

THE RUNAWAY;
OR,
THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By MR. SMITH.

Somers, whom misfortunes had humbled till fate could not awe nor death dismay, stood calm as a Christian in the crash of worlds.

VOL. I.

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THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.



WHEN the sun was hastening towards the western hills, that closed the distant view, the woe-worn Somers walked to the Avon's bank, there to beguile a melancholy hour in reading the sorrows of others, and thus endeavour to lose the recollection of his own.—Vain attempt! Scarcely had he seated himself and read a dozen pages, before his truant thoughts wandered from the subject, and traced the retrospective view of happiness that

once was his, but now considered lost, never to be regained. "Ah, Louisa!" cried he, "to memory ever true, but false to love; why have you thus forsaken me? Why at the altar did you register your vows of eternal fidelity and affection, if your heart joined not in the sacred oath? Was it to raise me to the pinnacle of human bliss, that I might feel your loss the more severely? My infant too!—distracting thought.—It is too much, thus, as a husband and a parent, to be bereft of all that can render life desirable. Oh time—time! how tediously thy leaden hours pass on! the evening comes, the morning follows, and nothing presents itself but unavailing sorrow."

While he sat thus a prey to the anguish that wrung his heart, his attention was suddenly

suddenly arrested by the sound of a footstep, of some person who was walking round a small rock that overhung the spot on which he sat. In a few moments a young man, about one-and-twenty years of age, came in sight, and, after viewing the river attentively, seated himself at the foot of an oak-pollard.

Somers was struck with the appearance of the young man. His dress and manner plainly bespoke him above mediocrity, while the despondency of his looks alarmed him for his safety. He saw him take a letter from a pocket-book, and, after reading it with attention, wipe a tear from his eye the subject had occasioned. "Good Heaven!" exclaimed Somers, "what grief can possibly occupy the heart of such a youth?—he surely

never can have felt the force of love! he never knew what it was to be deprived of a wife and child (for whom he felt a tender attachment), by those whose duty it was to have cherished her affection!—But perhaps he has lost his parents, or wants a friend.” He started from the ground, for the purpose of advancing towards him; but stopt, on perceiving him open a case which contained two miniatures richly set in diamonds. Again his tears began to flow; he pressed them to his lips, while a sigh bespoke the real anguish of his heart. Once more he surveyed the river. Somers, dreading he had some fatal intent, and unable longer to stand a silent spectator of this distressing scene, immediately accosted him:—“ Pardon my presumption,” said he; “ I would not have intruded on your private sorrows,

rows, but that I wish to be informed if it can lay in my power to alleviate them."

The young man, on the appearance of Somers, had hastily put up the miniatures, and endeavoured to assume a chearful aspect.

"Seek not, my young friend," continued Somers, "to hide your uneasiness: I have witnessed it. Believe me, I do not ask for the satisfaction of an impertinent curiosity; nor do I wish you to divulge any thing that may give you pain to mention."

The youth continued silent, and Somers, fearing he had taken too great a liberty, determined to withdraw: but first, pointing towards his habitation,

“ Yonder house,” said he, “ beneath the rock, is mine : if at this, or any future time, you should feel the want of a friend, you may command me.” Then, bowing respectfully, retired.

Cliffdown Lodge stood near the banks of the Avon, in the county of Gloucester : a stupendous rock sheltered it on the north ; two rising hills, covered with wood, protected it equally from the east and western winds ; on the south front was a lawn, the extremity of which was washed by the river, and the spot was considered beautifully romantic. In this recluse situation lived Mr. Somers. He was (at the time I speak of) about three-and-thirty years of age ; had once possessed a lively, animated disposition, but which had evidently been dispelled

pelled by sorrow, that now appeared visibly seated in his countenance, and strongly portrayed in his thin, emaciated form.

The only domestics he retained were a gardener, a man to attend his horse, and two elderly women, who procured and dressed the few necessaries he required.

Somers possessed a heart truly benevolent: from having experienced want and sorrow, which is generally its attendant, he was taught to alleviate it in others. The appearance of the young man had strongly interested him in his favour: upon a nearer view of him he had discovered that his shoes were almost worn from his feet, his clothes and linen were dusty, and extreme fatigue seemed mingled with the uneasiness depicted in his features,

features, which the rising blush occasioned by his addressing him was not able to extinguish: yet, notwithstanding these apparent marks of poverty, when he was accosted he discovered a majestic deportment, a certain dignity of aspect, blended with every accomplishment that nature could bestow, and which shone more conspicuously from the tear that was visible in his eye, and the dusty appearance of his attire.

Somers had scarcely seated himself in the arbour at his door, before he observed the young man entering the front gate.

He hastily rose to meet him, and taking hold of his hand conducted him into a parlour.

“ Your

“ Your offer of friendship,” said the youth, “ to a perfect stranger, excites my wonder and admiration, and emboldens me (circumstanced as I am) to crave your protection.”

“ I should hope,” rejoined Somers, “ that an offer of friendship, where it is thought necessary, would not afford matter of surprise. The dejection I observed in your countenance made me eager to offer that friendship ; and if you wish for pecuniary relief, you will find me more forward to administer it than, I fear, you will be to ask it. I know how to feel for another’s sufferings by the recollection of my own—(alas !” continued he with a sigh, “ how few there are can feel for me !)—You will materially oblige me by stating explicitly your situation, that

I may thereby know in what way I can be of service to you."

"I am," replied the youth, "literally in want of bread, and know not where I shall find a resting-place this night. I have parents, but so far removed, they know not what I suffer, or by what means I am reduced to"

He would have proceeded, but his heart was too full for further utterance.

Somers requested him to be composed, handed him a glass of wine and some cake, and rung the bell, desiring coffee to be got ready.

After he had accepted this refreshment, he proceeded.—

"I

“ It may excite your wonder,” said he, “ when I inform you my father is a person of family and fortune, and yet that I should be obliged to solicit for some menial employment. The reasons why I was obliged to leave the person in whose care I was entrusted, I cannot now relate : and, if I did, they so far exceed belief that I should be looked upon as an impostor ; therefore shall esteem it a favour, as I have strong reasons for keeping it a secret, that you will not request me to divulge who and what I am, or from whence I came : and I hope, when I assure you my desire to persevere in silence in this particular does not proceed from any thing that ought to draw a blush upon my cheek, you will do me the favour to believe me.”

“ Undoubtedly,” replied Somers ; “ nor
 B 6 will

will I offend you by requiring a further explanation. You say you are in search of some menial employment; let me know of what nature the employment may be that you are in search of. I have but a small acquaintance, yet I will extend my enquiries as far as I am able to procure for you some situation. In the mean time, what name am I to distinguish you by?"

The young man appeared greatly confused, and a tear started in his eye. "I never thought," said he, "I should be obliged to screen myself under a borrowed name; but in this case"

Somers interrupted him: "I beg your pardon," said he; "I did not wish to hear your name; but as you may not have thought of one, I will call you 'Theodore Somers;' if you have no objection,
you

you shall pass for a relation of mine: and now, Theodore," continued he, "let me hear what place you are capable of undertaking."

"I need not inform you," replied Theodore, "that I was not brought up for any profession; yet, from the education I have received, I consider myself capable of being a clerk in some office."

"This situation I have solicited through every town that I travelled; but the mortifying reception I frequently met with, in return for the application, and the tedious enquiries it subjected me to, respecting my friends and connections, made me relinquish any further application for such a place; and having some knowledge of gardening, in which I took great delight when at home, I intended to exchange my dress, and apply for something in that way."

"I have

“ I have no connection,” resumed Somers, “ with mercantile men, with whom I could hope to fix you as a clerk ; and as to the situation of a gardener, permit me to say, I think your appearance in that character would create suspicion, and subject you again to tiresome enquiry : it fortunately happens at this time I am making some improvements in my pleasure-garden ; if you will assist me in the design by giving your opinion and instruction, I shall consider it a favour ; in return for which, my house, table, and purse, are at your service.”

Somers merely requested his advice respecting the improvement, fearing lest he should refuse to accept his offer of residing with him, unless he could be of some service in return.

Theo--

Theodore was grateful, and was preparing to thank him ; but Somers insisted the obligation was on his side, and therefore requested he would say no more on the subject. He next furnished him with a change of linen and various other articles he had immediate occasion for, and then threw down his purse on the table, desiring he would supply himself with sufficient to purchase other necessaries.

Theodore requested he would lay him under no further obligation at present, but permit him first, by the exercise of his abilities, to make some small return for his favour and protection.

Somers would not be denied ; and finding his young friend so diffident, he put a twenty-pound note into his hand, and de-

fired



fired he would oblige him with the acceptance of it.

There was a certain decided manner in Somers, peculiar to himself, in the action of delivering the note, that prevented Theodore from refusing it; he therefore no longer hesitated, but taking it up, "The day will come," said he, "if I can remain concealed for a time, that I shall have it in my power to make some compensation for this unlooked-for, and unbounded generosity."

"Till such time," rejoined Somers, "let this act, as likewise any other by which you may conceive yourself obliged, lay dormant, as I cannot endure to be reminded of favours which give me far greater pleasure in bestowing than you can possibly derive from their acceptance."

Theo-

Theodore bowed, and Somers left the room to give some necessary orders concerning providing an apartment for his young friend.

Again did Theodore take out the miniatures from his pocket, and being alone, seized this opportunity to thank his Creator for having conducted him where humanity dwelt, and thereby saved him from any further mortifying enquiries, suspicious looks, the haughty repulse of his apparent superior, or contempt of menial officers.

While his heart was thus raised in gratitude to his God, and he was admiring the interference of his providence, which had led him through so many scenes to this sequestered spot, Somers
entered

entered the room: "I am happy, my young friend," said he, "to find you thus engaged; and it gives me great pleasure to know that your thoughts so perfectly coincide with mine, for if a sparrow falls not from the house-top without divine permission, and if every hair of our heads is numbered, how is it possible any act of ours can escape the notice of our God? or why should we despair of his protection while we endeavour to do our duty? or how can we hope to escape punishment, when we are aware that our most secret thoughts, and the spring of all our actions, are known to him? But come, Theodore, with me; a plain but comfortable repast is provided for our supper, after which no doubt you will be happy to retire to rest."

CHAP. II.

AT the dawn of the ensuing day Theodore left his chamber, and walked out to enjoy the beauty of the scene. The garden first attracted his notice: after pursuing his way through various paths and avenues, he struck into a wilderness, and discovered a small temple, over the door of which was engraved, "Sacred to Solitude." Theodore paused for a few moments, ruminating whether he should commit a trespass on the feelings of his friend by entering it: fearing lest this should be the case, he left the door, and followed the track that led past the side of the temple. Here his attention was suddenly taken up, by observing a window that was open; he involun-

involuntarily turned his head, and the first object which presented itself was Somers: he was seated at a table, his head reclined upon his hand, and looking upwards; a tear stood glittering on his eye-lid, while he was engaged in surveying a painting before him of a lady and a child: a quantity of letters lay open on the table which he had been perusing; he took up one, read a few passages in it, started from his seat, struck his hand upon his forehead and exclaimed, "Oh, God, when will my sorrows have an end!" Then raising his eyes towards heaven, sent up a supplicating petition to his Creator.

Theodore dreaded lest he should be suspected of wishing to pry into the cause of his friend's uneasiness, and therefore

fore hastily left the spot, considerably impressed with the scene that had just presented itself.

“Is it possible,” said he, “that a man who possesses a heart capable of feeling for, and relieving another’s woes, and who addresses his God with such fervency, should be permitted to suffer so poignant an affliction as he seems at present to endure!”

Theodore had conceived a high opinion of his benefactor, and thought him far too worthy to merit misfortune; he was on the point of arraigning the justice of his Creator, when the words that Somers made use of on the preceding evening, that, ‘he had learnt to feel for another’s

other's sufferings by the recollection of his own,' recurred to his memory.

“Amiable,” said he, “as my friend appears, yet this disposition (unless I misinterpret his expression) he has acquired by misfortune. Even these culinary articles before me cannot arrive at perfection without the assistance of art: shall I then attribute to my Creator injustice by dealing with his creatures in such manner as is most likely to contribute to their own benefit, and render them ornaments to society? — Certainly not: hereafter will I be silent, nor murmur at his dispensations; confident that from the source of wisdom and justice, tempered with mercy, there can come no wrong.”

Somers

Somers now joined his young friend; and as the sun sweetly breaks forth from the cloud after a refreshing shower, so did his eyes beam with pleasure through a tear upon his approaching Theodore.

After the usual congratulations of the morning had passed between them, and they had taken an early breakfast, Theodore intimated that he would go to Bristol for the purpose of purchasing some necessaries; and Somers having a friend to call upon, proposed to accompany him.

With this intent they crossed the river into Somersetshire, and after winding round the side of a hill, arrived at a small cottage.

Somers

Somers tapped at the door, and was desired to enter.

On an elbow-chair, near the fire, sat an elderly lady, seemingly much debilitated through age and sickness.

“Where is your fair charge?” said Somers.

“Ashamed,” replied the old lady, “to trespass farther on your goodness than we could help, she insisted on carrying to market such fruit and flowers as we could spare.”

“You have acted highly wrong in permitting it,” rejoined Somers: “are you aware of the mortification and insult her appearance is likely to create her? Neither her dress or manners is suitable to the occupation she is at present engaged
ed

ed in. I wish I had called here sooner; I think I could have pointed out to her the impropriety of such a step, and prevented her from undertaking it."

"I used every entreaty I could," replied the old lady, "and told her you would highly disapprove of it; but it had no effect: she insisted she was only fulfilling the duties of that station in which it had pleased God to place her; and while she was conscious of doing her duty, she had a firm hope that she should meet with his protection."

"It is a point I will not argue upon," said Somers: "I am going to town, and if I am fortunate enough to meet with her, I will prevail upon her to return with me."

He now took his leave of the old lady, and pursued his way towards Bristol.

“ I cannot help expressing my surprise,” said Theodore, “ at the appearance of the cottage we just visited. There is a neatness in it so very different from the slovenly manner in which such habitations are generally fitted up, that excited my wonder. The embroidery, the drawings, and various pieces of filagree-work, that adorn the room, bear evident testimony to the industry of its inhabitants; while the guitar and music-book that lay on the table bespeak them beings of a superior order to what I expected to meet with from the external view of the cottage: for although an air of neatness is likewise visible there, yet it is not common for persons possessing such endowments to content themselves in so humble a dwelling. If it is not too great a liberty,” continued Theodore,

dore, " I should be happy if you would satisfy my curiosity ; for I confess it is greatly excited by these seeming contradictions."

" The young lady you heard me make mention of," replied Somers, " has undergone a sad reverse of fortune : her story may be comprised in a few words ; and I will relate it to you as nearly as possible to what I was informed by the person we saw at the cottage.

" Mr. Lesley was a person who had descended from a good family ; but being a younger brother, he possessed but a small fortune.

" His father designed him for the army, and was on the point of obtaining a commission for him, when he accidentally became acquainted with a young lady for

whom he conceived an unconquerable attachment ; and, notwithstanding she had no fortune, and his friends used every means to prevent an alliance, yet such was the case that he imprudently married under these inauspicious circumstances.

“ The event was, that he gained the disapprobation of his father, who shortly after dying, left him without any means of existence, except a small annuity, which he could not deprive him of.

“ Mr. Lesley’s elder brother, who inherited the estate upon the decease of his father, refused him any pecuniary assistance ; but acquainted him, that if he had an inclination to go to the West Indies, he would give him letters of recommendation to a friend who had just gone over to take possession of several
large

large and valuable plantations, which letters could not fail to forward his interest.

“ Mr. Lesley, finding no other resource, was necessitated to accept his offer ; but, before he was ready to sail, Mrs. Lesley became pregnant, and he was advised to leave her in England till she could follow him with safety : for this purpose he recommended her to the care of a Mr. and Mrs. Morris, at whose house he then lodged, leaving her what money he could spare, and promising to send her further remittances if she should find herself incapacitated from performing the voyage as soon as he expected.

“ Mrs. Lesley submitted with reluctance to imperious necessity, and parted from her husband with an aching heart. He had left England about four months when

she was delivered of a daughter ; but the unfortunate mother did not survive many days after its birth. Morris paid every attention to the infant, to whom he gave the name of Clarissa, after its deceased parent. He informed Mr. Lesley of his loss, and received a letter in return, acquainting him that he had succeeded in his most sanguine expectations, and that he should regularly remit to him two hundred pounds per annum for the support of his daughter.

“ Clarissa was brought up and educated under the immediate inspection of Mr. Morris till she was ten years of age ; when, Mrs. Morris dying, he thought it prudent to select some person who, in the character of a governess, could superintend her education.

“ It was not long before Mrs. Bentley,
who

who we have just parted from at the cottage, was recommended to his notice.

“ She is the reliēt of an officer, and has nothing to exist upon but the widow’s pension.

