luxuries, which, considered in a temporal or external point of view, are derived from accumulated possessions; and although these are not an essential good or a fundamental cause of happiness, they certainly

contribute to it, by lessening the general effects of outward evils, increasing our pleasures, by adding to the means of their attainment, and proportionably diminishing unpleasant sensations, by preventing the causes from which they would arise.

The causes of poverty, said Sir Edward, are various, and proceed from different circumstances in different countries. It is not necessary for us to consider the principal causes of national poverty peculiar to civilization; though one of those causes may appear desirable, namely, a greater extent of territory, and particularly of foreign possessions; but when the necessary expences of attainment and retention outweigh the present means, diminution of national property must follow, notwithstanding the natural effect of a state of necessity to stimulate individual invention and industry; which, at best, under the inevitable restrictions of foreign commerce, can operate in only an inferior degree. What may have been reckoned among the advantages of a state of warfare, the rapid accumulation of fortunes through speculative traffic, favoured by the consequent sudden mutations in commercial and other property, is in reality

one of its greatest evils, not only with reference to the demoralizing effect of a luxurious change of habits upon the lucky favourites and their connexions, but in the false shame and increased taste for expence excited thereby in the possessors of hereditary wealth. With these, too, comparative poverty is frequently produced, by an indolent neglect of proper enquiry into the actual state of their finances, as well as of caution lest their annual expences exceed their income. A man is not rich according to the wealth he possesses, but in proportion to what he expends. The possessor of ten thousand a year, if he spend twelve, is really poorer and less independent than the man whose income is only one hundred pounds, and who lives upon ninety.

The poverty of the lower order of people, said William, in a country where the manufactures are numerous and the means of disposing of the articles of commerce extensive, frequently arises from the want of prudent consideration in their general expenditure, and an ignorant reliance upon animal enjoyment as the only source of human happiness. The real wants of nature are few. Life might be amply supported at a small expence, were not the gratification of mere

appetite so dearly estimated. But when, from the evils of war, or any other national cause of distress, employment is wanting, it becomes an imperious duty on the rich and powerful, to endeavor to afford the industrious and indigent those means of occupation, which are not only essential to their present interest, but calculated to promote their future good and final felicity.

CONVERSATION XIV.

On the Passions productive of Pleasure or Good. Observations on Reason, Cheerfulness, and Love.

THE sources of pleasure, said Charles Wentworth, which we have denominated corporeal, are so intimately connected with the mind, that their absolute disunion is impossible; and those we have named entirely mental, as the gratifications arising from a natural or cultivated taste, are communicated as much by the organ of sight as by the perceptions of the mind. The delight that results from the combination of sounds which produces harmony, and occasions some of the most exquisite sensations of the soul, is conveyed through the medium of the ear. Intellectual pleasures, which more particularly proceed from literature, are communicable through the eye. Indeed I know of no

pleasure that can be truly said to be divisible, or capable of separation from our external senses, since these are the general medium of our perceptions, ideas and sensations.

The most abstracted corporeal pleasure, said Sir Edward, is that which arises from indulgence of the appetite; and this seems to be enjoyed with the greatest delight by those who are least inclined to feed upon intellectual food; not that a full enjoyment of the pleasures of the table is derogatory or inimical to the possession of intellect; on the contrary, mental expansion refines upon this and every other source of gratification. The man who partakes of the delicacies of the table with moderation, and discerns the hand of the bountiful Giver in the rich repast, may experience surely as much pleasure as he who sits down only to gratify propensities enjoyed in common with animal nature; which, unhappily for themselves and society, is the case with thousands who call themselves rational beings.

As we all appear interested in the subject, said Charles Wentworth, and have considered the possession of the virtues, and the enjoyment

of the pleasures connected with this infancy of our existence, as capable of contributing to the increase of individual happiness and the general sum of good, will you allow me to propose a short investigation of the passions, whose influence on the mind occasions suffering or increases enjoyment. We agree, I believe, in the opinion, that the attainment of moral excellence is the greatest good which can be possessed in life; therefore, the means that lead to its acquisition deserve particular attention, and the proper regulation of the percussions, or the accidental or habitual impulses of the mind which we generally denominate passions, are the first and most essential requisites to the attainment of moral perfection. Without such regulation, we are incapable of acquiring the virtues and enjoying the pleasures which must constitute the highest state of human happiness.

From the natural proneness of the mind to self-deception, said the Vicar, we are by no means properly capable of deciding upon the moral or intellectual rank to which we ourselves are entitled: others must form this estimate, though they have no other rule than our conduct; as we alone know the motives by which we are

ıctuated; and no action, however amiable it may ıppear, or productive it may be of good in its consequences, is really so in itself, unless influenced by a principle of rectitude. 'Know thyself' is a precept not sufficiently attended to; and without this knowledge all our studies and acquisitions are of little use. Indeed, the greater capability we possess of forming an accurate judgment of the general rule of right, the greater is the criminality attending our deviation from it.

