

which case, it will be no singular display of our mysterious nature, although the visitations of a common sympathy should be found to alternate with the high-sounding peals of a most rapturous and uncontrollable merriment.

16. We cannot fail to perceive, in this instance too, how inseparable the alliance is between perception and feeling. According as the mind looks, so is the heart affected. When we look to the awkwardness of the mischance, whatever it may be, we become gay. When we look to its severity, we become sad. It is instructive to observe with what fidelity the heart follows the mind in this process, and how whichever the object is that for the time is regarded by the one, it is sure to be responded to by an appropriate emotion from the other.

17. We should not have ventured on these illustrations but for the lesson which they serve to establish. They prove the extent to which a sense of the ludicrous might lighten and divert the painfulness of those serious feelings to which humanity is exposed. It is true that much evil may be done, when it puts to flight, as it often does, seriousness of principle; but, on the other hand, there is unquestionable good done by it, when it puts to flight, either the seriousness of resentment, or the seriousness of suffering. And when we think of its frequent and powerful effect, both in softening the malignant asperities of debate, and in recon-