“ Mrs. Bentley had received a liberal education, and was perfectly qualified for the situation she was appointed to fill; yet thought it too humiliating an office to accept of in the house of another: as such, Mr. Morris consented to her taking Clarissa into the country, for which purpose a small house was provided and furnished by him, and the whole annual stipend was regularly paid to her for three or four years: at the expiration of the fifth year Mrs. Bentley received a letter from Mr. Morris, acquainting her that no monies had been remitted to him during the last twelve months, nor had he receiv-

ed any letter or intelligence whatever from Mr. Lesley; but that he had been informed by private correspondence, that having laid out the whole of his property in a venture, which was afterwards taken by the enemy, it had such an effect on his health as to bring on a decline, of which he died.

“ Mr. Morris further stated his incapacity of paying any such sum as formerly for the young lady's education, but promised to send thirty pounds per year for her support till she should arrive at a proper age to fill some genteel situation in life, which he thought, from the education Mrs. Bentley had given her, she would be capable of undertaking with credit to herself.

“ Mrs. Bentley was not long hesitating on what line of conduct to pursue: she
deter-

determined not to part with the young lady, who deservedly inherited a large share of her esteem, but immediately, in order to lessen her expences, removed into an inferior situation, discharged her servants, and with pleasure performed every domestic office that was necessary, while her leisure hours were occupied in Clarissa's education.

“ A twelvemonth had elapsed in her new habitation, and she had received no letter or remittance from Mr. Morris: at length she determined on writing to him; this she repeatedly did, but received no answer.

“ After a few months, a neighbour who was going to London undertook, at her request, to call on him, and, if possible, to ascertain the cause of his silence.

“ In a few days from that period she

received the unwelcome intelligence that Mr. Morris had absconded on account of losses he sustained, and that no one knew to what part of the world he had gone.

“ Mrs. Bentley was extremely disconcerted on the receipt of this unpleasant news. Economical as was her plan of existence, yet it was too expensive to be continued merely upon her pension.

“ She had a small sum by her, saved out of the money allowed her by Mr. Morris, and with this sum she purchased the cottage and garden where she now resides, thinking that her income, trifling as it is, could with frugality procure them support: and in all probability they would have found it sufficient, had not Mrs. Bentley been attacked with a severe fit of illness, that cost her a considerable sum,
and

and which has confined her to her house for the last six months.

“ Having brought her history thus far,” continued Somers, “ I will now relate the circumstance that introduced me to their acquaintance.

“ About three months back, in consequence of being reduced in their circumstances, Clarissa came to a determination of taking in needle-work, and old Betty (my housekeeper) was applied to, and employed her.

“ At the time the articles came home, Betty brought them to me ; amongst various things she had made was a cotton morning-gown, and as it required an alteration, I desired she would introduce the woman, that I might explain it to her. I never was more confounded,” continued

Somers, “ than when Betty returned conducting in a young lady about seventeen.

“ I involuntarily rose from my seat and made my obeisance.

“ She curtsied, while her face vied with the damask rose.

“ The humility and profound respect with which I approached her threw her into evident confusion.

“ ‘ Look up, young woman,’ cried my brute of a house-keeper; ‘ why you stand like a fool; my master wants to shew you his gown.’

“ I silenced the tongue of my servant by ordering her to quit the room; and then addressing myself to Clarissa, I took the liberty, said I, to request your attendance concerning a trifling alteration—but it is of no consequence, I will not trouble you with it.

“ The

“ The fact is, I was ashamed to trouble her: nor could I mortify her by asking how much I stood indebted.

“ In accents the most pleasing, and in a manner peculiar to herself, Clarissa requested to make the required alteration; at the same time assuring me she should think it no trouble whatever.

“ I replied by informing her I would put it on, and if I found the alteration absolutely necessary, I would send it to her by my servant together with the sum I stood indebted.

“ She curtied, and was leaving the room.

“ I beg your pardon, said I, but you have forgot to inform me of your residence.

“ ‘ I live with Mrs. Bently,’ replied the lovely

lovely girl, ‘ in the white cottage at the foot of yonder hill;’ at the same time pointing towards the spot.

“ I then attended her to the door through the garden, and she departed.”

CHAP. III.

“THERE was something,” continued Somers, “so peculiarly interesting in her appearance, that strongly prepossessed me in her favour: and my curiosity was greatly excited to know by what means so amiable a girl was reduced to the necessity of earning a scanty subsistence by her needle.

“I was confident, from her timidity, that she had not long been accustomed to such an employment; while her graceful deportment and distinguished elegance of figure served to strengthen me in a supposition I had ventured to form on the first moment I beheld her, that she was a person who had received
a liberal

a liberal education, but had been reduced to necessitous circumstances through misfortunes.

“ While I stood at my garden gate, surveying her as she walked on the bank of the river, I observed her strike into a different path than that which led to the ferry, over which it was necessary to cross before she could reach her home.

“ The thought occurred to me that I would seize that opportunity during her absence of waiting on Mrs. Bentley, by which means I expected to be satisfied respecting the particulars as I wished to know them ; and likewise escape the mortification of being necessitated to witness the humility of the amiable girl while she performed the servile task of holding out her hand to receive the scanty pittance which she was entitled to
for

for the exercise of her menial employment.

“ I hastened therefore to the ferry, and having passed the hill, soon discovered Mrs. Bentley’s cottage.

“ I found the old lady sitting in her elbow-chair. She attempted to rise on my entrance.

“ I prevented her, and immediately introduced the conversation respecting the young lady, by enquiring how much I stood indebted; at the same time expressing my surprise that so amiable a character should be necessitated to gain a livelihood by needlework.

“ Mrs. Bentley was by no means communicative. She informed me concerning the extent of her demand, and further added, that ‘ she thought it no disgrace
to.



to use every honest endeavour to obtain a livelihood.'

" I agreed with her in this particular, and apologised for my presumption in venturing to trouble her with enquiries, at the same time alleging that I had no motive except what might originate from a wish to relieve to the utmost of my abilities provided there was the least shadow of necessity.

" Mrs. Bentley was still cautious, and replied, that ' she hoped they should be able to procure a sufficiency without laying themselves under an obligation which it was impossible they could repay.'

" Finding that she still continued to treat me in this distant manner, I rose from my seat, laid down a five-pound note for the work, and was preparing to
take

take my leave, but she insisted on my staying while she gave me the change; and this she did in so positive and decided a manner, that I could not refuse.

“ I thought she had too much pride to receive a favour delivered in this manner; but I hoped to have it in my power to relieve her necessity by some other means. Therefore, having paid her the exact sum that she charged, I bowed respectfully and left her.

“ As I was pursuing my way back, ruminating on the folly of coalescing pride with poverty, and studying by what means I should be enabled to relieve her, I met the lovely girl on her return.

“ She was at that time with difficulty ascending the hill, having a large bundle
of

of linen in her hands, as much as a person of moderate strength could carry.

“ I hastened towards her, and insisted on disencumbering her of the load.

“ She thanked me with a smile that spoke more than a thousand words. I am infinitely obliged to your employer’s brutality, said I, in not sending a servant with this parcel, as it has afforded me an opportunity of rendering you this trifling service.

“ ‘ I feel myself extremely obliged to you,’ rejoined Clarissa ; ‘ your kindness is conspicuous, more particularly in this part of the country, where common civility is scarcely to be met with : I am sorry to trouble you ; but am so fatigued, I really think I should not be able to reach home with it.’

“ How

“ How came you, said I, to incommode yourself with it ?

“ ‘ The doctor,’ replied Clarissa, ‘ to whom we stand indebted a trifle for his attendance, prevailed on me to take it ; and as the work was given to discharge the bill, I thought it would appear affectation in me, mixed with ingratitude, to refuse taking what he considered me capable of carrying.’

“ We conversed,” continued Somers, “ on various subjects, till we reached the cottage ; Clarissa then introduced me to Mrs. Bentley, and mentioned the obligation she was under for the trivial service I had rendered her.

“ The old lady thanked me, and seemed more communicative than on my former visit ; amongst other conversation, the
cause

cause of her illness, and the medicine prescribed, occupied a considerable share.

“ I have no great knowledge of physic, yet, from the little experience I have had, I concluded her doctor was making practical experiments at her expence, and therefore strenuously solicited that she would permit me to send one of the gentlemen from the infirmary to which I was a subscriber.

“ After a considerable altercation on this subject, wherein I maintained that my only motive was on account of the superior knowledge he must possess from the extent of his practice, I at length obtained her consent, and departed for the purpose of requesting his attendance.

“ Since that time, I have sent her wines, and such nourishing food as I
thought

thought necessary for a person in her debilitated state; and I should have been happy, if, by the united exertions of the doctor and myself, she could have been restored to health, but I am fearful that will not be the case, as there appears to be an evident decay of nature."

"I cannot help confessing," said Theodore, "that I feel myself greatly interested for the unfortunate Clarissa: I tremble when I consider what must be her lot if it should please God to remove Mrs. Bentley; she will then be turned on the wide world without a protector."

"I hope not," rejoined Somers: "I did not consider that moment lost which introduced me to her acquaintance; and when the period arrives that she may stand in need of a friend, I trust I shall
not

not refuse her any assistance that is in my power to give."

Theodore possessed a heart fraught with many valuable sentiments; he seized the hand of Somers, and pressed it between his, while his eyes bespoke the full satisfaction this assurance created. "How few there are to be met with," exclaimed he, "who possess so benevolent a heart!"

"Hold," cried Somers, interrupting him; "it is no more than a common duty we owe to each other, but of which we are too often unmindful."

"The man who is in the full career of pleasure delights not to fix his eye on scenes of misery and wretchedness; Clarissa would meet with no relief from such a character, unless he indulged the vain
hope

hope of satisfying an improper appetite : but let that man once feel the full force of misfortune, let him be reduced to penury and want ; if after that the means of existence return to him, it is more than probable he will have a heart to relieve the sufferings of another. And thus the adversity a man sometimes meets with is, in reality, the greatest blessing his Creator could have sent him, as it enables him to make a proper use of the money he enjoys, and to riot in a pleasure unknown to any, except those who are in the possession of a feeling heart.”

By this time they had reached Bristol : Theodore now parted with his friend, for the purpose of purchasing a few articles he stood in need of, and Somers went to the market in pursuit of Clarissa.

The first object that attracted the no-

tice of Somers, after he had parted from Theodore, was a bill pasted upon the front of the post-office, to the following purport :

“ One hundred pounds reward.

“ Eloped from his friends, a young
 “ gentleman, turned of twenty years of
 “ age ; about five feet eight inches in
 “ height, remarkably well proportioned ;
 “ dark hair and eye-brows ; sharp pierc-
 “ ing black eyes ; a mole on his right
 “ cheek : when he left home he was
 “ dressed in a brown coat, white waist-
 “ coat, buckskin breeches, and boots.

“ Whoever will give information to
 “ Mr. Quibble, attorney-at-law, Thaives
 “ Inn, London, so that he may be re-
 “ stored to his disconsolate uncle, shall
 “ receive a reward of one hundred
 “ pounds.”

Somers,

Somers, on reading this bill, was extremely uneasy on account of his young friend: he was certain it could be no other than him, as his age, person, and dress, were so particularly described.

Anxious for his safety, he determined to look for him in the various shops that dealt in apparel; and with this intent he hastened from street to street, carefully surveying every shop he came to; in which pursuit I shall leave him while I attend to Clarissa.

CHAP. IV.

CLARISSA had dressed herself early in the morning in as plain a manner as she could, and as nearly suitable to the occupation she was bent upon undertaking.

She left Mrs. Bentley's cottage about nine o'clock, with some fruit and flowers in a basket, which she hung on her arm, and reached the market in about an hour.

Clarissa was uncommonly handsome, and there was something in her whole appearance so totally different from those who were occupied in the same employment, that could not fail to attract the general notice.

This was precisely the case, for no
sooner

sooner had she reached the vicinity of Bristol than she was necessitated to undergo the broad vacant stare of the market women, and the fulsome, half-witted compliments of puppyish shopmen, who seldom fail to make a handsome figure the butt of their insolence, unless they are awed into silence by the expensive externals that may decorate the individual.

Clarissa had not taken her standing in the market but a few minutes before she was accosted by an elderly lady, who offered to purchase the whole she had in her basket at her own price, provided she would take it to her house.

Clarissa readily assented, and followed her.

They had not walked more than one street from the market-place, before

Clarissa attracted the notice of a Mr. Freeman, a young gentleman with whom Mr. Somers was acquainted, having frequently met him when amusing himself by fishing.

“ Well, my pretty maid,” said Freeman, “ what do you ask for these flowers ?”

“ I have sold all I have to that lady,” said Clarissa ; (thinking thereby to get rid of any further importunity).

“ So your ladyship has been catering in the market this morning,” said Freeman, addressing himself to the old lady, and then looking attentively on Clarissa ; “ you have, I see,” he continued, “ picked out a choice article.”

“ Mr. Freeman,” said the old lady,
“ I do not understand you, and must
intreat

intreat you will not interrupt us, as I am in haste."

"I'll bet a wager," cried Freeman, "here is some underhand work: you are dealing in contraband goods, and if you are—but stop—I'll soon set this matter right;" then taking hold of Clarissa by her arm, and addressing himself to her, "Do you know who you are with," cried he, "or where you are going?"

Clarissa was alarmed at the conduct of Freeman, and requested he would leave his hold.

By this time, several people had collected themselves around them.

"Mr. Freeman, I am ashamed of you," cried the old lady; "I beg you will desist, the young woman is a person I am perfectly acquainted with." Then beckoning for a hackney-coach which

stood near her, she requested Clarissa to get in, and ordered the coachman to drive to her house.

Freeman declared he would not suffer the coach to move till he was satisfied.

“Not in the street, by Jafus!” cried an Irish officer who had witnessed the preceding scene; “you had better go home with the lady abbess.”

“Indeed, I want none of his company,” said the old lady; at the same time repeating her request that the coachman would drive on.

“There may be some mistake,” cried the Irish officer; “give me lave, I will spake to the young woman:” then turning to Clarissa, “Has she offered you a fair price?” said he.

“Indeed, gentlemen,” replied Clarissa,

rissa, greatly terrified at the appearance of the crowd, "she has agreed to give me all I asked, and I am perfectly satisfied."

"Oh, by saint Patrick," cried the officer, "it is a fair bargain; and let me see the man that dares be after attempting to take the old lady's goods out of her hands."

Freeman had no desire to quarrel with the Hibernian, and therefore (although with evident reluctance) suffered the coach to proceed. But he was not so perfectly satisfied respecting it as was the officer, and as soon as he had disengaged himself from the crowd he determined on paying a visit to the old lady, and arrived in the street just time enough to see them alight from the coach.

As he was hastily advancing up to the
D 5 house

house he ran against Somers, who was at that time in search of Theodore.

“ Well met,” cried Freeman, “ you must go with me to the nunnery ; I have some business to settle with the lady abbess.”

“ I must confess,” rejoined Somers, “ I do not understand you ; nor can I do myself the pleasure of attending you, as I am at this time engaged on an affair of importance.”

“ Never mind your important affairs,” said Freeman ; “ you must and shall go with me to Mrs. Gripe’s. You have been to yonder nunnery many times no doubt to do ill, you shall now go to do good : if I do not mistake, when I was last with you, you were strongly inculcating the practice of virtue ; you have now an opportunity of giving a specimen of it.”

“ What

“What do you mean by the nunnery?” said Somers.

“Oh, your most obedient,” rejoined Freeman; “but perhaps you may know nothing of it, and being almost a stranger, living in a manner secluded from the world, you may not clearly comprehend me. The inhabitants of Bristol are not so vulgar as in London; they do not stigmatise certain places with the appellation of houses of ill-fame, nor do they call the mistress a procuress, but, wearing more the semblance of virtue, they are here called nunneries, and the mistress the lady abbess.”

“And wherein,” rejoined Somers, “can I give you a specimen of the practice of virtue, by visiting so infamous a place?”

Freeman explained by informing him

of the late incident, and likewise drew an animated picture of the person who accompanied Mrs. Gripe.

“For Heaven’s sake,” cried Somers (greatly alarmed lest it should be Clarissa), “let us hasten to the house, I shall be anxious till I learn the whole of this circumstance.”

They advanced towards the door, and Somers having knocked, was answered that Mrs. Gripe was engaged; but Freeman, standing on no ceremony, pushed past the servant, desiring Somers to follow him.

In a moment they were surrounded by a quantity of nuns, but as their business was not devotion, they presently got rid of them; and after searching various rooms arrived at the apartment where Mrs. Gripe and Clarissa were closetted.

Somers

Somers ran and caught her in his arms. "My dear Clarissa," said he, "how came you to venture yourself with a person you knew nothing of; you are not aware of the motives that infamous woman had in bringing you here."

"Indeed, Mr. Somers," replied the innocent girl, "you are too hasty in your conclusion; the lady has been very kind, she paid me more than I asked for the fruit I brought to market, and has offered me an asylum in her house, if I think proper to accept of it."

Freeman was not sparing in the epithets he bestowed on the old lady; he talked largely of sending her to prison, and having raised his voice above the usual pitch it alarmed the nuns, who came into the room to protect the lady abbess.

Neither

Neither Somers or Freeman could submit to have Clarissa's ears invaded with the conversation made use of by these deluded victims, and therefore insisted on immediately removing her.

While Freeman was signifying his intentions to Mrs. Gripe, by declaring he would have the lady, a well-known voice thundered in his ear, "You will! will you? but I think I shall spoil your sport."

