

select in its fare. What would formerly have given offence, now gives none. The palate is vitiated or made dull. The produce of the book-club, and the contents of the circulating library, are devoured with indiscriminate and insatiable avidity. Hence the mind is secretly corrupted. Let it be observed, too, that in exact correspondence with the increase of a passion for reading novels, an aversion to reading of a more improving nature will gather strength. There is yet another consequence too important to be overlooked. The catastrophe and the incidents of romances commonly turn on the vicissitudes and effects of a passion the most powerful of all those which agitate the human heart. Hence some of them frequently create a susceptibility of impression and a premature warmth of tender emotions, which, not to speak of other possible effects, have been known to betray young women into a sudden attachment to persons unworthy of their affection, and thus to hurry them into marriages terminating in unhappiness.

In addition to the regular habit of useful reading, the custom of committing to the memory select and ample portions of poetic compositions, not for the purpose of ostentatiously quoting them in mixed company, but for the sake of private improvement, deserves, in consequence of its beneficial tendency, to be mentioned with a very high degree of praise. The mind is thus stored with a lasting treasure of sentiments and ideas, combined by writers of transcendent genius and vigorous imagination, clothed in appropriate, nervous, and glowing language, and impressed by the powers of cadence and harmony. Let the poetry, however, be well chosen. Let it be such as elevates the heart with the ardour of devotion, adds energy and grace to precepts of morality, kindles benevolence by pathetic narrative and reflection, enters with natural and lively description into the varieties of character, or presents vivid pictures of what is grand or beautiful in the scenery

of nature. Such are in general the works of Milton, of Thomson, of Gray, of Mason, and of Cowper. It is thus that the beauty and grandeur of nature will be contemplated with new pleasure. It is thus that taste will be called forth, exercised, and corrected. It is thus that judgment will be strengthened, virtuous emotions cherished, piety animated and exalted. At all times and under every circumstance, the heart penetrated with religion, will delight itself in the recollection of passages, which display the perfections of that Being on whom it trusts, and the glorious hopes to which it aspires. When affliction weighs down the spirits, or sickness the strength, it is then that their cheering influence will be doubly felt. When old age, disabling the sufferer from the frequent use of books, obliges the mind to turn inward upon itself; the memory, long retentive, even in its decay, of the acquisitions which it had attained and valued in its early vigour, still suggests the lines which have again and again diffused rapture through the bosom of health, and are yet capable of overspreading the hours of decrepitude and the couch of pain with consolation.

But it is not from books alone that a considerate young woman is to seek her gratifications. The discharge of relative duties, and the exercise of benevolence, form additional sources of activity and enjoyment. To give delight in the affectionate intercourse of domestic society; to relieve a parent in the superintendence of family affairs; to smooth the bed of sickness, and cheer the decline of age; to examine into the wants and distresses of the female inhabitants of the neighbourhood; to promote useful institutions for the comfort of mothers, and for the instruction of children; and to give to those institutions that degree of attention, which, without requiring either much time or much personal trouble, will facilitate their establishment and extend their usefulness: these are employments in the precise line of female duty; employ-

ployments which diffuse genuine and lasting consolation among those whom they are designed to benefit, and never fail to improve the heart of her who is engaged them.

In pointing out what ought to be done, let justice be rendered to what has been done. In the discharge of the domestic offices of kindness, and in the exercise of charitable and friendly regard to the neighbouring poor, women in general are exemplary. In the latter branch of Christian virtue, an accession of energy has been witnessed within a few years. Many ladies have shewn, and still continue to shew, their earnest solicitude for the welfare of the wretched and the ignorant, by spontaneously establishing schools of industry and of religious instruction; and with a still more beneficial warmth of benevolence, have taken the regular inspection of them upon themselves. May they stedfastly persevere, and be imitated by numbers!

Among the employments of time, which, though regarded with due attention by many young women, are more or less neglected by a considerable number, moderate exercise in the open air claims to be noticed. Sedentary confinement in hot apartments on the one hand, and public diversions frequented, on the other, in buildings still more crowded and stifling, are often permitted

ted so to occupy the time, as by degrees even to wear away the relish for the freshness of a pure atmosphere, for the beauties and amusements of the garden, and for those "rural sights and rural sounds," which delight the mind uncorrupted by idleness, folly, or vice. Enfeebled health, a capricious temper, low and irritable spirits, and the loss of many pure and continually recurring enjoyments, are among the consequences of such misconduct.

But though books obtain their reasonable proportion of the day, though health has been consulted, the demands of duty fulfilled, and the dictates of benevolence obeyed, there will yet be hours remaining unoccupied; hours for which no specific employment has yet been provided. For such hours it is not the intention of these pages to prescribe any specific employment. What if some space be assigned to the useful and elegant arts of female industry? But is industry to possess them all? Let the innocent amusements which home furnishes claim their share. It is a claim which shall cheerfully be allowed. Do amusements abroad offer their pretensions? Neither shall they, on proper occasions, be unheard. A well regulated life will never know a vacuum sufficient to require an immoderate share of public amusements to fill it.

#### ON THE HAPPINESS OF YOUTH.

A SUBJECT upon which the poets of all ages have delighted to expatiate, is the happiness of youth.

This is a topic which has usually been handled by persons advanced in life. I do not recollect that it has been selected as a theme for description by the young themselves.

It is easy to perceive why the opinion upon which it proceeds, has been so generally entertained.

The appearance of young persons is essentially gratifying to the eye. Their countenances are usually smooth; unmarked with wrinkles, unfurrowed by time. Their eye is sprightly and roving.

Their limbs elastic and active. Their temper kind, and easy of attachment. They are frank and inartificial; and their frankness shows itself in their very voice. Their gaiety is noisy and obtrusive. Their spirits are inexhaustible; and their sorrows and their cares are speedily dismissed.

Such is frequently the appearance of youth. Are they happy? Probably not.

A reasonable man will entertain a suspicion of that eulogium of a condition, which is always made by persons at a distance from it, never by the person himself.