No. 145.

On the Exiguity of Harems.
11 Kings VIII, 13. "And Hazael said, but what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"

Of the man, who is brought to our notice in these words, we know but little, but that little is full of instruction. It is a striking example of self-ignorance, showing how temptation may subdue one who imagined himself strong in virtue; then the heart may be brought at last to acquiesce in that, at the very suggestion of what it once shrank back with horror.

The king of Syria, being sick, hearing that the prophet Elisha was in his neighborhood, determined to consult him concerning the event of his sickness. It was common, among the Eastern nations, to apply in such cases for information to those, who
were distinguished for uncommon wisdom, so were they to have a prophetical knowledge of the future. Thence, when the king entered into an earnest, the sense of God was to be so important to his anxious mind, that Hazaël, a man perfectly of military rank, or as one may say, one of his ministers of state, to whom the king gave it in charge, to go to the prophet, to enquire of the Lord by him, saying, shall be come of this disease. On the occasion of this commission, Hazaël went to the prophet, and made the proposed enquiring, 'Elisha said unto him, go in unto the king, that the thing that the Lord hath spoken unto you, even that which you fear, shall befall you. And the messenger with great earnestness and feeling, 'is thy servant, or doth he say that he should do this thing?' can you deem me so base, as to suggest that I should ever be guilty of such insulting evidence, such wanton audacity.' The Lord had said unto him, that he should one day be king of Syria, and thus the event proved. This man, who had so much tenderness of conscience, as to hesitate from the prediction, with its foretold his wickedness severely, went home, and considered the king his master, of whom he was considered the king, his master, of whom he was considered the king, as well as his master, and avowed the same. He began a course of the most abandoned impiety. I began a course of the most abandoned impiety. He had been into his character with a keen eye, from his future track marked with blood. Here is the particular point in this piece of history, to
As a friend directed, open attention, from which suppose to draw some instruction in the cold and calm of reason. When it was predicated, that he should be the strongholds of the children of Israel, doing that same with the word of God, their children, with what warmth of feeling, with what virtues contempt, to be drawn from them, the very thought of such enormies, with this strong defence of moral sentiment, was soon broken down; and all the distance of but one day, in the process, he could disregard the promptings of conscience sufficiently to put to death the king, that he might save the crown himself. Ambition had begun to grow in his ear, but promises of advice, he held out her flattering hopes overseas. He listened to the temptation, and took possession into his mind; the siren of the chariot meted down his freedom; all that venerable instinct indignation against crime, was lost, and the first beauty, vanished before the dazzeling and alluring attractions of power's domain. The extremity of such situations motions in his mind was probably like the breaking of a spring over a mound, flying down and ending the breach till the whole is finally excepted away. He knew not how soon he was to become the slave of guilty fears, of deformed desires, or wicked pursuits; how soon muscles of oppression, of cruelty would become the familiar inmates of his heart; instead of appearing as they once did to dark and terrible forms, would come to be regarded as the necessary and lawful instruments of this iniquitous project.

And this trait of character, too, is not, he learned, at Pascal. It is a general feature of the human mind; once is less clearly marked in different cases. Pascal strikes the offenses, in some degree at least, those love, are ignorant of ourselves. He knew not what to treat, what temptation may make of us, nor can we promise that a change of circumstances may not change our frame. His views, incalculable are the instance, all things that we knew not ourselves, if we need not tell you, how common it is, to see men lust to indulge in vices, with they once looked on with horror and detestation. It would seem as if we might better know, the means points at which are may be assessed to over come, and guard them against the attack. As Pascal, I doubt if there be any, even the most
sincerely virtuous man, who has not at times found himself ignorant of his own heart, and who has not occasionally at least made too much an estimation and is not, it is essential to remember that, in the strength of 1: Principles, we seem to know everything better than ourselves; yet it is be- hind, and the mind considers how much more thoroughly we are acquainted with other subjects, than with what is after all most considerable. The contrast of many knowledge of what he does not know, what he does within himself is very striking. He pushes his enquiries into the world without, and becomes familiar with all the vehicles of knowledge, but it is, but if the little world within his own breast, he is of- ten times as ignorant as a child. Yet the movements of revolutions, or are going on in this small domain are of vastly more importance to us, than all the changes of events with are filling the world with more exciting the eager anxious of our bustling race. It is of more consequence to us to know what has been relative to passions, than the understand the causes of the laws of nature, to know the means by which an evil propensity may be crushed in the heart, than to speculate into the profound secrets of admirable, to look into our own minds, than to look through the open doors of external objects. A man may be perfectly con- scious with all the splendid noble principles of science, he may cultivate with ability and success all the fields of knowledge; he may enter into the investigation of causes effects, trace the chain of consequences from one point to another, even till he finds it proper to the shrine of the Most High; he may push his researches into all that is marvelously vast and wonderfully minute: he may have all the learning that books and education of good discipline can communicate, he may possess intimate knowledge of all the history of the world, and yet not know himself. Since this is the case, even self.
one of the heart is so little estimate of human, it becomes us to take heed that we do not hastily resolve into a most shameful and dangerous ignorance on the subject. We may not indeed be so openly deceived as was Hazael; for we are placed in circumstances so differing, as adapted to work upon the tendency to self-deception. But the danger of being ignorant of ourselves is one to which we are all exposed in some degree of other. Of course, every practice was to have it, and might, indifferently as big as the honest to a day, that He should do this thing; yea, but before many months have passed away, it may be, we shall enter heedlessly on some one of these courses. Nothing is truer than the declaration of the prophet, that the heart is deceitful above all things.