Freeman looked round, and was surprised on seeing his uncle, Sir Charles Freeman, at whose house he was on a visit, and who happened to drive past in his carriage at the time he entered the nunnery, and knowing it for what it was he alighted, and reached the apartment as before mentioned.

"And so," continued Sir Charles, "you are determined to have a tit of
your

your own. This will be a handsome tale for me to communicate to your father, which you may depend upon I shall do: and as to the lady, I will indulge her with a few months' recreation in the county gaol."

Somers undertook to appease Sir Charles, by entering into an explanation of the leading particulars, and concluded by requesting he would exercise his authority as a magistrate in taking the young lady from the house: but there was no necessity for this; Mrs. Gripe finding Clarissa's party were likely to prove too powerful for her, readily consented to her accompanying them.

Sir Charles made an ample apology to his nephew for the unworthy suspicion he had harboured, and dwelt largely on the meritorious service he had performed;
in

in doing which, he was necessitated to glance at the wretched lot he had in all probability preserved her from : and then surveying the unfortunate characters around him with an eye of pity and concern, he advised them to return to their friends, and forsake so vicious a course of life, which could end in nothing but certain misery. But to Mrs. Gripe he was far more severe ; he painted to her in the most glowing colours the infamy of her conduct, and concluded by threatening her with a prosecution.

Clarissa was now no longer blind to the situation in which she had been nearly plunged.

She fled from the side of Mrs. Gripe, and taking Mr. Freeman and Somers by their hands, called them her protectors ; while the tear that was forced into her

her

her eye from the fulness of her heart ornamented the effusions of gratitude she sent up to the throne of her Creator.

Sir Charles offered the use of his carriage to convey Clarissa to her friend, which offer was thankfully accepted, and Mrs. Gripe got rid of her unwelcome visitors.

Mrs. Bentley's cottage stood at some distance from the high road ; Sir Charles was therefore necessitated to part from her before she reached home. Somers and Clarissa alighted for the purpose of walking across the fields, and Freeman requested permission to make one of the party.

They shortly arrived at the cottage, and Somers had once more the pleasure of seeing Clarissa under the protection of
Mrs.

Mrs. Bentley, after which he took his leave, and accompanied by Freeman pursued his way to his own house.

When he arrived he enquired if Theodore had returned.

The servant replied in the negative, but informed him that a man had brought a letter from him which she had laid in his library.

Thither he immediately repaired, and having broke the seal had the mortification to read the following lines :

“ DEAR COUSIN,

“ In consequence of a bill posted up in Bristol describing a person (whose resemblance I am supposed to bear) as having eloped from his friends, and offering a reward of one hundred pounds for his apprehension, I am at this time in the custody
of

of two countrymen at Sir Charles Freeman's.

" They conveyed me to this house that they might have the sanction of a magistrate for their proceedings.

" I represented to them that I was a relation of yours, and that you were capable of satisfying them of their error respecting me.

" Sir Charles is from home ; as such I have not yet been necessitated to answer any interrogatories.

" I need not add that your attendance here is indispensably necessary for the future happiness of,

" Your sincere friend and cousin,

" THEODORE SOMERS."

Something was necessary immediately to be done. Theodore had by this letter marked out a method for him to pursue.

He

He shewed it to Freeman, and after consulting respecting the most eligible method of rescuing him from the countrymen, they set off together for Sir Charles's.

CHAP. V.

WHEN Theodore parted from his friend Somers in Bristol, he hastened to furnish himself with such necessaries as he required, and for this purpose repaired to several shops.

During the time he was being served at a Hosier's, a man with a parcel of hand-bills entered, and after throwing one on the counter, left the place.

Theodore read the contents, in which his person and dress were minutely described.

The tradesman was too busy in endeavouring to enhance the value of his goods to attend to the countenance of Theodore, which bore evident marks of confusion ;

sion; he admitted every thing he said, gave him what he asked, and while he was employed in receiving the money, had the address to slip the hand-bill into his pocket.

He determined to purchase no other articles on that day, but to get out of the city as soon as possible.

For this purpose, after leaving the shop, he ran through several streets till he reached the fields, without ever observing that he was pursued; at length he was overtaken by two countrymen.

“Where be’st gooing,” said one of them, “that thee runs so vast?”

Theodore stopt and endeavoured to compose his countenance.

“Thee must goo wi’ me to thig housen on the hill,” resumed the countryman;

“Zur ?

"Zur Charles must ha' some talk wi thee."

"I really do not comprehend you," said Theodore; "I desire you will leave me, and attend to your own concerns."

"What," cried the other countryman, "I zuppose thee dos'ent knaw Muster Cribble the lawyer of Thieves Inn; but Zur Charles wull make thee knaw un whether thee wull or not, zoo come along He tell thee."

Theodore found all resistance would be useless, and therefore suffered himself to be conducted towards Sir Charles Freeman's

When he arrived within a quarter of a mile of the house, the men desired him to stop while they withdrew to a small distance to have some conversation together.

"Look'e,

“ Look’e, vrend Tummas,” said one to the other; “ thig hundred poonds wad be a main great thing vor us if we could get un; but Ise donna like thig same lawyer, nor thig name of Thieves Inn; thee knawest all the lawyers be great rogues, and we shall only have our pains vor our trouble; now if so be as how the young man wull ge’ us any thing, wull thee take the money and let un goo?”

“ Why, Ned,” replied the other, “ what thee saist may be right and may be not, zo if the young man wull ge’ us vorty or vifty poonds why we wull e’en let un off.”

These preliminaries being adjusted, they made Theodore acquainted with the result of their wise cogitations, but he was too much on his guard, to suffer them
from

from any offer of his, to suspect that he was the real party, nor had he any such sum about him.

He contented himself by observing, that he was a relation of Mr. Somers, who would not fail to punish them for their conduct.

“ I do knaw Muster Zummers very wull,” said one of the men, “ and thee knawest nothing about un, or thee woos’ent talk about his punishing us ; God blefs un, he woos’ent punish a worm ; he would more likely pay us vor taking thee to thy vrends who is breaking their hearts vor thee.”

“ Your goodnefs is conspicuous,” replied Theodore, “ and highly deserving of a reward, since you would sacrifice the feelings of those friends, for forty or fifty pounds.”

“ Now,” cried one of them, “ vorat that speech, God rat un, thou shalst gooth wuther thee would or not; zoo come along.”

Theodore having arrived at Sir Charles's, was confined in an apartment under a guard of one of his servants till he should return home. To this servant he delivered a request that he might be indulged with pen, ink, and paper, and that he would forward a letter to Mr. Somers, which request was complied with.

No sooner had the men delivered Theodore to the care of the servant than they adjourned to the kitchen, and taking out the hand-bill explained to Richard, Timothy, Ralph, Humphry, Jenny, Peggy, Molly, Dolly, &c. &c. the whole of this mysterious affair, which naturally excited the curiosity of these votaries to the brush and

and dishevelled; and not one of them was there who did not make an errand to the apartment for some trivial matter, in order to gain a sight of Theodore, whose interesting figure, and manly deportment, could not fail of exciting their admiration.

Every female tongue was occupied in this praise: "What a charming young man!" said one: "Bless me," said another, "how unhappy must his friends be on his account; I would give my last new gown to know what made him elope."

While each were engaged in developing this mystery, Ellen, the servant of Augusta Freeman, made her appearance.

"Have you seen him?" was re-echoed from every corner of the room.

Ellen had been attending on her young

lady, and had not heard of Theodore, but her curiosity was now greatly excited by the relation of the servants; she immediately recollected that she had something to say to John who was placed in the room as a guard, and therefore hastened to the apartment.

Theodore's mind was at that time fully occupied with his perilous situation, which forced a tear into his eye that was visible on her approach.

This tear prepossessed Ellen in his favour more than his external appearance otherwise would have done; and observing him to be rather pale, she requested him to take some refreshment, to which request he readily assented.

Ellen desired John to conduct the young gentleman into the parlour, and after presenting

senting him with a glass of wine and a biscuit, left the room.

Theodore discovered a piano-forte, and having seated himself, endeavoured to compose his spirits by playing a few of his favourite airs.

Augusta, the only daughter of Sir Charles Freeman, was at that time walking in the pleasure-ground, and within hearing.

She was attracted by the masterly style with which she heard some person perform on the instrument, and hastened to the parlour to be satisfied respecting who it was.

The door was not shut, and Theodore's attention being occupied he did not observe the approach of Augusta till he had finished a favourite piece, and was looking over the notes for another; but he

no sooner cast his eyes towards her than he arose from his seat and made his obeisance.

Augusta returned it; and looking towards the servant, he informed her the gentleman was waiting to see Sir Charles.

Augusta requested Theodore would resume his seat; then taking a letter from her pocket ordered the servant to convey it as directed.

The servant hesitated; and at length informed her that he was desired to stay with the young gentleman till Sir Charles returned.

It so happened that but a few days back a person was introduced into this same apartment who alleged he had business with Sir Charles, and before the expiration of the day an article of plate was missing. Sir Charles therefore desired

ed that no stranger might be left alone for the future, provided any valuables were laying about. And when Theodore heard the servant mention that he was desired to attend, a blush overspread his countenance from a recollection of his own situation, and feeling mortified at the necessity there appeared to be of acquainting Augusta with it; while she, on the other hand, interpreted the blush and evident confusion of Theodore to the apparent suspicion betrayed by the servant, and, therefore, in a manner that would admit of no denial, ordered him to convey the letter.

The servant bowed and retired.

Augusta and Theodore being left alone, she endeavoured to do away the unpleasant idea which she concluded he must have received from the expression of the

servant, by treating him with the utmost respect and attention.

Theodore still remained standing.

Augusta again requested him to resume his seat, and to indulge her by playing a favourite overture.

He complied; but from the agitation and hurry of his spirits, made several errors, for which he apologised.

Augusta Freeman had scarcely attained her nineteenth year; she was a most enchanting figure, and had a manner with her so peculiarly bewitching that could not fail to fascinate the eye of the beholder.

Theodore was at an age capable of receiving a soft impression in its full force.

At the time he was playing Augusta was sitting at the end of the piano, viewing, with admiration, the masterly manner
with

with which he touched the keys; and perhaps her admiration was not a little heightened by his external accomplishments.

Whatever might have been her feelings at that period, nothing could have exceeded those of Theodore's.

He strove to touch the keys to perfection, but Augusta so fully occupied his thoughts that errors were unavoidable.

A secret sensation thrilled through his heart that he was at a loss to account for, but which naturally inclined him to play a pleasing air more suitable to his feelings than the former.

This so far led him beyond himself, that he cast an expressive look on Augusta which spoke a volume.

She arose from her seat, and was endeavouring to hide the perturbation it

had created, when she was relieved by the entrance of her father. She took this opportunity, after thanking Theodore for his kindness, to quit the room.

Theodore arose on the entrance of Sir Charles, and having endeavoured to collect himself, he determined to carry off the affair which had brought him there with an air of pleasantry; and therefore assuming a smile, "I am brought here," said he, "upon a very ridiculous business; a hand-bill has this day been circulated in Bristol offering a reward for the apprehension of a young man who has eloped from his friends, and because the description therein given in a great measure resembles me, I have been conveyed to this house that you may have an opportunity of ascertaining the fact; but I hope when I inform you that I am a
relation

relation to Mr. Somers, and reside with him, you will be satisfied I am not the person taken for."

During the time Theodore was explaining the business that brought him there, Sir Charles was perusing a bill to the same purport, which had been put into his hands at Bristol; and after viewing him with scrupulous attention—"I do not hesitate," said he, "in believing you to be the identical person: as to a relationship between Mr. Somers and yourself, I am greatly inclined to doubt it, for from what I know of him he is the most likely person in the world to screen you from the knowledge of your friends under the title of a relation, provided he thought he was doing a charitable transaction, and rendering an essential service to an individual.

“ The other day he made interest and got a man liberated who was confined for stealing a sheep, pleading as an excuse for the man, that he had a large family, and that as he consumed it amongst them, it was clearly evident hunger prompted him to commit the theft.

“ I do not mean to wound your feelings by bringing a comparison between that man's crime and the charge alleged against you ;—far from it ; there is no degree of criminality attaches to you ;—I mention it only to shew how wrong Somers can act when prompted by benevolent motives : it is clearly evident he lost sight of justice.

“ However, Mr. Somers must excuse me, as I shall certainly request him to answer me a few questions concerning the relationship between you before I shall discredit

discredit the evidence of my own senses ; for if ever a person was fully described, yours is most particularly so, in this bill."

Theodore now appeared greatly confused.

" You will meet with far more lenity," continued Sir Charles, " if you will make a candid avowal of who you are ; I will then undertake to reconcile you to your friends, and prevent your being further exposed."

A servant now entered, and informed Sir Charles the two countrymen who had brought in Theodore wished to know how they were to proceed.

Sir Charles, left the room for the purpose of speaking with them.

Augusta had been informed by Ellen of the unfortunate situation of Theodore, and was hastening to her father, lest her intercession.

tercession for his release should be necessary, when she met him at the door after he had left the parlour, and requested he would not give the informers (as she styled them) any hope of his being the person, till such time as he had thoroughly investigated the cause that made him leave his home.

Sir Charles paused. "I will take your advice, Augusta," said he; "this may be a delicate business, Mr. Somers shall be sent for before I decide on any thing; in the mean time, I will have some further conversation with him."

Theodore had taken the advantage of Sir Charles's absence to ruminate on what method he should pursue.

He had sent a letter to his friend Somers signifying he had passed for his relation, nor could he now think of
con-

confessing to the contrary, lest Somers should assert the same, and be detected in the falsity.

In this perplexing dilemma he drew the case from his pocket that contained the miniatures, and surveyed them attentively, while he heaved a sigh, and found relief in a tear.

Sir Charles and Augusta were spectators of this silent scene, having, although without design, entered the room unperceived.

Sir Charles discovering something in Theodore's hand which attracted his attention, thought it might probably throw some light on the business, and therefore requested he might know what it was.

Theodore turned round on hearing Sir Charles's voice, and as he was in the act
of

of shutting up the case, one of the miniatures fell from it.

“ A lady, I perceive !” cried Sir Charles, as Theodore was stooping for it.

“ We seldom hear of an elopement without it is accompanied by a love scene : but I cannot conceive what could induce you to possess yourself of the portrait of a lady at so early a period : come, sir,” continued he, “ let me see this paragon of beauty, that has been the cause of your exiling yourself.”

“ Sir Charles,” replied Theodore (rather warm), “ what you beheld was undoubtedly the resemblance of a lady ; but you will particularly oblige me in not making either her or me the subject of your ridicule.”

“ I find how it is,” rejoined Sir Charles ;

“ you

“ you really fancy yourself in love ; and, I suppose, like Don Quixotte, would attack the first wind-mill that might present itself in opposition to you.”

Augusta was extremely uneasy, lest her father should provoke Theodore so far as to make him utter what he could not recal : at the same time she was anxious, although she knew not why, to obtain a sight of the miniature in question. But Theodore was prevented from replying by the entrance of a servant, who announced the arrival of Somers and Freeman.

Sir Charles requested their attendance.

As soon as Freeman entered the room he ran up to Theodore, and taking his hand, “ My dear old friend,” said he,
 “ you

"you cannot imagine how disappointed we were, in not meeting you at home."

"Old friend," repeated Sir Charles, somewhat sarcastically; "come, come, Ned, that will not do with me: I will bet you a wager you never saw this young gentleman before."

"Indeed, my dear uncle," replied Freeman, "you cannot but recollect how often I have dwelt on the merits of Theodore Somers."

"I desire you will say no more, Ned," cried Sir Charles, "I am not to be bantered out of my judgment; and am confident Mr. Somers has too great a respect for truth to insist upon this person being either a relation of his, or an old acquaintance of yours."

"I shall

“ I shall refer you to him,” rejoined Freeman ; “ and since I have had such ill success here, I will try what I can meet with elsewhere.”

He then left the room, before his uncle had time to ask him his meaning.

CHAP. VI.

SOMERS found it would be impossible to impose on Sir Charles, and therefore resolved to ask for the discharge of Theodore as a favour. He informed him that Theodore had put himself under his protection, and that he would particularly oblige him by not interfering in this business.

“ However I might be inclined,” replied Sir Charles, “ to oblige you as a private gentleman, I have it not in my power to do it as a magistrate ; nor am I quite clear whether you have not been imposed upon ; for, if I do not mistake, it is a love affair : and I will leave you to judge, if he is at a proper age to distinguish for himself in such a particular.”

“ It

“ It is the first word I have heard of it,” rejoined Somers ; “ nor can I credit it.”

Sir Charles repeated to Somers the affair of the miniature, and, as a proof of his assertion, requested he might see it.

Theodore complied, by putting the case into his hands.

Sir Charles opened it, and discovered two miniatures ; the one of a lady, the other of a gentleman.

“ To shew,” said Theodore, “ how wrong Sir Charles was in his conjecture, it is necessary I should inform him they are the miniatures of my parents ; to which I consider myself entitled, as they were left to remind me of those dear relatives : I therefore possessed myself of them before I left home, and shall take special care to preserve them.”