In estimating, said Charles Wentworth, the influence of the passions, we may consider them as divided into those which are productive of pleasure and happiness, or good, as Love, Joy, Cheerfulness, Hope, Pity, Melancholy, &c. and those which excite unpleasant or painful feelings, as Hatred, Revenge, Despair, Fear, Anger, Jealousy, &c. proportionably contributing to the general sum of evil. To analyze the nature or enquire into the causes of these, is beyond our plan; but we will venture a few remarks upon the preponderance of each in the formation of character.

Every sensible impulse of the mind naturally augments our pleasures or our sufferings; and it may be remarked that the same passions occasion

either good or evil, according to the disposition of the individual. Those, however, which originate in bad principles, can from their nature produce only positive evil.

The passion to be considered as the most general in its effects upon all ages, in all countries and in every situation, is Love. This, in the virtuous mind, is capable of inspiring the most noble sentiments, and of exciting the most meritorious actions. Only the common acceptation of the term at present demands our attention; but we may observe that the sensations proceeding from love, in its most unlimited signification, are in every respect calculated to diffuse good, whether we consider it under the denomination of filial, parental, or fraternal love, or branching forth into the general affections of the mind, from its strongest particular influence, to the extended feelings of philanthropy. The sensation we are contemplating may be referred to a sympathetic feeling, or uniform application of the mind, which eventually becomes a principle of the soul. Every mind, therefore, is not sufficiently enlarged to admit of this principle, otherwise there could be no transfer of affection; which is totally incompatible with the generous impulse that constitutes real love.

Before we proceed in our remarks, said William Berine, I request we may be favoured with Sophronia's opinion. I perceive, her mind is teeming with ideas that exalt her own sex and debase ours, or at least place us more on a level.

To aspire to the honour of ranking with the Lords of the Creation, replied Sophronia, is what you have already decided, so subordinate a creature as woman should never attempt.

We will have your opinion, if you please, Sophronia, said Sir Edward; so do not hesitate. However severe you may be on the gentlemen, we will excuse you; for, as you have neither father, husband nor brother amongst us, it is a little hard that you should be prevented from expressing your sentiments freely. For my own part, I must do you the justice to say, that you have generally truth and good sense on your side, though I believe it is such as the young fellows of the present age do not relish.

Since I am compelled to speak, replied Sophronia, you must not be offended, if I observe that love, like every other passion, has stimulated my sex to more noble and praiseworthy

actions than yours. I allude principally to its effects under the character of conjugal affection. The instances of previous fidelity which it may have produced, are not, from the natural delicacy of the female mind, so well known; but notwithstanding the severe sarcasms that have been so abundantly bestowed upon us, I believe there are few examples to be adduced, in the conduct of females whose characters are formed on the basis of virtuous principles, of a voluntary breach of fidelity. I make no comment upon your sex, though we have frequently been so illiberally treated. The soul knows no distinction: virtue may reside in and equally influence both sexes, though its effects in ours may be more obvious; as it is apparent that the pleasure which a woman experiences in being able to support by her own exertions a rising family, is superior to what is commonly enjoyed by those whose more peculiar duty it is to provide for their offspring; and when this becomes necessary, the ardour, industry, perseverance and courage of woman, in the midst of repelling difficulties, is greater than what is usually observable in man.

Well, Sophronia! said William, what else have you to say in favour of the ladies? You

shall meet with no opposition or contradiction; therefore I pray proceed.

To speak the language of truth, replied Sophronia, confirmed by general observation, women are very seldom treated as rational beings by your sex. The plain inference to be drawn from the conversation and behaviour of men frequently is, that you conceive us to be devoid of principle to direct, and judgment to regulate, our conduct. Weakness and Woman are held to be synonymous terms.

Pray continue your remarks, Sophronia! we are all attention, and you speak excellently on the subject.

Since you admire Truth, replied Sophronia, I will venture another remark for your amusement, and observe, that men cannot justly complain of the weakness of woman, while they study by flattery to render them so; nor lament that they are incapable of rational conversation, when they prevent them from joining in or benefiting by it, by invariably refraining, in their presence, from the discussion of subjects calculated to improve and instruct them.

I thought, Sophronia! you loved flattery; and you must be pleased to remember that Reason is of the masculine gender, therefore should not too often intrude upon the presence and society of the ladies.

I would not, replied Sophronia, wish to deny that the approbation of my friends affords me the most pleasing delight; or that the gratification of this honest pride augments every enjoyment, and in my opinion constitutes the principal reward arising from steady perseverance in the path of duty; but my soul could never acknowledge as a friend, one who would by flattery excite to vanity, or to the omission of duties or non-performance of obligations rendered sacred by affection or necessary by situation. The approbation to which I aspire, and which alone could be gratifying to me, is that which is dispensed by the worthy and merited by the deserving. The only justifiable use of flattery is to stimulate the youthful mind to persevering exertions in the acquisition of knowledge, to lead to the more attentive performance of duty, and to induce us to be what we ought to be. If flattery were used with these views, it would be more justifiable, have less pernicious effects, and instead of feeding female vanity,

might be instrumental in forming girls to prudence, wives to obedience, and mothers to affection; and in the female character, these virtues are successive links in the same chain, or necessary consequences. The woman who in youth does not possess prudence, cannot be expected to be afterward capable of submitting to the deprivations and restraints of obedience, or to the attentions and fatigue of maternal duties.

