SKETCHES

OF

MODERN LIFE;

OR,

MAN AS HE OUGHT NOT TO BE.

A Novel.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

——Romane caveto!

These ſhall the fury Paſſions tear,
The vultures of the mind!
Diſdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
And Shame, that ſkulks behind—
Or pining Love ſhall waſte their youth,
Or Jealouſy, with rankling tooth,
That inly gnaws the ſecret heart,
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-viſag'd, comfortleſs Deſpair,
And Sorrow's piercing dart. GRAY.

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1799.

SKETCHES

OF

MODERN LIFE,

&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

THREE days having elapſed, Hartlebury, who, during that time, had not called in Bond Street, made his appearance, at ten o'clock. After congratulating Foreſter on his recovery—

"I hope I bring you good news," ſaid he; "I have ſeen Lord Arrowſworth. We had much converſation about you; but as anceſtral pride is his foible, I concealed the

ſtory of your birth, and merely ſaid, that you were of a decent family in the weſt of England. His Lordſhip is at preſent in need of an amanuenſis, and I thought you extremely well adapted to the office. I ſee your ſurpriſe; but let me explain my motive."

He then declared, that, in his opinion, Creſwell's promiſes and a coquet's integrity were upon a par. He was certain, from his late behaviour, that he could have no wiſh of ſeeing him ſettled in life. He then expatiated on the advantages likely to ariſe from an introduction to the family of Lord Arrowſworth; painted the character of that nobleman in bold and glowing colors, and finally obſerved, that Foreſter was not to look upon himſelf as a dependant but as a friend; and, whenever Creſwell choſe to make good his promiſes, no imputation of ingratitude could be incurred, were he to leave the houſe of Lord Arrowſworth. He however adviſed him to keep the whole tranſaction a ſecret from

Creſ-

Creſwell, who would, doubtleſs, ſtrain every nerve to injure him: for this purpoſe it would be neceſſary to retain his lodgings in Bond Street. Foreſter expreſſed his willingneſs to accede to any propoſal made by ſo diſintereſted a friend, and began to expreſs the gratitude he felt.

"We will talk of thanks," ſaid Hartlebury, "when you are ſettled to your ſatisfaction; but at preſent, you may thank your good genius, who has tuned the heart of Lord Arrowſworth to the moſt harmonious pitch. After having buried ſeveral infant ſons, and given over all hopes of an heir, Lady Arrowſworth, after more than twenty years marriage, has declared herſelf again pregnant. His Lordſhip is in raptures, which are only allayed by a fear of the wreck of his hope: his anxious concern will hardly permit her to walk acroſs a room, leſt too much exerciſe be prejudicial; or ſit ſtill, leſt inaction have the ſame effect. Above all, the poor woman muſt not approach the window, for fear of being

ſhocked by a funeral, or the rencontres of pugiliſts. My fear is, that he will teize her to death; for, to confeſs the truth, her Ladyſhip, though ſure of a ſon, as if already born, is not of a temper to bear confinement. Her parties are numerous and faſhionable; and though ſhe does not herſelf plunge into the modiſh vice of gaming, the whole town flock to the houſe of Lady Arrowſworth."

The gentlemen then walked towards St. James's Square. His Lordſhip received them in his library. Foreſter was delighted at the idea of paſſing his time ſo much to his taſte; and after an hour's converſation, took leave, in order to diſmiſs his ſervant, and ſend his effects to his new reſidence. He charged the people of the houſe to bring all letters directly to St. James's Square, and not to hint at his having left the lodgings, which he ſhould ſtill conſider as his own. He then called upon the Apſleys, informed them of his good fortune, and mentioned that Hartlebury would, with

pleaſure,

pleaſure, introduce them to his Lordſhip. He then returned to St. James's Square.

Lord Arrowſworth was every thing, and more than Hartlebury had deſcribed him. The pride of birth, indeed, would ſometimes betray itſelf; but it was to advance his own conſequence, not to hurt the feelings of another. The idea of an amanuenſis was merely mentioned, that Foreſter might not think himſelf degraded to the ſituation of a humble friend. The mornings were ſpent in the library, where the ſtrong ſenſe of Lord Arrowſworth, cultivated by a refined education, was a ſource of knowledge to his protegé; and by the aſſiſtance of his patron, Foreſter was ſoon enabled to taſte the beauties of Dante, or rove with delight through the enchanted bowers of Armida. The evenings were, indeed, devoted to leſs rational amuſement. Lady Arrowſworth, a priſoner in her own houſe, was reſolved to lighten the burden of her captivity by every means in her power: continual rounds of company

amuſed her; and the congratulations ſhe received from particular friends, tended to raiſe her conſequence, and render confinement tolerable.

One morning, while Lord Arrowſworth and Foreſter were contending about the legitimacy of one of the odes aſcribed to Anacreon, a note was delivered to the latter:

"SIR,

"I RITE by the deſire of Mrs. Tommus, who is verry ill abed with the rumatiſe. She begs her kind duty to you, and ſays that ſhe has nott been abel to work theſe two munths. She hopes you will be ſo kinde as to ſtand her frend, for ſhe has nun in the wurld but yourſelph:

"I am, ſir,

"Your dewtiful ſervant to commande,

"HANNAH PRICE.

"Duke Street, Weſtminſter."

Foreſter now recollected, with concern, that his neglect of Mrs. Thomas had probably

bably reduced her to great inconvenience. Lord Arrowſworth remarked the change of his countenance, and half laughing, ſaid he hoped it was no diſappointment in love. Foreſter anſwered, by putting the letter into his hands, and announced his intention of flying to her relief. Lord Arrowſworth inquired who the poor woman was; and being informed by Foreſter that ſhe was an old ſervant of his mother's, by unforeſeen calamity reduced to diſtreſs, warmly applauded his humanity, and inſiſted, as the weather was bad, that he ſhould make uſe of the chariot. When Foreſter reached Duke Street, he was ſhocked at the wretched figure of his poor dependent: ſhe was yet able to crawl from place to place; but her hands were contracted in ſo terrible a manner, that it was utterly impoſſible for her to aſſiſt herſelf in dreſſing, much leſs to work at her needle. The poor creature made many apologies for being ſo troubleſome to his goodneſs, but hoped that he would forgive her, as ſhe had not applied to him

till all other reſource had failed. "My life, my dear ſir," ſaid ſhe, "is a burden: I would willingly, if God pleaſed, lay it down; but I ſometimes think that if you were once well ſettled in the world, I ſhould (if you permitted) end my days in your family with more comfort, than in a lodging, where there is nobody to whom I am particularly attached. Make me happy then, ſir, by promiſing, if ever it be in your power, that I ſhall live and die under your roof. I received you when you firſt came into the world, and I feel I love you more than I yet ever loved any body."

Foreſter gave her the demanded promiſe, and then aſked if ſhe had heard any more of his father? To this ſhe replied in the negative, not forgetting to rail at her attendant for her careleſſneſs. After ſome time, Foreſter took leave, having relieved her as far as his finances would permit, and proceeded to Clifford Street, enjoying that tranquil flow of ſpirits which the conſciouſneſs of a good action never fails to inſpire.

Cuthbert

Cuthbert was ſeated in an arm-chair: his head reſted upon his hand, and his appearance indicated that internal wretchedneſs which flies from the voice of comfort, and, wrapped wholly in itſelf, is indifferent to the common affairs of life.

Sinclair was twiſting a whip-laſh.

Upon entering the room, Foreſter immediately took the hand of Cuthbert, but ſtarted when he felt the burning heat of his ſkin. His eyes were hollow; a lively red died his cheeks; and his reſpiration was ſhort and quick.

"Good God," cried Foreſter, "what is the meaning of this? Am I to ſuppoſe that you let the coquetry of a worthleſs woman prey upon your mind, and deſtroy your health?"

Cuthbert endeavoured to ſmile. "I am very well," ſaid he, in a hurried voice; "I am vexed—I mean ſurpriſed, that you ſhould think otherwiſe. Have you dined?"

"It is but three o'clock!"

"True, true—what was I ſaying? how

ridiculous! I am ſorry that I could not call in Bond Street yeſterday."

"You know, Cuthbert, that I now reſide at Lord Arrowſworth's."

"Where?"

This interrogatory was uttered with ſuch a look of vacancy, that Foreſter, terrified, rung the bell, and ordered a ſervant to run with all poſſible ſpeed to Dr. Elton. Sinclair, however, declared he would be the meſſenger, and quick as lightning darted out of the room.

Cuthbert now ſlowly aroſe. "I am, indeed, not very well.—I believe ſo. Will you take a glaſs of wine?" and walking to the ſideboard, he poured a rummer half full.

"Willingly," ſaid Foreſter, wiſhing to prevent him from doing the ſame; and as he approached the ſideboard, pretending to ſtumble, he threw the decanter upon the floor. At the ſame time, raiſing the glaſs to his lips, he perceived that what he had taken for white wine, was ſtrong French

brandy. Shocked at the idea, that Cuthbert, either by design or mistake, should thus ruin his health, he turned towards him, looked earnestly in his face, then solemnly addressing him—"Cuthbert," said he, "are you aware, while you give way to the impulse of passion, how far you afflict your friend, degrade yourself, and destroy your father?"

"My father!" said Cuthbert, faintly: "I have no father: he has, doubtless, renounced me; and I know how unworthy I am of such a parent; but what are friends? what are the ties of nature? where is their obligation? what are the most sacred considerations, when the glance of a woman can, in a moment, dissolve their influence?"

"Your father has not forsaken you, dear Cuthbert: he knows not your errors; and, did he even know them, his anger would melt at the sight of your repentance. But have I felt no pangs attached to love? have I not, like you, felt for the same object? I now curse the delusion, and spurn

the charm. Awake then, Cuthbert, from this temporary weakneſs; let love be ſuperſeded by contempt; conſider the groſs vices of the creature you admire; forget her perſonal charms, and fix your thoughts on the blackneſs of her heart."

"It cannot be; it cannot be: you injure her: ſhe is, indeed, faulty, but I alone am licenſed to upbraid her."

Cuthbert now flung himſelf upon the ſofa, and talked in ſo incoherent a manner, that Foreſter was fearful leſt his frenzy might tranſport him to the moſt fatal extremities. He diſmiſſed the chariot with a note to Lord Arrowſworth, ſummoned the footman, and awaited the coming of Dr. Elton with impatience. The worthy man ſoon appeared, followed by Sinclair, who inſtantly taking up his whip-laſh, buſied himſelf aſſeduouſly in tying knots, as if his whole dependence in life were on his induſtry. The phyſician immediately declared his patient in a high fever, and ordered him to be inſtantly taken to bed. Sinclair ſat ſtill; and

when

when Dr. Elton returned to the parlour with Foreſter, he was ſtill employed with his whip-laſh. "Your brother is quiet now, ſir," ſaid the doctor; "I hope he will do well; he muſt not be diſturbed, and it would be proper to ſend for a careful nurſe."

"What a curſed obſtinate knot!" muttered Sinclair, while he pulled with all his might—"What infernal whipcord!"

"Really, ſir," ſaid Dr. Elton warmly, "I am aſtoniſhed at your apathy—were he even a ſtranger, common decency would at leaſt require ſome ſeeming attention."

Sinclair looked up; his eyes were filled with tears, and his face ſhowed that they had flowed in a plentiful ſtream. "Look'e, doctor," ſobbed he, "you ſee this new whip-laſh; willingly would I wear it out on my own ribs, could but that penance reſtore my poor brother to health, for it was all owing to my folly that he came to this unlucky town. I was aſhamed to ſhow that I could not command my tears, and therefore pretended to be buſy; but for ſuſ-

pecting

pecting that one brother could unmoved behold the agonies of another, agonies of which he was the cauſe, I'll be curſed if you don't deſerve a horſewhipping yourſelf." He then reſumed his occupation.

Dr. Elton was thunderſtruck; he made every apology for his vehemence; bade Sinclair hope the beſt, and aſſured him that he apprehended his patient to be in no danger whatſoever. The tide of joy flowing ſo unexpectedly, almoſt overwhelmed the faculties of the affectionate youth; he laughed and wept, ſhook the doctor by the hand, and kicked the chairs about the room; nor was it till informed that by ſo doing he would diſturb his brother, that he was reduced to act like a reaſonable being. Dinner was announced, and the phyſician with ſome difficulty was perſuaded to partake of the meal. Sinclair, in the joy of his heart, paid his devotions to the bottle, which, in a ſhort time, produced a ſoporific effect, and Foreſter was conveyed to St. James's Square in the chariot of Dr. Elton.

Elton. A large party were aſſembled to dinner; and Foreſter, being en diſhabille, retired to his own apartment, where, for the amuſement of his patron, he paraphraſed the ode of Anacreon which had been the ſubject of their morning's converſation.

As late, of ſweeteſt flowrets made,
A garland for my fair I wove;
Beneath a roſe ſupinely laid
I ſpied, aſleep, the god of love.

Elated with imprudent joy,
Reſolving vengeance to obtain,
I ſeiz'd the unſuſpecting boy,
Who ſtruggled to eſcape in vain.

No longer, tyrant, ſhall thy pow'r
Deprive me of my reſt, I cried;
Thy reign is o'er; the preſent hour
Shall terminate thy ſaucy pride.

This ſaid, with eager haſte my prize
I bore to where a goblet ſtood,
And, deaf to all his piercing cries,
Immers'd him in the mantling flood.

Then to my lips the bowl I preſt,
"Reſolv'd to have a draught divine;"
And deep within my glowing breaſt
Imbib'd the captive and the wine.

But

But while I thus a daug'rous foe
Conſign'd relentleſs to his fate,
I little knew what hours of woe
My daring raſhneſs would create.

For, ever ſince within my heart
The little god deſpotic reigns;
There, undiſturb'd, he plies his dart,
And ſcatters poiſon through my veins.

Foreſter thought on Cuthbert, ſighed, and retired to reſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Self-love thus push'd to social, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.
Is this too little for thy boundless heart?
Extend it—let thy enemies have part:
Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,
In one close system of benevolence.
Happier as kinder in whate'er degree
And height of bliss, but height of charity. POPE.

ALTHOUGH the mornings were devoted to study, the evenings owned the influence of folly; for Lady Arrowsworth, proud of confinement that added to her consequence, admitted the whole fashionable world. Forester, whose disposition, though it led him to taste the pleasures of society, shunned the tumultuous glare of dissipation, passed most of his evenings in discharging the duties of friendship. Cuthbert was sensible of his attention, and after some time was enabled to quit his room; a pro-

profound melancholy, nevertheleſs, continued to prey upon him, and undermine his conſtitution. Dr. Elton, hoping that a change of ſcene might effect a change in the feelings of his patient, recommended the air of Briſtol; and ſhortly after the Apſleys took leave of their friend, and ſet off for Somerſetſhire.

One morning as Foreſter was ſitting in his chamber, expecting the ſummons to breakfaſt, he was ſurpriſed by a meſſage from Lady Arrowſworth, requeſting the favour of his company in her dreſſing-room. He immediately obeyed her orders, and found her engaged in an amicable conteſt with his Lordſhip. Different caſes of jewels were ſcattered over the breakfaſt-table, and when Foreſter entered the room her Ladyſhip exclaimed, "Come here, my good friend, you always take my part; we want you to ſettle a knotty point—a family quarrel: my Lord wants to ruin himſelf in diamonds; I am not in need of any: I have no objection to take this necklace,

but

but what have I to do with ear-rings or bracelets, when I have already more than are neceſſary?"

Foreſter begged to decline interfering, as perhaps her Ladyſhip might find him, for the firſt time, of a contrary opinion to hers. The conteſt was firmly kept up for ſome time, but Lord Arrowſworth gained a complete victory; yet, as her Ladyſhip objected to the ſetting of the ear-rings, they were to be returned to the jeweller for alteration. As Foreſter was going out, he offered himſelf to be the bearer: this propoſal was graciouſly received by Lady Arrowſworth, who cautioned him as ſhe gave the caſe not to be a Belcour, and give away her jewels for the glance of a fine pair of eyes. He promiſed he would not, and, deſirous to ſee his protegée, haſtened to Weſtminſter, forgetting to leave his charge at the jeweller's by the way. The poor woman was rapidly and perceptibly declining, yet her eyes brightened when ſhe beheld her preſerver. She lamented that

no

no proviſion was made for him, and deſcanted ſo much upon the ſubject, that in order to enliven her ſpirits he aſſumed a gay air, and aſſured her, that if he had no proviſion in life, he had good credit among the jewellers: he then produced the caſe. Mrs. Thomas took it, ſcreamed with ſurpriſe, and exclaimed, "Yes, yes, they are the ſame—on my ſoul the very ſame—how does wickedneſs come to light!"

Foreſter, alarmed, inquired her meaning.

"They are the ſame, and I ſhall have my character cleared, ſir, as I hope for ſalvation—they are the very ear-rings I was accuſed of ſtealing."

Foreſter begged her to be very ſure of what ſhe ſaid; but Mrs. Thomas declared, that ſhe had put them on Miſs Burgeſs ſo often, that ſhe could deſcribe every diamond. She accordingly gave him the caſe, and ſo accurate was her deſcription, that no doubt remained on his mind. He bleſſed the happy forgetfulneſs that had put him in a way of diſcovering the whole of the

dark

dark buſineſs, and promiſing Mrs. Thomas that every juſtice ſhould be done her, he returned haſtily to Lord Arrowſworth.—His Lordſhip was ſurpriſed at his hurried air; but Foreſter apologizing for not executing his commiſſion, earneſtly requeſted that he might know the value of the ear-rings in his poſſeſſion. Lord Arrowſworth anſwered, Eight hundred pounds, and expreſſed a wiſh to be acquainted with the reaſons that induced him to aſk.——"My Lord," ſaid Foreſter, "you are perfectly authorized to inquire the motives that influence my conduct; there is a black buſineſs to be unravelled; theſe jewels may throw ſome light upon it: when I am myſelf a maſter of the facts you ſhall know all; at preſent forgive my preſumption, if I beg you to delay the alteration of theſe ear-rings for a fortnight."

"Willingly," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth; "yet if you think you knew the former owner, I can vouch that you labor under a miſtake. The jeweller informed me, that theſe

theſe ear-rings belonged to the lady of an emigrant of diſtinction, who, from the preſſure of diſtreſs, was obliged to part with them."