“ Have

“ Have you had the misfortune to lose these relatives ? ” said Sir Charles.

“ Heaven forbid ! ” replied Theodore ; “ they are at present in existence, although separated from me by an immense ocean : yet I trust I shall one day see them.

“ The person in whose charge I was left when an infant, has abused his trust ; and you, Sir Charles, under the idea of doing an act of justice, are only endeavouring to assist one of the worst of men.

“ As a proof of the truth of this assertion,” continued he, “ take out the miniatures, and under them you will find a letter which will further inform you.”

Sir Charles did as Theodore had requested.

The letter was without either direction

or

or signature, and contained the following words :

‘ DEAR FRIEND,

‘ On the receipt of this hasten from
 ‘ home to where you can remain concealed. I am now positive that an art-
 ‘ ful design is laid to convey you out of
 ‘ the kingdom, which I shall not have
 ‘ the power to prevent, as I am not the
 ‘ party selected to put it into execution :
 ‘ hesitate therefore not a moment ; but
 ‘ take the first opportunity of letting me
 ‘ know to what part of the world you
 ‘ go, and I will answer any pecuniary
 ‘ demand you may make on me, and be
 ‘ happy to assist you with such advice as
 ‘ may hereafter be of service to you and
 ‘ your family. I have no occasion to sign
 ‘ my name, since you must recollect the
 ‘ party

‘ party who first informed you of this
 ‘ unpleasant business, to which party you
 ‘ must attribute these lines.’

After having read this letter, Sir Charles declared himself at a loss how to proceed.

“ I am of opinion,” said he, “ that I should act wrong in delivering the young man to his uncle till this unpleasant business is cleared up ; but how am I to get rid of the countrymen who took him ? they will not think of parting with him without the reward specified in the bill.”

“ I will undertake to settle the business,” said Somers, “ by paying the money.”

Theodore testified his gratitude, and assured him the time would come that
 he

he should have it in his power to make an ample compensation for his generosity.

During this conversation Freeman returned to the room. "I have relieved you," said he; "from the necessity of so doing, by taking the trouble off your hands.

"The men were not so unbelieving as Sir Charles: I declared to them, that Theodore was an intimate acquaintance of mine, and a near relation of yours; and, in return, I received a thousand apologies from them."

"You should have given the men something for their trouble," said Somers; "as they were certainly doing no more than their duty."

"They are a couple of scoundrels," rejoined Theodore; "for they offered to

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liberate



liberate me if I would give them forty or fifty pounds."

"If that be the case," resumed Sir Charles, "they are rightly served. And now we have disposed of this unpleasant business, if you are not engaged (addressing himself to Somers), I shall be happy in the company of yourself and young friend to dinner."

Somers and Theodore accepted the invitation:

Augusta now approached Theodore, and congratulated him on his escape; adding, "that she should have felt herself extremely disappointed, had any thing happened to prevent her from receiving a few lessons on the piano, as he performed in so masterly a style, and infinitely superior to what she had ever heard."

Theodore

Theodore thanked her for the compliment (as he called it), and declared "he should feel himself highly honoured in being permitted to render her any assistance, provided it lay in his power."

As soon as they had dined, Freeman, who thought Augusta might carelessly mention what had past concerning Theodore, and as such put it in the power of any individual to inform against him, requested her company a few minutes in the garden.

When they had left the room, Sir Charles desired Somers to fill his glass. "Come," said he, "I will give you the young couple that has just left us—Edward and Augusta Freeman."

"With pleasure," replied Somers; "an amiable pair."

“ Yes, Mr. Somers,” resumed Sir Charles ; “ they have been designed for each other from their infancy.

“ My brother has no child but Ned, and I have none but Augusta.

“ It would be an unpleasant circumstance if my estate were to go from my own child ; but, as it is, she will inherit it at my decease by virtue of her marriage with my nephew, as it passes to the male heir, which title rests in him.”

“ I sincerely hope,” said Somers, “ that nothing will intervene to prevent so desirable a purpose ; for I presume, much as you wish to bring this matter to bear, you would not desire it unless both parties were perfectly agreeable, and confident that their own happiness depended on such an union.”

“ I will

"I will not admit of such an idea for a moment," replied Sir Charles; "because I am determined it shall not make me unhappy."

"Freeman is as handsome a young man as it is possible to meet with, and my girl is not wanting of accomplishments; therefore I do not know how they should avoid being attached to each other: and yet, I must confess, there does not appear to be that refined attachment between them that I could wish; they treat each other more like brother and sister, and their affection seems to have that source for its origin. I have often thought," continued Sir Charles, "I acted wrong in acquainting them with my design, till such time as I had been positive their inclinations perfectly accorded with it."

“ Human nature will always resist compulsion,” rejoined Somers. “ It is very probable, had Mr. Freeman and your daughter been left to the free and unbiassed exercise of their own inclinations, you would have had your end accomplished ; whereas, on the contrary, they will resist what appears to be forced, and naturally repine for what is forbidden. Such, at least, is the general remark I have been able to make from different characters I have hitherto been acquainted with.”

“ Whatever they may be inclined to do,” resumed Sir Charles, “ they will scarcely, I think, venture to resist the positive commands of my brother and myself ; for whether they approve or disapprove, it certainly shall be brought about ;

about ; therefore I make myself perfectly easy on that head."

"What," cried Somers, "without having formed an attachment?"

"I shall trust to that taking place hereafter," replied Sir Charles. "Marriage naturally habituates the one to the other, and affection is almost sure to follow where the dispositions of both parties are amiable, as is the case in the present instance."

Somers shook his head.—"I hope, Sir Charles," said he, "whatever may be the event, you will use your endeavours to interrupt, instead of forwarding, an union, unless you are confident it perfectly accords with their wishes ; for, without that, it must occasion unparalleled misery."

Theodore lent an attentive ear to this conversation : he was happy to find that Augusta had betrayed no symptoms of a real affection for Freeman, and yet he knew not why he felt this sensation.

He looked on Mr. Somers and Sir Charles alternately ; conceived one to be an ornament to his species, and the other void of every tender sentiment that could dignify a human being : he felt a strong inclination to deliver his sentiments on this subject, and several times attempted to speak ; but checked himself, fearing lest his words might convey an offence.

Sir Charles observed this inclination on the part of Theodore, and being desirous to hear what he could advance on the subject, condescended to request his opinion, by asking him, how he should conduct

duct himself if he were placed in the situation of Freeman.

“ I should conceive it impossible,” replied Theodore, “ but that your nephew must have an exalted affection for Augusta ; for who can see her and not feel the force of such united accomplishments ?

“ If he possess that affection in its fullest extent, he will not suffer any power whatever to unite him to her, unless he is confident she possesses the same sentiment towards him. On the other hand, if Miss Freeman possessed the most lively affection for your nephew, and was confident that affection was not returned, she would be highly culpable, although awed by the commands of a parent, in suffering herself to be allied to him.

“ But if neither party have an affec-

tion, it would be monstrous even to think of uniting them, and those that insist on it are lost to—— But I beg your pardon; it is not my meaning to give offence, and therefore I shall not enlarge upon the subject.”

“ I request you will proceed,” cried Sir Charles, “ as I am impatient till I hear your opinion fully.”

“ I never knew,” resumed Theodore, “ what it was to experience the caresses of a parent, having been left by them in an infant state; but so exalted is my idea of paternal regard, that I should conceive they would be the last persons in the world who could be so far lost to all sense of feeling as to sacrifice the happiness of their own child.

“ I know not what opinion I should have of my father, if he were to insist upon

upon my swearing at the altar to love a person during my life, when, at the same time, I did not feel one spark of affection for her.

“ I should think I did not commit an error by disobeying his will in this particular ; as, by complying with it, I should be guilty of an act of injustice to her I might marry, convert into mockery one of the most sacred institutions, and as such draw upon myself the vengeance of my Creator.”

“ You take up this business in a wrong light,” resumed Sir Charles ; “ let me ask, if you would not draw upon yourself the vengeance of your Creator by marrying in direct opposition to the will of your father ?”

“ If I were to do so now,” replied Theodore, “ I should think I acted imprudently,”

dently, because it is presumed I am not arrived at years of maturity, and as such incapable of judging for myself: but the case would be materially different had I arrived at manhood. At that period I should be capable of managing my own estate—of delivering my sentiments in the senate; I should then be considered capable of distinguishing: and am I, then, to give up my judgment or inclination to the will of my father in an affair which so materially concerns my future happiness?

“ One man takes a delight in hunting, another in shooting; another is an epicure, another delights in play, and another takes no happiness but in wine:—while I object to them all, and am never so happy as when I am reading. If my father were to insist on my practising for
the

the residue of my days any of the before-mentioned pleasures, I should conceive it a severe penance, and should not be able to oblige him. How then would it be possible that I could be happy with a person of his choice, provided she was not equally so of mine? Indeed, I should have no dread whatever of bringing upon myself the vengeance of Heaven by marrying the person my heart approved; confident that when he required me to act otherwise, he wished to exact an act of duty from me that I was not bound to pay, and which both religion and human policy would compel me to resist.

“ But if by complying with the commands of a parent a son should be rendered unhappy, how truly miserable must a daughter be when placed in a similar situation!—Men may range at large with-
out

out being considered obnoxious to society: when home is disagreeable they may engage in a thousand pleasures to divert the mind; and can absent themselves for months, without any one daring to call their conduct in question. But such is not the case with a wife: she is under the absolute control of the husband—a control which must be intolerable when she dislikes her partner. She is obliged to live a life of perpetual deception; to receive his caresses with an air of tenderness; and, if she deviate from virtue, she is immediately execrated by society. In fact, I have made up my mind to it, that in an affair of so much importance, no one is so capable of judging what is necessary for their future happiness as the party concerned.”

“ From the whole of this conversation,”

resumed

resumed Sir Charles, " you would give me to understand, that if my daughter fixed her attachment on a Tinker I ought not to oppose her inclination, but, on the contrary, to use my endeavours in forwarding it, seeing it would be conducive to her future happiness."

" That is a circumstance," rejoined Theodore, " which I should conceive impossible to take place; there never could be an union of souls between two such opposites; such a character would be more likely to create disgust than affection."

" And yet," resumed Sir Charles, " circumstances of that nature almost as monstrous frequently happen."

" I will admit it," rejoined Theodore; " but it seldom is the case when the lady has arrived at a proper age, and capable
of

of distinguishing : till that period therefore it becomes the parent to prevent the child from making any improper engagements ; but it does not follow that she should be forced into a marriage with a person whom her heart cannot acknowledge."

" Upon the whole," said Sir Charles, " your argument is very well in theory, but could not with propriety be brought into practice."

" What argument is that?" said Freeman, as he entered the room leading in Augusta.

" Theodore," said Sir Charles, " has been insisting on the doctrine of free-will respecting marriage, by totally excluding the right of the parent to interfere."

" I am of his opinion," said Freeman, " where a person marries a stranger ; but
the

the case differs where we are required to marry a relation ; a first cousin for instance : it would be hard indeed, if we could not oblige our friends in such a trivial case, as the marriage could scarcely make us more related than we were before."

This expression was delivered with a degree of sarcasm that brought the colour into Sir Charles's face, and Augusta, who was fearful lest it should occasion an unpleasant remark, gave a turn to the conversation, by requesting Theodore to oblige her with a lesson at the piano.

Theodore complied.

Sir Charles was delighted with his playing, and requested Somers would permit his young friend to visit him frequently, that Augusta might derive a benefit from his abilities.

" Certainly,"

"Certainly," replied Somers; "and I have no doubt but he will be happy to attend."

Theodore bowed an assent, while the pleasure that beamed from his eye bore evident testimony of the satisfaction he received from the invitation.

Augusta was far from appearing displeased; she joined her request to that of her father, and promised, in return, to exercise her assiduity to the utmost that she might do credit to his instructions.

"I presume," said Sir Charles, addressing himself to Somers, "it would be idle in me to request your company, as I am informed you shun society as much as possible, and take no delight but in solitude."

"We must endeavour to dispel this
gloom

gloom," rejoined Freeman, " or he will shortly become a hermit."

" Before he shall be lost to the world," resumed Sir Charles, " we will visit him every day; what say you, Ned?—Augusta, will you join with us?"

Somers thanked them for their kind intentions, and took his leave, after assuring them he should be proud in the honour of their company.

CHAP. VII.

AS they drew near to Cliffdown Lodge, Theodore took occasion to observe that Somers appeared unusually melancholy.

“ It proceeds,” replied Somers, “ from a variety of causes; some of which I cannot make you a partaker in: I confess it gives me uneasiness when I consider that my plan of life is to be infringed upon. I cannot be happy in the company of Freeman; I believe him to be a worthy character, but he is too lively: his gaiety of disposition will but ill suit with the melancholy turn of mind that I am in.”

“ Are you not aware,” said Theodore,
“ how wrong it is to indulge this melan-
choly,

choly, which unless conquered will embitter, if not shorten, the residue of your days?"

"I know my error," resumed Somers, "but Freeman is not the character who could rouse my soul from the stupor that possesses it; he would touch my sorrows with too rough a hand."

"You complimented me," said Theodore, "by saying you were happy I possessed a mind congenial to your own; if you really think so, why will you not make me acquainted with the origin of this melancholy? if my attempts to alleviate it should fail, still it will have one good effect, as it would prevent me from touching upon that theme which wounds you most, but which otherwise I may be guilty of through ignorance."

"It

“ It is impossible,” replied Somers, “ that you can feel for me as you would do had you been in a similar situation with myself; you have never yet been either a husband or a parent—I am, unhappily, both.

“ I have this day assumed a gaiety foreign to my feelings.

“ When I observed with how much pleasure your eyes were fixt on the lovely form of Augusta; how you devoured her words; how you watched every motion, and each breath she drew; I could not help recalling to my mind, that such was once the case with me; and perhaps, like you, I fondly hoped my happiness would never have an end.”

“ Is it possible,” said Theodore, “ you could distinguish any thing particular in
my

my conduct towards Augusta Freeman? if so, I am fearful Sir Charles must have noticed it."

"You have not yet," replied Somers, "learnt to disguise your own feelings: as such, ask your heart what are its sentiments respecting Augusta; then judge whether I have been able to distinguish. Sir Charles I am confident did not notice it: he is like the over-cautious mariner, who is for ever looking forward through his telescope to discover an enemy at a distance, and sees not his foe that has approached from a different quarter."

"I feel," resumed Theodore, "that you have formed a right judgment respecting my sentiments towards Augusta."

"I have frequently been introduced into the society of some of the most enchanting

chanting women ; yet never, till this day, did I feel so strong a desire to please.

“ I attempted to recommend myself by playing with greater skill and judgment than I am accustomed to do, yet never was I so dissatisfied with my performance.

“ Nothing could have exceeded the mortification I endured when I saw the necessity there would be of her becoming acquainted with the unpleasant business for which I was conducted there ; and I will venture to assert, that the fear I had lest I should be removed to where I could not see her, was equal to the dread I felt lest I should be sent back from whence I came.

“ I cannot help adding, that it gives me pleasure when I reflect on the doubts entertained by Sir Charles on the projected union, which doubts were considerably strengthened

strengthened by their conduct towards each other; but were I to attempt to describe the satisfaction I felt on receiving a general invitation to the house, for the express purpose of instructing the amiable Augusta; my words would fall far short of the sensations it created."

"It seems then, Theodore," resumed Somers, "that I was right in my conjecture: yet permit me to say a few words by way of caution. You have already embarked in a very hazardous undertaking; it becomes you to check this growing passion, till you are certain you can have it fully returned. That man ventures more than his life who places his happiness in another's keeping: you should therefore be well acquainted with Augusta, before you fix your attachment beyond the possibility of recal.

“ Understand me right: I do not mean to insinuate that Augusta has one unfavourable trait; I know little of her, either from personal acquaintance or report, as she has chiefly resided with her aunt in London; yet, in justice to her, I must acknowledge that what I have heard has been greatly to her advantage.

“ But, Theodore, there requires an unity of sentiment before there can be an union of souls. I likewise am a convert to the opinion you maintained to-day, but which you now seem to forget, that youth, till they arrive at a certain age, are not capable of distinguishing; and although I shall readily allow that some have more discernment, and are better capable of judging what is necessary for their own happiness at twenty than others are at thirty, yet still it becomes you to examine yourself

self well before you decide in your own favour. I do not flatter you when I say, that it is my opinion you possess a share of sense not commonly to be met with in a person of your years : it cannot, therefore, be so difficult a task for you to examine your own sentiments and feelings as it otherwise would. If you are actuated only with a strong desire to possess the person of the amiable Augusta, believe me, your attachment is ill-founded, and will be but of short duration. To endeavour to inspire her with a sentiment of affection towards you, while you possessed no better sentiment towards her, would be cruel, unjust, and highly improper. But if, on the contrary, you look forward with the pleasing hope of enjoying a life of domestic felicity with Augusta, your affection is of such a nature as will stand

the test of time, by always continuing the same; at least, such was the groundwork of my attachment, which neither ill treatment or desertion has been able to do away.