Allow me, said Mrs. Osbourne, to observe, that we have not noticed the pleasures derived from entering with the eye of Imagination into the scenes of future life, which sometimes the best-directed mind allows itself to do. How much superior in many respects the enjoyments of the imagination are to the realities of life, every one will acknowledge, who has experienced the pleasures of anticipation, and the pain, disappointment and mortifications of fruition. The imagination never portrays to itself scenes of sorrow, nor suffers a source of distress or humiliation to obtrude, and cloud the brilliancy of the delightful prospect depicted by flattering Fancy. Vanity is always satisfied, every sanguine wish is indulged; and the secret hopes which probability discards and Reason refuses to admit, are by Imagination dwelt upon with pleasure.

Delightful friend of the unfortunate, fair nurse of Fancy! visionary as is the happiness thou affordest, yet still continue to soothe the miserable, solace the sad, and charm with scenes of ideal felicity the woe-worn children of humanity.

Nothing can be more injurious to the progress of intellect, said Sophronia, than to yield the reins of the understanding to the imagination. Reason never exerts his full powers, when Fancy is his yoke-fellow; as the imperial monarch, enslaved by the delusive charms of his fair companion, is too much elated by her endeavours to please and amuse him, to recollect that he is designed to be her governor and director, and not her follower and slave. Fancy, as the humble friend of Reason, is amiable in her place, an ornament to his retinue, but a tyrant in power, unreasonable in her commands, and fickle in her pursuits. Happy is the mind which she is only allowed to embellish, but weak and inconsistent the soul over which she domineers. Let the friends of Reason cherish her as they ought, derive amusement from her engaging fascinations; but let them compel her to subordination, and not permit her to direct those whom she was destined to follow, serve and obey.

CONVERSATION XV.

Continuation of the Passions productive of Good. Joy, Hope, Pity, Melancholy, Ambition.

JOY, said William Berine, is a lively impulse of the mind, proceeding from an excess of pleasure or delight; it is active, but not durable; its effects are frequently very strong, and sometimes even injurious to the individual; it is not therefore necessarily productive of good. The ardency of this sensation naturally occasions a succession of languor. Cheerfulness is capable of producing more lasting gratification. Cheerfulness may be considered as a resident in the mind, Joy only as an occasional visitor.

Joy may pay a hasty visit into the regions of Vice, but his entrance only produces noise and tumult, and not the serenity which succeeds his admission into the abode of Virtue; but he never

continues long, and is only followed by boisterous Mirth, and not, as is frequently the case in his visits to Virtue, by Cheerfulness, who, conscious of native elevation, scorns to approach even the borders of Vice, and loves alone to reside with Virtue: she may sometimes withdraw for a season into the vales of Contemplation, be banished by sorrow, or driven away by the impelling influence of strong passions; but where Virtue resides, if possible, Cheerfulness will dwell. They are affectionate partners, and would be inseparable companions, did they follow their natural inclinations; but are sometimes separated by disease and forced asunder by care. Both are frequently happy inmates in the abode of Poverty, but are not always found united in the palace of Plenty; where Gaiety, and sometimes Levity, assumes the form of Cheerfulness, and vainly endeavours to imitate her smiles.

Hope, observed the Vicar, cannot be too highly appreciated. Ever must I estimate as the sweetest boon of Heaven, that consolatory influence which cheers the wanderer in his bewildered way, and not, like Joy, forsakes entirely the child of sorrow, or like Cheerfulness, casts on him an occasional smile. Often, when Grief

presents her bitter draught, the anguish of the moment would impel the wretched sufferer to dash from his lips the soul-healing potion; but Hope rises to his view, extends her fostering hand, and sweetly smiles upon him. Cheered at the irradiating benignity of her aspect, he regains his composure, pursues his journey, bears the ills of life with manly fortitude, and under the influence of his heavenly directress, looks forward to the happy time when, in the fruition of perfect bliss, he shall no longer need her supporting aid.

Pity, now, demands our attention, said Mrs. Osbourne, that fair benignant maid who, with the balm of commiserating love, alleviates the wants of indigence, soothes the sufferings of pain, and consoles the agonies of grief. Heavenly maid! go on, perform the celestial task assigned thee, and painful as must be to thy susceptible breast the scenes of sorrow which thou so often witnessest, let not the acuteness of thy feelings diminish thy ardent desire to relieve them, nor the ingratitude of a deceitful world induce thee to neglect pouring the balm of consolation into the wounds of affliction.

The tendency of Melancholy, said Charles Wentworth, to amend the heart and refine the feelings, cannot be disputed; but to consider it a source of pleasure, capable of imparting sublime sensations to the soul under its dominion, would not perhaps be so generally admitted.