"Probably, my Lord, there may be ſome miſtake; permit me to make every inquiry." He then left the houſe, and walked haſtily towards Charing Croſs. The jeweller was at home; at firſt ſight he denied having mentioned them as the property of an emigrant:—"The necklace I ſent this morning," ſaid he, "was ſo; if I have made a miſtake, I aſk his Lordſhip's pardon; I bought theſe ear-rings at a public ſale."

Foreſter inquired at what houſe, and was directed to an auction-room near Covent Garden; thither he bent his ſteps, and, after a long and tedious inveſtigation, traced the jewels to the ſhop of an eminent pawnbroker. Here he made an eager inquiry. The man ſeemed no ways alarmed; he remembered the ear-rings, and produced a ticket, of which he ſaid the perſon who

pawned

pawned them had a duplicate; but as she had not redeemed them, they had been sold by public auction. Forester looked at the ticket; it acknowledged the receipt of three hundred pounds by Ann Phillips; he remembered Lady Fazakerly called her maid by that name, and all doubt vanished from his mind. On his return home, Forester detailed all the particulars of this nefarious business to Lord Arrowsworth; he shuddered as he repeated it, and, when he had concluded, sunk into a deep reverie; from this he was aroused by the voice of his Lordship.—

"The demon," said he, "deserves, and doubtless will be exposed in her native colors; you must publish this affair to the world."

"That she deserves every punishment, and that every punishment is inadequate to her crime," said Forester, "I am convinced; but if I conceal this transaction, it is not from childish pity to a monster, but compassion to the feelings of a husband.

"I can

"I can pity Colonel Meredith," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth, "but I cannot therefore connive at villany. I know but little of the colonel; I hear he is the ſon of a Mr. Meredith; he left him at leaſt a noble fortune; I believe, *entre nous,* he is a natural ſon—for that he is to be pitied; but birth is little regarded now-a-days—a wealthy ſteward, or a pillaging Indian fortune-hunter, elbows a peer of the realm."

Lord Arrowſworth continued his digreſſion, affirming with Sir Archy, that all our new nobility ſprang from porter butts and tobacco hogſheads. Having paid this tribute to his pride, he directed his diſcourſe to its former channel, and forcibly pointed out the neceſſity of expoſing the guilty Emily—pleaded the contagion of example, and declared that ſtrict juſtice ought to be done.

"Ah, my Lord!" ſaid Foreſter, "Give every man his deſerts, and who ſhall ſcape a whipping? If *ſtrict juſtice* were to be adminiſtered, how ſhould we ſhrink, when our

own actions were put to the fiery ordeal of impartial inveſtigation?"

"That I have failings as well as others, I agree," ſaid his Lordſhip, rather piqued; "but I can preſent myſelf to the eyes of all, as guiltleſs of any groſs vice, or any thing approaching to a crime."

"It was not my intention, my Lord, to cite you as a particular inſtance of the truth of my aſſertion: I ſpoke of mankind in general. I know your worth; your ſoul recoils at the bare idea of criminality: but I fear you judge of others by your own ſtandard. You think all muſt have the ſame elevation of ſentiment; and pardon me, my Lord, if I ſuſpect that, faultleſs yourſelf, you are not apt to pardon the failings of another."

"To what you term pardoning the failings of others, I can give no better name than the encouragement of vice or weakneſs. Would ſo many diſorders pervade the world, if a ſtrict attention were paid to the extirpation or expoſure of evil?"

"But may not ſeverity, my Lord, har-

den the heart, which a proper degree of lenity might reform?"

"Reform!" exclaimed his Lordſhip: "why not eradicate the evil at once; and cruſh by ſeverity the hope of pardon, which ſeduces ſo many to err?"

"If you would have the world faultleſs, my Lord——"

"Faultleſs!—I aſk pardon for twice repeating your words; but when vice glares in open day, to think of excuſing it, is an abſurdity, if not a crime. To the neglect of wholeſome ſeverity, or rather to the lenity of which you are the advocate, do we owe the number of wretches who ſubſiſt on the precarious pittance of infamy. Do not our ſtreets nightly echo the diſſonant mirth, and unhallowed orgies of the moſt abandoned proſtitutes?"

"Do they not likewiſe echo their groans, my Lord? But is it to lenity you ſay they owe their vices? Oh, no! How many now hardened in wickedneſs once wept the deluſion of the firſt falſe ſtep,

ſtep, and would have returned to the pale of virtue, had not the ſtern cenſure of the world 'ſhut the gates of mercy' on them; abandoned by that world, they bade defiance to its laws, curſed its ſeverity (for to that they owed their opprobrium), and in a tumultuous liberty now purſue the ſhort career of proſtitution."

"If," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth, triumphantly, "you would pardon the deviations from virtue, how are you to diſtinguiſh the faultleſs from the guilty?"

"Do not miſtake me, my Lord," replied Foreſter: "I am not the palliator of female errors; but I would make a diſtinction between the act of a moment where the head was alone to blame, and the deliberate vice that proceeds from the heart. The law pardons a murder, if not premeditated, and if committed in a moment of paſſion; it is the *deliberate* act alone that calls down the puniſhment."

"You have now convicted yourſelf," ſaid his Lordſhip. "You cannot deny but

that Mrs. Meredith has, in the moſt cool and deliberate manner, ſlandered an innocent woman. Her crimes deſerve puniſhment; and the ſufferings of her oppreſſed ſervant call down the moſt exemplary vengeance on her head."

"I cannot tell, my Lord, how far I may be blameable in concealing the flagitious conduct of Mrs. Meredith; but ſurely, while I deſpiſe and execrate her, I may be juſtified, if I have ſome pity on her huſband and relatives. From what I have ſeen of Colonel Meredith, I believe him to be a worthy generous man; and let but a round of pleaſure pall upon his ſenſes, he will be found to poſſeſs virtues, that, in private life, will afford that happineſs he fails to attain in a more turbulent ſphere. A diſcreet wife might effect the change: he unfortunately has choſen a diſſipated woman; but may he not make her ſenſible of her errors?"

"Never, never."

"Perhaps, then, my Lord, *I* may effect ſome good. I will ſeek Mrs. Meredith,

dith, point out her vices, and make her bluſh at her own deformity."

"Nay, ſir," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth, ſmiling, "Hercules *only* took the earth on his ſhoulders; *you* would achieve a more arduous taſk—the reformation of a coquet."

He then left the room.

Foreſter, when alone, was enabled to reflect on the affair in a diſpaſſionate manner: he ſat ſome time loſt in thought, when a ſervant delivered him a letter brought that morning from his lodgings.

"*To* REGINALD FORESTER, *Eſq. in Bond Street, leading out of Oxford Street, in London; theſe.*

"SIR, *Elm Grove.*

"THE deſire my nephew, Cuthbert Apſley, Eſq. expreſſed that I ſhould get ſomebody to write, is the cauſe of my troubling you at this preſent time. My nephew, ſir, is very ill; I ſaw it when I was

in London. He ſcarcely eats enough to ſupport life, and loaths the ſight of food, which makes me imagine that his ſtomach is weak; loſs of appetite is a certain ſign of a weak ſtomach. He was removed yeſterday from the houſe of his father, Arthur Apſley, Eſq. to the Hot Wells near Briſtol, for the benefit of the air; but, had my opinion been aſked, he ſhould have come to Elm Grove, where *I* would have undertaken his cure at my own peril.

"As for my nephew, Sinclair (except juſt at meals), I ſee but little of him. The Spaniards, under Fernando Cortez, were taken for a part of the quadrupeds they beſtrode. Now my nephew has the mania to be almoſt always in the ſaddle, and, had he been the diſcoverer of America, might have paſſed for a centaur; his ſpirits are volatile, and he cares not what riſks he incurs. I often put him in mind of his broken ribs (of which he hates the mention), and give that excellent advice which Ovid puts into the mouth of Apollo, when he would diſ-

ſuade

ſuade Phaëton from deſtruction—'Spare, boy, the ſpurs, and ſtrongly make uſe of the reins.'—I am not quite clear, whether I am juſtified in uſing the word *ſpur*, particularly as Phaëton was to mount a *chariot*. But the word *ſtimulus* may apply to many things; and I do not wiſh to begin my letter again, as I am much troubled with the *arthritis vaga* in my right arm.

"I hope, ſir, that you will not deem me improperly officious, if I bid you take great care of yourſelf. Guard againſt the night air, and ſtudying too much at a low deſk. You were very ill when I ſaw you in London; indeed little I ſaw there will, as Virgil ſays, pleaſe upon recollection.

"I had almoſt forgotten to inform you, that although Cuthbert is too weak to write himſelf, he begs that you will let him hear from you, and hopes that you will make good a promiſe made him of viſiting Apſley Manor-houſe. Thus, ſir, I have fulfilled his requeſt of letting you hear about him, perhaps, at the expenſe of decorum;

for I think it an impropriety for two perſons of different ſexes to correſpond, unleſs hymeneally or collaterally connected.

"I am, ſir,

"Your moſt obedient,

"And devoted ſervant,

"SACHARISSA M'ALLISTER."

Foreſter ſmiled at the delicacy of the good old lady, and immediately ſat down to anſwer her letter, for he made no doubt that an anſwer was expected. He lamented the ill health of his friend, paid many compliments to her medical abilities, deſired his remembrance to Sinclair, but excuſed himſelf from viſiting Apſley Manor-houſe for the preſent. To Cuthbert his letter was moſt affectionate and conſolatory. He did not bid him take patience, an advice always productive of a different effect than the intended; he gave none of thoſe awkward condolences which irritate rather than appeaſe a wounded mind. His letter was of a different nature. He confeſſed

that

that his ſufferings were great, and his wrongs many, but bade him exert his ſtrength of mind, which was but for a moment depreſſed; pointed out the many advantages he derived from nature and education, and drew a picture of life in the glowing tints of enthuſiaſm. A moment's recollection convinced Foreſter that the picture was flattering; but, as Cuthbert might be deceived into a return of ſpirits, by contemplating mankind on the bright ſide, he let it paſs, though he could not but ſmile at the Utopia his fancy had created.

CHAP. III.

SIX weeks paſſed away without any meſſage from Creſwell. The time was devoted to ſtudy, ſo well blended with amuſement, that it inſenſibly took its flight; and Foreſter was only amazed that he had received no anſwer from Cuthbert: at length, he wrote to Sinclair, begging to be relieved from ſuſpenſe. Not having ſeen Hartlebury for many days, he reſolved to viſit him: he was admitted, and found his friend in a morning gown, converſing with a perſon, whoſe appearance denoted the ſeverity of affliction; his eye was downcaſt, and his cheek hollow and colorleſs; yet ſometimes a ray of animation would illumine his countenance, and ſhow clearly that he once knew better days.

"I am glad you are come," ſaid Hartlebury to Foreſter; "this unfortunate gentleman was wiſhing the world to be acquainted

quainted with his hiſtory, as a penance for his follies; perhaps you, my friend, may derive ſome advantage from the recital. Mr. Clavill will, I am ſure, relate the moſt ſtriking facts."

Clavill half groaned: "To your humanity," ſaid he, "I owe my liberty and——"

"We will talk of that, ſir, another time," cried Hartlebury; "you will oblige me by not mentioning it now."

"I ought to obey you," ſaid Clavill. "My hiſtory is ſhort, but abounding in crime. I was not always clothed in the garb of poverty. Upon the death of my father, I came into the poſſeſſion of an unincumbered eſtate of three thouſand a year; beloved by the tenants, and reſpected by the whole county, I might have been happy. What was the ruin of my fortune?—Gaming. What was the ruin of my peace of mind?—The ſeduction of an amiable woman. Of all the ladies reſident in my neighbourhood, Edmunda Nugent was the faireſt. Her father, Sir Edmund

Nugent, idolized rather than loved her. The moſt eminent maſters were engaged at an immenſe expenſe, to teach what the quick ideas of the pupil ſoon acquired, and eaſily retained. In public ſhe was the envy of the female world, in private the theme of detraction. Her competitors agreed that Edmunda was beautiful, that Edmunda was accompliſhed; but Edmunda was illegitimate. The fair creature had another failing; nor were her rivals ſlow in diſcovering it. Her father had frequently declared his intention of leaving her his whole property. His income was near twelve thouſand a year; the certainty of this immenſe wealth cauſed pride to take poſſeſſion of a heart, where otherwiſe no unworthy paſſion could find a place. Several were the propoſals made to Sir Edmund for his darling daughter, and theſe were all rejected on her part. She had formed a reſolution not to leave her father, and declared that ſhe would remain unmarried, provided the object on whom ſhe might fix her affections would

not conſent to reſide at the manſion of Sir Edmund. Under theſe circumſtances I ventured to addreſs her: my particular attentions were the talk of the whole county, and fame had more than once privately married us; but a ſad reverſe awaited on ſecurity. Sir Edmund was fond of hunting; purſuing his favorite amuſement, he fell from his horſe, fractured his ſkull, and was brought home lifeleſs. Every endeavour was made to find a will, but the ſearch was fruitleſs—Sir Edmund had died inteſtate. One of his diſtant relations, whoſe enmity to him was notorious, took poſſeſſion of his whole eſtate, and determined to ſatiate the vengeance he could not execute on the father, on the head of the defenceleſs daughter. Edmunda had now to learn the bitter taſk of humility. Her ſorrow was tumultuous. She ſtill expected to be treated as an heireſs; but the conduct of the few friends ſhe had made, ſoon gave her to underſtand that her fortunes were altered. Fortunately for me, as I then thought, I had not publicly made any pre-

tenſions to the fair mourner. I neither abated my attentions, or talked leſs to her of love; but my ideas took a new turn. I would have made the *heireſs* my wife; the *deſtitute Edmunda* I reſolved to obtain on eaſier terms.

"Conceive the horror of her feelings, when I firſt made the infamous propoſal. She caſt on me a look, that blended in it a thouſand paſſions, and haſtily quitted the room. But let me not detail all the arts I put in practice; in ſhort, I triumphed, and Edmunda was undone.

"Though huſhed for a while, her feelings ſeverely reproached her; a gloomy melancholy took poſſeſſion of her mind, and my endeavours to ſooth her, but augmented the cloud. One morning (a morning of horror), I returned from a ſhort ride. I inquired for Edmunda: ſhe was in her chamber, and had given orders not to be diſturbed. I was, however, determined to ſee her, and tapped ſoftly at the door of her apartment: no anſwer was returned: I repeated the knock, and louder: ſtill no anſwer.

ſwer. I then entreated her to admit me; but the ſame ſilence prevailing, a dreadful preſentiment of what had paſſed ruſhed upon my mind, and, in a fit of deſperation, I burſt open the door with my foot. Gracious heaven! what a ſight of horror! Edmunda lay on the floor bathed in blood. She had cut the arteries of her arm; a riband was tied in a nooſe round her neck, by which it appeared ſhe firſt would have put a period to her exiſtence by ſtrangulation. During a week I was inſenſible to all that paſſed. The coroner had brought in a verdict of lunacy; and the unfortunate Edmunda had been, by order of my ſteward, privately interred in the pariſh-church. As ſoon as the firſt ſhock was in ſome meaſure weakened, a letter was brought me: it was from the woman I had deſtroyed. Her waiting-maid found it in the 'Nouvelle Heloiſe,' and placed in that part where St. Preux defends the act of ſuicide."

Clavill took a letter from his pocket-book—

book—ſhuddered—dropped a tear, and read as follows:

"In the moment of determined ſelf-deſtruction, do I trace theſe lines. I cannot live, that ſcorn may point the finger at me; but it is neceſſary that I attribute my death to him who cauſed it. Clavill, you are *not* the man;—no, it was my father; my tender, my indulgent father, who lived but upon my ſmiles; who was wretched when I was from his ſight: *he* cauſed me to lift my hand againſt myſelf: *he*, and *he alone*, was the author of my death. I was young and beautiful: I ſpeak not this from vanity; all vanity with me is paſt—my different acquirements were the theme of panegyric, and Edmunda Nugent was looked up to as a being of a ſuperior order. My father thought no pains, no expenſe, too great to enlarge my mind, or adorn my perſon: he gave me a taſte for luxury, gratified my every wiſh, and reproved me for not forming more. He dies: I am illegitimate; a

ſtranger.

ſtranger takes his right, and I am thrown upon the pity of a world of which I once thought myſelf the arbitreſs. Say, Clavill, would you have courted the heireſs of Sir Edmund Nugent to be yours on diſhonorable terms? No; it was the forlorn Edmunda you dared to inſult. Who left her forlorn?—Her father, who taught her wants, and gave her not the power to gratify them. I mean not to excuſe the raſh action I am about to commit. I would addreſs myſelf to Heaven, but dare not. May you be happy, Clavill. The fatal riband now lies before me, by which I may at once leave a world productive of nothing but miſery to

"EDMUNDA."

"In the firſt burſt of paſſion," continued Clavill, "I could have followed the example of the woman I had ſo cruelly wronged; but fear arreſted my arm. I left the country, hoping, in the diſſipation of the capital, to experience relief from the ſtings

ſtings of conſcience. In evil hour did I fly to London: the mania of gaming ſeized me: nightly did I loſe immenſe ſums at play, and was accounted one of the moſt happy and thoughtleſs men, when my heart was torn with anguiſh. Ruin ſtared me in the face. My creditors became clamorous. I reſolved to make a deſperate effort, and one unfortunate night ſtripped me of my laſt guinea. At length I was arreſted, and conveyed to the King's Bench, where this generous man——"

"Hold, hold," cried Hartlebury; "no more of that."

"Why wiſh to ſtop my acknowledgments, ſir?" ſaid Clavill; "why ſhould an action that——"

"If I have obliged you, ſir," interrupted Hartlebury, "pray return the obligation by not hurting my feelings. I knew you once, Mr. Clavill, in the gay circles of life, and am glad that a conviction of their futility will give you a taſte for more retired

ſcenes.

ſcenes. Perhaps I may be of uſe to you; at leaſt you ſhall command all in my power."

He then requeſted to ſpeak with him in another room; and apologizing to Foreſter, both withdrew.

The character of Hartlebury was now developed. He cenſured the vicious, but protected the humble penitent; and yet Emily had deſcribed him as a profligate. Foreſter could ſcarcely contain his indignation at the idea; yet he reflected that the criminal can never patiently allow others to enjoy the dignity of virtue. He continued muſing, when his eye reſted upon an unfolded paper; it was poetry: curioſity prompted him to the peruſal.

EGERTON.

Still the wave ſullen heav'd, ſtill the wind hollow blew,
Though the rage of the tempeſt was paſt;
Diſmay o'er the ocean triumphantly flew,
A wreck all around him met Egerton's view,
While firmly he clung to the maſt.