“ Another circumstance is, there may be a disparity between your fortunes, which may prevent all hope of success upon application to Sir Charles; but of this you are the best judge. At all events, you are certain that her father has set his heart on seeing her married to Freeman: as such, you may depend upon it, your conduct will gain his disapprobation; which last matter he will in a great measure have to thank himself for, as his want of penetration in this particular is evident. I should have thought,” continued Somers, “ that the sentiments you delivered respecting matrimony would
have

have been a sufficient reason to have prevented him from selecting you as a tutor to his daughter, exclusive of the danger there might be from the similitude of your ages and accomplishments ; but it is what I have had frequent occasion for observing, that the greatest errors are sometimes made by those who profess to have the most penetration. They are always looking into futurity, and surmising evils that never happen, which prevents them from seeing the dangers that surround them. Such is the case with Sir Charles : his mind is now occupied, and all his ideas absorbed, in bringing about this projected union ; he fancies to himself a variety of obstacles that may arise to thwart his wishes, and lays plans to do them away : so intent is he on this business, that it never once strikes his imagination that he is at pre-

sent pursuing the most probable method of placing an effectual barrier to all his aerial schemes."

Theodore thanked his friend for the advice he had given him, and promised to pay every attention to it within his power.

"Once more," said Somers, as he set his foot on the threshold of his door—
"once more within my peaceful habitation, where I may enjoy my own thoughts without interruption.

"I have been advised to mix with society, as a certain remedy against the melancholy that at present almost overpowers me.

"This day has been pregnant with adventure: I have been forced into a variety of company, and my ideas have been occupied with the concerns of others;

others; but I do not find that it has had the desired effect: on the contrary, it gives me far greater inclination for the pleasures of retirement; for what comfort can a man possibly derive from any other source, who has had his feelings so deeply wounded as mine!"

"Ah! my friend," said Theodore, "how capable are we of judging for others, and not for ourselves.

"Is it possible your spirits can ever survive the shock they have sustained, while you thus give way to unavailing sorrow, and delight in nothing but melancholy and retirement? You are like a man who is troubled with a lethargic complaint taking opium for relief.

"But I will not dwell on the subject, as I am confident you must be aware of the



the truth of my observation, but have not the power to prevent it."

CHAP. VIII.

EARLY on the ensuing morning, Somers arose as usual, and walked to the temple in his garden, there to indulge himself by giving free vent to his thoughts. He placed himself in the same situation he was in on the preceding morning, when Theodore had observed him.

While he remained in this pensive attitude, his soul wrapt up in contemplation, he was alarmed by a sudden rustling in the bushes that stood near the path leading to the door of the temple, and
in

in a moment Freeman made his appearance.

Somers started from his seat, and advanced hastily towards the door, with an intention of preventing his entrance.

Freeman observed it; and, whether it was from curiosity or any other motive I cannot pretend to determine, but he passed him, and took a seat beside the table.

“ I wish to have a few minutes’ conversation with you,” said he, “ and am happy to find you alone.”

“ There is no person will interrupt us in the house,” rejoined Somers, “ and we will adjourn there, if you have no objection.”

Freeman cast his eyes on the inscription, ‘ Sacred to Solitude,’ then taking off his hat, he very orderly laid it on the table.

"I beg your pardon," said he, "I did not know I was in so sacred a place; but as I am, it is fit I should be uncovered; and as I came here on very serious business, no place can suit me better than this."

Somers was vexed at this intrusion, which vexation he betrayed both by his look and manner.

"And now, my friend Somers," said Freeman, "as we are alone Oh, I beg your pardon," continued he, viewing the whole-length portrait of a lady and a child, "I did not know I was in such good company."

"This is Venus and Cupid, I presume: of all the characters I ever heard of, they are the most likely to drive a man to a temple dedicated to solitude: but it excites my wonder to see them placed here.

I should

I should rather conclude that the dedication is only a blind made use of to screen your devotions to Venus."

" Mr. Freeman," resumed Somers, " you wrong me ; these are not portraits of any fictitious deities, but of characters whom I highly esteem."

" Oh, ho !" cried Freeman, " your earthly goddess, is it ? Upon my word, a tolerable figure. What the devil have you done with the original ? I long to pay my respects to her."

" Let me beg of you," said Somers, " to choose some other subject for your mirth ; you cannot wound me in a more tender point than by persisting in this conversation,"

" A candid confession," rejoined Freeman. " So then this is the lady who has been able to drive into solitude the

once agreeable Somers, and whose incomparable charms have converted a lively, animated fellow into a flandering cynic? Incomparable indeed! But, now I survey her more attentively, I think she is too lusty; and a certain hauteur is distinguishable in every feature. To be sure, there is no accounting for fancy: but then, very possibly it was her affection for you, her wondrous truth and constancy, the evident preference she gave to you of all others—and these are valuable traits I must confess.”

“ You know not how you wound me,” cried Somers; “ you are trifling on a subject I cannot bear.”

“ Why surely I have not wronged her?” resumed Freeman. “ If she possessed not these last qualities, in addition to every other, why is it that you grieve for her loss?”

loss? Is it possible that my philosophical friend can make so small an use of his reason, as to admit his affections thus far to master him? must he thus seclude himself from society for a woman that has no attachment for him? Upon my word, I believe I am the greatest philosopher of the two."

"It is a title," replied Somers, "to which I never set up a claim."

"When I inform you that the portraits before you are the resemblance of my wife and child, who have been taught to desert me, I hope you will no longer persist in making either them or me the objects of your mirth."

"After receiving this information," resumed Freeman, "you might have depended she would excite no sentiment in me but detestation; unless, indeed, some
cause,

cause, which I cannot admit to exist, has induced her so to act."

"Some other time," said Somers, "perhaps I may acquaint you with the particulars; at present you will oblige me by dropping the subject, and attending to that for which I am indebted to you for this visit."

"Your own affairs," replied Freeman, "have so far excited my curiosity, that the business I came upon claims only a second place in my consideration; yet, to oblige you, I will say no more on that head at present."

"My motive for visiting you thus early was in behalf of the amiable girl we rescued yesterday from the possession of Mrs. Gripe."

"I do not think she was born to figure in so menial an employment as that of
conveying

conveying fruit to a market; and I am fearful lest Mrs. Gripe should make use of some artful method to get her within her power.

“The better, therefore, to secure her from all further attempts of that nature, and to place her in a sphere of life more suitable to her abilities, would be for you to speak to my cousin Augusta—she might be prevailed upon to take her as a companion.”

“It certainly would be an eligible situation for her,” replied Somers, “at the decease of Mrs. Bentley; but I am confident she would not listen to any proposal that should separate her from the old lady, although greatly to her advantage; at least, such is my opinion of her.

“Mrs. Bentley has been a second mother to her; she now stands in need of Clarissa’s

rissa's assistance ; to desert her under such circumstances, would be cruel and unjust.

“ Respecting Mrs. Gripe, I have no fear whatever from that quarter ; she is aware that Clarissa has friends, who would not permit any injury to be offered her.

“ As to her attending the market, I shall take effectual precaution to prevent it in future ; and had I known the extent of their necessitous situation, which I was kept in ignorance of through the pride of Mrs Bentley, she should have had no occasion for embracing so humiliating an employment.”

“ I know not how it is,” resumed Freeman, “ but something possesses me, that she is not the daughter of a cottager ;—she must have been reduced from

an exalted situation by fortuitous circumstances."

Somers replied, by acquainting him with her history as far as it had reached his knowledge.

"I thought as much," resumed Freeman; "her appearance of itself is almost sufficient to denote it.—Suppose we pay them a morning visit, and enquire how she is after her fright of yesterday?"

"I have no objection to go there when I have breakfasted," replied Somers; "but not now, it is too early.

"Mrs. Bentley, I must inform you, is very proud; and she would look upon so early a visit as a want of respect—a liberty we should not have taken, had she been in different circumstances. I am of opinion, that greater respect is due to those who have fallen in the world, than
to

to others, as they must be more susceptible than they could be if they were in the possession of affluence."

"I subscribe to your opinion," rejoined Freeman; "and am sorry it is so frequently the case; but more particularly on their account, as I have a fifty-pound note that is infinitely at their service"—at the same time producing it;—"but I know not how to present it to them without gaining their displeasure."

"I am confident," resumed Somers, "they do not stand in need of it at present; besides, a part of it would be sufficient to send, as so large a sum would look conspicuous, and incline them to imagine I had acquainted you with their story. It is true, I was not desired to keep it a secret; yet, perhaps, she would not thank me for divulging it. It is not
for

for me to set bounds to your generosity ; but where a variety of distressed objects present themselves, we should give to every one a proportion, according to our abilities and their several wants.”

“ This I shall readily admit,” replied Freeman ; “ yet I have met with no one hitherto for whom I have felt so great an interest, or so strong a desire to relieve. But, come, why do you procrastinate the hour of breakfast ? I am all anxiety and impatience till I shall have an opportunity of seeing her.”

“ Seeing who ?” cried Somers.—“ Who is it that creates this anxiety and impatience ?”

“ Can you be so dull of comprehension ?” replied Freeman.—“ Who should it be but Clarissa ?”

“ And why is this ?” resumed Somers.

“ Do

“ Do you mean that I should put an improper construction on your proposed generosity? Examine your own feelings, and see if there is no sensual motive masked under this stroke of friendship.”

“ None, by Heaven !” replied Freeman. “ I should have thought my conduct of yesterday would have prevented you from harbouring so mean a suspicion of me: cannot a man see, admire, and relieve one of the opposite sex, without wishing to become her destroyer ?”

“ Certainly he can,” replied Somers; “ but you spoke of your anxiety and impatience with so much fervency, and with the ardour of a man enraptured, that I confess it rather surprisèd me.”

The breakfast bell now summoned their attendance, and put an end to the conversation.

Freeman

Freeman requested pen, ink, and paper, as he had a letter to write, which he wished to be conveyed home. After he had finished it, he dispatched a neighbouring cottager with it, and then followed Somers to the breakfast parlour.

Theodore shortly made his appearance. He thanked Freeman for his kind interposition on the preceding day, and enquired respecting the health of Sir Charles and Augusta.

“ They are perfectly well,” replied Freeman. “ I know not what you have said or done,” continued he, “ but you have placed yourself effectually in their estimation. I had nothing to attend to, after your departure, but extravagant encomiums lavishly bestowed on you by Sir Charles, all which were readily assented to by Augusta, and generally with an addition.

dition. Then your musical talents were beyond all description ; you played divinely : her soul, as she expressed it, was led away by the masterly style with which you performed. I thought," continued Freeman, " I could discover something lurking under these encomiums, and therefore observed (although I must confess rather incautiously), that so elegant a young man as Theodore Somers could not fail of attracting the admiration of the ladies, without the addition of so pleasing a talent.

" My cousin's face was covered with crimson, and Sir Charles cried, ' Why, I hope, Freeman, you are not jealous?' I replied, it was impossible I could, as both Augusta and myself had come to a right understanding respecting our affection for each other, that precluded the
necessity

necessity of jealousy or suspicion on either side. ‘Why, that is as it should be,’ resumed my uncle; ‘and it gives me great pleasure to find that it is so.’ I bowed, and Sir Charles went on by observing, that as I had not heard from my father lately, I must be in want of some remittances, and then very graciously presented me with a fifty-pound note. The fact is, I was not short of money, but as I wished to render some pecuniary assistance to a friend in need, I thought it would be unhandsome in me to refuse the old gentleman’s offer, and therefore accepted it with pleasure. It makes me smile,” continued Freeman, “when I see a man who thinks he possesses the greatest foresight in the world so industrious in imposing upon himself.”

“How is this?” said Somers, who had observed

the extreme anxiety pictured in the countenance of Theodore during this short recital; "I cannot conceive how Sir Charles can impose upon himself, when you candidly own an existing affection between yourself and Augusta."

"I beg your pardon," resumed Freeman; "you are not authorised to draw that inference from my words, not even if I should inform you our affections were mutual."

"It is true," rejoined Somers, "the words will admit of being differently construed; but I should scarcely think it possible you could avoid having a serious attachment for so amiable a character as Augusta; and, if you have not, I am at a loss for the motives that can induce you to deceive Sir Charles respecting it: he certainly would sooner overlook a candid avowal

avowal of your sentiments, although contrary to his wishes, than he can be brought to endure this deception ; more particularly as it will call his own judgment in question, and place his profound penetration, upon which he so highly values himself, in a very ridiculous light."

"Sir Charles is at liberty," replied Freeman, "to put what construction he pleases upon my conduct ; he can at all times console himself with the knowledge that it was himself who forced me into it."

"Is it possible then," said Theodore, "that you have no affection for Augusta?"

"You are in an error," replied Freeman ; "I possess a lively affection for my cousin, and I am positive that affection is as amply returned by her."

Theodore turned pale.—"I see how it is with you," continued Freeman ; "your

conduct of yesterday was fully explanatory of your sentiments, without any farther proof; and I am fearful this business must terminate in a duel."

Theodore was relieved from the anxiety this assurance would have created, by a significant look which he observed Freeman give to Somers when he uttered it.

"I hope," said Somers, "there will be no occasion for such a remedy."

"I am inclined to think there will not," resumed Freeman; "but that you may judge for yourselves, I will make you acquainted with a few particulars."—

CHAP. IX.

“**A**T an early period of life I was sent for to my uncle’s, who at all times took a delight in mentioning his wishes respecting an union between Augusta and myself.

“As we advanced in years, he spoke of it as an event that had been settled between my father and him, from which there was no receding. I am of opinion that this apparent compulsion was what first wrought in me a spirit of resistance.

“ I have no fault whatever,” continued Freeman, “ to find with Augusta; the most envious woman must allow that she is extremely handsome; she needs but to be seen to be admired. But this is trifling when compared with the endow-

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ments

ments of her mind. She speaks several languages fluently; is in possession of some of the fine arts; plays enchantingly on various musical instruments; possesses a large share of sense; and is withal so merciful, that no culprit brought before her father meets his desert, if it is in her power to mitigate it. In addition to this, her benevolence is such, that no petitioner is suffered to feel the weight of sorrow through pecuniary embarrassments, where she has the power to relieve.

“ Yet, with all these rare accomplishments, and this amiable disposition, Augusta has not been able to touch the heart of Freeman. I cannot but admire her, and, as my relation, she possesses a large share of my affection. I do not think, if she were my sister, I could esteem her more. I examined this affection, and found I
had

had no spark of that tender attachment which is so necessary to be possessed for the person I should be inclined to pass my life with.

“ I endeavoured to discover what sentiment actuated Augusta ; but so remarkably tender and assiduous was she, that I was not able to distinguish whether this conduct originated in her natural disposition, increased by her being my relation, or from an interest I had in her heart ; and therefore determined on an explanation, and that for the following reasons :

“ I thought there was a possibility that she (in compliance with the will of her father) might be endeavouring to make up her mind to the wished-for alliance. In such case, it would be necessary on my part to signify my strong disinclination to it, lest she should suffer her heart to be

ultimately engaged ; or, if I found that the latter was really the case, then to make up my mind to it, as Augusta was the last person in the world whose feelings I could think of wounding, or whose pride I would mortify by a refusal.

“ As to Sir Charles, I never could have a moment of uneasiness on his account ; he had no motive in proposing the match but what originated in an idea that Augusta was as partial to his title and estate as was himself ; he therefore naturally wished she might possess them through a marriage with me, as I am heir to both : and, with respect to my father, I was confident, from the whole of his conduct to me through life, that, whatever he might say to me to the contrary, he would finally leave me to the free and unbiassed exercise of my judgment.

“ It

“ It was not long,” continued Freeman, “ before I found an opportunity of entering into the explanation so much wished for.

“ Sir Charles possessed a considerable sum in the funds: an estate is now on sale contiguous to his own; this estate he is inclined to purchase for his daughter; but, before he entered into a treaty for it, he determined to consult with us upon the business.

“ Sir Charles, Augusta, and myself, had just breakfasted when he introduced the subject.

“ ‘ I need not,’ said he, ‘ inform you, that my brother and myself have designed you for each other from your infancy.

“ ‘ I flatter myself I possess no small share of penetration; by which I plainly discover, that the plan is far from being

disagreeable to either of you.' He then, addressing me, bestowed a few handsome encomiums upon Augusta; after which, *vice versa*, he paid a few compliments to your unfortunate orator, from which he drew a false conclusion—that it was impossible two people so accomplished could fail of having a lively attachment for each other.

“ ‘ I need not ask you,’ continued Sir Charles, ‘ whether it is so, as I can read it in the satisfaction of your looks.’

“ Here my wise uncle was in an error, for I am confident I never looked so foolish in my life. I stole a glance at Augusta, to see what kind of satisfaction was seated in her countenance; but I could discern nothing there except a visible uneasiness.

“ Sir Charles seemed waiting for a reply,

ply, by way of confirmation ; but as I had not consulted with Augusta, I felt myself embarrassed, and was only capable of answering with a nod, and a smile which I forced into my countenance, contrary to my feelings.

“ This was sufficient for Sir Charles, who at all times appeared eager to impose upon himself. He then declared his intention of purchasing the estate in question, provided we approved of it ; alleging, that he thought we ought to be consulted on it, as it was ultimately to be ours.