Whilst investigating the sources of temporal enjoyment, whether positive or partial, said the Vicar, we should discriminate between those which are naturally beneficial, and such as may be injurious to the mind. Melancholy comes under the latter denomination. Strong minds are the most susceptible of its power; yet there is not perhaps a sensation, the prevailing influence of which is more dangerous, if yielded to without restraint, or more capable of producing a lamentable degree of intellectual weakness, and even of mental derangement; consequently no impression should be more carefully guarded against. And though the pleasures of melancholy afford a soothing consolation in the hour of affliction, when the child of grief steals from his associates in the world, whose presence is a restraint and whose conversation is irksome, still let the possessor of sensibility guard against its effects. Rather should the child of misfortune

fly for consolation alone to Religion, who, instead of enervating, will strengthen his mind; and if she does not entirely dispel, will at least diminish or enable him to endure the sufferings that may await his probationary existence.

In recounting those impulses of the mind which have a natural tendency to promote the dissemination of good, said Harriet Wentworth, you omitted to mention two, which I think are entitled to our consideration, viz. laudable and well-directed Ambition, and that ardent desire of glory which sometimes occasions highly praiseworthy and meritorious actions.

These are effects of the same cause, said Charles Wentworth, and proceed from the principle of ambition residing in the soul, which produce good or evil, according to the principles and prevailing disposition. Ambition naturally possesses the power to excite to noble and great actions. Every mind is susceptible of this impulse in a greater or less degree, and perhaps there is not a person that does not experience its desires. An observer of mankind may discern its effects in the peasant as well as in the prince—in the child of ignorance as well as

in the mind of activity: the principle is in each the same; the effects differ according to the character, inclination, and mental capacity of the individual. Ambition, like perhaps every other sensation, is most powerful in minds of superior organization, which from their natural susceptibility and capability of admitting its influence, yield most readily to its dictates. Ambition aspires after what the mind deems excellence, incites the ardent wish to attain eminence in the different departments and stations of life, and compels to exertions best calculated to produce those effects. In this respect, ambition is productive of national as well as individual good; since personal acquisitions, that contribute to general utility, augment the public good, and by enlightening, benefit society; contributing to the advancement of knowledge, the augmentation of enjoyment, and consequently to the increase of happiness.

The effects of ambition, said Sir Edward, as grasping at extent of territorial possessions or enlargement of temporal power, may be in the highest degree injurious to society, particularly in its tendency to create the numerous evils of a

state of warfare. Ambition therefore cannot be of utility to the individual whose mind it engrosses, unless sustained and directed by virtuous principles, otherwise it can only be productive of evil.

The desire of fame, or of living in the memory of posterity, is a usual attendant upon ambition, at least in its highest degree; and this desire, by exciting to deeds of utility or advantage to society, is necessarily productive of good. But the notice which its possessors attract, and the honors they obtain, may be productive of vanity, lead to dissipation, and lessen the pleasures arising from devotional feelings, in the assumption of a self-importance which is inimical to the essential enjoyments of religion, and inconsistent with the situation of the creatures of a day, the feeble possessors of frail mortality.

The ardent desire of fame, said the Vicar, so generally connected with intellectual vigour, or that expansion of the mental faculties which we denominate genius, is no proof of superiority of judgment, or of a greater capability of discerning what is best calculated to constitute positive good; since its possession is more an imaginary than a real advantage: it may

contribute to public utility, by stimulating others to exertions capable of producing a superior degree of excellence, but very little doth it augment the solid enjoyments of life. The notice and regard of persons of worth, eminence, and talent, independently of the personal gratification of the individual, may promote the good of society, and be particularly serviceable to posterity; which is always essentially benefited, from the honours bestowed by a grateful country upon those who have served it, by defending its rights, supporting its privileges, or enlightening its inhabitants.

The tribute of respect and admiration which is generally paid to the possessors of superior mental expansion, by those who can discern and appreciate the vigour of genius in others, and which can only be in proportion to the mental cultivation they themselves possess, though highly gratifying to a mind capable of estimating its value and feeling the delight resulting from the pleasure of pleasing the good and the wise, may produce consequences detrimental to the mental and moral advancement of the individual, by lessening the degree of application necessary to the acquisition of further superiority, and may induce him to value himself upon attainments

for which he ought only to be grateful to God; and if genius, by the admiration it excites, suffers itself to be drawn from the shades in which it naturally loves to dwell, into the gay scenes of dissipation, farewell, then, to the further growth of moral excellence. Dissipation and virtue cannot pursue the journey of life together as friends and companions: one must yield and be subservient to the other; and the acquisition of fame in this life, by compelling us to live more for others, may prevent us from following our more laudable inclinations.

There are that love the shades of life,
And shun the splendid walk of Fame;
There are that hold it rueful strife,
To risk Ambition's losing game;
That far from Envy's livid eye
The fairest fruits of Genius rear,
Content to see them born and die
In Friendship's small but genial sphere.

LANGHORNE.

CONVERSATION XVI.

The Passions productive of Pain or Evil: Hatred, Revenge Despair, Fear, Anger, Jealousy. Observations on Learning, Knowledge, and Wisdom.

THE contemplation of sensations that increase the sum of individual, and proportionably of general evil, said Sir Edward, is so unpleasant in itself, that I would propose only a slight comment on their nature and effects.