One reason, why we are so ignorant of ourselves is, that we do not judge of our own actions by the same rules, by which we judge those of others. And consequently what we can see to be a hateful wrong in another, we cannot see to be so in ourselves. The heart plays this game of deception with a great deal of dexterity and cunning. When our own conduct is under consideration, all the aggravating circumstances of such motives are thrown into the background of entire approbation; when we are canvassing the actions of others, whatever can add darkness to the picture will certainly not be brought out, or where there is not enough, invention can multiply undeservedly more. Now the man, who simply judges thus, must necessarily be ignorant of himself. He may be very sharp sighted in discerning the faults of others, discriminating in weighing the general character of others, but he will be slow of ballot in perceiving his own faults of particulars. I have no doubt that when Hazael mounted the throne, he entered on his less course of blood-revenge, but he would have hesitated in severest terms, the same conduct in any other man; if we knew that when Nathan presented to the view of David, a scene of injustice and iniquity, as practiced by a beloved, fathering son, his indignation was roused, his heart stirred within him at the thought of such baseless, he did not imagine that this was only the picture of his own conduct, but it was not till the prophet pressed it home upon him for some time that pretended decla
Then act the man, that he began to know himself as to feel the vanity of this crime. Apply the same severe standard of judgment to your self, that you do to your neighbors to the world around you, if you will not long remain ignorant of your own heart. When you are about to enter upon any action, or to give into any indulgence, say to yourself, what should I think of this, if another were to do it; what should I say of my neighbor were he to conduct thus? Should I condemn it, with any hesitation or reserve? Then let me so freely and honestly condemn it in myself, as out of myself, for a moment I look at my own motives and passions, with the same keenness of vision, as you would at those of a man in whom your interest is concern. In this way, you may wind into the recesses of your soul, of being ever to the light of day all your hidden principles of action, explore them in their true character. Since it is hard, perhaps impossible, thus to act in perfectly impartial judgment, upon ourselves, but not impossible to thereby apprehend, and understand, and act upon some thing of the divine reason, as that man told me what he knew of God's name, that it is too late to begin.
Namely, the one who goes on heedlessly in his business without surveying the ground before he steps, what will you think of me, who suffers his mind almost to waste, a never descending thorn to summon them to answer the searching questions: How can such an one be ignorant of himself? A better mind, in speaking of a certain song, says: "Before he betook himself to rest, he addressed his soul in the following manner: what out of these best they cured this day? what fine work stood? in what respect are their better? Carnal will cease or become cool, when it knows every day it is to be thus called to account. And the same for cause, may be, take with myself, every day or in judgment on myself: that even when all is kind it still I make a bowing into the day, and my words & actions, hide nothing from myself, concealing none of my mistakes through fear? Let us imitate this wise & judicious example, might your shall not as often be made. I am perfectly inimical to all the dangers of falling. Endeavor shall I the attend an ignorance of my own.
faithless. He who comes before God in the sincerity of his soul, with his offering of praise and prayer, constrained to look into his own heart, will, to true state, if he will feel his perfection as can be done behind the distractions and agitations of this world, that his soul has arrived at; that calm and balance require, where one can take a careful, undisturbed survey of himself, sound his own motives, examine his own errors, bring all his thoughts and actions to the test of God's will. It is this third step which operates as a source of self-knowledge, giving at once a higher standard of what we should be, a clearer conviction of what we are.

There make these remarks in order to point out the importance of self-knowledge, the means of acquiring this most valuable science. The example in the text, which led to these reflections, is a striking one: even with all their virtues, heroes of crime in a few days turned into a tribunal of thieves, wasting the lives and happiness of the innocent and defenseless. Let us hear the voice of warning if we ever imagine that we knew ourselves and

friendliness. Would you be humble? Then study yourself; for you will see enough of pride in these two aspects. Would you be charitable? Study the workings of your mind. See how you have become perfectly familiar with your own words, your own deeds, your own actions; and you may have to have more charity for the weak, the merciful failings of others. Would you not be the steps of your soul? Penetrate into your feelings; penetrate with impartiality. See how few of these you have been to form that path? Then, you will be more likely to be turned to it, to walk therein. In that, if you would be preserved from fatal mistakes, you would not be governed by mistake of the heart. Would you, by the power of your own strength, if you would acquire and maintain the twin characters of self-knowledge - bring your own heart to under a strict scrutiny, or watch them with unswerving fidelity. The spirit of a wolf coming, where are the hearts and souls of men? if they are not here, there is One on high, somewhere through our souls, if we never have looked through the
ourselves. That we may become prepared for the discovery of that which is the searching eye of that judge. Let us strive to know ourselves before it be too late.

let us accustom ourselves to be at home in our own hearts, not to be strangers there, that this we may be enabled with joy to anticipate the welcome, "well done, good and faithful servant."

April 1822.
At home, April 24, 1822. Forenoon.
At home, Jan. 20, 1826. Forenoon, violent nor'west term.