“ I thanked him in as polite a manner as I possibly could for his condescension, after which, to relieve my mind from the embarrassment he had occasioned, I walked into the garden. In a few minutes I beheld Augusta walking down a path

in the pleasure ground, seemingly lost in thoughts of an unpleasant nature.

“ I advanced towards her, and taking her by the hand, seated her in an arbour. I then recapitulated the conversation of Sir Charles, and requested a candid avowal of her sentiments.

“ ‘ Edward,’ she replied, ‘ I am of opinion we esteem each other so much in our present relative situation, that it cannot be increased by any other tie : such esteem is very different from that which would be requisite in forming a happy union. I feel for you the affection of a sister, but no further.

“ ‘ I readily admit,’ continued she, ‘ the truth of the encomiums my father bestowed on you this morning, and am confident you would make the person happy that you may be allied to ; but I feel,

Edward,

Edward, that I am not to be the person, nor shall I ever harbour such an idea till my wishes are consonant with it, and my heart approves it.'

"Being thus relieved," continued Freeman, "from the anxiety of my mind by the candid declaration of my cousin, I seemed to have acquired new life; and, in as delicate and feeling a manner as I could, acquainted her, in reply, with the similarity of our sentiments; which assurance, on my side, administered the same relief to her. The only subject that now required our serious consideration, was how to conduct ourselves before Sir Charles. We were of opinion there was no occasion to excite his resentment by an avowal, till such time as he wished for its completion; in such intermediate space various occurrences might happen,

that would make him bear the disappointment with more patience than he could do at present ; and therefore determined to conduct ourselves as usual. Not that I have any great reason to fear his resentment : he can, it is true, injure his estate, and alienate a small part of it ; but this would not force me into a marriage contrary to my feelings ; nor could any consideration whatever compel me to do so great an act of injustice to my cousin, by taking her when my heart disapproved of it ; or to be guilty of so great a folly as to ally myself to a person who declares she possesses no other sentiment than friendship, arising from our relative situation."

" Nothing could give me greater satisfaction," said Theodore, " than the recital you have obliged us with. Augusta
being

being totally at liberty, her heart and hand undisposed of, I shall, with your permission, endeavour to recommend myself to her notice."

"I have been the more particular," replied Freeman, "in relating this business, because I thought, from what I could observe yesterday, and the questions that were put to me this morning, that you had a secret wish to be placed in my situation. If therefore you can satisfy me that your expectations in life are such as ought to entitle you to hope for a favourable reception, I will do my utmost to promote your interest."

Theodore thanked him for his offer in a manner that plainly shewed how highly acceptable his proffered service would be to him, and promised to give him every satisfaction he required.

Breakfast

Breakfast being ended, Freeman again expressed his impatience to pay a visit to Mrs. Bentley's cottage. Somers agreed to accompany him, and Theodore preferred remaining at home.

They crossed the river, and shortly arrived at the cottage. When Somers and Freeman entered the door, Clarissa, who was engaged at her needle, rose from her seat.

Freeman bowed respectfully. In fact, he did not know her, so great an alteration had dress made in her favour.

On the preceding day she had put up her hair under a close cap, on her head she wore a flat hat, and the residue of her dress was covered by a stuff joseph-coat. But having now no occasion to disguise herself, her hair was hanging in natural ringlets carelessly on her shoulders,

ders, she wore a small cottage bonnet, and white muslin drefs.

Clariffa curtfied, and handed him a chair; at the fame time calling him by his name, and affuring him how highly gratified fhe was, in receiving a vifit from her protector.

“Is it poffible,” faid Freeman, “you can be the fame perfon I had the honour of attending here yefterday? I then obferved an elegance of manner, and a degree of beauty not commonly to be met with, and which I thought it was impoffible for drefs to improve; but what I now behold convinces me to the contrary.”

Clariffa blufhed: fhe poffeffed not the power of rally, and if fhe did, her forlorn fituation had too much humbled her fpirits to fuffer her to make ufe of it. Somers beheld her embarraffment, and
relieved

relieved her by enquiring for Mrs. Bentley.

Clarissa replied by informing him that she remained as usual, and that she expected her to make her appearance in a few minutes.

While Clarissa was speaking, a man entered and delivered her a letter, saying he brought it from a gentleman in Bristol, and it required no answer.

Before she could break the seal the messenger was gone.

Clarissa hastily opened it, and perused the contents. "Thank Heaven!" exclaimed she, "our friend has not forgotten us." Then delivering it to Somers, he read as follows:

' MADAM,

' I am desired by Mr. Morris to forward the inclosed to you: he is sorry
' that

‘ that his circumstances have been such
 ‘ as to have prevented him from sending
 ‘ you a supply sooner ; but he desires me
 ‘ to assure you he will endeavour to be
 ‘ more punctual for the future.

‘ I am, Madam,

‘ for Mr. Morris,

‘ Your most obedient,

‘ THOS. CHAPMAN.’

The inclosed was a bank-note for fifty pounds.

Somers congratulated her upon the circumstance, and she hastened to inform Mrs. Bentley, who shortly after entered the room in company with her.—“ I should not be so much surpris’d,” said Mrs. Bentley, addressing herself to Somers, “ at the receipt of this from Mr. Morris, if I could account for the possibility of
 his

his finding out our place of residence, as I made no person acquainted with it."

"I confess," rejoined Somers, "it appears singular; nor can I account for the letter being wrote by another person."

An idea now entered the mind of Somers that made him request another sight of the note and letter.

It so happened, that when Freeman produced the note in the morning, Somers had observed a blot under the word 'Fifty,' which blot he plainly distinguished on the note in question.

He was no longer at a loss to account for this transaction; but did not think proper to acquaint them with it: yet he gave a significant look to Freeman, which strongly testified that he had a knowledge of his being the author of the letter.

Freeman,

Freeman, fearing lest this business should be farther investigated, gave a turn to the conversation by admiring various pieces of needle-work that were framed and hung around the room, and requested to know whose performance they were.

Mrs. Bentley replied they were Clarissa's, and dwelt largely in her praise: amongst other things she mentioned an arbour that Clarissa had ingeniously formed, and desired she would shew it to Mr. Freeman.

Clarissa complied.

Freeman admired it, and requested that he might be allowed to bring his cousin to see it: at the same time alleging he should be happy to introduce Augusta to the acquaintance of so amiable a character as Clarissa Lesley.

Clarissa

Clarissa thanked him for the honour he intended her, but thought the performance too insignificant for Augusta's notice, and was likewise fearful the sphere Providence had placed her in was too humble for her to look forward to the friendship or acquaintance of his cousin; yet, should he be able to prevail on her to visit the cottage, she should consider herself highly honoured by her company.

“ You know little of my cousin,” said Freeman, “ if you suppose she would not be delighted with your society; she is truly amiable: I am confident you cannot but esteem each other; while I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have been the means of forming a friendship between two of the most amiable objects the country can produce.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

WHILE Clarissa was thanking him for the compliment (as she styled it), a gentleman made his appearance at the front of the garden.

He stood a few moments as if looking for the gate ; at length discovering it, he entered, and approached the spot where Freeman and Clarissa stood conversing ; then assuming an air of profound respect, requested they would inform him the way to the next village, alleging that having been out for a morning's ramble, he had mistaken his road.

Freeman immediately recognised in the stranger the features of Sir Thomas Blandford,

ford, and, addressing him by his name, offered to conduct him.

Sir Thomas professed to be thankful, but having met with Freeman, with whom he was only slightly acquainted, he seemed to be in no haste to pursue his ramble, and declined his offer ; signifying that he should not be so deficient in good manners as to deprive him of the company of his amiable companion.

Freeman replied, by observing it would occasion his absence but a few minutes, as it was not a quarter of a mile from the place he wished to find.

Sir Thomas still lingered : he professed to be fascinated with the spot, admired the romantic situation, the stupendous rocks, the hanging wood, the fertile vale, the winding stream, and the assemblage
of

of beauty that every-where surrounded him. As to the garden, it was, in his opinion, beyond any thing he had ever seen upon so small a scale: and having been informed the arbour was Clarissa's performance, he dissected the whole of it; admired each component part, and declared his astonishment that nature could be so wonderfully improved; but admitted it might proceed from the exquisite taste and admirable talents of Clarissa.

Freeman readily admitted the truth of his observations respecting the situation; but pointed out still greater beauties they should meet with in their walk to the next village, which he advised him to pursue.

Sir Thomas could no longer be deaf to these hints, and finding no inclination
to

to depart, he declared, that having met with such good company, he should spend the morning with them, if they had no objection.

This appeal to Freeman's politeness had so far the desired effect, that he no longer urged him to pursue his ramble; but informed him he had visited Mrs. Bentley on a matter of business; that having now nothing further to detain him, he should return home, and should be proud of his company.

"Nothing further to detain you!" exclaimed Sir Thomas; "what a horrid compliment are you paying to this amiable cottager!" Then taking his glass, which hung dangling to his button, and staring for a minute on Clarissa, while he manufactured a phrase: "I vow to God," cried he, "I could dwell for years on the prospect

prospect of so much loveliness:—Permit me, my little agreeable wood-nymph,” continued he, “to apologise for my friend Freeman; his heart, my dear girl, must certainly be disposed of, or positively he would feel a spark of that fire which at present animates me. It always was my misfortune to melt before the sunshine of beauty;—the effects of possessing too feeling a heart.”

“I am happy,” said Freeman, “to hear you profess yourself a man of feeling, as I think, when you view the confusion your conversation has thrown this lady into, there is immediate occasion for the exercise of it, by dropping the subject.”

Clarissa had in a small degree recovered herself, and turning to Freeman, “I request,” said she, “you will permit Sir

Thomas to amuse himself; the poverty and humble situation of the object will always plead an excuse in the breast of a modern fine gentleman for the style with which he may think proper to address her."

Sir Thomas felt the full force of this retort, yet was preparing to defend himself with the utmost effrontery, by a repetition, when Somers advanced towards them.

No sooner did Sir Thomas observe him than he seemed to lose his confidence; he hesitated and stammered, without being able to articulate a sentence; yet, although he was deficient in point of words, he made ample amends by his actions; he bowed repeatedly to Somers, with every appearance of profound respect, while Somers stood fixt like a statue,

ture, so great was his surprise on meeting him at the cottage.

After a pause for a few moments, Somers broke silence, by requesting of Sir Thomas, if Mrs. Bentley were his tenant or his debtor.

Sir Thomas replied that she was neither.

"That is rather unfortunate," resumed Somers, "as it would afford you an ample means to practise some of those virtues for which you are most famous. I am at a loss," continued he, "to account for your visit here this morning; but I have no doubt it was for some benevolent purpose."

There was a marked disapprobation and sneer on the features of Somers while he spoke, that left Sir Thomas no room to doubt concerning the true meaning of

his words ; yet he determined not to understand him, but to carry it off as lightly as possible : and fearing lest Clarissa or Freeman should harbour an ill opinion of him, “ Faith,” replied he, “ I have indeed been cursed unfortunate this morning, not having met with any person who has solicited relief ; nor have I any petition by me at present that requires answering.”

“ I am extremely sorry,” rejoined Somers in the same strain of irony, “ that a gentleman famous for the practice of benevolence, should be so unfortunate as to possess a bad recollection ; and since I find you consider it a misfortune not to be acquainted with any one who stands in need of your assistance, you force me to remind you of the unfortunate Mr. Bridport.”

“ I beg,

“ I beg, Mr. Somers,” cried Sir Thomas, interrupting him, “ you will not mention that fellow’s name ; he treated me with unparalleled insolence, and has met with his deserts.”

“ You must excuse me,” resumed Somers ; “ I shall always remind you of him, in whatever company I find you, until you have endeavoured to make some reparation for the injury you have done him. As to his deserts, poor unfortunate man, he deserves a better fate ; yet, had his sufferings been the reward of his crimes, instead of his virtues, it ill becomes you to wrest from your Creator the prerogative of punishing.”

“ Your sentiments and mine,” replied Sir Thomas, “ are extremely different : you seem to infer, that every man who

robs upon the highway, or commits any act, however atrocious, should be left to receive his punishment till the day of judgment: why, sir, you would do away, by this doctrine, the greatest blessing of Englishmen—a trial by jury.”

“ If he has committed an offence,” rejoined Somers, “ why did you not leave him to the verdict of a jury?—but well enough you knew they would have held him guileless.”

“ You will allow, I hope,” cried Sir Thomas, “ there are some offences of a heinous nature, that are daily committed, and which the law can take no cognizance of; in such case, where the offended party can find no redress from his country, it becomes him to be his own avenger, provided he has the means in
his

his power ; those means I have, and nothing shall make me discontinue to exercise them."

" I readily admit, sir," resumed Somers, " there are crimes committed daily which the law can take no cognizance of ; for instance, a man may seduce the daughter of his tenant and his friend, lead away her young mind by promises of marriage, and having reduced her to an equality with the refuse of her species, desert her a prey to wretchedness, poverty, and shame ; and to aggravate this infamous conduct, if her unfortunate father, whose sum of happiness was centered in his child, should dare even to whisper a complaint, then the vile seducer of his daughter throws him in a prison : these, sir, are crimes that the law can take no cognizance of. On the other

hand, if a poor wretch meets a man on the highway, and takes a few shillings from him that he can well spare, and never feel the loss of, yet shall this wretch suffer death: compare the crimes, and see who most deserves condign punishment, he who takes a purse, or you—you, Sir Thomas, who robs a man of all his store of happiness."

"A truce with this insolence," cried Sir Thomas; "I do not feel inclined to put up with any more of it. If you think I have acted wrong, and are determined to become my tenant's champion, I wear a sword, and shall at all times be ready to answer you."

"You wear a sword," rejoined Somers, "then use it in a better cause. What have I said that has given you offence? I have repeated your own conduct; is that

that a crime? learn never to do an act that you are ashamed of, and you will not blush at hearing it repeated.

“ You wear a sword! so may a highwayman: but, sir, I meet none but gentlemen, nor shall all that you can say force me to become the executioner of a criminal, however infamous his conduct, or richly deserving of his fate.

“ You may wear your sword with safety; I shall not put it in your power to add the crime of murder to the catalogue of your vices.”

“ Then, sir,” cried Sir Thomas, furiously, “ you are a wretched poltroon, and I shall post you for a coward in all companies.”

“ Just as you please respecting that,” replied Somers; “ I have no doubt but
 1 5 the

the world in general will approve of my conduct when the particulars are made public ; and I give you my word it shortly will be the case, as I have drawn out a petition for Mr. Bridport, which will be sent to the printer's, and some thousand copies will be circulated.

“ This petition gives a statement of the facts, with the names of all the parties at full length ; and solicits the charity of the humane and benevolent to assist him with the means of his discharge.”

“ Have a care what you do, sir,” cried Sir Thomas ; “ you will perhaps afford me an opportunity of prosecuting you for a libel.”

“ Depend upon it,” rejoined Somers, “ I shall attend to your advice. I shall not advance any thing but what I can authenticate.

authenticate. You cannot, or at least you ought not to blame me for rendering your virtues conspicuous to the world."

"Mr. Freeman," said Sir Thomas, "I will appeal to you; is this the conduct of a gentleman? or has Mr. Somers any right to interfere in a private quarrel between me and my tenant?"

"I can see no impropriety," replied Freeman, "in the conduct of Mr. Somers. Nothing is more common than to petition the wealthy in cases of distress; but if you think an explanation of the circumstances will bear hard upon you, you had better put it out of his power by giving the poor man his discharge."

"As to that," rejoined Sir Thomas, "if an application had been properly made, perhaps I should have had no
 1 6 objection;

objection ; but to be forced to it in this way, I never can submit to."

" Do not endeavour to persuade him," cried Somers, addressing himself to Freeman ; " I would not for a trifle lose the pleasure of adding another laurel to the brow of Sir Thomas. I have no doubt but I shall be able to procure his discharge without appealing to his humanity ; and I promise myself great satisfaction in proceeding to his house at the head of some of the principal gentlemen in the county, and tendering him down the money."

" You may render yourself as ridiculous as you please," rejoined Sir Thomas ; " for, I assure you, not all that you can do shall force me to liberate the man, while I have the power to hold him."

This

This conversation was put an end to by a party appearing in sight, who were evidently bending their course towards the cottage.

CHAP. XI.

WHEN Sir Charles had parted from Theodore and Somers on the preceding evening, he began by observing to Freeman and Augusta, that the appearance of Theodore had greatly prepossessed him in his favour.

“ I know not,” continued he, “ any young man more capable of handling a bad cause to advantage than himself; but I am inclined to think the disagreement between his uncle and him originates in his having imbibed too independent a spirit. He totally excludes the authority of a parent to interfere with the marriage of his child; and positively asserts, were it his case, he should
not

not consider himself guilty of a breach of duty in refusing, provided he had no affection for the party proposed."

Edward saw the drift of Sir Charles, and rightly imagined he only recapitulated the opinion of Theodore for the purpose of gaining his ideas on the subject; for this reason he determined on giving an evasive reply.

"It is a happy circumstance," said Edward, "where the wishes of a parent and child are mutual, as, in such a case, it renders all argument on the subject useless."

"Do you think," resumed Sir Charles, "it would admit of any argument in its favour?"