Alas!

Alas! but for this, gentle youth, didſt thou ſtray
In the death-dealing iſles of the weſt?
Alas! but for this, didſt thou ſigh for the day
When fortune and glory thy toils ſhould repay,
And give thee to England and reſt?

The moment arriv'd, and what joy could compare
With the tranſport that glow'd in his mind!
But ſcarcely had hope ſuperſeded deſpair,
When the veſſel that bore him to all he held dear,
Was a prey to the ocean conſign'd.

In England a maid poſſeſs'd Egerton's love;
She as fondly ador'd him again;
And oftimes, her paſſion unalter'd to prove,
At eve to the church of the village would rove,
And ſigh as ſhe look'd at the vane.

Ceaſe, ceaſe, O fond maiden, the vane to behold,
For the wind that impels it to wave,
No more ſhall the ſails of thy lover unfold,
But hollow ſhall howl o'er his relics ſo cold,
Entomb'd in a watery grave.

Now night blacken'd round him, yet Egerton clung
To the maſt with a ſinewy arm;
For hope ſtill ſurviv'd; e'en the billows among,
Her lay the enchantreſs deluſively ſung,
And ſooth'd each contending alarm.

"What if, when the morning ariſes," he cried,
"Some veſſel I chance to eſpy?"—
The morning aroſe—but on every ſide,
(Portending deſtruction) the ſea ſpreading wide,
Was all that met Egerton's eye.

"Alas!" he exclaim'd, "am I doom'd to the wave,
Ere yet half my courſe I have run?
Yet I will not deſpair—there is One who can ſave;
With humble devotion his mercy I crave,
And bow to his will—be it done!"

At a diſtance, with joy, he a veſſel eſpies,
But ſometimes 'tis loſt in the waves;
What tranſports in Egerton's boſom ariſe!
With voice loudly rais'd, for aſſiſtance he cries;
Now he weeps, now with wildneſs he raves.

But vain are thy tranſports; as vain are thy tears;
Poor youth, the deluſion give o'er;
Regardleſs the veſſel her courſe onward ſteers;
More diſtant the object each moment appears,
And now he beholds it no more.

"Farewell then, my love," he exclaims with a ſigh;
"For ever, I fear, we muſt part:
In a moment like this, if I tremble to die;
If a pang rend my breaſt, if a tear dim my eye,
'Tis thy image that ſoftens my heart.

"Farewell

"Farewell then, my love; nor give way to thy woes;
My loſs 'twere in vain to deplore;
The finger of death ſoon my eyelids ſhall cloſe,
And nought ſhall denote where the relics repoſe
Of him who muſt ſoon be no more.

"Yet oft let remembrance preſent to thy mind,
The love I bore firmly to thee;
Be happy—I ſink in the ocean, reſign'd—
But, ha!—ſee a ſail!—and the favoring wind
Impels it—oh tranſport!—to me."

The veſſel approach'd, and the generous crew
Their ſpeedy aſſiſtance afford;
Each man to the taſk with alacrity flew;
A rope to the ſuff'rer, exhauſted, they threw,
And ſoon was he ſafely on board.

But, alas, he was ſpeechleſs! no words could impart
His joy—thus eſcap'd from the wreck;
To relieve his full boſom, no ſoothing tears ſtart;
He roll'd his glaz'd eyes—laid his hands on his heart,
And in tranſport—expir'd on the deck.

Foreſter had juſt finiſhed the lines, when his friend re-entered the room. "You ſee I am become a ſpy," ſaid he; "but I cannot repent my imprudence, as I conceive you to be the author of theſe verſes."

You

"You may then repent at your leiſure," ſaid Hartlebury, "for I can aſſure you I am not; I never could rhyme luckily in my life. In my younger days, I penned a ſublime ſonnet to a fair nymph; but as I happened, unfortunately, to bring in *roſe*, as a jingle to *noſe*, I was diſmiſſed for my pains; the dear creature took it for a reflection. Theſe lines were written by a friend of mine, who witneſſed a fact nearly ſimilar. But what is your opinion of the melancholy tale of Clavill? is he not greatly to be pitied?"

Foreſter drew a compariſon between Lord Arrowſworth and Hartlebury, much to the diſadvantage of the former. He contraſted the ſeverity of his Lordſhip, and the mild benevolence of his friend—oh, how great the contraſt! "I was much touched," ſaid he, after a pauſe, "by the woeful cataſtrophe of Edmunda, and no leſs at the appearance of ſincerity evident in the repentance of Mr. Clavill. But may I entreat you to give me the particulars of your meeting?

ing?—I guess the circumstance—you relieved him from prison."

"It would be affectation," said Hartlebury, "to deny it. I make it a rule to visit the different places of confinement, and set at liberty the unfortunate debtors detained for small sums. I was passing through the King's Bench when the faded form of Clavill glided by me: shocked at his appearance, I followed, and offered him a small sum, pretending not to recollect his face: he drew back, thanked me, but bade me bestow my bounty on more deserving objects. From that moment I resolved to set him free; eight hundred pounds were the price of his ransom, and I willingly gave it, as I could by that means restore a penitent offender to the world."

"Eight hundred pounds!" exclaimed Forester; "good heavens! can you reconcile your generosity and your prudence? Were your fortune greater, and you have often told me it was limited——"

"Listen

"Liſten to me, my young friend; I will open my whole heart to you, but let ſecrecy ſeal your lips. I came into the poſſeſſion of a large fortune—my former extravagance reduced it—gaming was my foible, but I ſoon ſaw its folly; women abuſed my credulity, but I perceived their arts. Having been acquainted with few but the worſt of the ſex, I contracted the ſtyle of a woman-hater, which, though my better reaſon condemns, I yet chooſe to continue. A man, to live in the world, had better have the character of eccentricity than none at all. My known attachment to gaming procures me a paſſport to the circles of faſhion; I live at ſmall expenſe, ſee no company at home, and ſeldom give a formal dinner at a tavern: by this frugality I am enabled to ſave three hundred pounds half-yearly; theſe are devoted to gaming. If ſucceſsful, I venture larger ſums, and by that means acquire the name of a gameſter: the money I win is not devoted to external ſhow; I do not admire an equi-

page that rolls upon the four aces; I expend my ill-gotten wealth in relieving the poor debtor from the horrors of confinement, or ſeek out modeſt worth that ſhrinks from the idea of obligation.—You have now my hiſtory."

Surpriſe and veneration had kept Foreſter ſo long ſilent; at length, while the tears ſtood in his eyes, he exclaimed, "Hartlebury, you are above praiſe—never did I believe the exiſtence of ſo much virtue."

"I am ſorry for that," replied Hartlebury; "for I muſt then conclude, that there are few who know how to be happy: but do you not think me a monopoliſt of pleaſure, when I do not communicate to the world the ſecret by which I have ſecured my own approbation?"

"Ah!" ſaid Foreſter with a mournful ſmile, "few, I fear, profit by it. How long has Clavill been liberated?"

"Juſt two days prior to the diſcovery of Apſley's unfortunate deluſion—I had been a conſiderable gainer ſome time before—had

not

not Clavill's ranſom been ſo conſiderable, I might have been enabled to accommodate your friend Cuthbert with a ſum ſufficient to extricate him; but I hope his father will make allowance for the wildneſs of youth."

Foreſter concurred in the wiſh, and returned to Lord Arrowſworth more charmed than ever with Hartlebury.

Three weeks had paſſed away ſince Foreſter had written to Sinclair; and as he received no anſwer, he feared the worſt. At length he reſolved to undertake a journey to Briſtol, and was ordering a chaiſe to be ready next morning, when he was informed that a gentleman in the parlour requeſted to ſpeak with him; he obeyed the ſummons, and to his aſtoniſhment beheld Colonel Meredith. Foreſter was alarmed at his appearance; he was in a riding dreſs, his countenance was ghaſtly, and his voice hurried.

"You know, you muſt know," ex-

claimed he, "where they are—you can—you will—you muſt inform me."

Foreſter begged him to be compoſed, and ſay what information he required.

"What!" raved Meredith, "muſt I recapitulate the horrible tale? ſpare me—ſpare me—you *muſt* know it all; I am—I am—ruined—ruined for ever—loſt beyond the power of redemption!"

Foreſter proteſted he was ignorant of the cauſe of his agitation.

"How!" exclaimed Meredith, foaming with rage, "do not the very children mock me as I paſs? Fool! dupe that I am! Emily, my wife—furies blaſt the name! has eloped—has left me—left me who adored her!"

His auditor was thrilled with horror—"Eloped!" faintly repeated he; "with whom?"

"Pretend not ignorance; you know with whom; you know where they are hidden; but let them not hope to eſcape my vengeance."

"For

"For Heaven's ſake be calm; I proteſt by all that's ſacred, upon my honor, I know not where they are, or who is the perſon you ſo juſtly execrate."

"His name is Apſley; the wretch you took by the hand—the cenſor of vice—the man of ſentiment—infernal hypocrite! He, he ſeduced my wife, after a union of little more than two months."

Had the ground, opening at the feet of Foreſter, vomited flames, and menaced inſtant deſtruction, his ſurpriſe had been leſs than what he now experienced; he ſtaggered to a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

"Your confuſion ſhows you know where theſe wretches are concealed," raved Meredith: "give them to my fury; my revenge ſhall exceed all the fables of Turkiſh ſeverity."

Foreſter remained ſilent.

"Tell me this inſtant where they are, or tremble——"

"Hold, Colonel Meredith!" ſaid Foreſter, riſing with dignity. "I can allow much for the agitation of your ſpirits; but do not imagine, if I even did know where the objects of your purſuit were concealed, that *menace* would induce me to make the diſcovery. I allow the extent of your wrongs, but ſhould imagine that contempt, and not revenge, ought to be the predominant feeling of your heart. I have many proofs how unworthy your wife is of regard; when I ſay this, you will naturally obſerve that I ought to have warned you from the ſnare; to this I reply, that I had no *poſitive* proofs of her turpitude prior to your union with her. If you will promiſe to act with calmneſs, I will inform you of ſome circumſtances by which you will be convinced, that the man I once eſteemed my friend is ſufficiently puniſhed by the poſſeſſion of his wiſhes."

Meredith promiſed to behave with temper, and Foreſter began to detail the va-

rious acts of atrocity committed by the vile Emily. Meredith groaned deeply, but was ſilent. When the narration ceaſed, he aſked, in a low voice, if any third perſon were preſent during the converſations of Cuthbert and himſelf? Upon being told there was, "Permit me," ſaid the colonel, "to inquire who. I doubt not your words; I remember the affair of the jewels; but the affair is ſerious: forgive me; I ſcarce know what I ſay."

"I am happy," replied Foreſter, "to be able to produce an unexceptionable witneſs—Mr. Hartlebury."

"Will he confirm your aſſertions?"

"He certainly will."

"Then I am ſatisfied. I will take till to-morrow to reflect. Heaven preſerve them from an accidental meeting with a man they have ſo much injured."

At this moment a letter was delivered to Foreſter; the poſt-mark was of Briſtol: he haſtily tore it open.

"Apſley Manor Houſe,
near Briſtol.

"DEAR SIR,

"MY head is in ſuch a buſtle ſince laſt Saturday, that I fear I ſhall not be able to tell you the whole ſtory. Such a misfortune! My poor father! I am afraid he will not ſurvive it; and my aunt, who endeavours to comfort him, only makes him worſe. I am ſorry to inform you that my brother Cuthbert is gone off, the Lord knows where, with a certain lady of your acquaintance, Mrs. Meredith. But I begin the ſtory at the wrong end. Indeed, I am out of all patience, and ſcarce know whether I am in England or France. The devil take all woman-kind, if ſuch be the fruits of gaining their *eſteem*, as they call it! Laſt Saturday morning a man and horſe came to Elm Grove, with a letter from my father: he begged me to come to him without delay; off I ſet, and Crop carried me in leſs than three quarters of an hour—pretty ſmart riding, conſidering it was all up hill and

down.

down. My father looked ſhockingly, and was ſo tormented by his feelings, that he quite forgot his gout. Mrs. Meredith, it ſeems, had been at the Hot-well with her huſband for about three weeks or a month, and in that time had prevailed on Cuthbert (for I am ſure he was not in fault) to ſet off with her to the devil. All what I wiſh is, that ſhe had taken the journey alone: ſhe knows the way blindfold. In ſhort, my father is ſo wretched, that I am very angry with Cuthbert, and think, that when he is ſo ſevere on others, he ought to have an eye to his own conduct. He left my poor father a letter, ſaying that ſome particular affair called him away for ſome time; but the fact was too well known, and was noiſed abroad in a moment.—He was ſeen with Mrs. Meredith, in a poſt-chaiſe and four, on the London road; and what is the worſt of all, ſhe is reported to have carried off jewels and money to the amount of ſeveral thouſand pounds. If true, Cuthbert is inexcuſable. Had he loved her ſo violently,

no need of pecuniary inducements. But don't, pray don't, be too angry with him; perhaps he may ſee his folly, and repent; that is my father's only hope. My aunt is very violent; ſhe ſays ſhe is ſure that *I* ſhould never have expoſed my relations in ſuch a manner: yet if the poor old lady knew as much as you and I, ſhe would have little reaſon to thank my ſteadineſs. If you ſhould ſee Cuthbert, my dear Mr. Foreſter, do pray tell him how much we are all grieved. Say that my father will break his heart, and that even *I* muſt no longer defend him. I received your letter ſome weeks ago: I ſhould certainly have anſwered it, if Cuthbert had not prevented me, by ſaying that he ſhould write himſelf, or otherwiſe you would be too much alarmed. I dare ſay ſhe was then courting him to do all the miſchief. I mean to aſk my father's permiſſion to go up to London, in order to find out Cuthbert, and tell him in what diſtreſs his flight has involved us. I hope my aunt will allow me to depart alone; for

for although ſhe exclaims with bitterneſs againſt my brother, ſhe would not willingly truſt me from her ſight; and ſince I have uſed her ſo ill, I think it but juſt to allow her her own way. I beg my reſpects to Mr. Hartlebury, and remain,

"Dear ſir,

"Your friend and ſervant,

"SINCLAIR APSLEY.

"P. S. As ſoon as Mrs. Meredith came to the Hot-well, my brother recovered ſurpriſingly. I ſay no more."

"That letter is from Briſtol," exclaimed Meredith, relapſing into fury: "it is from the villain who has ruined my peace; give it me, I inſiſt—I mean I beg; I entreat you to give it me."

"It is from Briſtol," replied Foreſter; "read it; it will hurt your feelings, but will corroborate my teſtimony."

Meredith read the letter; his hands trembled; a thick miſt obſcured his ſight, and he leaned againſt the wainſcot for ſup-

port. "It is true," ſaid he. "By this paper I am convinced you are not deceived. I deſpiſe her. But ſay, Foreſter, will you not deſpiſe me, if I ſuffer this Apſley to eſcape the ſword, that he may lie open to the law?"

"So far," ſaid Foreſter, "from blaming your conduct, in nobly diſdaining reparation founded in blood, I ſhould eſteem you as poſſeſſing a mind ſuperior to the ſlaviſh rules by which the votaries of falſe honor are biaſſed. But ſhould you ſuffer the law to take its courſe, will a few thouſands, of which you are not in want, compenſate for the ignominy of hearing your name the theme of ribald jeſters, and your conduct the animadverſion of a public court?"

"Muſt I, then, tamely ſubmit to my injuries?"

"Weak are your feelings to thoſe which the guilty parties will ſoon experience."

"They are guilty; let them ſuffer. I can accuſe myſelf of no fault, yet I am on the rack."

"You muſt ſummon the aid of reaſon: you have loſt a wife unworthy of your love. What would have been your feelings, had you been acquainted with her crimes before ſhe had committed that by which you are at liberty to break your bonds? You muſt, in common with the whole world, execrate your guilty wife; but you may ſpare Apſley, like yourſelf, a victim to her arts. Confeſs, Meredith, that ſhe is unworthy a thought."

"Alas!" cried Meredith, "I loved her tenderly; loved her with adoration—*loved!*—oh, I feel I love her ſtill; I ever ſhall love her."

"She is, indeed, a faſcinating creature," ſaid Foreſter: "her ductility of temper, which accommodates itſelf to the different feelings of her adorers, ſecures her univerſal empire. She can laugh with the gay, reaſon with the ſerious, and turn the arms of the inconſtant upon himſelf: but her arts, once known, loſe their power. We may admire, but we muſt deſpiſe a coquet. It is in the ſame manner we behold a beautiful wanton;

wanton; we confeſs her charms, but know them to be common property."

All the arguments Foreſter could adduce, were incompetent to aſſuage the anguiſh of Meredith: he raved at one moment, and ſwore eternal hatred; at another, he recapitulated the good qualities, the ſweetneſs and beauty of his Emily. Foreſter propoſed that he ſhould viſit Hartlebury: after ſome faint refuſals, it was agreed to; and the converſation that paſſed, fully convinced Meredith of the vile conduct of the woman he once thought ſuperior even to the foibles of her ſex.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The dawn is overcaſt; the morning low'rs;
And heavily, in clouds, brings on the day—
The great, th' important day——!

ADDISON.

WHILE Foreſter was endeavouring to calm the feelings of an injured huſband, Sinclair Apſley was buſied in perſuading his father to permit his journey to London. This was always refuſed; but no news arriving of Cuthbert, the health of Mr. Apſley declined ſo rapidly, that Miſs M'Alliſter, who conſtantly attended him, began to doubt her own medical abilities, and propoſed calling in a phyſician: this Mr. Apſley objected to, and anxiouſly awaited tidings of his fugitive ſon. At length, exhauſted by his feelings, he propoſed going himſelf to London. "I will find Mr. Foreſter," ſaid he to Sinclair: "perhaps Cuthbert, though he neglects his poor father, may have written

written to him; yet, if he have any ſhame left, he will hide himſelf from every eye. Poor boy! that it ſhould ever come to this! You, Sinclair, ſhall accompany me, for I know you wiſh it. Your good aunt," added he, mournfully ſmiling, "will be content to truſt you with me."

But he was much deceived. Miſs M'Alliſter, though ſhe reprobated Cuthbert and London, would not hear of being left behind: it was therefore ſettled that they ſhould leave Apſley Houſe on the morrow; Sinclair, Miſs M'Alliſter, and her old maid Kitty, in one chaiſe, and Mr. Apſley, who, on account of the gout, would take ſhorter ſtages, in another. Sinclair would have preferred riding on horſeback; but his aunt would not hear of it. "It was indelicate," ſhe ſaid, "for two females to be alone in a poſt-chaiſe." He was obliged to ſubmit.