The first-named of these I think was Hatred. This must be a source of such extremely painful sensations, that the mind cannot reflect on them without horror. How much, then, is the person to be pitied, who suffers under the pangs which hatred can inflict! The crimes occasioned by this passion make humanity shudder, and perhaps can only be equalled by those

proceeding from Revenge. Revenge is a more active, hatred a more settled or fixed feeling; both are equally bad in themselves, and more injurious to those who harbour them than to those who suffer from their operation.

You will observe that I allude to Hatred, only as directing its aim against persons, and not as applied to the abhorrence of causes generating evil; which is, in fact, inherent to the mind, which naturally seeks pleasure and avoids pain, and must therefore be ultimately productive of good. But knowledge is necessary to the formation of a right judgment of what constitutes good; as we seek what we conceive to be capable of contributing to our happiness, with an ardour proportionate to the value we affix to its possession, and which, if misapplied, may lead us into evil, contrary to our intention. By forming a proper estimate of things, we learn to refrain from present gratifications, that may subsequently occasion pain. In whatever point of view we consider the subject, we shall find that what we term the acquisition of good is invariably combined with the acquisition of knowledge. This we may learn from nature. Some plants, for instance, are of a poisonous quality, though pleasing to the eye and gratifying to the taste.

If we are unacquainted with their tendency, we fatally suffer through our ignorance; but if we knew the effects which they produce, it would be the highest absurdity to feed upon them.

Your idea, suggested by nature, my friend, said the Vicar, pleases me much; and I will carry it a little farther, and observe, that although in the vegetable world there are poisons, there are also antidotes: and those who ignorantly partake of them should immediately have recourse to the remedy provided. These antidotes, in a moral point of view, are to be obtained by amendment, penitence, and prayer; and no one need despair, if they persevere in their use; for there is still balm in Gilead, there is still an Omnipotent Physician, who can heal even the wounds of vice.

One means of avoiding the commission of error would be invariably to reflect upon the effects which our actions may have a tendency to produce. Every action contains in itself the seeds of good or evil, pleasure or pain. Either virtue is the cause, and happiness the consequence, or vice the source, misery the effect. The conscience seared by vice, may for a time withhold its reproaches and restrain its torments,

but only to plunge the unfortunate victim into greater depths of woe. Happy are they who possess a tender conscience, a mind susceptible of the smallest deviation from strict rectitude, which shuns the least approach of guilt, and avoids with horror its contaminations. It is this only we should fear. What else ought to inspire this sensation in a rational being, an immortal mind? Should the fear of death, the natural consequence of our creation, the end for which we were born, the effect of nature? Fear in this respect is inconsistent with reason: it cannot prevent, all our endeavours cannot ward off the blow. Why, then, should we fear the lot of mortality, the ordinance of the Deity? Man is born to die; his death is the admission to happiness, his entrance into the regions of felicity, into the enjoyments of immortality.

We have before made some remarks on Anger, said Charles Wentworth, therefore will only now observe, that since the incitements to this passion are so continually recurring, it is particularly necessary to guard against its influence. Persons of the greatest abilities and most superior attainments, are equally and perhaps naturally more liable to this passion than the most ignorant

and uninformed; but they are too sensible of their dignity as rational beings to yield to its power: they labour to subdue this and every other influence which may produce consequences derogatory to their intellectual and disgraceful to their moral character. There is no merit due to the cold inanimate child of Apathy, whose blood flows languidly in his veins, and whose natural insensibility and deadness of mind prevents him from equally feeling insult, indignity, and disdain. The merit of self-government cannot be attached to him who has not any, or only weak passions to subdue; but it is deservedly due to him who, susceptible of ardent impulses, feels acutely, but labours to subdue his feelings, to keep his passions in subordination to his reason, the standard of which should be erected by morality, upon the firm basis of vital Christianity.

Jealousy, said Sir Edward, is frequently considered connected with and attendant upon love; but in my opinion very erroneously, at least according to our definition of love in a former conversation, as arising from a union of souls, a congeniality of sentiment, neither changeable nor transferable, but a fixed principle, proceed-

ing from an attachment whose basis is the mind, and no less permanent than the mind itself, independently of separation by any external circumstance, or even by death. Where jealousy exists, love cannot properly be said to reside; as it implies a want of confidence inimical to its extended enjoyment. Love demands an equal return. The whole heart, undivided, must be mutually possessed. The mind, inspired by this sentiment, grasps according to its expansion. *Tout, ou rien,* is its motto. Jealousy may attend love, in the common acceptation of the term, but cannot gain admittance into superior minds, into souls formed by virtue, allied by congeniality, and united by an affection founded on friendship, regard, and mutual estimation.