"Theodore, it seems," replied Edward, "made use of some; but there is every excuse for him, he never knew his
parents,

parents, and having never experienced their careffes, it cannot be fupposed he fhould feel that ftrong inclination to oblige them, as otherwife would be the cafe."

" You think, then, there needs an excufe?" rejoined Sir Charles. " Come, let me hear your fentiments candidly ; for, to confefs the truth, I fhould not be inclined to forward an acquaintance between Theodore and you, if I thought you were inclined to his opinion, left his arguments fhould ftrengthen you in fuch a miftaken notion ; befide which, there was a degree of irony in your expreffion, when you entered the room to-day, and interrupted our argument, that calls for an explanation on this head."

Edward faw, or thought he faw, the dawn of affection between Theodore and

Augusta ;

Augusta ; an event which, if real, might tend to rid him of any further perplexing importunities ; he therefore determined on giving such a reply, although evasive, as should satisfy Sir Charles, and throw him off his guard.

“ Would you have me,” said Edward, “ declare, that duty to my father, and submission to the will of my uncle, were the reasons that would induce me to attend Augusta to the altar ? or, would she not be more satisfied to hear, that a serious and grounded affection on my side was my only incitement ? ”

“ That is very true,” replied Sir Charles ; “ no doubt the last assurance would make her the most happy ; but can you give her that assurance ? ”

This was a question so direct, that perplexed him to answer, and drove him to
the

the necessity of a moment's pause; at length he replied, "Why really, sir, I do not think there is any occasion for an umpire in this business; Augusta and myself can come to a right understanding without the interference of a third person; but, as you express a wish to be satisfied, I will confess to you, that having a sincere regard for Augusta, and having imbibed some doubts of her real regard for me, I spoke to her on the subject, and had the happiness to find our affections were mutual."

"Why, this is as it should be," rejoined Sir Charles in ecstasy: "such a candid avowal on your part gives me great pleasure, as it effectually removes every suspicion I had to the contrary. Come, come, Augusta, do not blush at what gives me such infinite satisfaction."

Augusta

at Augusta smiled.

I “ I should not,” continued Sir Charles, “ deserve the character I have acquired for penetration, if I could not plainly discern that the candid acknowledgment of Mr. Edward gives you pleasure. I have a letter to write, and shall therefore leave you together for a few minutes, to enjoy that perfect happiness which only can be felt by those whose hearts are in unison, like yours.”

Here Sir Charles’s penetration had overshoot its mark.

Augusta had with silence attended to her father’s close examination of Edward, and trembled for the event. The blush was occasioned by a consciousness of the imposition practised upon him ; and the smile was forced into her features in compliment to Edward, who was behind the
back

back of Sir Charles, enjoying a laugh at his expence.

When Sir Charles had quitted the room, Augusta declared that she was inadequate to the task imposed upon her; for that she should be unable, from sentiments of duty and affection to Sir Charles, to persevere in so manifest a deception.

“ A truce with compunction,” exclaimed Edward; “ I had something of that sentiment prevailing within me during my conversation with your father; but his last remark obliterated every shadow of it, and set my mind perfectly at rest:—did he not say, he would leave us together for a few minutes to enjoy that perfect happiness which only could be felt by those whose hearts were in unison like ours? This expression plainly testifies

fies that he has known what it was to love with sincerity, and to have that love returned ; he has therefore no excuse on the plea of ignorance, for asserting that you ought to marry in compliance to his will, although your heart may be estranged from the party. If he is aware that perfect happiness can be attained only by such characters, inheriting such sentiments, what plea can he make use of in palliation of his conduct respecting us, to whom he has repeatedly pledged himself, that he would see our union accomplished whether we had an affection for each other or not ?”

“ However inexcusable my father may be,” said Augusta, “ or however wrong he may act, it does not follow that I should be guilty of an impropriety of conduct

duct in carrying on a deception ; such a practice is repugnant to my feelings."

" He forces you," resumed Edward, " to adopt this line of conduct ; the propriety or impropriety of which I shall not argue upon, but leave it to your own decision ; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, you will shortly feel a necessity for adopting it."

" From whence should this necessity arise ?" said Augusta ; " for I am at a loss to ascertain it."

" Ah, my dear cousin," said Edward, " you may impose upon yourself as much as you please, but you cannot impose upon me : I will name to you the cause in one word, ' Theodore.' Now, hide that blush, or you will explain more than you intend."

" Upon

"Upon my word, Edward, you are very rude," cried Augusta; "your wisdom for once is in an error; the blush was the effect of your suspicion, and is no confirmation of the truth of it. Theodore is certainly a very amiable young man, and I felt"

"Aye," cried Edward, interrupting her, "that is what I wish to be informed of; what were your feelings when in his company?"

"Nothing more, I assure you," replied she, "than what any other person would have experienced; I felt interested in his behalf."

"And this," resumed Edward, on "account of his appearing so *very amiable*?"

"Amiable!" said Augusta; "do not dwell upon my words: I hope I may say
that

that Theodore is amiable, without having the expression tortured to an improper meaning?"

"That we may come to a right understanding," resumed Edward, "permit me to ask you one question, Would you have felt so much interested in his behalf had he possessed the manners and appearance of either of the men that brought him here?"

"Certainly not," replied Augusta; "but that is no criterion to judge by. You must allow that some persons may strongly interest me in their behalf from their appearance more than others, and yet I may be totally free from that sentiment which you insinuate is possessed by me: my father, for instance, professes himself interested in his behalf."

"That argument is conclusive," rejoined,

joined Edward.—“ I beg your pardon for having troubled you with my opinion, which originated from what I imagined I saw in your countenance when you were together; but I am happy, on your account, that it is not so; and my only reason for introducing the subject was, to warn you against any fascination that might take place on your side; for, to tell you the truth, Theodore had the address effectually to impose on your father respecting the reasons that induced him to quit his uncle's protection.

“ Somers acquainted me with the whole particulars, as we were walking from his house to this; the sum of which is, that Theodore has placed an attachment on an amiable girl; his uncle insisted on procrastinating the match till he could acquaint his father and receive his

consent, and meant to remove him, in the mean time, to his seat in the country, where he would be at a distance from the object ; but as Theodore did not approve of so tedious a delay, and learning his uncle's intentions respecting him, he left his house. This accounts for the letter you heard read, and his insisting on free-will respecting marriage."

The ejaculation of " You surprize me!" which fell from the lips of the attentive Augusta at the conclusion of this recital, was followed by a sigh and a pale languor that overspread her countenance, which did not escape the penetration of Edward.

He concluded that she had either imposed on herself, or wished to impose upon him, and was preparing to inform her that the tale was all a fiction of his own, related

related for the mere purpose of estimating the strength of her attachment, and confirming the truth of his suspicions; but he was interrupted from so doing by the entrance of Sir Charles; after which Augusta took the first opportunity of leaving the room, and, by alleging she had a trifling head-ach, made that a pretence for not returning again during the evening.

Edward naturally concluded the information he had given her respecting Theodore was the true cause of her absenting herself, and repented that he had trifled with her feelings by forging a tale so contrary to truth: he wrote a note for the purpose of sending by Ellen, but was informed she had retired to rest, and therefore deferred the explanation till the morning.

Augusta, being an early riser, was walking in the garden when Edward made his appearance. He had anticipated the pleasure she would receive on hearing the tale contradicted, and approached her for the purpose of rendering that peace to her mind which he concluded she stood so much in need of, but was prevented from so doing by the unusual appearance of gaiety assumed by Augusta; she seemed to be in high spirits, and the very life of humour.

This conduct on her side made Edward ashamed to confess his stratagem, lest he should have formed a wrong judgment, and should, by an explanation, subject himself to be laughed at in his turn; concluding, therefore, if there were no reality in his suspicions, it could be of no consequence to Augusta what was the
real

real motive for Theodore's quitting his uncle's house ; and, if his suspicions were well grounded, she merited the deceptive conduct he had made use of : for these reasons he determined to say nothing on the subject. Thus did Augusta, through a false pride and want of confidence that needed not to have been exercised towards Edward, her near relation and intimate friend, suffer many an uneasy moment, which otherwise would not have been the case.

Edward therefore left her, for the purpose of visiting Somers, as before related.

Augusta was shortly after joined by her father, who informed her that he meant, as soon as he had breakfasted, to visit Somers ; and desired she would be ready to walk with him.

This was contrary to a plan she had privately laid down, which was, not to venture herself in the company of Theodore till she had perfectly regained that peace of mind she enjoyed prior to her seeing him; and therefore requested to be excused.

Sir Charles pressed her so forcibly, and at length insisting on it, she was obliged, although with evident reluctance, to comply.

As soon, therefore, as they had finished their morning's beverage, they strolled down the hill to Cliffdown-lodge.

As there were no attendant porters at the gate, they entered unobserved, and walked through a small shrubbery to the house, where a servant met them, and informed them his master was from home, but that Theodore was in the garden; whither

whither Sir Charles bent his way in search of him, taking Augusta with him.

The first object that attracted her notice was Theodore : he was sitting in a small arbour, formed by woodbine and jessamine, his head reclined on his hand, and apparently lost in thought.

Much as she wished to avoid the sight of Theodore before she arrived there, yet she could not now help casting a look towards him who had first inspired her with that pleasing yet perplexing sentiment till late unknown to her ; but the thought instantly occurring to her mind that he was then contemplating on her for whom he had left his uncle's house, it obliterated for a moment the tender sensation, and made her strike into a different path to avoid him.

After walking through various avenues,

they arrived at that gloomy recess where stood almost secluded the temple dedicated to Solitude.

“What a romantic spot!” exclaimed Augusta: “it is no wonder there is an air of melancholy diffused over the countenance of Somers; it becomes habitual to him through living in this retired and unfrequented situation.”

About fifty paces from the temple was a small rock of easy ascent, covered with underwood, down which ran a trifling stream of land water, that was checked in its progress, so as to create several small cascades, the murmuring of which greatly added to the gloom of the situation; nothing was heard save that and the notes of different birds, which seemed to vie with each other in melodious harmony.

“I should

“ I should conclude,” said Sir Charles, “ from the retired situation of this temple, it incloses a cold-bath :” then advancing to the window, he beheld the portraits ; “ What have we here ?” cried he ; “ Venus and Cupid, I suppose, and executed in a masterly manner.”

“ I differ with you,” said Augusta ; “ it is evident the person who executed the piece perfectly understands his profession, he would therefore not have dressed her in modern attire ; besides which, although it represents a tolerable figure, yet she falls far short of the beauty and mien usually expressed in the person of Venus. I have heard Somers has been married, and is separated from his wife ; this then is certainly the portrait of her and his child.”

“ You



“You are right,” rejoined Sir Charles:
“and on the table lye several letters and
papers: here is where he retires to indulge
his melancholy. I am surpris’d that So-
mers, as a man of sense, has not more
fortitude than to become a prey to a
hopeless passion for a woman who in
all probability has us’d him ill: he will
never regain his spirits while he practises
this line of conduct. Retired from the
world, where he has no friend to open his
mind to, no one to rouse him from the
stupor he has fallen into, he indulges his
sorrows in obscurity; and I am greatly
mistaken if his life in the end will not be
shortened by it, for his appearance is
wonderfully altered for the worse of late.
Remind me, Augusta,” continued he,
“that I insist on his relating his story,
for

for without I know the cause, it will be impossible for me to apply a remedy: he must not be suffered to be thus lost for the want of a friend to advise with."

"I will not only remind you," replied Augusta, "but I will add my request to yours. I am greatly mistaken if Somers ever merited ill treatment; he appears naturally humane and whatever might formerly have characterised him, yet here no blemish appears in him; on the contrary, he is an ornament to the human species."

"You have drawn a faithful portrait of him," said Theodore, who was led to the spot by the sound of their voices.

After the congratulations of the morning had passed, Sir Charles enquired of Theodore where Somers was gone, and

received for answer that he was visiting Mrs. Bentley in company with Freeman.

Thither Sir Charles determined to bend his course, and requested Theodore would conduct them to the place, to which he readily assented, and they arrived while Somers and Sir Thomas were disputing as before related.

CHAP. XII.

FORTUNATELY for Sir Thomas, the arrival of Sir Charles, Augusta, and Theodore, put an end to the dispute between him and Somers.

Sir Charles professed himself happy in meeting him, as the estate before mentioned, that he was in treaty for, belonged to Sir Thomas; while they withdrew to converse on it, Freeman took an opportunity of introducing Clarissa to the acquaintance of Augusta.

This was a seasonable relief for the latter; she had treated Theodore during their walk with a constrained civility foreign to her feelings.

A conduct

A conduct so much the reverse to what he had before experienced from her greatly disconcerted him, and his uneasiness of mind appeared visible to all. Augusta witnessed it, but concluded it originated in her apparent want of respect; the company, therefore, of Clarissa relieved her from the unpleasant constraint she had imposed on herself, and afforded her an opportunity of entering into a more animated conversation, in which she expected Theodore would bear a part, but his spirits were too much oppressed by the past to admit of his taking any pleasure in society.

Somers beheld the visible uneasiness in his countenance, and enquired if he were well; or if he had received any intelligence that occasioned it.

Theodore

Theodore not thinking it prudent to venture upon an explanation before so many hearers, was necessitated to plead indisposition.

Somers recommended him to take a glass of hot wine, in which request Augusta joined, accompanying it with such a tender sollicitude in her look, that ought to have done away every unpleasant suspicion in him.

Theodore, to get rid of all further importunity, acceded to the proposal, at the same time, penetrated with gratitude for the attention manifested by Augusta, his eyes did not fail to speak the language of his heart, and ought to have given her cause to suspect the truth of Freeman's assertion; but so it too frequently happens, that when the mind is once prepossessed with a belief of any particular circumstance;

stance, it requires many repeated proofs to the contrary before the party can be brought to discredit it.

Clarissa undertook to prepare the wine, but Somers was too much concerned for his young friend to permit any person to attend him except himself; he therefore requested she would join the company of Augusta, and leave Theodore in his charge.

As soon as they were alone, Theodore, who abhorred all kind of imposition, informed Somers that he was not bodily ill, but that an incident of a trifling nature, which he could not then explain, had depressed his spirits, and rendered him unfit for company.

Somers, on the receipt of this intelligence, professed an anxiety to return home.

Sir .

Sir Charles invited Sir Thomas to dine with him ; and Clarissa received a pressing invitation from Augusta to spend the day with her, which, with the consent of Mrs. Bentley, she accepted.

Sir Charles likewise requested the company of Somers and Theodore, and was greatly mortified on meeting with a refusal.

Augusta added her intreaty to that of her father's in behalf of Mr. Somers ; but Freeman being present, and recollecting the charge he had laid to her the preceding night, she could not compel her tongue to include the name of Theodore in the invitation.

This mark of disrespect added strength to the suspicions of Theodore, and almost deprived him of the power of respiration.

Unable

Unable to endure this mortifying scene, or be subject to any further marked contempt, which, when coming from the object we most admire, is the more severely felt, he proposed to walk on before; but Somers insisted on accompanying him, and Sir Charles determining not to part from their society till they had crossed the ferry, they all took leave of the cottage.

As Augusta was descending the steps that led down to the side of the river, her foot slipped, and Theodore, who was behind her, started forward, and caught her in the act of falling, which prevented her from receiving an injury; but, in endeavouring to recover himself, he lost the step, and pitched upon his elbow; yet, instantly springing up, no notice was taken of it: he had escaped unhurt.

In a few minutes they were landed on the opposite side, and Theodore, observing some dust on his arm, took out his handkerchief for the purpose of wiping it off.

Augusta, fearing he had sustained some injury, asked him if he were hurt.

"Not by the fall," replied he.

Theodore had laid a peculiar emphasis on his reply, and a tear stood quivering on his eye-lid as he gave it, which inclined Augusta to think he had sustained some other injury; but she was prevented from pursuing the enquiry further, on account of her father joining her at that period.

Having arrived at the spot where it was necessary to part, in order that they might reach their respective homes, Somers took Freeman aside: "I entrust
Clarissa."

Clarissa," said he, "to your protection; take especial care not to leave her with Sir Thomas; and if I am not able to join you towards the evening, I request you will see her safe to Mrs. Bentley's."

Freeman assured him that he might depend upon him.

Somers and Theodore now took leave of the party, and shortly reached their sequestered habitation.

No sooner had they seated themselves in the parlour, than Somers requested he would relate to him the incident which had so much depressed his spirits.

"I feel," replied Theodore, "the full force of your observation of yesterday, that 'That man ventures more than his life, who places his happiness in another's keeping.' I have suffered my vanity to lead me into an error; but I hope by fortitude."

fortitude I shall in time expel this weakness."

He then drew a picture of Augusta's conduct to him on the preceding day, and compared it with the treatment he had just experienced. "I will leave you to judge," continued he, "if I have not been treated with a marked contempt, or at least a cool indifference, bordering upon rudeness."

"Perhaps," rejoined Somers, "Sir Charles has been making use of his penetration, and by his wonderful sagacity has suggested something unfavourable concerning you, which may have driven Augusta to the necessity of adopting this line of conduct."