The eventful morning dawned; the weather was rainy and tempeſtuous; and the party proceeded with dejected hearts, but ariſing from different cauſes. Sinclair was out of

humor

humor with his aunt for confining him in a chaiſe, and wiſhing him to ſwallow her cordial, to prevent wind in the ſtomach. Miſs M'Alliſter recollected, with no degree of pleaſure, her former inauſpicious egreſs from Somerſetſhire; and Kitty, reflected, that, had ſhe taken the journey five and thirty years before, ſhe would have been free from virgin reſtraints; for ſhe was perſuaded that in London huſbands were to be had by wholeſale.

The party were in the midſt of Marlborough downs, when the chaiſe, by falling into a deep rut, gave a ſudden jolt. "Bleſs my ſoul," exclaimed Miſs M'Alliſter, "we ſhall certainly exceed the centre of gravity."

"Don't be alarmed," muttered Sinclair; "there is no danger: I am with you, and you know the proverb."

He had no ſooner ſaid the word, than, in a moment, the chaiſe was overturned: the ſpokes of the wheel had ſnapped. "I thought ſo," ſcreamed Kitty, as ſhe fell.

Quick

Quick as lightning, Sinclair tore open the chaiſe door, and firſt extricated his aunt, and then her maid: both were in violent hyſterics, though unhurt. The poſtillion was buſied in unharneſſing the horſes; and while Sinclair held his aunt, poor Kitty was left to wallow in the mud at her diſcretion. At length, both recovered a ſenſe of their ſituation. The cherry-coloured ſatin of Miſs M'Alliſter, thanks to the care of Sinclair, had ſuffered little; but the yellow damaſk of Kitty was ſo woefully bedaubed, that ſhe quite forgot her own ſituation, and only lamented the fate of her gown. Sinclair conſoled her, by ironically aſſuring her that the rain would ſoon waſh it clean. He pulled off his great coat, and wrapping it round his aunt, though ſhe violently oppoſed it, begged her to be comforted, for that he would take one of the horſes, and ride to the next town for a conveyance. But Miſs M'Alliſter begged him not to leave her, and aſſured him that ſhe ſhould die with fear, if he quitted her even for a

moment.

moment. He acquieſced, and the poſtillion was diſpatched with the horſes to procure aſſiſtance. The party walked ſlowly on: a profound ſilence reigned for ſome time: at length Kitty groaned, and Miſs M'Alliſter exclaimed, "Well! to be ſure we are at the *ne plus ultra* of misfortune! nothing but diſaſters. As Swift ſays, 'It cannot rain, but it pours.' Well! if ever I ſaw ſuch a day; the atmoſphere is one cloud: I will not complain; but woe is me, that I ever left Elm Grove! as Seneca juſtly obſerves —As I am a Chriſtian ſoul, I have loſt my ſhoe! Pray look for it, Sinclair; there it is; pour out the water; thank you, my dear.—I ſhall catch my death: but I have a cordial by me; it will ſave all our lives.—Oh dear! well! this is the worſt of all; the bottle is broke in my pocket."

Sinclair was rejoiced to hear it, and at the ſame time beheld a cart at ſome diſtance. He communicated this to his companions. The vehicle ſoon overtook them. The driver was informed of the misfortune,

which

which the ſhattered chaiſe but too much indicated. "You may come in, and welcome," ſaid the man. "I have only two women here, that our juſtices be paſſing to the next pariſh; a *kiple of vagrom varmint!*"

Miſs M'Aliſter declared that her delicacy would be ſhocked to a degree, if ſhe put a foot in ſuch a conveyance; and the man, giving her a hearty curſe, ſaid ſhe might ride in the next cart ſhe uſed for nothing; and he hoped it would not be long firſt. Sinclair was only prevented from chaſtiſing his inſolence, by the ſcreams of his companions, who, clinging round him, begged him to deſiſt.

Sinclair was now completely out of temper. He ſharply ridiculed the punctilio which had prevented their accommodation. His aunt, to pacify him, vowed that if the chaiſe did not arrive, ſhe would uſe the next vehicle that offered, be it what it might. The words had ſcarce paſſed her lips, when Sinclair beheld a hearſe and ſix on a ſlow trot, and likely to overtake them:

he

he ſtopped ſhort, and pointed out the object. Miſs M'Alliſter, bound by her word, of which ſhe was very tenacious, grounded all hope upon the refuſal of Kitty, who wept and prayed, but who wept and prayed in vain. The hearſe came up with them. The driver agreed to accommodate the ladies with a ſeat on the top; and it was only by threatening Kitty with being left alone, that ſhe could be induced to mount the funereal car. The rain, which before was violent, now fell in ſuch torrents, that Sinclair, alarmed for his aunt, actually propoſed that ſhe ſhould be an inſide paſſenger.

"Far be the omen from me," exclaimed Miſs M'Alliſter. "What! ſhall I be fellow-traveller with a caput mortuum?"

The driver ſeeing that Kitty was ready to faint at the propoſal, ſaid, "Perhaps, miſtreſs, as t'other lady don't like it, *you* may chooſe an inſide birth?"

"Oh dear," cried Kitty, with a ſcream almoſt amounting to a roar, "pray don't mention

mention it; if I did, I ſhould ſoon be, as my miſtreſs ſays, a *gaby montem* myſelf."

Sinclair could not refrain from caſting an eye over the party. His aunt was ſeated on the front of the hearſe, and Kitty cloſe by her, in all the majeſty of mud. The cherry-colored and yellow gowns formed a ludicrous contraſt to the funereal hue of the attendants, three in number, who were ſeated behind. Sinclair ſhared the box with the driver.

"Well," ſobbed Miſs M'Alliſter, "if I once could reviſit my penates, never would I quit them more. Always ſome ſiniſter accident! Who would ever have imagined that any of the name of M'Alliſter would have been reduced to ſuch ſtreights? I proteſt I am a downright memento mori; and then ſuch a *rigor* pervades my whole frame, that a Siberian winter were a torrid zone to it."

Sinclair renewed his propoſal of ſeeking a chaiſe. He gave half-a-guinea to one of

the

the attendants, and begged him to lend his horſe, which was tied behind the hearſe, the badneſs of the road preventing any faſter progreſs than a very ſlow trot. His aunt conſented, with difficulty, to his abſence; but the hopes of a better vehicle reconciled her to the idea. Sinclair was out of ſight in a moment.

The hearſe ſlowly dragged along; and Kitty, afraid of ſilence, begged the driver to inform her what lady he was conveying to her long home?

"No lady at all," replied the man; "it is a gentleman I am to carry to London."

"A gentleman!" exclaimed Miſs M'Alliſter. "Lord bleſs me! and Sinclair wanted me to go in the inſide!"

"Why, I don't think he'd do you much harm, madam," ſaid the driver; "he's quiet enough now; God knows what he will be."

Kitty inquired his name; but the man refuſed to ſatisfy her curioſity.

"I never tell a ſecret," ſaid he; "but

"but so far I'll inform you, that I don't believe the gentleman in the hearse had his equal in England for spirit; and he was so strong, that if he took twenty chaps by the head, he'd set them spinning like tops."

"A perfect Milo!" observed Miss M'Allister.

"Yes, ma'am," said the man, not understanding her sapient remark, "he has often tript up the heels of Mendoza; a deadly strong, spirited——Ha! by jingo, there they are! look, Peter, the rascals are upon us!—To horse, to horse!"

The men descended with swiftness from their elevated situation, mounted their steeds, while he who had lent his to Sinclair, unharnessed one from the hearse, and all set off at a full gallop.

"Now the consummation of our disasters has taken place," said Miss M'Allister; "the fates can do no more; we are marked by the hand of misfortune."

Poor Kitty repeated her paternoster.

The

The horſes ſtood ſtill, and Miſs M'Alliſter wondered what had cauſed the ſuddon flight of the attendants. "Well!" cried ſhe, "Cowley obſerves, and very properly, that 'Some wiſe men, and ſome fools, we call.' Now, though we are women, I cannot but think the paſſage may be applied to us; for I fear, Kitty, we are of the latter claſs." She ended with a deep ſigh, and pulled Sinclair's wet great coat over her ſhoulders. Both were ſilent for a few minutes: at length a loud halloo was heard, and Miſs M'Alliſter looking up, obſerved the hearſe to be ſurrounded by a party of dragoons, and two men with blue coats, and cockades in their hats. She ſat motionleſs, and one of the dragoons ordered her to ſtop.

"So I do; the more hard is my lot," ſaid Miſs M'Alliſter; "but, for Heaven's ſake, tell we what you want? If you mean to kill us, I beg you will put us out of our pain as ſoon as poſſible."

"Oh, pray don't mention it," ſcreamed

Kitty. "If we muſt be killed, I beg of you to be as long about it as you can. If you only come for the gentleman in the coffin, I can aſſure you I know nothing about him, and that I am innocent of all his crimes."

"Aye, aye," ſaid one of the men in blue, "we'll ſoon ſee what the gentleman is made of." And opening the door of the hearſe, he ſwore he would be bound it was as good French brandy as ever was tipped over tongue.

"So you think then, you ſir, in the red gown," added he, "that we did not trace this all the way from Devonſhire: we keep a pretty ſharp look-out. And ſo you have put on petticoats, and be hanged to ye; but I'll tell you what, you are both old offenders; I ſee that with half an eye."

"Indeed," replied Miſs M'Alliſter, "you are right when you call us old; nay, I believe and know that we are both ſad ſinners; yet I don't remember that I ever defrauded

frauded any one; and Kitty has been a faithful ſervant to me."

"Oh, oh! your name is Kitty, Mr. Raſcal, is it? Well! well! you'll both be hanged, if you don't mind your eye. But firſt let me ſee if you have any arms about you. Should you pop at us in the mean time, remember it is death without reprieve."

They then pulled away the great coat of Sinclair from the ſhoulders of the aſtoniſhed Miſs M'Alliſter, and drew from the pockets a pair of piſtols.

"Aye, aye, 'tis plain enough," cried the by-ſtanders; "they are old offenders; and by the flight of the reſt, no doubt they are concerned in the murder of poor Jack Williams. They'll ſtretch a cord for it: hanging is too good for them."

But one dragoon, with more humanity than the reſt, helped the forlorn pair to deſcend, and ſaid it was impoſſible that they could be any thing elſe than a couple of crazy old women.

"What!" exclaimed Miſs M'Alliſter; "crazy! Sir, I'd have you to know that I never was taken for a lunatic before. As to your being officers, I much doubt; for it is your office to protect, and not inſult the fair ſex. If my nephew Sinclair Apſley, Eſq. were here, he ſhould teach you to—— but as I live, a chaiſe comes this way; it is ſurely he; if I am not deceived, he ſhall teach you the reſpect due to perſons of family, from the dregs of plebeian obſcurity."

The chaiſe rapidly advanced, and Sinclair was ſeen in the ſaddle, driving as hard as the powers of the horſes would permit.—His perſon was known to one of the cuſtom-houſe-officers. A ſingle word ſettled the buſineſs; and he begged his aunt to get quickly in the chaiſe, for he declared that it rained like a watering-pot.

"Firſt let me," ſaid ſhe, "explain to this perſon."

"But, my dear aunt, you'll catch your death."

"Let

"Let me tell you, sir," said the enraged genealogist, "that the name of M'Allister is one of the most ancient in the kingdom; and if the last male heir had not died of cutting his teeth, it would not yet have been extinct. There were," said she, counting on her fingers, "the families of the Colvilles, the Hartingtons, the Fazakerlys, the Osbaldestons, the Fotheringhams, and the Whites! He might have quartered all these arms; but now there is nobody to quarter them, because his mother would not follow my advice, and let him wear an anodyne necklace. And is any of the name of M'Allister to be called a smuggler? It is a solecism. My nephew will witness for me that I never defrauded the revenue in my life."

"Nor I, neither," cried Kitty, who now began to comprehend what was going forward, "except by buying a pound or two of run tea, that turned out to be sloe-leaves after all."

Miss M'Allister would have continued her invective, had not Sinclair observed

that the men were only deficient in reſpect, from an ignorance of the antiquity of her family; and that though a number of her name had travelled inſide, nobody would have ſuſpected to have found a M'Alliſter on the outſide of a hearſe.

"Upon my life, my dear, you are in the right," ſaid ſhe. "Well, gentlemen, a learned author ſays, a burden becomes light, if well borne. I ſhall therefore endeavour to forget what has paſſed. And now, nephew, help me into the chaiſe, for I begin to feel ſymptoms of the *miſerere mei*."

Sinclair obeyed; and having recruited his ſpirits by a ſip from the bottle of the cuſtom-houſe-officer, aſſiſted in ſeating his aunt and the unfortunate Kitty in the chaiſe. By proper care, both eſcaped colds, and the next day brought them without farther accident to London.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

——— Methinks I tread in air.
Surpriſing happineſs! unlook'd-for joy!
Never let love deſpair! DISTRESSED MOTHER.

WHILE Foreſter, actuated by the moſt benevolent motives, vainly endeavoured to diſcover the retreat of the deluded Apſley, that young man, blinded by momentary gratification, gave not a thought to the permanent bleſſings he had loſt. The guilty Emily, by every blandiſhment in her power, ſtrove to chaſe melancholy ideas from his brain; but reflection nevertheleſs obtruded itſelf, and preſented to his view the deſpair of a father, who loved, who idolized him. He feared his curſe; his brother too, whoſe follies he had reprobated, would now doubtleſs exult in his misfortune. Guilt had contaminated the heart of Cuthbert, and, being fallen in his own eſteem, he conceived himſelf to be

ſo in that of others. One evening, as he was ſitting in a melancholy mood by the ſide of his miſtreſs, ſhe tenderly inquired the cauſe of his dejection.

"Am I no longer dear to you?" ſaid ſhe; "and do you already repent that I have ſacrificed all for your ſake?"

Cuthbert preſſed her hand, and turned away his face.

"You do not ſpeak to me," continued ſhe; "'tis then as I ſuſpected." And tears (which ſhe had at command) glittered in her eyes.

"No," exclaimed Cuthbert with fervor; "no—I am not a monſter of ingratitude. Not love you, Emily! *you* who have given up all for me! who have followed a wretched, undone——"

He ſtopped ſhort: Emily, ſeizing his hand, begged him to proceed. He caught her in his arms, his head reſted on her ſhoulder, and he ſighed with bitterneſs.

"Perhaps," ſaid ſhe, in the greateſt agitation, "pecuniary embarraſſment is the cauſe of your diſtreſs. Speak, I conjure you,

you, that in a moment I may put an end to your trouble."

"Can you forgive me, Emily? Say, can you forgive the man who has reduced you to misery? You but too well gueſs at the cauſe of my deſpair: for a ſhort time I ſhall be enabled to ſhield you from want. But (wretch that I am!) what awaits my Emily when that time ſhall elapſe?"

"That time is yet far diſtant, my Cuthbert." Emily then haſtily aroſe, and went into the adjoining room.

The victim of paſſion threw himſelf upon the ſofa: his hands were claſped to his forehead, and his manly frame heaved with convulſive ſighs. He dared not behold the woman he had irreparably injured; and he judged of her feelings by his own.

In a ſhort time ſhe returned. "Look up, my Cuthbert," ſaid ſhe: "Fie! take comfort; I bring you relief."

He raiſed himſelf from the ſofa, and gazing mournfully at her, beheld that ſhe had

decorated her perſon with a profuſion of diamonds. He ſtarted.

"Whence," cried he, "have you theſe jewels?"

"Knew you not that I poſſeſſed them?"

"You have never worn them, to my knowledge."

"That was becauſe I was conſcious how little I needed the adventitious aids of dreſs to charm the only man I ever loved. I am in no want of jewels while I poſſeſs your heart. Take them, they are yours; diſpoſe of them and me as you pleaſe: the value is nearly eight thouſand pounds."

Cuthbert trembled: ſomething whiſpered to him that *now* was the time, if ever, to prove that all honor was not extinct in his boſom. He reflected, that although he was guilty of one crime, it did not follow that he muſt wilfully plunge into more.

Emily drew the pendants from her ears, and replaced all her treaſure in the caſket from whence ſhe had taken them.

Cuth-

Cuthbert, in a hesitating manner, inquired how long she had possessed the jewels.

"The blockhead Meredith," said she, "gave me the greatest part subsequent to our marriage. It was his refusing me a diamond-necklace I had set my heart upon, that produced the little fracas that ended in my vowing revenge. I think I have pretty well performed my vow," added she, smiling: "I wish I could be a spectator of his despair; it must needs be farcical. Should not you like to witness it?" She then laughed with the malice of a fiend.

Cuthbert felt as if the struggles of departing life agitated his frame; his bosom heaved no sigh, nor could a tear force a passage to relieve his oppressed heart.—"Am I then," cried he (after a pause of desperation), "a robber? Emily, have *you* deceived me? There is no faith in woman. *You* have wronged me, and honor is a jest. But, how dare *I* talk of *honor*, who have

broken all ties human and divine? Your unhappy husband is now suffering, while I (guilty wretch!) mock his despair. Leave me, Emily; *you* have made me what I am. Oh, no; I—I only am to blame; I have —oh, I am the worst of villains." Having uttered these incoherent sentences, he again threw himself upon the sofa. Dreadful is conviction to the guilty mind; but the conviction of his own turpitude was not the only misery Cuthbert was doomed to experience. As one idea rapidly followed another, confusing his brain almost to madness, the dreadful thought occurred, that Emily, who could ridicule the anguish of a doating husband, might, when the novelty of her situation with him was past, equally insult his feelings by forming other connexions. This thought he wished to smother, as ungrateful to the woman who had sacrificed all to him; but his mind was too much agitated to form a connected chain of ideas. He still lay stretched upon the sofa, when the voice of Emily aroused him.

"If,"

"If," ſaid ſhe, "I am doomed to be miſerable (and that my imprudence has deſerved it, I own), could not my fate have been determined by other lips than yours? Muſt the man, who bade me ſpurn the cold maxims impoſed by a narrow-minded world, be the firſt to accuſe me of my errors?"