We ought not to conclude our observations on the passions, said William Berine, without noticing their effects on the countenance. These are strongly visible during the moment of each impulse, and leave stronger traces, according to their frequency. Beautiful is the countenance, irradiated by the genuine beams of benevolence and philanthropy, where the fire of intellect and the acuteness of discernment are blended with the peaceful serenity of virtue, and the cheering

irradiation of habitual good-humour. Where these are combined, how ineffably attractive are their effects! Did women, particularly, know their real interest, they would devote less time to the embellishment of their person, and more to the improvement of the mind, not however to shine in conversation, or charm by their wit in public assemblies, where, although they may display their acquirements, they certainly do not their good sense, nor their knowledge of what is becoming in their sex; whose aim should not be to attract the gaze of the fashionable world, but to secure and perpetuate the admiration and love of their social or relative connexions. It is more necessary for a woman to please particularly than generally; and it may be remarked, that those females who attract the greatest buz of public admiration, are not always the most deserving of private estimation, and are frequently the least happy in the obedience and affection of their children, the confidence and regard of their husbands, and the esteem and approbation of their parents.

The discussion of the several subjects that have engaged our consideration, my children, said the Vicar, will be of no essential service,

unless our conduct be proportionately influenced by the attention we have bestowed on them. *Knowledge*, unconnected with its necessary effect, *virtue*, is of little utility; on the contrary, our criminality becomes greater, if with our eyes open, and understandings enlightened, we wilfully wander into the labyrinths of error, or suffer ourselves to be deluded into the paths of vice. In whatever point of view we consider knowledge, it is assuredly power; but its end is perverted, unless it be subservient to the cause of virtue. In the same degree, wisdom is virtue; therefore the most virtuous may be justly considered the most wise, and this, totally unconnected with any other expansion of intellect than that which teaches us to choose good and avoid evil.

Learning, Knowledge, and Wisdom, said Sir Edward, are in themselves totally distinct, but to form a perfect character, should be united. A man may have acquired a great deal of learning by application and intense study, and yet possess little knowledge of the world, of men, and the general connexion of things, and be entirely destitute of real wisdom.

I should be happy, said Harriet, to be able to discriminate accurately between a Man of Learning, a Man of Knowledge, and a Wise Man.

A man, said Sir Edward, may be considered learned, who is master of the dead languages, is intimately acquainted with the occurrences of preceding ages, is deeply read in abstruse and speculative disquisitions, and capable of discerning and elucidating the curiosities of antiquity. A Man of Knowledge may perhaps have only a superficial acquaintance with these points; but from having spent less time in the closet and more in the world, he has made observations upon life, men, and manners, and the general nature of things, for which the other has not had opportunities. He is not able, like the man of learning, to explain the laws of Lycurgus or Solon, to enlarge upon the benefits derived by their contemporaries from those institutions, and their improvements in succeeding ages, in the regulations of later legislators, which is the province of the man of learning; but he is nevertheless acquainted with the general nature of existing laws, their proportionate influence upon society, and general utility to mankind. The

man of knowledge may not be able, like the man of learning, to predict the time of an approaching eclipse of the Sun; but he may have a clear idea of its cause. The nature of the Solar system may be obvious to his comprehension, so far as elucidated and explained by others; but he is not qualified to enter into cosmographical researches, or to make new discoveries in the field of science. He may understand that the points we behold in the firmament, denominated stars, are acknowledged by reason and analogy to be suns, enlightening other habitable spheres; and this knowledge, by enlarging his views of the greatness and wonderful power of the Deity, must increase and exalt his perceptions of unbounded benevolence, although he may not be acquainted with their names, distances, size, or the time of their appearance above our horizon, which is the more peculiar province of the man of learning. The man of knowledge is acquainted with the general laws of mechanics, without being able to enter into profound disquisitions on the subject; but from observation and association, he has acquired information on these points, with which the man of learning is probably unacquainted. The man of knowledge may not be able to trace the origin of Commerce, to date

its era, or name the nations from whence it proceeded; but although ignorant of the particular commodities which constituted the traffic of the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, he knows what manufactures may at present be productive of advantage to the exporter, and of utility to the nations by which they are imported. He is not qualified to enter into metaphysical disquisitions, or to investigate the nature, formation, and particular powers of the mind, but is nevertheless able to discern its effects, to perceive the net spread by the worldling to ensnare him, of which the speculative professor of metaphysical theory may be ignorant. From these observations I would infer, that the acquisitions of a man of knowledge are of more particular and individual advantage than the profound erudition of the man of learning; but that the acquirements of the man of learning are more directed to general usefulness. Wisdom, however, claims the pre-eminence, and this may be totally unconnected both with the acquisitions of the man of profound learning, and the attainments of the man of general knowledge; neither of whom is necessarily happy; but a truly Wise Man cannot really be unhappy, at least for any length of time, because he is truly virtuous,

living in time as a candidate for eternity; and although he may be totally unacquainted with the events of antiquity, the laws of the universe, the nature of things, the history of nations, the regulations of policy, the products of climes, the particular objects of commerce, the component parts of manufactures, the theory of ethics, or the speculations of theology, he feels God in his soul, lives in His fear, and devotes his life to His service. This man, though unable to read the language of his country, may be ranked amongst the truly wise. But when to this desire of virtue, which is the soul of wisdom, are united the advantages of knowledge and the acquisitions of learning, then indeed man may be truly said to be progressively advancing towards the perfection of his intelligent nature, and to rank little lower than the angels.