"I have every reason to believe that is not the case," replied Theodore, "as nothing could exceed the respect I met with

with from Sir Charles during the morning. Her conduct is the result of caprice ; a disposition inherent in too many of the sex. I am but a novice in love, and was not able yesterday to hide the sensations that I felt ; by which she discovered the true state of my heart, and thinks it a duty incumbent on her, as a female, to tyrannise over my feelings ; but so mean a practice, for which I cannot sufficiently express my disapprobation, will never agree with a disposition like mine, nor shall she ever again have an opportunity of practising a similar conduct towards me, as I have made up my mind never to see her more."

" Stop for a moment," cried Somers, " before you seriously resolve."

" I am firm," resumed Theodore ; " my determination is the result of cool deliberation."

ration. If she have no affection for me, I feel it will be highly improper for me to trust myself again in her company, seeing that so short an acquaintance has been able to destroy my peace. If, on the contrary (which cannot be the case), she have the smallest attachment, I am confident I never could be happy with a person who could disguise her sentiments merely to wound my feelings, by treating me with unmerited coolness and marked insult in public company.

“ I know that my singular introduction into your house, and more particularly her father's, is sufficient to create suspicions, and those perhaps unfavourable; yet I should have conceived a delicacy of sentiment would have prevented her from being the first to treat me with contempt, more particularly as her father
 adopted

adopted so different a line of conduct: I must confess, that this amongst the rest lessens her materially in my estimation; it is a conduct I could not have adopted to a person in a similar situation with myself."

"I have ever made it a remark," rejoined Somers, "that when a lover meets with a disappointment, however trifling, he suggests a thousand circumstances that never have or could occur, and makes himself wretched on the force of his own imaginations."

"Augusta has certainly heard something advanced in disparagement of you, from which she feels a necessity of assuming a more distant behaviour, till she is satisfied respecting the truth of the information."

"As to caprice or indelicacy, I never
can

can believe she possesses an atom of either. The face is generally an index to the mind: is it to be supposed a countenance that beams with every tender and compassionate sentiment can be acquired by possessing a tyrannical, cruel, or capricious temper? or is it to be supposed she has acquired that humility, that diffidence, and modesty of carriage, by possessing a mind fraught with rudeness and indelicacy?

“ You might with as much truth declare the ferocious appearance of the tyger was a certain criterion to judge of the kindness of his nature, or the mild appearance of the dove betokened the heart of a vulture, as to declare what you have respecting Augusta. It is not all that you or any one can say will ever incline me to think otherwise, than that

all which is amiable in human nature and Augusta are inseparable. Some error has taken place. My advice to you is, to see her again, before you come to a positive decision."

"I should esteem myself unworthy of the favours I have received from you," replied Theodore, "if I did not attend to your advice, but I hope you will not oblige me to accompany you to Sir Charles's; we shall no doubt meet some time by accident: it would wound my pride to experience such treatment at her father's, as it would incline me to think she conceived I wanted to force my company where it was not desired."

"I had flattered myself," resumed Somers, "as you are not ill, that I should have been able to have prevailed on you to accompany me to Sir Charles's, as I
am."

am anxious on account of Clarissa. I do not wish her to form an acquaintance with Sir Thomas Blandford."

Theodore requested he might be no hindrance to him; and having promised to amuse himself during his absence, Somers, who could not account for the motive that induced Sir Thomas to visit Mrs. Bentley's cottage, complied with the entreaty of Theodore, and left him for the purpose of attending Clarissa at Sir Charles's.

Somers had no occasion to have delivered so strict a charge to Freeman concerning Clarissa, for independent of the suspicion Freeman entertained respecting Sir Thomas, Clarissa had a friend within his breast that would have prompted him to afford her every care and protection within his power.

When Somers arrived at Sir Charles's, he found Freeman and Clarissa walking in the pleasure-ground, and engaged in conversation ; Sir Charles and Sir Thomas were closeted upon business respecting the estate that the former was in treaty for ; and Augusta was endeavouring to pass away a dull moment by playing a few airs on the piano ; but instead of it affording her relief, it only attuned her soul to tender ideas, and called to her mind the object of all others she most wished to forget.

She had recapitulated in her mind the last words made use of by Theodore when she asked him if he was hurt, and he replied " Not by the fall ;" the manner of his expressing himself plainly informed her he had sustained some injury, and while she was pondering upon what it could

could be, her favourite servant Ellen made her appearance.

This girl was the daughter of a tradesman once in a respectable sphere of life, but whom misfortunes had humbled; he had bestowed on her a good education, in addition to which she was a tolerable figure, and Heaven had endowed her with a real goodness of heart.

It is therefore not in the least extraordinary that Augusta, who esteemed merit wherever she found it, and in a country place, where society does not always present itself, should have made of her a confidential friend, by reposing in her breast those secrets which it is a pleasurable relief to unburthen: nor do I know how she could avoid it; for so tenderly solicitous was she in behalf of her mistress, and so anxious to oblige, and promote

her happiness in the most trivial particular, that it could not fail of attracting the notice, and ensuring the esteem, of the amiable Augusta.

No sooner, therefore, had Ellen entered the room, and observed the uneasiness depicted in the countenance of her mistress, than she exclaimed, " Bless me! madam, what can have happened?—you seem unhappy."

" I am indeed unhappy," replied Augusta; " and long, very long, I fear, will it be before I shall feel that peace of mind I used to enjoy."

" You surprise me!" resumed Ellen; " what can have occasioned this?—I thought yesterday you seemed more particularly happy than usual, and concluded you had made a valuable acquaintance in Mr. Theodore, who would relieve many a dull
and

and melancholy hour during your stay in the country. I expected, as Sir Charles took you to Cliffdown-lodge this morning, that Mr. Somers and his young friend would have returned with you."

"Ah! my dear girl," resumed Augusta, "this is partly what makes me unhappy; Theodore is not well."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Ellen, "what will become of him; he never can be properly attended at the lodge; there is nobody but a couple of peevish old maids to wait on him: besides, he will be lost for the want of society. If you could prevail on Sir Charles to have him removed here, I am sure we could attend him much better; and (I may be mistaken) but I think he would be far more happy."

A transient blush overspread the countenance of Augusta, which terminated

with a sigh. "I know not," said Augusta, "whether he is really unwell, or only makes use of it as a plea to excuse some vexation of mind, for he appeared extremely unhappy this morning. I could not enquire the cause, as Edward was present, and that for the following reasons."—

Augusta then informed Ellen of her sentiments in behalf of Theodore; recapitulated the suspicions of Edward, as likewise her denial of it, together with the information she afterwards received from him respecting the affections of Theodore being otherwise engaged.

She next took a minute survey of her conduct to him during the morning; the depression of his spirits; his fall in endeavouring to save her; his last words, which implied he had received some injury; and concluded by expressing herself
at

at a loss to account for the cause from whence it originated, at the same time requesting her opinion concerning it.

“ I am afraid,” replied Ellen, “ that you have overacted your part, and, by putting a restraint upon yourself, adopted a conduct towards him that he did not expect, or by any means deserve.

“ He is not aware of the motives you had in acting as you have done, but is feelingly alive to his own situation. He knows under what suspicious circumstances he was introduced to your acquaintance, and concludes you treat him with contempt on account of some unfavourable impression you have received. Neither are you certain that Mr. Freeman’s information is correct; he may have advanced it for the purpose of satisfying his doubts; and, if that is the fact,

think what Theodore's feelings must be in receiving such treatment from you. In my opinion, it fully accounts for the injury he alluded to ; and if he could have spoken his mind more plainly, he would have said, ' 'Tis not by the fall I have sustained an injury, it is you, Augusta, that have wounded my feelings in the tenderest point.' "

" Hold," cried Augusta, interrupting her ; " get me a glass of water."

" Bless me, madam !" exclaimed Ellen, " you are unwell : I wish I had not said a word ; perhaps I was wrong ; and now I think again, I dare to say I was."

" Do as I request," said Augusta, " or I shall shortly be worse."

Ellen instantly obeyed, and after a few minutes Augusta was relieved by her tears.

" Yes,

“ Yes, Ellen,” resumed she, “ I feel that what you have said is right:—how could I be so absent as not to know the cause!—what must he think of me!—It has been my practice, even to the greatest stranger, to smooth the brow of sorrow; is it possible, then, that I should have so far forgot myself as to wound the feeling of him who, of all others, I wish most to oblige!—and yet I have undoubtedly been guilty of this.

“ What reparation can I make?—for I shall be anxious till I have reinstated myself in his good opinion.”

While they were conversing on this point, Somers made his appearance in the 'fore-court.

Augusta saw him the moment he entered. “ Oh, Heavens!” said she, “ here is Mr. Somers!—and alone!—Theodore is

certainly ill, or is offended, and will not come. Go, Ellen, meet Mr. Somers as he enters the house, and inform him I am alone, and shall be happy to speak with him."

Ellen hastened to obey her; in the mean time Augusta endeavoured to compose herself.

CHAP. XIII.

WHEN Somers entered the room, Augusta rose from her seat.

“ I took the liberty,” said she, “ to request your company out of charity, for the rude creatures have all left me.

“ Pray, how is your young friend? I presume, as you have left him at home, he is better.”

Somers replied, that “ Theodore was better, but that he requested to be left behind.”

“ That is singular,” resumed Augusta: “ I am afraid he gives way to a melancholy disposition. You should endeavour to rouse him from it. He appeared greatly oppressed

oppressed this morning; has any thing occurred to occasion him uneasiness?"

Somers did not think he should act a prudent part by stating the real cause, as he had not Theodore's permission so to do; and therefore replied, "It is not to be supposed a person in his situation can always appear in high spirits; you should consider," said he, "he has left a home, where probably he has formed some tender friendships; to be deprived of these, and thrown amongst strangers, will naturally affect his spirits for a time; but I have no doubt he will shortly habituate himself to their absence, and become more resigned to it, since there is an absolute necessity for it."

This excuse of Somers, although perfectly natural, was the worst he could have made in behalf of his friend, as

Augusta

Augusta interpreted every sentence of it into a confirmation of the truth of Edward's relation.

She concluded the *tender friendship* he alluded to was no less than an unconquerable attachment he had formed for some female; and replied, that "he was at an age when youth are most liable to receive an impression, and that, from the small judgment she was able to form of him, she did not conceive he could easily forget engagements of that nature, or enjoy any real happiness in the absence of the party."

"You carry the point too far," resumed Somers. "I have as high an opinion of Theodore as you can have; but I do not think he could form any friendship that would incapacitate him from enjoying the company of another, or of being so
unhappy

unhappy as you describe in the absence of the party. I only spoke of what is perfectly natural, and endeavoured to account for the uneasiness of his mind from being with strangers. I know not any particular friendship he has formed."

"Come, come, Mr. Somers," rejoined Augusta, "do not unsay what you have already ventured to relate. I know you scorn an untruth, and would not willingly deceive me; you certainly have truly stated the cause of your friend's uneasiness; therefore, why should you endeavour to prevaricate, or why is the secret to be withheld from me in particular?"

"Then, to tell you the truth," resumed Somers, "you are the last person in the world I should wish to deceive; and since you drive me to state the fact, I verily believe that a little of your society, joined
with

with the agreeable humour you entertained him with yesterday, would afford him more pleasure than the absence of all his friends can give him pain."

Notwithstanding the firm belief Augusta had to the contrary, yet this expression naturally forced a blush into her countenance, and prevented her for a few moments from replying. She would have given the world to have believed it; yet, conceiving it could not be the case, and that Somers was trifling with her, she replied, "I did not think, Mr. Somers, that any conduct on my part would have made you consider me a fit object for your rally."

"I beg your pardon," resumed Somers, "perhaps I was wrong; I will say no more on the subject: suppose, therefore,

fore, to change the scene, we go in search of Edward and Miss Lesley."

Now would Augusta have given any thing to have recalled her last expression, she wished to speak on that subject of all others that was nearest to her heart ; and repulsed Somers merely for the purpose of enforcing an explanation, which she thought he would be necessitated to give in his own defence, so eager was she to find some grounds on which she could erect a hope ; and therefore replied, that she would rather remain in the house, for that the day was too warm, and the sun was very powerful. " And so," continued she, " Theodore would rather remain at the lodge, and spend an agreeable day with your venerable spinsters, than be troubled with our society ?"

Somers .

Somers saw the strong desire she had to renew the conversation, but feeling a wish to be perfectly satisfied respecting his suspicions, that he might thereby be enabled to relieve the mind of his young friend, he determined to give such a reply as would force her into a further explanation: "Why really, Miss Freeman," said he, "you must excuse me from delivering my opinion, as by repeating what I have already stated, or by adding to it, I should perchance gain your displeasure: I think it more prudent to be silent."

"I beg your pardon," resumed Augusta, "it was not my meaning to convey an offence to you by the reply I made, or to silence you on the subject; I have too high an opinion of you to suppose you meant to insinuate any thing that would be improper for me to hear, and therefore

therefore estimated your remark accordingly : you must be aware that I have no reason for pursuing this conversation, but merely on account of the young gentleman, who I think must be extremely dull in your absence ; and since he has recovered, I think I will even venture myself with you, and possibly we shall be able to persuade him to accompany us.

Somers cast a significant look towards her.

“ I am afraid, Miss Freeman,” replied he, “ you will find the day *too warm*, besides *the sun is very powerful*.”

Augusta felt the full force of this retort ; she feared that she had gone too far, and turned her face to hide the crimson blush that displayed itself in her countenance.

As soon as she could recover herself,

“ Mr.

“ Mr. Somers,” said she, “ you treat me unkindly by harbouring improper suspicions.

“ To deal ingenuously with you, my only motive was this, I thought that Theodore might be dissatisfied with either the conduct of Sir Charles or myself this morning, which prompted him to remain at your house: I, therefore, proposed going with you for the only purpose of doing away any unfavourable impression he might have received.”

“ I knew,” resumed Somers, “ that goodness and Augusta Freeman were inseparable.

“ You have defined the cause of his uneasiness and his absence, I shall therefore be proud to attend you on so praiseworthy an errand.”

“ No, sir,” resumed Augusta, “ I cannot

not now think of going, after the suspicion betrayed by your looks and words, because I feel that I do not merit it in the smallest degree."

"If that be really the case," rejoined Somers, "better by far is it for my young friend's future peace that he remain where he is: but, lest it should not be so, permit me to add a few words;—few and fleeting are the moments allotted for happiness in this life; they are, therefore, by far too precious to be thrown away through a mistaken pride, or a desire to tantalize each other."

Augusta felt convinced of the truth of this assertion, and in all probability would, in return have entrusted him with a small share of her confidence, but was prevented from so doing by the entrance of her father and Sir Thomas.

„ Sir Charles had just received a draught copy from the attorney of the conveyance to the estate he was in treaty for.

After thanking Somers for his company, and enquiring concerning Theodore, “ Come,” said he, “ I know you are half a lawyer ; have the goodness to peruse this draught.”

Somers sat down beside Sir Charles for that intent.

A thought now occurred to him whereby he could serve the unfortunate Mr. Bridport, who was in prison at the suit of Sir Thomas for rent due on part of the estate in question ; and when he came to that part which conveyed it, he took out his pencil and interlined, ‘ And likewise all arrears of rent due on the said estate,’ &c. then shewed it to Sir Charles, at the same time requesting him to insist on it, as he
would

would thereby have an opportunity of serving an unfortunate character, by rescuing him from the gripe of his oppressor.

Sir Thomas was at that time conversing with Augusta at the further end of the room, and did not observe that any alteration was made or suggested by Somers, which might have led him to suspect his motive ; but shortly after turning round, and noticing the draught laying on the table, he asked Somers if it was all right.

“ Perfectly so,” replied Somers.

“ There is one particular that has occurred to me,” rejoined Sir Charles ; “ I may as well save you any further trouble, by having the arrears of rent due on the estate.”

Sir Thomas, not considering his motive,
replied,

replied, " I see you are determined to have a good bargain ; however, as we have come to a right understanding hitherto, I shall scarcely differ with you concerning it : you may insert it."

This business being adjusted, " Now," said Somers, " you have nothing to consider but when these deeds are to be executed."

Sir Charles declared himself ready with the purchase-money ; and Sir Thomas fearing he should have occasion shortly to leave the country, it was proposed that the draught should be returned by the clerk, who was waiting in the house, with orders for it to be engrossed and ready for execution on the following day.

The draught being returned, Sir Charles

requested the company of Somers and Theodore to attest the execution.

“ I will endeavour,” replied Somers, “ to prevail on him to attend.”

“ Prevail on him!” repeated Sir Charles; “ what makes the lad so shy, and why have we not his company to-day?—Is he at home?”

Somers replied in the affirmative.

Sir Charles rung the bell: a servant attending, he desired him to take his carriage and fetch Theodore; “ Tell him,” continued he, “ I must have his company.”

“ Had you not better write a note?” said Somers.

“ Very true,” rejoined Sir Charles; “ the young gentleman may feel himself slighted.” Then taking pen, ink, and paper, he wrote the invitation.

Augusta

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and politics filled up the vacant time during the absence of the ladies.

Augusta returned to tea, but did not share in their conversation, directing the whole of her discourse to Clarissa.

The evening having advanced, Sir Thomas took his leave; and shortly after, Somers, Theodore, and Freeman, attended Clarissa to the Cottage.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.