"I blame you not, my Emily, deareſt, moſt adorable of women; I blame you not; I—I alone am the curſed cauſe——"

"Of our mutual happineſs. Why, Cuthbert, this deſpair? We may yet live in peace and competence. Diſpoſe of theſe inſignificant baubles; let us ſeek another country; let us leave care and uſeleſs retroſpect in the foggy climate of England; let us away to the warm and voluptuous ſkies of Italy; there ſhall you bid defiance to the horrors that now weigh you down, and replace them by the ſoft cares of love."

Cuthbert raiſed himſelf on his elbow. "And could you, my Emily, leave your native country for my ſake; for my ſake conſent to quit ſcenes of which you are the

greateſt

greateſt ornament? Oh, how do I deſerve ſuch happineſs?"

He ſtretched out his hand towards her; ſhe preſſed it between both hers, and wetted it with her tears.

"Diſpoſe of theſe baubles, once more I entreat you," ſaid ſhe, "and let us away."

He haſtily roſe, and ſeized the caſket which contained the jewels; but, as ſuddenly throwing it from him, with horror, exclaimed, "By the labor of my hands can I ſupport you, but not by the produce of theſe; I cannot, I will not make uſe of them. Let us fly, but let it be to deſerts; let us hide ourſelves from the face of man; let us wander in primæval wildneſs; but let us not eternally forfeit ſelf-eſteem."

"My love, my ardent affection," cried Emily, "is then nothing in your eyes? Why heſitate to uſe what is your own (for all that is mine is yours), when, by ſo doing, we may ſecure a future independence?"

"But

"But what price ſhall we pay for that independence? No more of this; trifle not on ſo ſerious a ſubject; I am ſure you jeſt. Reſtore the jewels to Colonel Meredith, ſhare my poverty, and ſecure my eternal love."

"Share your poverty?" cried ſhe; "I can look poverty in the face with as ſteady a gaze as yourſelf; but why court the ſpectre to our ſide? No, we have the means of competence, let us ſecure it; I will myſelf diſpoſe of theſe diamonds. The fool Meredith loves me too well to endeavour to recover them; and, had he the wiſh, he has not the power."

"How! how!" raved Cuthbert; "can you, will you ſquander your huſband's laviſh bounty on a ruined profligate? From this moment I ſwear never more to——"

"Hold," interrupted Emily; "end not your oath; there is no need of that to prove how ſmall your love to me.—Behold," cried ſhe, with a theatrical air, "it is more merciful to end my exiſtence at once, than ſuf-

fer

fer me to linger a tardy victim to your cruelty."

She tore open her dreſs, and expoſed her boſom. Cuthbert was vanquiſhed, he fell at her feet, vowed implicit obedience to all her wiſhes; and fearing leſt her deſpair might tempt her to ſome fatal act, he aſſumed an air of gaiety foreign to his heart, and endeavoured to perſuade her that his anger was wholly levelled at himſelf.

Emily, with all the cunning attached to the character of a finiſhed coquet, had eaſily developed the feelings of her lover. Reflection, ſhe knew, muſt be carefully guarded againſt. To the tumultuous ſcenes of pleaſure his mind had no propenſity; nor did ſhe wiſh much to expoſe herſelf to contempt, at places where ſhe was formerly received with far different ſenſations. This ſhame aroſe from pride—not principle; ſhe therefore reſolved to put all her arts in practice to render home agreeable to Cuthbert. Her efforts were ſucceſsful: ſometimes grave, ſometimes gay, but never licentious,

tious, ſhe faſcinated the unfortunate youth, and he endeavoured to bury all reflection on the paſt and conſideration of the future, by the contemplation of preſent happineſs. Although the love Emily bore Cuthbert was as great as was in her nature to feel, their ſouls had nothing in common. Art uſurped the empire of hers, while that of Cuthbert owned all the influence of Nature: ſhe was deeply read in the book of the world; he had never turned the page. Though cunning ſupplied the place of wiſdom in Emily, her paſſions would ſometimes betray her; this was the caſe relative to her elopement. The fine perſon of Cuthbert ſtruck her fancy; ſhe delighted in adoration, and in him found a worſhipper. Profuſe, not generous, ſhe offered to part with her jewels to relieve his diſtreſſes; becauſe at that moment ſhe had a remaining partiality for him. Had ſhe grown indifferent, or had a finer perſon ſtruck her eye, ſhe would have left him without pity; and

had

had want been his portion in conſequence, no relief would have come from her.

Cuthbert did all in his power to avoid diſpoſing of the jewels. He delayed it from day to day; at length he was obliged to break in upon his laſt fifty pounds: he paid a ſmall ſum, put the reſt into his pocket, and left the houſe.

Emily awaited his return with impatience. Twelve and one o'clock ſtruck: ſhe was alarmed: at length, wearied with watching, ſhe retired to bed, but not to reſt. About four in the morning a gentle knock at the door announced his approach: Emily trembled, ſhe knew not why; in a few minutes he entered the room. He took up the light which always burnt in the chimney, and approaching the bed, ſoftly undrew the curtain.

"Sleep you, my Emily?" ſaid he, in a low and tremulous voice.

"Do you think then, Cuthbert, there was a poſſibility, when I trembled for your ſafety?"

"Generous

"Generous woman! and do you not reproach me for the alarm I have cauſed you?"

"You ſhall never hear reproach from my lips, Cuthbert. May I inquire where you have been? but, if you wiſh to conceal it, I will forbear to aſk."

"I have been," cried he, "where horror preſides; yet I have brought comfort home. This purſe, my Emily, contains notes to the amount of eight hundred pounds."

"Oh, heavens! Cuthbert, you have not been raſh enough to——I ſpeak not on account of the ſuppoſed crime, but of the dangers of detection. You have ſurely not been on the——"

She ſtopped ſhort: Cuthbert was too much agitated by joy to comprehend her meaning.

"I left you, my Emily, with deſpair. I had a ſmall ſum in my pocket. I flew to a gaming-houſe near Leiceſter Fields. Fortune was my friend: I won twelve hundred pounds, but a ſudden change of luck reduced

duced me to eight; unwilling to purſue a bad run, I left the houſe. Thank Heaven, there is now no need for parting with your ornaments."

"And did you," ſaid ſhe, "win all that money fairly?"

"How, Emily! can you ſuppoſe me guilty of fraud?"

"Dear me! don't feel hurt; it is what is practiſed every day."

"By the loweſt of ſharpers, perhaps, it may."

"Aye, and by the firſt ladies of the land. Do you think that Lady Fazakerly could ſport three carriages, and keep a hoſt of footmen, if it were not for the hoſt of faro? She is a perfect Breſlaw; and, indeed, to finiſh the education of a woman of faſhion, it is as neceſſary to have a notion of ſhuffle and cut, as a preſence of mind when detected in little peccadillos."

"And does not ſuch a detection often take place?"

"Oh, yes, very often; but the perſon who could be uncivil enough to obſerve

ſuch

ſuch a thing, would be voted a *bore* in all polite circles."

"But ſurely *you* never indulged in this faſhionable plunder, this quality knavery?"

"Oh, no!—Sometimes, indeed, when hard run, I have made an *arrangement* with Lady Fazakerly; my aunt, you know, was to blame. She was left my guardian, and was the beſt judge of what I ought, and what I ought not to do."

Cuthbert ſighed deeply; Emily had almoſt betrayed herſelf. He thought he perceived a depravity of heart, but he chaſed the idea from his mind. He recollected her tenderneſs towards him; and falſely argued himſelf into a conviction, that, if if ſhe had errors to others, he, who had received unequivocal proofs of her attachment, had no right to be her cenſor.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

——Would curſes kill,
I would invent as bitter ſearching terms,
As curſt, as harſh, as horrible to hear,
Deliver'd ſtrongly through my fixed teeth,
With full as many ſigns of deadly hate,
As lean-fac'd Envy in her loathſome cave.

SHAKESPEAR.

FORESTER, though he intereſted himſelf greatly in the affairs of the Apſley family, did not ſo wholly devote himſelf to their ſervice, as to neglect his own concerns. He once or twice viſited Creſwell, but received little ſatisfaction from the interviews. At length a letter was brought from Bond Street:

"SIR,

"I AM deſired to inform you, that in about a year's time (it being impoſſible

poſſible to be ſooner, for many reaſons) you will no longer have cauſe to complain of the want of a proper ſettlement. I ſuppoſe you will be grateful (at leaſt, you ought to be) for the protection of your friends.

"I am, ſir,

"Your very humble ſervant,

"URIAH CRESWELL."

"Pall Mall."

Foreſter did not feel himſelf quite ſo grateful as Creſwell ſeemed to expect. He thought the delay unneceſſary; yet as he could not aſcertain the reaſons for it (his guardian not being much uſed to aſſign any), he acquieſced, and reſolved to trouble him no more with his viſits. He now viſited every public place, in order to diſcover the fugitives; but in vain. He walked the moſt frequented ſtreets, but found no clue by which to trace them. Meredith gave orders that his elegant town-houſe ſhould come to the hammer, and took the apartments Foreſter had quitted, in Bond Street;

Street; promiſing to ſend all letters directed to him at that place, to Lord Arrowſworth's.

One morning, as Foreſter was paſſing through Dover Street, ruminating on the uncertainty of his ſituation, a ſudden ſcream rouſed him from his reverie. A fine child, in attempting to run acroſs the ſtreet, had been knocked down by the pole of a carriage. The driver checked his horſes with all poſſible ſpeed; and Foreſter, ruſhing forwards, ſeized the boy, and carried him in his arms to his almoſt diſtracted mother: but ſhe was in ſtrong convulſions; and her ſhrieks brought every body to the windows. Foreſter congratulated himſelf on having ſaved a fellow creature's life; and was retiring from the crowd, when, at a drawing-room window, that reached from the ceiling to the floor, he beheld Mrs. Meredith. She ſlightly caſt her eyes over the crowd, and turning away, Foreſter ſoon loſt ſight of her. The glimpſe, however, was ſufficient to prove her identity. He took the

number,

number, and haſtily walked to Bond Street. He was uſhered up ſtairs. The room was empty; and he had an opportunity of reflecting what meaſures he was to purſue. He blamed his raſhneſs in coming immediately to Meredith, and reſolved to conceal his knowledge of his wife's abode.

In a few moments the colonel made his appearance: he ſeemed to be in good ſpirits, and welcomed Foreſter with an unuſual degree of cheerfulneſs. They converſed together for ſome time, when the ſervant appeared with breakfaſt. Foreſter expreſſed his ſurpriſe, as it was paſt two o'clock. Meredith, ſmiling, replied, that he had not been in bed till ſeven that morning. "I ſee no particular reaſon," added he, "that a man ſhould mope and pine, becauſe his wife has proved a jade. The caſe is common, that is one poor comfort. I am determined to brave the laugh of the world; and in order to prove how little I value Emily, I have taken a pretty warbling actreſs under my protection. But

why are you ſo ſilent? Does this ſhock your tender conſcience? No, no; I ought rather to aſk, do you not applaud my ſpirit?"

"I will anſwer your queſtion by another. Do you yourſelf think ſuch conduct right?"

"Indiſputably. It is the way with married men who get rid of their wives, to take ſome *chere amie* from a friend, or the public. I muſt not be out of faſhion; but I muſt get a divorce."

"You will be faſhionable, then, again? Yet, as *you* are ſituated, divorce is neceſſary. But how many make a traffic of their wives, and enjoy the price of their ſeduction? It is ſometimes convenient to have a faithleſs mate."

"The world," ſaid Meredith, "can never attach that ſtigma upon me. My fortune is unencumbered. It muſt be known, that neceſſity in no degree influences my conduct."

"But will the world agree to attribute your behaviour to its real motive? I know

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the world too well: I know its propenſity to draw erroneous concluſions from the beſt actions. The trade of divorce begins to be ſeen through. If the damages given by a jury to a huſband, were appropriated to the uſe of the ſtate, ſo as to act only as a puniſhment to the offender, the application for divorces would not be ſo frequent."

"What, then, am I to do? Put yourſelf in my ſituation. I am unwilling to expoſe my character to illiberal cenſure.—Guide—adviſe me."

"Obtain a diſſolution of your marriage, and let Emily purſue her unbridled career. No longer your wife, her actions reflect no ſhame on you. Yet, if her conduct be ſuch as to entitle her to your bounty; if, repenting her raſh ſtep, ſhe ſolicit your aſſiſtance, generouſly allow her wherewithal to ſupport life in exile, where ſhe may weep the errors that have thrown her from the happineſs once within her graſp."

"I will," ſaid Meredith, after a pauſe.

"I give you my honor that I will. I must now tell you, that at the same time she took her jewels; on the day," sighed he, "that she left me, I found my escrutoire broke open, and bills and money taken out to the amount of fifteen hundred pounds."

Forester was shocked at this additional proof of her turpitude; but he exclaimed, with fervor, "My life on the innocence of Cuthbert Apsley. He knew not of this infamous transaction. He may have been led into an error, but not into the commission of an act like this; an act so degrading and infamous."

"I am indifferent as to that," replied Meredith. "Deceived by her in whom I most trusted, I believe honor to be a bubble created by the breath of knaves, as a mean of diverting the attention of the weak from a reflection on their designs. I shall give up all thoughts of injuring Apsley—but let him not insult me by his presence."

"You then engage to abandon the idea of injuring the offending party?"

"I do."

"I do."

"Solemnly?"

"Solemnly."

"I will then inform you, that I this morning diſcovered the abode of the fugitives."

"Heavens and earth!" exclaimed Meredith; "where? where are they? My vengeance ſhall——"

"Hold, colonel! Did you not ſolemnly promiſe to abandon all idea of retribution?"

"I did; I own the charge: let them periſh; let them——but you knew of their retreat before, and thus have trepanned me into a promiſe of——"

"Meredith," ſaid Foreſter, "I charge you not to tempt me too far. I am willing to ſerve you; but if you once dare to accuſe me of duplicity, I withdraw my aſſiſtance. I wiſh to ſave you from yourſelf. If your feelings can own the control of reaſon, hear me. I knew not, till this morning, of the retreat of your wife; nor will I now reveal it to you. Is this your boaſted

indifference, to allow your paſſions the power of tranſporting you to tranſgreſs a ſacred promiſe?"

"I will be calm," cried the colonel; "I will keep my oath. May all the miſeries attendant on mortality be their lot! Forgive me, Foreſter."

He held out his hand, which was cordially accepted. Foreſter then propoſed ſome terms which he meant to offer to Mrs. Meredith. The colonel agreed to all; and his friend, ſtepping to Lord Arrowſworth's, put the diamond ear-rings in his pocket, which Mrs. Thomas was accuſed of ſtealing. He took an early dinner, and, wrapped in a large box-coat, proceeded to Dover Street. He walked backwards and forwards for a quarter of an hour, ruminating on what he ſhould ſay to his once valued friend, when the door of the houſe opening, Cuthbert ſallied forth, muffling his face with his handkerchief. Glad to ſpeak to Emily without witneſſes, he gave a ſingle knock at the door,

door, which was opened by a foot-boy. He eagerly inquired for Mrs. Meredith, but was informed that no such person lodged there. He asked if there were any lodgers at all? and was informed that a Mr. Apsley and his wife had taken the first floor. Forester desired to be shown to Mrs. Apsley, and was introduced to a handsome drawing-room, where, upon a sofa, dressed in all the elegance of fashion, sat the beautiful and guilty Emily. Confused at his sudden appearance, and at a loss how to construe the unexpected visit, she remained immoveable. The foot-boy withdrew. Forester, with a cool bow, apologized for his intrusion, and hoped his coming had not alarmed her.

"Alarmed me!" exclaimed Emily. "Why, sir, should it alarm me? I am, surely, the properest judge of my own actions: nor can I see by what right you assume the office of my censor."

"Your ready guess at the motive that caused this visit," cried Forester, "con-

vinces me that you are not yet ſo far loſt to ſhame, as to juſtify your criminality. Will you afford me half an hour's converſation? If after that you ſtill perſiſt in your unprincipled career, I ſhall, with regret, abandon you to the conſequent miſeries of unbridled profligacy."

Rage flaſhed from the eyes of the fair culprit. She threw herſelf into a chair, half choked with impotent fury. At length, riſing, ſhe ſaid in a hurried manner, "Yes, I will hear you, that you may have the mortification to find all your rhetoric unavailing, and that I may have ſufficient cauſe to eſtrange you for ever from my Cuthbert."

"If," ſaid Foreſter, "he perſiſt in his deluſion, it will be no difficult matter. In that caſe, I muſt never ſee him more, and try to forget his virtues, once ſo promiſing; virtues, blighted and deſtroyed by you."

"Very well, ſir; go on!" She calmly ſeated herſelf upon the ſofa.

"Liſten to the catalogue of your faults—(to call them by no harſher term). I ſhould

ſhould not mention theſe, if I did not mean to point out a way by which you might, in ſome meaſure, repair them."

"Very well, ſir; go on." And taking her work-bag, ſhe began to knot.

"I paſs over my own injuries: thoſe I have forgiven. But you have, in the moſt unprincipled manner, corrupted the heart of a once lovely and amiable girl.—Poor Cecilia! ſhe deſerved a better fate. She has, indeed, not forfeited her rank in ſociety; but I fear it is becauſe no gay rake of faſhion thinks her faded form worth the trouble of ſeduction. Her mind once vitiated, the perſon is of little conſequence."

"So, then, you really think me handſomer than Cecilia?" cried Emily, with a malignant ſmile. "Who would have expected a compliment from you?"

"Liſten to me, madam. You have next betrayed the confidence of a huſband who adored you: have falſified all the promiſes, the ſolemn promiſes of fidelity you pledged at the altar: broken your marriage-vow!"

"And a very foolish, silly vow it was," said she; "and rash vows ought not to be binding. How much better all that stuff is managed in France! Who cares about marriage, or any thing else, contrary to their inclinations, in that happy, enlightened country? But I suppose you are come to preach about *love*, *honor*, and *obey*. I always knew you to be a great stickler for *religion!*"

The last word was uttered with a sneer, followed by a malicious laugh, by which she displayed her ivory teeth.

"I confess the charge, madam," said Forester. "I *am* the advocate of religion: of a religion that scepticism cannot undermine, or bigotry contract. In regard to the enlightened country you mention, I cannot think that its wild theories are at all calculated to render mankind wiser or better. But do not attempt to lead me from my subject. Your vows once broken, you had not the poor plea of yielding in a weak moment. Your scheme was deep laid; and *who* was the object? *You seduced* a young

young man from the duty he owed his friends, his father, and himself: a young man, who, but for *you*, had been an ornament to his country, and a bleſſing to all around him."