Virtue, the strength and beauty of the soul,
Is the best gift of Heaven; a happiness
That even above the smiles and frowns of fate
Exalts great Nature's favourites; a wealth
That ne'er incumbers, nor to baser hands
Can be transferr'd; it is the only good
Man justly boasts of, or can call his own.

ARMSTRONG.

CONVERSATION XVII.

The general duties of Parents, Children, Husbands, and Wives.
Conclusion.

THE advantages that may arise, said the Vicar, from a deliberative view of the possession of the virtues, the enjoyment of the pleasures, and the proper regulation of the passions, as subservient to the increase of individual happiness, should induce particular attention to the peculiar duties of our station, as parents or children, husbands or wives, friends, masters, or servants. It is not particular situation which ennobles us, but a proper performance of the duties annexed to it. Parents who are convinced that virtue is good and vice evil, should assiduously endeavour to sow the seeds of the one, and eradicate the propensities of the other. An excellent example may be adduced from the

Athenian law, which obliged children to provide in age or infirmity for their parents, but exempted them from this duty of nature, if the parent had not enabled the son to fulfil it, by giving him a trade, wherewith to supply himself with the means of a creditable subsistence. A no less useful lesson may be learnt from the Jewish proverb, which enjoins you to give your son a trade, lest you make him a thief; and although it may not be necessary for every one literally to adopt this maxim, yet parents, however high their rank in life, should endeavour to inspire their sons with an attachment to some useful art or occupation, which may prevent them from feeling the pains of listlessness or weariness, which too frequently await elevation of rank.

Children who are under such infinite obligations to the authors of their being, should invariably endeavour to make every return in their power, by the most tender and affectionate offices; and if they would consider the excruciating anguish which ingratitude must inflict upon hearts to which they should only impart pleasure, surely the disrespectful reply, the disgraceful taunt, would be heard no more. Neither age, talents, situation, nor any succeeding occurrences, can lessen the natural duty of a child

The faults or improprieties of parents may diminish the respect and esteem of their offspring, yet the natural obligations of children can never be lessened or suspended. Gratifying indeed is the sight of superior filial piety, which perhaps of all others is a virtue most peculiarly ennobling to man, and delightful in the sensations it admits and imparts. It is inseparably combined with the better qualities of the heart and an enlightened understanding. The mind that is destitute of this feeling cannot be capable of enjoying the charms of friendship, of admitting the enlarged perceptions of philanthropy, or the genuine impulses of benevolence; nor can religion glow in the breast which is not susceptible of the softest emotions of filial piety.

And you, my sons! who may be husbands, consider, before you enter on that state, the obligations entailed upon a union indissoluble but with life: allow no momentary impulse, no motive of ambition or interest to guide or direct your choice. Wait until your heart selects one whom your reason and judgment approve; and remember that a woman who can forget the duty she owes to herself, to her station or connections, may hereafter forget the duty she will owe to you. Recollect

that you can enjoy little happiness with a woman, however fair her face, elegant her form, or polished her manners, who does not merit your respect by her virtue, and command your esteem by her conduct. Her attractions would soon vanish, and you would find, to your unavailing regret, that you had formed a union which augmented every evil of life. Let husbands possessing generosity and sentiment, ever consider the happiness of those whom nature, affection and unbounded confidence, have made dependant on them, and remember that the wounds inflicted upon the mind are painfully acute to the feelings of dependence. Let them be satisfied with the free compliance of beings who would have been independent as themselves but for the reliance thus placed in their honour and generosity; nor require from their wives any greater degree of subserviency than should be voluntarily rendered by free agents and rational beings, which was ordained by our divine legislator, and is necessary to the well-being of a family, and the promotion of general good. However superior the wealth, rank or abilities of the woman may be, yet in becoming a wife, she has entered upon a state of subordination which requires from her the performance of

appropriate duties, and therefore claims for her, greater consideration, attention, and delicacy, than had she been placed on an equal footing with the husband himself.

Woman was formed to be the companion and friend of man. As the ivy entwines around the oak, imparting to it grace and beauty, but deriving from it vigour to produce its own verdure; so should woman share with man the benefit of his knowledge, his conversation, and observations; while man's domestic comforts and enjoyments should particularly engage her attention.

"Well-order'd home, man's best delight to make,
And by submissive wisdom, modest skill,
To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life;
This be the female dignity and praise."

No man, said Sir Edward, ought to surrender the prerogative with which he is invested; but he should recollect that when power is exerted, confidence is diminished; and that the delightful and unreserved communication which results from a union of the mind, must be lessened proportionately to the restraints of imperious authority, or the influence of sensations

inimical to the privileges of equality, the pleasure of friendship, and the charms of love.

Let wives, continued the Vicar, remember the sacred nature of their obligations, which no circumstance can diminish. The duties of a wife, like those of a child, are not lessened by the conduct or unworthiness of the beings to whom they are due. A child, in this respect, is more to be pitied, because the duties of filial piety are those entailed by nature; but the duties of a wife are assumed and adopted.

