

at worthless grandeur, and to despise those whom the multitude adores.

Human nature must always have an object suspended in its view. The lovely Laura was the object of Petrarch. The passion was romantic; the idea of her excellence imaginary; but it had a happy influence on the poet's mind. It called forth the latent fire of his genius, it exercised his fine fancy; and, though the poet pours his plaintive verse in strains which affect our sympathy, yet we are by no means to consider him as unhappy. For it is a truth collected from long observation on human nature, that the pleasure of the chase consists in the pursuit, not in the attainment; and that it is often better to expect than to enjoy.

I believe it is not on record, or even suspected, that the passion of Petrarch was criminally gratified. It is generally thought that it began and terminated in imagination. But yet it is impossible not to lament, that the object of the poet's fanciful idolatry was one on which he could not innocently place his affections.

No. XCIX.

ON THE FOLLY AND WICKEDNESS OF WAR.

THE calamities attendant on a state of war seem to have prevented the mind of man from viewing it in the light of an absurdity, and an object of ridicule as well as pity. But if we could suppose a superior being capable of beholding us miserable mortals without compassion, there is, I think, very little doubt but the variety of military manœuvres and formalities, the pride, pomp, and circumstance of war, and all the ingenious contrivances for the glorious purposes of mutual destruction, which seem to constitute the business of many whole kingdoms, would furnish him with an entertainment like that which is received by us from the exhibition of a farce or a puppet-show. But, not-

withstanding the ridiculousness of all these solemnities, we, poor mortals, are doomed to feel that they are no farce, but the concomitant circumstances of a most woful tragedy.

The causes of war are for the most part such as must disgrace an animal pretending to rationality. Two poor mortals take offence at each other, without any reason, or with the very bad one of wishing for an opportunity of aggrandizing themselves by making reciprocal depredations. The creatures of the court, and the leading men of the nation, who are usually under the influence of the court, resolve (for it is their interest) to support their royal master, and are never at a loss to invent some colourable pretence for engaging rival nations in the horrors of war. Taxes of the most burthensome kind are levied, soldiers are collected, so as to leave a paucity of husbandmen; reviews and encampments succeed, and at last a hundred thousand men meet on a plain, and coolly shed each other's blood, without the smallest personal animosity, or the shadow of a provocation. The kings, in the mean time, and the grandees, who have employed these poor innocent victims to shoot bullets at each other's heads, remain quietly at home, and amuse themselves in the intervals of balls, hunting schemes, and pleasures of every species, with reading at the fire-side, over a cup of chocolate, the despatches from the army, and the news in the Extraordinary Gazette. Horace very truly observes, that whatever mad frolics enter into the heads of kings, it is the common people, that is, the honest artizan and the industrious tribes in the middle ranks, unoffended and unoffending, who chiefly suffer in the evil consequences. If the old king of Prussia had not been at the head of some of the best troops in the universe, he would have been judged more worthy of being tried, cast, and

condemned at the Old Bailey, than any shedder of blood who ever died by a halter. But he was a king; but he was a hero:—those names fascinate us, and we enrol the butcher of mankind among their benefactors.

When one considers the dreadful circumstances that attend even victories, one cannot help being shocked at the exultation which they occasion. I have often thought it a laughable scene, if there were not a little too much of the melancholy in it, when a circle of eager politicians have met to congratulate each other on what is called a piece of good news just arrived. Every eye sparkles with delight; every voice is raised in announcing the happy event. And what is the cause of all this joy? and for what are our windows illuminated, bonfires kindled, bells rung, and feasts celebrated? We have had a successful engagement. We have left two thousand of the enemy dead on the field of battle, and only half the number of our countrymen. Charming news! it was a glorious battle! But before you give a loose to your raptures, pause a while; and consider, that to every one of these three thousand, life was no less sweet than it is to you; that to the far greater part of them there probably were wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, and friends, all of whom are at this moment bewailing that event which occasions your foolish and brutal triumph; a triumph perfectly consistent with the basest cowardice.

The whole time of war ought to be a time of general mourning; a mourning in the heart, a mourning much more sincere than on the death of one of those princes whose accursed ambition is often the sole cause of war. Indeed, that a whole people should tamely submit to the evils of war, because it is the will of a few vain, selfish, ignorant, though exalted, individuals, is a phenomenon almost unaccountable.

But they are led away by false glory, by their passions, by their vices. They reflect not; and indeed if they did reflect and oppose, what would avail the opposition of unarmed myriads to the mandate of a government supported by a standing army? Many of the European nations are entirely military; war is their trade; and when they have no employment at home, or near it, they blush not to let themselves out to shed any blood, in any cause, to the best paymaster. Ye beasts of the forest, no longer allow that man is your superior, while there is found on the face of the earth such degeneracy!

Morality and religion forbid war in its motives, conduct, and consequences; but to many rulers and potentates morality and religion appear as the inventions of politicians to facilitate subordination. The principal objects of crowned heads, and their minions, in countries subject to despotism, are the extension of empire, the augmentation of a revenue, or the total annihilation of their subjects' liberty. Their restraints in the pursuit of these objects are not those of morality and religion, but solely reasons of state and political caution. Plausible words are used, but they are used only to hide the deformity of the real principles: Wherever war is deemed desirable in an interested view, a specious pretext never yet remained unfound. Morality is as little considered in the beginning as in the prosecution of war. The most solemn treaties and engagements are violated by the governing part of the nation, with no more scruple than oaths and bonds are broken by a cheat and a villain in the walks of private life. Does the difference of rank and situation make any difference in the atrocity of crimes? If any, it renders a thousand times more criminal than that of a thief, the villany of them, who, by violating every sacred obligation between nation and nation, give rise

to miseries and mischiefs most dreadful in their nature, and to which no human power can say, Thus far shall ye proceed, and no farther. Are not the natural and moral evils of life sufficient, but they must be rendered more acute, more numerous, and more imbibtered by artificial means? My heart bleeds over those complicated scenes of woe, for which no epithet can be found sufficiently descriptive. Language fails in labouring to express the horrors of war amid private families, who are so unfortunate as to be situated on the seat of it.

War, however, it will be said, has always been permitted by Providence. This is indeed true; but it has been permitted only as a scourge. Let a spirit and activity be exerted in regulating the morals of a nation, equal to that with which war, and all its apparatus, are attended to, and mankind will no longer be scourged; neither will it be necessary to evacuate an empire of its members, for none will be superfluous. Let us, according to the advice of a pious divine of the present age, think less of our fleets and armies, and more of our faith and practice. While we are warriors, with all our pretensions to civilisation, we are savages. But be it remembered, that nothing in this essay, or in any other composition of its author, was ever intended, or could be fairly understood, to discountenance a truly just and necessary WAR OF DEFENCE. Wanton and offensive war is the subject of his reprehension.

No. C.

ON THE EFFECTS OF INTEMPERATE STUDY ON THE HEALTH; AND ON THE DUTY OF PAYING REGARD TO THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

THERE is in general but little danger lest good qualities and habits should be carried to excess. The moralist may, for the most part, recommend every