"I cannot ſee any peculiar hardſhip in his caſe," cried Emily. "He is miſerable, truly, in poſſeſſing the affections of a woman for whom half the town was running mad. There is not a man of his age, who would not think himſelf but too happy to be ſo diſtinguiſhed."

Here ſhe diſplayed her hands, pretending to look for the ball of cotton.

"Whether ſuch a diſtinction," cried Foreſter, warmly, "be not the height of infamy, I ſhall not at preſent inſiſt. But hear me to the end. I ſhall not long trouble you."

"Oh, very willingly! I was low-ſpirited when you came in, and you quite divert me."

"Think," ſaid Foreſter, "of Apſley's feelings, when the dream of paſſion ſhall

ceaſe! Think of the reproaches to which he will ſubject you! Think of the miſery of his father; a father who dotes on him; who has fixed his hope in his ſon's integrity; and who is now curſing the hour of his birth, in the bitterneſs of anguiſh! Oh, Emily!—Mrs. Meredith! think of his father, and releaſe him from his thraldom."

Emily ſmiled. "Really you are an excellent painter," ſaid ſhe.

"Have you no compaſſion? no ſenſe of honor? Is your mind become quite callous, becauſe you have proſtituted your perſon?"

"This is rather too much, good ſir," cried Emily, riſing to ring the bell. "A little acrimony is vivifying, but I nauſeate an exceſs."

Foreſter ſeized her hand, and ſeating her on the ſofa, exclaimed, "You then perſiſt in your connexion with my friend?"

"I do." And ſhe ſtruggled violently to diſengage herſelf.

"Have you no pity for others?"

"He is to be *envied*, not *pitied*."

"If, then, you are firmly fixed, tremble for yourſelf. Do you know theſe ear-rings?" With theſe words he produced the ſhagreen caſe. All confidence now abandoned the beauteous criminal: the color forſook her lips; ſhe heaved a deep ſigh; looked round the room with unutterable anguiſh, and fainted on the ſofa. Foreſter ſprinkled her face and neck with water, which luckily ſtood on the table: he contemplated her beautiful inanimate form; and while he could not but pity her wretched ſituation, he mentally exclaimed, "*To this does vice reduce her votaries!*" At length, animation returned, and Emily, looking around wildly, threw herſelf at the feet of her monitor, and ſhrieked, in the bitter accents of miſery, "Spare me! ſpare me! Take pity on a wretch who little deſerves it."

"Where was your pity for others?" ſternly demanded Foreſter. "No, vile woman! it is now my turn to tyrannize. You ſhall expiate this crime by public expoſure.

poſure. Our laws ſuffer not the meaneſt ſubject to be defamed. To the deciſion of thoſe laws I leave you. What! you could, unmoved, behold the tears of a father; could retain a deſerving youth in the chains of infamy; could brave the opinion of the world, by breaking your plighted faith; and can you not bear the additional ſhame of having reduced an innocent woman to miſery?"

He then pretended to leave the room; but flying towards him, ſhe ſeized the ſkirt of his coat, and again falling on her knees, franticly implored his clemency. "I can bear any opprobrium," exclaimed ſhe, "attendant on my elopement. Some may pity me; but oh, for Heaven's ſake, do not cover me with univerſal execration. I feel—I feel that I cannot ſurvive this ſhock."

"You *can* feel, then!" ſaid Foreſter, in a taunting voice, while his heart was burſting with pity. "You *can* feel! Wretched woman, it is too late! You, who had no mercy on others, can and ought not to expect any for yourſelf."

Yet,

"Yet, hear me, Reginald. I beg, I entreat you to hear me. You ſaid you would point out a way by which I might repair the wrongs I have committed. Tell me, inſtantly tell me which way, that I may prove the extent of my repentance."

"The conditions I have to propoſe are harſh and grating; ill ſuited to one of your turn of mind; nor ſhall I repeat them. Why repeat what would meet with rejection? Your crimes be on your head!"

"I will, I will accept them: any, any conditions—were they ever ſo repugnant to my feelings, I will implicitly ſubſcribe to them! Will you not hear? Oh, Heaven, take pity on me!"

She caſt herſelf, wildly, on the floor. Foreſter could hold no longer. He raiſed her from her abject poſture, and caſting his eyes upon her figure, which he had not yet truſted himſelf to do, he was ſhocked at the horror of her appearance. Her eyes were red, and ſwoln with weeping; her muſlin robe was

rent

rent in ſeveral places; the feathers that adorned her head, were broken, and fallen on her ſhoulders; and the ſilver band that connected her hair, hung looſely at her back.

"Hear, then, my conditions," cried Foreſter; "hear them with patience. I fear you will yet reject them. Once rejected, they will never more be offered."

He then propoſed that ſhe ſhould ſign a paper, acquitting Mrs. Thomas of diſhoneſty; but that her ſhame might be concealed, it was to be reported that the earrings were miſlaid in a private drawer of her bureau. She was likewiſe to confeſs her crime to the woman ſhe had ſo much injured.

Emily liſtened in ſullen ſilence. "Have you any more conditions?" ſaid ſhe: "theſe are hard, but I ſubmit to them."

Foreſter proceeded to inform her, that as ſhe had, by her imprudence, forfeited all rank in ſociety, ſhe muſt be content to baniſh herſelf to ſome remote part of the

the kingdom, or enter as a boarder in a convent abroad. "In either caſe," ſaid he, "a ſmall proviſion will be made for you; and ſhould your future good conduct deſerve ſuch indulgence, you may yet enjoy a ſtate of affluence; for although his honor will never permit Colonel Meredith to receive you as his wife, he will not ſuffer you to be in want of any comfort he can beſtow."

"And theſe are your conditions?" ſaid ſhe, with a contemptuous ſmile. "I deſpiſe both them and you. But I will ſee if I cannot yet outwit you." So ſaying, ſhe haſtily ſeized the ear-rings, which lay upon the table, and at the ſame time ringing the bell with a violence that ſnapped the cord, ſhe ſhrieked aloud, "Save me! ſave me! help!"

Foreſter was thunderſtruck. He ran towards her, and ſeizing her in his arms, attempted to wrench from her the precious caſe containing the ear-rings. At the ſame moment, the miſtreſs of the houſe, alarmed by her cries, entered the room, followed by

two

two footmen, who immediately seizing Foreſter, confined his arms. "Away, ſir," cried Emily. "Never again let me ſee your face! Vile, unprincipled man! out of my ſight, and repent, if your heart be not callous, of your infamous conduct."

"What!" ſcreamed Mrs. Roſe (the miſtreſs of the houſe), "a lady inſulted, and a lodger of mine! What will the world come to? Call the watch: he ſhall be hanged as high as Haman!"

"Oh, no," cried Emily. "For Heaven's ſake, let him go, madam. I would not have this a public affair: my reputation would ſuffer, at all events. Pray let him go; I beg, I entreat you."

With much perſuaſion Mrs. Roſe was prevailed on to let Foreſter eſcape without puniſhment; when, as the ſturdy footmen were going to convey him down ſtairs, a girl, opening the door of another apartment, begged leave to ſay a few words. She then related the whole circumſtance of the tête-à-tête, and concluded by ſaying that Mrs. Meredith

Meredith was not the wife of the gentleman who lodged at the houſe. This was enough. Mrs. Roſe, enraged that a perſon of bad character ſhould defile her immaculate dwelling, ſoon changed the object of her abuſe, and loaded the abandoned Emily with every opprobrious term her unbridled rage could ſuggeſt. But that wretched woman was inſenſible of the torrent of violence ſo liberally beſtowed upon her: ſhe ſunk in a ſwoon from her chair, and in falling, the ſhagreen caſe, eſcaping from her pocket, rolled upon the floor. This Foreſter immediately ſecured, declaring it was the property of another, and deſired Mrs. Roſe to take it into her own poſſeſſion. She willingly undertook the charge; and in a ſhort time Emily recovered her ſenſes. Half unconſcious of what had paſſed, ſhe rolled her eyes, as if endeavouring to recollect: but when the idea of her expoſure flaſhed upon her brain, ſhe ſtarted from the floor, and fixing her hagard looks on Foreſter, ſhe exclaimed, in a voice half ſmothered by emotion,

emotion, "You triumph, and I am undone. I aſk no mercy: I expect none. Eternal curſes on you! Yet think not, although I am humbled, but that ſome means may be found to repay the miſeries I owe to your officious interference. You yet ſhall execrate the hour you firſt beheld me; not for the woes of others, but your own. I here vow, ſolemnly vow, never to let a day or hour paſs, wherein I will not plan or execute ſome harm to your repoſe. I warn you; deſpiſe not my threats; and when an unexpected ſtorm burſts on your head, think of me! For by all the pangs I feel, I ſwear to you eternal hatred."

She then flew to the other apartment, and locked the door. Foreſter liſtened. She muttered inarticulate curſes. Still had he liſtened; but the voice of Mrs. Roſe was too clamorous to allow any thing to be heard, but itſelf. The good woman expreſſed her uneaſineſs at ſuch a wicked creature remaining in her houſe; but declared, that the next morning out ſhe

ſhould

ſhould tramp, bag and baggage, though ſhe loſt her rent by it. "And indeed, ſir," ſaid ſhe to Foreſter, "by their behaviour, you would have ſuſpected nothing amiſs. The gentleman was rather *melancholiſh*, to be ſure; but then he always ſeemed ſo happy when he was in company with the bad woman, that I no more thought harm of them, than of the child unborn."

Foreſter now took leave, begging Mrs. Roſe to take particular care of the ſhagreen caſe; but ſhe ſaid, that as he knew the owner of it, it was juſt as ſafe in his own hands; and that, for her part, ſhe ſhould not give herſelf any farther trouble about a creature ſhe ſo thoroughly deſpiſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

What had I to do with play? THE GAMESTER.

AGITATED by the ſcene he had undergone, Foreſter felt himſelf unable to reviſit Colonel Meredith; he returned home, and found a note on his table: the hurried manner in which it was written prevented him from diſtinguiſhing the characters of Hartlebury.

"Rathbone Place.

"My dear Foreſter,

"COME to me immediately—never did I ſtand more in need of conſolation than now—yet it is not from you that I expect it: I only wiſh you to take warning, a ſad warning, from my miſtaken conduct. I leave London, and perhaps England; ſhould this letter not find you at home,

home, and I not ſee you, I beg you will accept the encloſed bills. Adieu. Receive my beſt wiſhes.

"J. H."

The bills were for five hundred pounds. Foreſter, alarmed, ſhowed the note without heſitation to Lord Arrowſworth, who would have accompanied him to Rathbone Place, had he not reflected that Hartlebury might probably be offended at the intruſion; he, however, promiſed to be in readineſs, ſhould his appearance be any ways neceſſary; and attended by a ſervant, Foreſter left the houſe. It was paſt nine o'clock, and when he reached Rathbone Place a poſt-chaiſe and four drove rapidly by him: not attending to this circumſtance, he walked haſtily to his friend's lodgings, where he was informed that Hartlebury had juſt driven from the door. Foreſter, who well knew, from the rapidity of the vehicle, that to overtake it would be an impoſſibility, begged to ſpeak to the miſtreſs of the houſe.

She

She ſoon made her appearance: he inquired what particular circumſtance had taken place relative to the ſudden departure of his friend. She replied, that ſhe knew nothing of Mr Hartlebury's concerns; that he ſeldom ſaw her but by accident: he generally kept late hours, but as he was a man of faſhion and fortune, gave little trouble, had his own ſervants, and made regular payments, ſhe put up with the inconvenience. "This morning, ſir," ſaid ſhe, "his footman had a letter for him, but before I ſent it up with the newſpaper, I felt that it was full of bank notes: at leaſt I thought ſo. Well, ſir, in a ſhort time the footman came tearing down ſtairs for dear life, calling for ſalts and hartſhorn, for his maſter was taken ill. I ran up, and there indeed ſat the poor gentleman on the ground as white as my cap. He told me he ſhould ſoon be better, and deſired his account to be inſtantly written out, for he believed he ſhould leave London to-morrow. He ordered his ſervant to pack up with all poſſible

ble ſpeed, while he went out to diſcharge ſome ſmall bills. The ſervant ſoon finiſhed packing, and about an hour ago Mr. Hartlebury came back: when he ſaw that all was ready, he declared it was not worth while to delay; ſent for a poſt-chaiſe and four, and turned away without ſpeaking, when I aſked if he had not better wait till morning. He took his ſervant into the chaiſe with him, and whiſpering the poſtillions, drove off not a minute before you came to the door."

"Do you think, madam," ſaid Foreſter, "that it was any pecuniary embarraſſment that cauſed my friend's ſudden departure?"

"No, ſir," replied ſhe, "I'll take my oath it was not; Mr. Hartlebury has lodged at my houſe, off and on, theſe fifteen years; beſides, the letter he received was full of money, and he has left fifty pounds in my hands for fear he may have forgotten any trifling bill."

"Strange! Did he not write a letter this

morning? I received one from him dated at this houſe."

"Perhaps, ſir, he may have written that at a coffee-houſe; he was too much flurried to write at firſt; I believe, if the fact were known, he is privately married."

The good woman put her finger to her noſe with a myſterious air. Foreſter, in ſpite of his chagrin, could not but ſmile at the idea of Hartlebury becoming a Benedick. "Did he leave no letter for me?" demanded he.

"Oh dear me!" cried the woman, "now I recollect (for I am quite ſpiſlicated, as it were), he did ſay ſomething about a letter on his table—Sarah, run up ſtairs quick, that's a good girl, and ſee if there is any thing there."

The girl obeyed, and her miſtreſs taking a paper from her on her return, looked at the addreſs, and ſaid, "If your name is Foreſter, ſir, this letter is for you."—He thanked her, and taking leave gave her his addreſs, begging her to give him early intelligence

when

when any tidings arrived of her lodger. When he reached Lord Arrowſworth's, Foreſter found that nobleman tête-à-tête with his lady, and entreated to open the letter in their preſence. This is Lordſhip oppoſed, as Lady Arrowſworth might be too much affected; her will, however, was a law; ſhe inſiſted upon being a witneſs; and Foreſter, with a trembling hand, broke the ſeal.

"Rathbone Place.

"My dear young Friend,

"I AM at this moment waiting for the chaiſe that will convey me far from the metropolis; yet I cannot leave it without imparting the reaſons of ſo precipitate a retreat. I owe the confeſſion to you, for I have loved you as a father, and I ſhould ill diſcharge my aſſumed duty, did I not warn you from the dangerous rock on which my peace of mind is wrecked. You remember the manner in which I uſed to beſtow the amount of my profits at the

gaming-table; you remember the praiſes you laviſhed on my conduct—I thought I deſerved them, but I was miſtaken. It is an incontrovertible truth, that no end will juſtify unworthy means—Do you doubt my aſſertion? Liſten to me, and tremble at your ſcepticiſm.

"A few days ago I attended a ſelect party at Lord Elving's—a party met for the purpoſes of play: bets ran high, and a young man of the name of Baynton was a conſiderable loſer; I found that he had lately ſucceeded to a large eſtate; I won of him five hundred pounds by the turn of a card, and he was a conſiderable loſer to others. I knew debts of honor to be ſacred, and pleaſed myſelf with the idea of liberating ſome honeſt debtor from the horrors of a priſon, and expending the money ſquandered at a gaming-table in uſes foreign to the intention of the loſers. This morning the bills were ſent me, with a note dated the day before, apologizing for the delay. I had ſcarce read it, when my eye glancing

glancing upon a newſpaper, I found that the unfortunate youth whoſe money I had won had yeſterday put a period to his exiſtence, owing, as it was ſurmiſed, to immenſe loſſes at play.

"I was almoſt overpowered by the acuteneſs of my feelings; my ſervant was fortunately in the room, and I ſoon recovered my preſence of mind: I at once ſaw my folly, and not only ſaw, but reſolved to repair it. Let the faſhionable world ſay what it will, I feel that I am acceſſary to the death of the unfortunate Baynton. Good heavens! may I not have reduced as many to deſpair as I have reſcued from it? I allow, ſome profligates ought to ſuffer, but am *I* to inflict the puniſhment? From this moment I reſolve to abandon a vice I always deſpiſed; I will never more touch card or die, but will diveſt myſelf of ſuperfluities, that I may purſue the feelings of my heart in a manner the moſt rigid moraliſt may approve. Foreſter, I know you deteſt play; but beware, take a caution

from the example of your neareſt friends; a weak moment may lead you into errors which the repentance of an age will ſcarcely obliterate; remember that gaming is the germ of vice, and if once implanted will ſtrike ſo deep, that reaſon and philoſophy will be incompetent wholly to eradicate its baneful effects. Heaven preſerve you from the ſhock that has cured me of my folly, by tearing my boſom with remorſe. I ſent you this morning the amount of my winnings—diſpoſe of it as you pleaſe—it is literally the price of blood; I know you will appropriate no part of it to your own uſe, though I could wiſh it; I muſt, therefore, beg you to be my almoner. Adieu, my dear Foreſter; pity, and continue, if poſſible, to think well of,

"Your devoted friend,

"JAMES HARTLEBURY."

Lady Arrowſworth wept while Foreſter read the letter; but his Lordſhip, vexed at the emotion ſhe betrayed, which he deemed

deemed prejudicial to her health, openly declared his disapprobation of the writer. "I always," said he, "thought Hartlebury a man of principle; I knew he gamed to a small degree, but never that he made it a practice."

"I still think him," replied Forester warmly, "and ever shall think him a man of the most unshaken integrity: his principles spring from the heart, and are not dependent on that false philosophy which is learned by rote, and detailed with a disgusting pedantry: if he finds himself betrayed into the maze of error, he instantly and carefully retraces his steps—he is liable to mistake, but amendment follows conviction."

"If," said Lord Arrowsworth, "a man's principles are not fixed at fifty, I fear it is too late to hope amendment."

"The principles of Mr. Hartlebury, my Lord, have never varied, though the means by which he reduces them to practice may—benevolence is his characteristic,

and he has only to reproach himself that this ſentiment has carried him rather too far."

"Too far, indeed," ſaid his Lordſhip; "but why had he not ſufficient ſtrength of mind to diſcover the turpitude of gaming before? It has been, by his own confeſſion, a practice of many years."

"Becauſe ſo dreadful an example as related in his letter never before occurred to his knowledge, at leaſt did not appeal ſo forcibly to his feelings."