A woman cannot be too cautious in the choice upon which the future happiness of her life is to depend; but when she has made that choice, let her not hesitate to perform every duty, recollecting that those which she has engaged to perform are dictated by nature, ordained by providence, and rendered sacred by religion. A woman possessing a susceptible and well-directed mind, must feel that her happiness is greatly dependant on her husband; but she should remember that she is invariably to study his; and that in giving him her hand, she has resigned her freedom of will. The man who is accountable for his wife's conduct has certainly a right to direct it; but his generosity

should forego that right, excepting in important matters, where its exercise may be necessary to their joint comfort and welfare. Mutual forbearance, considerate kindness, and generous indulgence, will generate sentiments of mutual esteem and affection, and maintain in happiness the hearts which love has joined.

We have already, said Mrs. Osbourne, expatiated on friendship; it is therefore only necessary to observe, that in the general intercourse of life, we should be careful not to place amongst the number of our friends any who are undeserving of esteem, or whose conduct does not entitle them to our respect. Lamentable are the consequences which have originated in misplaced friendship, or rather from the influence of youthful connexions; for, as Fenelon justly observes, *Les dieux ont donné aux bons de quoi se connoître les uns, les autres.* A principal duty entailed upon humanity, is to assist one another; and to me it appears criminal to omit any opportunity of serving our fellow-creatures, even although our so doing may be attended with considerable difficulty and inconvenience to ourselves. This duty increases, in regard to our associates and relative

connexions, for whom we must of course feel more particularly interested. Happy is the philanthropic mind, in its exertions to promote the good of others! If unattended with success, the satisfaction at least remains of having endeavoured to accomplish it.

The duty of Masters, said Sir Edward, extends beyond the temporal welfare of their dependants; and that of servants is founded upon fidelity, attachment, and general attention.

Happy, said Mrs. Osbourne, would it be for society at large, if every youthful mind were properly impressed with the importance of performing the duties of their station, and anxious to excel their contemporaries in wisdom and virtue. If such were the aim and endeavour of youth, how much advanced, in all probability, would be the succeeding generation, in moral excellence — how superior in really valuable attainments! The amendment of the human race, and the amelioration of existing evils, must greatly depend on those who are at present in the vigour of health, and the full exertion of their faculties. To promote the improvement of their fellow-creatures, at least so far as is

connected with the benefit of a good example, is in the power of every one; which, if it does not, as it most likely will, contribute proportionate influence to society, will at least ensure to themselves tranquility and happiness.

The attainments of youth, said Sir Edward, are only of real utility, as producing this effect. Knowledge naturally elevates and expands the mind, and by enabling it to find resources within itself, gives to its happy possessors means of enjoyment which no fortuitous occurrences can destroy.

Knowledge, said Sophronia, naturally

Leads man from earth, to range the boundless skies,
And view creation with unclouded eyes;
Displays an emblem in each opening flower,
Of Perfect Wisdom and Designing Power.
Each varying leaflet in great nature's plan,
Consumes obnoxious particles to man;
Emits alone the pure, the vital gas,
Refines and vivifies th' ætherial mass.
The bright Corolla, with attractive dies,
Conceals luxuriant stores from vulgar eyes;
The rich Nectaria, the hidden power
To yield its semblance to Earth's latest hour.
'Tis this fair Science opens to our view,
As in her paths we sacred Truth pursue:
Her knowledge brings each distant object near,
Proclaims the orbits of each rolling sphere;

In lucid gems discerns the suns that roll
Far from the regions of the arctic pole.
The rapid Comet's distant course we trace,
Bounding triumphant through the realms of space;
Or see with fancy's eye, Creation glow
With circling worlds, that round their centres flow;
Perceive the radiant, bright and bless'd abode
Of virtue, peace, tranquility and love.
Fair Science thus can chase each gloom away,
And bless her sons with truth's etherial ray;
Give them on earth that sacred bliss to know,
Which from celestial peace alone can flow.
Let every friend to man, to heaven and truth,
Lead to the rich repast aspiring youth;
Feed them with sacred intellectual food,
And serve their Maker, by diffusing good.

My dear children, continued the Vicar, we have now, I think, glanced at the general duties of life. Let us not plead ignorance in excuse for their future non-performance, but nobly endure every trial, support every affliction, and devote ourselves to the service of Him who has called us into existence, that we may be prepared for the state of immateriality to which this life is only an introduction. Severe indeed are the trials which frequently attend it, and many are the children of sorrow and care; but let them not faint under the burthen allotted them: let them console themselves with the conviction, that the clouds which envelope

them will in time be dispersed, that the effulgent radiance of celestial goodness will eventually surround them, and that hereafter they will have reason to be thankful for the sufferings, which in time oppressed their souls with woe and filled their eyes with tears. When immortality bursts on their view, every grief will be dissipated, every painful perception annihilated, and every source of sorrow dried up for ever. Evil will then be lost in the fruition of good, and refulgent knowledge, transcendant happiness, and inconceivable felicity, reign eternally triumphant.

Evil is folly, vice and woe,
And Good, the bliss the virtuous know.

THE END.

Printed by John Evans and Co. Bristol.