Foreſter, in his defence of Hartlebury, almoſt forgot the deference which he had been uſed to pay to the opinion of Lord Arrowſworth, who ſeemed rather hurt at what he termed a vindication of weakneſs. This deference, however, was not ſuch as is exacted by the proud, and paid by the mean —it was the deference of genuine reſpect and eſteem. He therefore did all in his power to exculpate Hartlebury, and ſucceeded ſo well, that Lord Arrowſworth conſented to

acknow-

acknowledge his many virtues, and forgive his error in favor of the motive.

When Foreſter retired to his apartment, he ſat down to meditate on the letter of his friend; never had his ideas been ſo truly perplexing; he remembered, that not a long time before his heart had warmly applauded the conduct he now was obliged to condemn; and he was aſtoniſhed that the conviction of its error had not ſtruck him in the firſt inſtance. Vice and virtue may appear ſo cloſely connected, that, unleſs great care be taken to draw the line, the deformity of the one may be totally veiled by the luſtre of the other; it is not ſufficient that a motive be good; the means to which it gives birth, muſt likewiſe be unexceptionable: who, to ſerve an oppreſſed individual, ought to commit an act of atrocity by which many may be ſufferers? Hartlebury had ſaid truly, he was the deſtroyer of the unfortunate Baynton. It is true, it was an act of free-will on the part of the young man; but did any friendly Mentor

warn him from the ſnare? If, inſtead of contributing to his loſſes, Hartlebury had kindly pointed out the danger—if, inſtead of winning for the ſake of others, he had preſerved a fellow-creature equally deſerving his compaſſion, then had he ſhown himſelf the friend of humanity and the champion of benevolence. But the ſoothing idea of relieving diſtreſs blinded Hartlebury to the miſery he often cauſed; and not properly diſcriminating between the gameſter by profeſſion and the gameſter by deluſion, he thought them but one claſs, and turned their follies to the advantage of others. Though late, he was convinced of the impropriety of his conduct, and with a reſolution that did honor to his feelings abjured his error; ſatisfied that no motive whatſoever can exculpate the gameſter, who is either a prey to miſery himſelf, or the cauſe of it in another.

The next morning Foreſter waited upon Meredith; he was admitted to his chamber, where he found him at breakfaſt in bed.

—"Well, what news?" cried he, "from my dear better half—will ſhe quietly pack off?—Faith, I am glad I have got rid of her—two months matrimony is enough for any reaſonable man."

Foreſter was hurt at his levity, yet glad to ſee him calm. Inſtead of giving a direct anſwer, he inquired after his health, fearing, by his unuſual mode of breakfaſting, that indiſpoſition was the cauſe.—Meredith replied, that it was mere lazineſs. "I have of late," ſaid he, "kept it up pretty decently; if I were to have a ſleepleſs night I ſhould be ready to hang myſelf the next day, for my reflections are not of the moſt agreeable caſt: I take, however, the beſt method to prevent it, as I ſeldom now go to bed till the ſober mechanic opens his ſhop."

"And how do you paſs the night?"

"Why, faith, I can hardly tell you; wine, however, makes it glide away imperceptibly; and provided I can but eſcape melancholy, I care not what means I employ."

"I thought you mentioned a warbling favorite," said Foreſter. "Of two evils I would prefer the leſs, and ſurely the converſation of any woman is preferable to drunken debauch."

"As for my wife's ſucceſſor," replied Meredith, "ſhe muſt ſeek an opportunity of breaking with her preſent protector; he has certainly behaved generouſly towards her, but I have two thouſand a year more than he."

"And do you not imagine, that ſome have the ſame advantage over you?"

"Certainly; and I ſuppoſe if a better ſituation offer ſhe will play me the ſame trick ſhe is now playing Lord Alſmere."

"And you would not feel more on the occaſion than you now expreſs?"

"Why, I don't know. Men of faſhion are more vexed at the infidelity of a miſtreſs than a wife; the one is a debt of honor—the other a bill to a tradeſman—we pay the moſt ſcrupulous attention to the former, though we know that more real

duty

duty is attached to the latter. But I think I ſhould e'en let it paſs, and if my miſtreſs ſought another protector, I would ſeek another miſtreſs."

"Meredith," ſaid Foreſter gravely, "I hitherto thought you a man of feeling—a man of principle."

"And pray, my grave cenſor," cried Meredith, half angry, "what now makes you think me otherwiſe?—But let us diſmiſs the ſubject—better talk of diſagreeable matters, than quarrel about trifles. Have you ſeen my wife?"

"I have."

"What is her determination? Will ſhe be ſupported by me, or will ſhe purſue her career of folly?"

"She ſeems in the high road to ruin; I fear ſhe will attempt to injure you, me, and all who know her: her preſent paramour will be the next victim."

"May you prove a prophet!" exclaimed Meredith; "and in that caſe, let the ſky rain

rain plagues upon me if I would not take him by the hand."

He then begged Foreſter to relate the particulars of the interview—was half ſuffocated with laughter when he heard of her art to gain the caſe of jewels; but at length more ſeriouſly declared, that, were ſhe to plead her own cauſe, ſhe ſhould find him adamant, and that his heart abandoned its laſt lingering love for her. Notwithſtanding this profeſſion of indifference, it was eaſy to perceive that Meredith had ſomething in his mind that he did not chooſe to avow even to himſelf.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Does not the hand of Righteouſneſs afflict thee?
And who ſhall plead againſt it? Who ſhall ſay
To Pow'r Almighty, Thou haſt done enough?

ROWE.

THE feelings of Foreſter upon his return to St. James's Square were ſuch as to unfit him for company; and as a large party were expected to dine with Lord Arrowſworth, he complained of a head-ach, and requeſted to take his repaſt alone. Lady Arrowſworth, who was greatly attached to Foreſter, rallied him ſharply upon his melancholy; ſhe aſſured him, that if he were pining for any diſdainful beauty, ſhe would become his advocate, and paint the irreſiſtible charms of his lengthened viſage in ſuch natural colors, as to melt even the hardeſt heart.

Foreſter, ſmiling, ſaid, that he could not wiſh for a fairer advocate, were he in want

of

of any aſſiſtance of that nature; but perſiſted with truth in declaring that he was unfit for company.—Lady Arrowſworth then left him, with the aſſurance, that although ſhe excuſed his appearance at dinner, ſhe muſt inſiſt upon his making one at her caſino party in the evening. When alone, Foreſter revolved in his mind what method he had beſt purſue in regard to the Apſleys. Should he himſelf ſee Cuthbert, or ſhould he acquaint his father with his retreat? If he purſued the former plan, he might lay himſelf open to the malice of Emily, who would doubtleſs do her utmoſt to incenſe her deluded lover againſt him: if the latter, Mr. Apſley's health, weakened by misfortune, might ſink under the ſhock. After deliberating ſome time, he reſolved to expoſe himſelf to any ſcene, however trying, rather than ſuffer a worthy man to become the victim of his feelings. He ſnatched an early and haſty dinner, and ſending a ſervant to acquaint Lady Arrowſworth that he would do himſelf the

honor

honor of attending her in the evening, went in ſearch of his deluded friend. He ſoon reached Dover Street; a maid ſervant opened the door; he inquired for Mr. Apſley, and was informed that he had left the houſe, and that the lady had gone away a few hours before him. While this diſcourſe was carrying on in the paſſage, Mrs. Roſe, putting her head out of the parlour-door, begged him to walk in, for ſhe had a great many things to tell him. He obeyed; and no ſooner was he ſeated, than her tongue, impatient of reſtraint, took a free courſe.

"Ah, ſir!" ſaid ſhe, "fine doings ſince yeſterday! Poor young gentleman! I declare my heart bleeds for him: but then what could he expect when he followed ſuch wicked courſes? He came home at twelve o'clock laſt night, and you may be ſure I rated him ſoundly for having brought his kept madams here—there never was any houſe more reſpectable than mine—but he ſwore bitterly ſhe was his wife. I told him

that

that was neither here nor there; but that folks who tell one falfity will tell fifty to fupport it. I did not fpare him, I aſſure you. He bounced and flounced as if he would pull my cap off, and ſwore again, that nobody ſhould ſeduce—I mean traduce the lady. Up ſtairs he went, and I ſoon heard them engaged in a violent diſpute. I crept to the door, but heard nothing more than a word or two. Mr. Apſley once ſaid, in a loud voice, 'No! never can I lift my hand againſt him:' and I heard her twice or thrice call him ſpiritleſs coward, and a number of hard names beſides. I was afraid of being diſcovered, and ſo left my poſt. This morning, at eight o'clock, Mr. Apſley came down ſtairs, and informed me that he was going to ſeek lodgings elſewhere. He had not been gone long before madam rang the bell, paid my bill, and ordered a hackney coach: her trunks were placed in it, and ſhe told my girl ſhe was going to her new lodgings. I could not imagine how ſhe ſhould know where they were;

were; but I was glad enough to get rid of her. Off she set, and about an hour ago, the young gentleman returned. He looked very much fatigued, and although I was very angry with him (as well I might), I civilly desired him to walk into the parlour. He asked me the amount of my bill; but when I informed him it was paid, and the lady gone,—oh gemini! had you but seen his face!—all his fine rosy color faded, and I thought he would have dropped on the floor; but when I said she had taken all the baggage, he cried out, 'She has then robbed me, but I deserve it; and yet Emily to leave me nothing! it is hard! too hard! but I shall soon find a remedy.'—Then snatching up his hat, he flew off like a cannon shot."

"Good heavens," exclaimed Forester, in an agony, "he surely meditates suicide; perhaps it may not yet be too late to save him."

He hastily rose, but how to trace the wanderer? He in a moment was convinced

ced that all perquiſition muſt be fruitleſs. He again addreſſed Mrs. Roſe, and begged to know the number of the coach in which Emily had left the houſe. She had forgotten; the maid was called: ſhe confeſſed that ſhe never had learned to read. Deſpairing of tracing the ſteps of the fugitive, Foreſter was compelled to leave the houſe; and after paſſing a tormenting evening, with a tireſome faſhionable party, he retired to his room. But his reſt was broken; his dreams preſented images of horror; he beheld his friend the ſelf-immolated victim to the arts of a wretch diſgracing the name of woman. Glad was he when the morning dawned; he ſtarted from his uneaſy pillow, and after reading a part of the Deſerted Village, and taking an uncomfortable breakfaſt, he proceeded to Swallow Street, where Mr. Apſley and his family were in lodgings.

This unhappy father was a martyr to the gout; his feet were wrapt in flannel, and he was ſupported in his chair by pillows.

Miſs

Miſs M'Alliſter and her maid were working a ſmall carpet; and Sinclair was reading the newſpaper. The whole family received Foreſter with cordiality; and Mr. Apſley anxiouſly inquired if he had heard any news of Cuthbert. "Should the account be contrary to my hopes," ſaid he, "I beg you not to keep it from me; every torment is leſs afflictive than uncertainty."

"Do not afflict yourſelf, brother-in-law," ſaid Miſs M'Alliſter, "about a youth who has diſgraced his family. He was named after my relation, Sir Hildebrand Cuthbert, Baronet; that worthy man would bluſh in his grave, could he know the profligacy of his god-ſon."

"For Heaven's ſake, madam," ſaid Mr. Apſley, "have compaſſion on him and me."

"No," exclaimed Miſs M'Alliſter, in a pompous tone, "though the ſky fall—let juſtice be done!"

"I fear, madam," ſaid Foreſter, "my unfortunate friend has received the puniſh-

ment

ment of his folly from the very perſon who ſeduced him to error."

He then related the facts, ſoftening, as much as poſſible, the concluſion. Mr. Apſley ſeemed not to have an idea that his ſon had committed ſuicide; and ſoon after, the converſation becoming more general, Sinclair was deſired by his aunt to finiſh reading the newſpaper. He took it up, and read ſome of the advertiſements, by which quacks boaſt of a patent to deſtroy the health of the dupes who reſort to them. Theſe he read in a manner ſo peculiarly humorous, that Foreſter was with difficulty enabled to retain his gravity; and even Mr. Apſley's features relaxed into a ſmile. Not ſo Miſs M'Alliſter—ſhe ſat liſtening with eager attention, often approving, but oftener condemning. She was in the midſt of a diſſertation on the properties of muſtard-ſeed, when Sinclair, uttering a loud ſcream, exclaimed, "Oh God!" and put his hand to his head.—Foreſter ſprung towards him, and inquired what was the matter.

ter.—"I have ſomething in my eye," ſaid Sinclair; and darted out of the room, beckoning Foreſter to follow. He ran up to his bedchamber, and when his purſuer had entered the room, he double-locked the door.—Foreſter again eagerly inquired what was the occaſion of his alarm.—"Read! read!" ſaid Sinclair, in a voice half extinct by emotion.

With a trembling hand Foreſter unfolded the paper; but horror ſuperſeded every other ſenſation, when he read the following paragraph:

"Yeſterday afternoon, as a man and woman were paſſing the bridge in Hyde Park, they diſcovered a gentleman floating on the water; they inſtantly went for proper aſſiſtance, and the body being carried to the —— inn, every method was taken, but ineffectually, to reſtore animation. The gentleman was dreſt in a blue coat, white waiſtcoat, white leathern pantaloons, and half-boots; his hair was of a light color, and tied in a queue. He had no money about him,

him, but a handſome gold watch and ſeal were found in his fob. He now lies at the —— inn to be owned. The coroner's inqueſt has not yet brought in a verdict."

The agony of Foreſter was ſuch as to preclude articulation. He gazed at Sinclair with a look of vacancy; tears ſlowly flowed down his cheek, and had not Nature found that relief, the conſequence of his feelings had been probably fatal. He was arouſed from his torpor by the voice of Miſs M'Alliſter, who begged them to open the door, as ſhe had procured ſome excellent eye-water.

Sinclair aſſured her there was no need of any; he begged her to walk down ſtairs, and ſaid that he would follow her in a minute. He then, with more than common earneſtneſs, requeſted Foreſter to deſcend, and aſſume, if poſſible, a cheerful countenance; they would then proceed to the inn in order to give proper directions for the interment of the unfortunate Cuthbert.

Foreſter,

Foreſter, with a ſlow ſtep and heavy heart, entered the parlour; Sinclair ſilently followed him: their altered countenances ſtruck the inquiring eye of Mr. Apſley.

He ſtarted; and in a hurried voice ſaid, "Tell me what has happened; is my Cuthbert dead?"

"Oh, my poor father!" exclaimed Sinclair; and burſt into tears.

"God's will be done," ſaid Mr. Apſley, bowing his head.

The grief of Miſs M'Alliſter and her maid was more clamorous: the former, in lamenting his death, forgot his miſconduct; and would with joy have received him into favor, now her favor could no longer benefit.

"Alas!" ſaid ſhe, ſobbing, "he was the beſt of youths; and I loved him moſt ſincerely. We muſt ſay nothing but good of the dead; and I am ſure he has not left his equal in the kingdom. His couſin, Sir Gilbert Potheringham, would have left him his immenſe property, but I am well

convinced that poor dear Cuthbert loved virtue better than money; and it is ſome comfort to think he is in a better place."

Foreſter was buſied in attending on Mr. Apſley. He earneſtly requeſted him to take comfort; and, for the ſake of his own health, to avoid an immoderate indulgence of grief.

Mr. Apſley looked up. "Yes, ſir," ſaid he, "I will follow your counſel; I am not the only father who has to curſe the allurements of gaming, or the arts of women! Reſt in peace, my Cuthbert; I reproach not thee—but myſelf. I ought to have guarded thee againſt the ſnare; but to render thy mind philanthropic, I painted the world in flattering colors. Oh, fatal error!—but go, ſir, if I may aſk it, and claim the body of my wretched boy; let it be tranſported to Apſley Houſe. I feel that I cannot bear to contemplate the wreck of my hopes."

Foreſter, charmed at his compoſure, readily

dily acquieſced; and Sinclair urged the neceſſity of his attendance.

Decency, he ſaid, required that he ſhould pay the laſt duties to his brother. After a few denials he gained his point, and both went in a hackney coach to the —— inn.

A crowd of people were near the door, but gueſſing at the buſineſs of the new-comers, they made a lane to let them paſs.

"That muſt be a relation," ſaid one; "ſee how his eyes are ſwelled with crying."

"Aye, aye," ſaid another, "it's a bitter bad job when folks make away with themſelves."

Foreſter dragged Sinclair along; he demanded to ſee the body. A maid ſervant, trembling, led the way with a candle to a dark cellar, and after paſſing through two ſmall vaults where faggots were kept for firing, ſhe opened a door, where the corpſe lay extended upon the table. Setting down the light, ſhe begged to be excuſed from going into the place with them. Foreſter,

willing to ſpare her the ſcene, begged her to be gone; and ſhe needed no ſecond entreaty. The vault was cold and comfortleſs, the bricks were green with damps, and Sinclair felt his heart appalled by viſionary terrors. The feeble glimmer of the ſingle ruſhlight was juſt ſufficient to make the darkneſs viſible; and as the gleam fell upon the ſheet with which the corpſe was covered, he almoſt fancied he ſaw it move. His trembling knees no longer could ſuſtain the weight of his body, and he would have ſunk on the ground, had he not leaned againſt Foreſter. He felt aſhamed of his weakneſs, and endeavoured to ſhake it off; but his endeavours were vain. He quitted the ſupport of his friend, and fell with a groan to the earth.

"Oh, Emily," exclaimed Foreſter; "vile woman! behold thy work! one brother lies a victim to thy arts, the other bewails his loſs in the bitterneſs of affliction; a father is bending under the weight of miſery, of which thou art the cauſe; a friend laments

the

the blight of thy victim's opening virtues: and ſhall not retribution take place? Yes, vile, unprincipled wretch, it will, it muſt, it ſhall!"

He raiſed Sinclair from the floor: his pallid countenance ſufficiently teſtified his ſufferings; but when Foreſter advanced his hand to remove the ſheet, he, by an effort of reſolution, ſnatched the light, and begged that that office might be his. Foreſter ſubmitted: Sinclair, with a quivering lip, advanced, and drew the covering from the face of the corpſe. He gazed at it earneſtly; at length, with a loud ſhriek, he cried, "Oh, Foreſter!—it is—it is—oh heavens! it is—not my brother!"—Foreſter quickly advanced, and found that his companion was not deceived: he claſped his hands in tranſport: the youth who lay before them was not Cuthbert. Both immediately quitted the vault. Sinclair, mad with joy, changed five guineas at the bar, and flinging the ſilver among the crowd, "There, you dogs," cried he, "drink,

drink, and be as happy as I am, if you are able. If a ſingle one of you be ſober by this time two hours, I wiſh he may get beaten by his wife, or ſtabb'd by a raſcally bailiff."

As the coach drove back to Swallow Street, Foreſter pointed out the neceſſity of caution in regard to Mr. Apſley, who, firmly perſuaded of his ſon's death, was reſigned; but though he was competent to encounter ſorrow, he might not with ſimilar equanimity bear the ruſh of joy. It was agreed that Foreſter ſhould break the matter to him by degrees. The coach ſtopped.—Miſs M'Alliſter and Kitty were ſtanding at the window: the altered countenance of the gentlemen was ſufficient to prove their fears groundleſs. Sinclair ſmiled at his aunt, who immediately ran from her poſt. Foreſter blamed him for precipitation; but his companion ſwore he could as ſoon fly without wings as look grave. When they entered the parlour, they found Mr. Apſley had ſunk on his knees, for which

his

his ſiſter-in-law was reproaching him, and demonſtrating that nothing was worſe for the gout than exertion.

Mr. Apſley, riſing with difficulty, thanked Foreſter for the trouble he had taken on his account.

"I know not, ſir," ſaid he, "how to expreſs the gratitude and admiration I feel! That a young man of the preſent day ſhould place his chief delight in acts of philanthropy, is to me ſurpriſing—at leaſt it is ſo now. I once flattered myſelf that Cuthbert poſſeſſed a feeling heart—the ſoothing dream is at an end: and yet, though deceived in him, let me not wrong the world—there may be—there are minds exalted as your own—though I confeſs they have not come within the reach of my obſervation."

"I hope, father," ſaid Sinclair (who felt rather hurt at this ſpeech), "that you except the company preſent."

"I meant not to hurt you, Sinclair," replied the father: "yes, my boy, you

poſſeſs an excellent heart; I glory in it. Forgive the querulous tone, prompted by misfortune. Your good conduct ſhall repay me for the dereliction of your brother."

"Upon the article of good conduct," replied Sinclair, "I fear I had better be ſilent: as to my brother, we will find him out, and you ſhall confeſs, ſir, that a ſingle temporary folly will not obliterate his many virtues."

"I admire your brotherly love," ſaid Mr. Apſley; "Cuthbert indeed had many excellent qualities."

"He has been ſeduced by paſſion," ſaid Foreſter; "but reaſon will ſoon reſume her empire."

"Though he ſeldom hunted," cried Sinclair, "I never knew a better horſeman; he ſat as tight as a part of the ſaddle!"

"Indeed," obſerved Miſs M'Alliſter, "the miſguided youth had an excellent notion of painting; and in my botanical folio,

folio, the Flos Adonis and the Strelitzia Regina are happy ſpecimens of his talents."

The converſation, which began but little in favor of Cuthbert, ended highly the reverſe. Foreſter promiſed to exert all his powers to diſcover his retreat, and left Mr. Apſley more calm than he had been for ſome time. Upon his arrival at Lord Arrowſworth's, not finding any of the family at home, Foreſter retired to his chamber, ruminating upon the ſcene he had juſt quitted, and lamenting the deluſion which had ſo fatally clouded the mental energies of Cuthbert; but when he reflected on the irreſiſtible incentives preſented by pleaſure to faſcinate the inexperienced, he could not but conſider him more as an object of pity than condemnation. This train of ideas ſuggeſted to him the following lines, wherein he endeavoured to diſplay the fallacious arguments which ſophiſtry too often makes uſe of to lure the unwary from the paths of virtue.

FAVOR'D mortals, blooming youth,
Liften to the voice of truth!
Spurn the ſolemn ſage's theme—
Life itſelf is but a dream.
Now, while youth and health are ours,
Let us cull life's choiceſt flowers;
Sip their ſweets, and, while 'tis May,
Bear the honey'd prize away.
What are wiſdom, pomp, and pow'r?—
Phantoms of the fleeting hour.
What is glory but a ray,
Dazzling only to betray?
Throng'd with danger is the road
Leading to her ſteep abode;
And when ſpent with toil and pain,
Haply you the ſummit gain,
Calumny, foul fiend of ſpite,
Hurls you headlong from the height.
Mortals, then no longer ſtray
Through life's rough and thorny way,
But in pleaſure's halcyon bow'rs
Wear away the laughing hours.
Beauty there maintains her court;
There the Loves and Graces ſport—
Ever ready to beſtow
Joys which only youth can know.
Winter never chills the plain—
Milder ſeaſons ſolely reign—
Smiling Spring, with roſes crown'd,
Scatters fragrant odors round;

Summer ſpreads her fruitful ſtore,
Brought from many a diſtant ſhore;
And, to fire the raptur'd ſoul,
Autumn fills the golden bowl.—
Now, in notes of ſofteſt ſound,
Swell melodious airs around;
Now enchanting nymphs advance,
Mingling in the mazy dance:
Where they bend their eaſy way,
Sportive Cupids round them play;
And with wanton ſmiles invite
To the bow'rs of ſoft delight,
Where, on roſy beds reclin'd,
Lull'd to reſt, the vacant mind,
Free from worldly care and woes,
Sinks ſupinely to repoſe.—
Mortals, then no longer ſtray
Through life's rough and thorny way,
But in pleaſure's bliſsful bow'rs
Paſs in endleſs joy your hours.

CHAP. IX.

And yet this tough impracticable heart
Is govern'd by a dainty-finger'd girl:
Such flaws are found in the moſt worthy natures!
A toying, whining, wheedling, whimp'ring ſhe,
Will make him amble on a goſſip's meſſage,
And take the diſtaff with a hand as patient
As e'er did Hercules. ROWE.

THE next morning, at breakfaſt, a note was put into the hands of Foreſter: he haſtily opened it.

"YOU are a villain—a mean hypocritical villain—who, under the maſk of friendſhip, have played upon my credulity. If you are not a poltroon alſo, meet me to-morrow morning at ſeven o'clock, by the ſecond mile-ſtone on the Hampſtead road, from which place we will adjourn to a field, whence one of us

muſt

muſt never more return. I ſhall bring my piſtols with me.

"PHILIP MEREDITH.

"Bond Street,
"Tueſday morn."

Foreſter plainly perceived the cauſe of Meredith's outrageous epiſtle. He beheld a gulf unexpectedly opening at his feet, and curſed the hour he had ever undertaken the part of a mediator. The words villain and poltroon for a moment robbed him of reflection, and he panted to exterminate the man who had dared to brand his fair fame with diſhonor; but cooler ideas ſoon took place of rage: he well knew the arts of Emily; ſhe had vowed the deſtruction of his repoſe, and he doubted not but that ſhe had told too ſpecious a tale to be detected without infinite care. He feared his temper poſſeſſed not ſufficient forbearance to diſarm reproach by reaſon; yet he was reſolved not to lift his hand againſt Meredith, till ſelf-defence might

might authorize the meaſure. Prudence ſuggeſted to him the neceſſity of conceal-ing the menacing billet from his patron.—Hartlebury had informed him of his Lord-ſhip's rigid notions in regard to affairs (falſely termed) of honor: in his opinion, nothing but blood would be competent to waſh the ſtain away. How much did Fo-reſter wiſh for the preſence of Hartlebury! in him alone he could confide the deareſt ſecrets of his heart; in him he could find a friend, and a man of the world—cha-racters ſeldom found united in one per-ſon. He determined, at length, to meet Meredith on the morrow, but to go un-armed; by this, he would manifeſt his own innocence, and ſhow a confidence in his challenger. Satisfied with this arrange-ment, he met Lord and Lady Arrowſ-worth at table with a ſmiling countenance, and informed them that he had planned a little excurſion with Colonel Meredith on the morrow. Her Ladyſhip wiſhed him an agreeable ride, and the converſation

became

became general. But another ſurpriſe awaited Foreſter. Dinner was ſcarce over, when a ſervant informed him that a gentleman, upon particular buſineſs, wiſhed to ſpeak to him in the drawing-room.—He concluded him to be Meredith, and haſtily obeyed the ſummons. To his utter ſurpriſe, he beheld a ſtranger in the habit of a clergyman. He ſlightly bowed.

"You are Mr. Foreſter, I preſume," ſaid the gentleman.

"I am, ſir. Have you any particular buſineſs with me?"

"I have, ſir. I wait upon you at the requeſt of a penitent ſinner, whoſe mortal career is ended. May her ſoul reſt in peace!"

He devoutly croſſed himſelf.

"How, ſir! Is Mrs. Meredith no more?"

"No, ſir; I ſpeak of Mrs. Ann Phillips, who, finding herſelf on the point of death, made an ample confeſſion of many enor-

enormities; ſome of which relate to you. As my duty obliges me to receive the confeſſions of the penitent, ſo does it oblige me to exhort them to repair the evil they have done; without which, though of the Romiſh perſuaſion, I conceive confeſſion to be of little avail. She, therefore, before her death, ſigned this paper, as bound in juſtice; and for this act, may her ſoul find mercy above."

He put a folded paper into Foreſter's hands: it was to the following purport:

"*The Confeſſion of* ANN PHILLIPS.

"I HAVE been guilty of many crimes, but hope this confeſſion, and my ſincere penitence, may, in ſome degree, atone for them. I have much injured Lady Winterfield, Mr. Foreſter, and one of my fellow-ſervants. I have ſinned greatly; but theſe deeds lie heavieſt on my heart. One morning, Mrs. Meredith, then Miſs Emily Burgeſs, called me into her room. (I was the waiting-maid of her aunt, Lady Fazakerly.)

She

She aſked me if I would undertake a long journey, for which ſhe would amply reward me? I ſaid that I would do every thing I could to ſerve her. She drew a letter from her pocket, and ſaid ſhe would not make a half confidante of me. 'I wiſh,' added ſhe, 'to cauſe a breach between Mr. Hartlebury and Mr. Foreſter. If I can ſucceed, I ſhall incenſe all that young fellow's friends againſt him, and break off a connexion of a tender nature, between him and Cecilia Fitzhubert (now Lady Winterfield). I cannot bear that he ſhould be happy. I know, by his laſt letter to Cecilia, that he is at Amſterdam. Phillips, you muſt croſs over to Holland, and put this letter in the poſt.' She then ſhowed me two letters, and aſked me if I knew one hand-writing from the other? I replied that I did not. 'I am confident you cannot,' ſaid ſhe, 'for I have imitated the hand to a nicety.' The letter was directed to James Hartlebury, Eſq. at Meſſrs. Tenhove and Verheyn's, Hamburgh. Miſs Burgeſs

gave

gave me thirty guineas, and I (telling Lady Fazakerly that my ſiſter was dying in the country) ſoon reached Amſterdam. I only put the letter in the poſt-office, and returned immediately. It was well I did; for in a week's time, the French army were in the country, and there was no paſſage to be procured to England, but by a very round-about way. When I returned, Miſs Burgeſs praiſed me for my diligence, but made me take a moſt tremendous oath never to reveal what had paſſed. She vowed, beſides, that if I ſhould let it eſcape me, ſhe would take proper methods to ſtop my information. I really think ſhe meant, by putting an end to my life. Fear, and fear only, prevented my diſcovering the whole to Miſs Fitzhubert, who, ſoon after, was no longer attached to Mr. Foreſter, but always ridiculed him to every body. Beſides this, Miſs Burgeſs uſed to make me mix different ingredients in the rouge Miſs Fitzhubert uſed, after ſhe came from Miſs Hartlebury's. Theſe, ſhe told me, were calculated

culated to burn the skin, and render her not quite so lovely as she had the vanity to suppose. Indeed, she said true; for the poor young lady soon lost her beautiful bloom, and was forced to supply its place by white paint. I believe, firmly, that for a quarter of a year before she married, she had not once shown her natural face. I could not have borne this; but I was altogether in Miss Burgess's power. Yet I might have ruined her in one instance: but she had so much art, that I feared to expose her. She would doubtless have made me appear the guilty person. Some years before the fact I have mentioned, Miss Burgess wanted money for the faro table, and made me pawn a pair of diamond earrings: she did not get above a third of the value, and was never able to redeem them. When Lady Fazakerly inquired why she did not wear her jewels? she said they were missing, and accused her own maid, Mrs. Thomas, of the theft. The poor woman was turned away without wages or character,

and

and I was wicked enough to ſuffer it. I have ſince heard ſhe died of want in the ſtreets. I hope this confeſſion may be the means of the repoſe of my ſinful ſoul.—Amen.

"ANN PHILLIPS.

"Atteſted by JAMES BUTLER, to be the confeſſion of Mrs. Ann Phillips, as written by him from her own mouth."

"This paper, ſir," ſaid Foreſter, "acquaints me with little but what I before knew. I always attributed the forged letter to Mrs. Meredith. The affair of the earrings has long been elucidated. Yet I cannot but wonder at the ſurpriſing manner in which the fraud has come to light."

"May fraud ever come to light!" ſaid the prieſt, claſping his hands with an air of devotion.

"Ah, ſir," ſaid Foreſter, "though I am convinced that few acts of fraud ultimately eſcape detection, I fear they generally attain the end propoſed, when friends are

to

to be disunited. So prone are we to receive every flying report, and so negligent to investigate its truth or falsehood, that sometimes irreparable breaches ensue: whereas, would we but take time to examine, we should find most of the circumstances distorted by falsehood, or misrepresented by designing malevolence."

"You speak feelingly, sir," said the good priest. "Pardon my presumption; but I believe there is more hanging on your mind, than the reflections that paper suggested."

"You are right, sir," said Forester. "The Mrs. Meredith mentioned in this confession, is the vilest of creatures. Profiting by the pliability of an injured husband, she has reduced me to the dreadful alternative of becoming a duellist, or passing, in the eye of the world, as a poltroon, who dared not defend what he dared to do."

"Will you dare to fight a duel?" demanded the priest.

"Why should you suspect my courage, sir?"

ſir?" ſaid Foreſter, warmly, and forgetting the folly of the queſtion.

"I ſimply meant," ſaid the prieſt, with a ſubmiſſive air, "to aſk if you had the courage to commit an action your heart muſt condemn?"

"Will not my injuries be a ſufficient excuſe? I have ſerved the man who dares to inſult me: I have endeavoured to ſave him from deſtruction: he blindly ruſhes on it: his folly deſerves puniſhment."

"How," cried the prieſt (fervently raiſing his eyes to Heaven), "ſhall any man preſume to think that vengeance belongs to him? Shall a mortal hand preſume to guide the thunders of Omnipotence?"

Foreſter had been inadvertently betrayed into a falſe train of reaſoning, if reaſoning it might be called. He abruptly changed the ſubject, and ſoon after Mr. Butler took his leave. The paper Foreſter poſſeſſed, might render him an eſſential ſervice: he therefore reſolved to take it with him on the morrow, and flaſh conviction in the face

face of Meredith, if he ſhould be yet dupe enough to liſten to his deceitful wife. When Foreſter retired to his chamber, he found it impoſſible to cloſe his eyes. He wrote a ſhort note to Lord Arrowſworth, in caſe any fatal cataſtrophe ſhould take place; and, for the firſt time in his life, rejoiced in his orphan ſtate. If he fell, he left no father to bewail his loſs: his death would render no mother childleſs: he felt himſelf a ſolitary, a ſuperfluous being, whoſe exiſtence was a matter of unconcern to any; and, could he have ſpared Meredith a crime, would have bleſſed the hand that freed him from the burden of life.

At five o'clock he wrapped himſelf in a great coat, and left the houſe, not forgetting to take with him the precious paper left him by Butler. Day juſt began to break; and as he approached the appointed ſpot, he beheld Meredith haſtily walking to and fro. He joined him. They ſtood gazing at each other for a few moments. At length, Meredith, in a cool, contemptuous manner,

manner, ſaid, "We are well here: here are no witneſſes." He then deſired Foreſter to produce his piſtols. Seeing Foreſter look at him with commiſeration, he, with an oath, repeated his words.

"Hear me, Meredith," ſaid Foreſter. "I pity your deluſion. I will not lift my hand againſt you, except in ſelf-defence. What is my crime?"

"Dare you aſk? Produce your piſtols, ſir."

"I have none. I am come hither, I ſay, to know my crime. If I am a villain, treat me as ſuch; and if my actions deſerve death, inflict the puniſhment. Is a villain to be on an equal footing with a man of honor?"

Meredith, in ſpite of his anger, could not but feel the candor with which this was ſpoken. He knew the obſervation to be juſt; but he endeavoured to ſmother the ſofter emotions that were ſo ſuddenly ariſing in his boſom. "You have irreparably wronged me," ſaid he; "and now, tired of life,

life, you would, as a laſt outrage, make me an aſſaſſin."

"Not ſo, by Heaven!" exclaimed Foreſter. "We are incapable of either action. I never wronged you, and you cannot become an aſſaſſin, if, indeed, duelling may not be properly termed aſſaſſination. Liſten to me, Meredith—I have tamely borne the name of villain, for I do not deſerve it; I have been threatened with a ſuſpicion of cowardice—My conduct unequivocally proves my courage. Few would dare, (why will you force me to be an egotiſt?) after ſuch a letter as I received from you, to allow you any explanation. Their *honor* would be tainted!—falſe and abſurd prejudice! There can exiſt no honor incompatible with juſtice: and *that* makes me entreat, nay, let me ſay inſiſt, that you inform me why we meet as enemies."

"It is juſt," ſaid Meredith, after a gloomy pauſe, "that you ſhould hear the catalogue of your crimes: may they gnaw your heart with anguiſh! Hear me, ſir.

You profeſſed yourſelf my friend: you taught me to believe you ſuch: unbounded was my reliance on you. It has ever been my lot to be the dupe of thoſe in whom I placed the greateſt confidence; and I find you, like the reſt of the world, ſelfiſh and inhuman."

Foreſter bit his lip, and with difficulty kept ſilence.

"My wife," continued Meredith, "was once the ornament of the firſt circles: her heart untainted, her character unblemiſhed. You firſt ſeduced her to error: you, the friend of her youth, in whoſe honor ſhe thought ſhe might ſafely confide, drew her from the path of rectitude. This ſhe has confeſſed to me with all the energy of truth, and ſincerity of penitence. I have the letter: here it is: read it; and, after confeſſing your guilt, act like a man."

"I *ſhall* act like a man," ſaid Foreſter, while he took the letter with a firm hand; at the ſame time he beheld Meredith with ſo ſteady a gaze, that, had not his reaſon been

been totally warped by rage, it muſt have told him that ſuch was not the look of guilt.

There was light ſufficient to diſtinguiſh the writing, and Foreſter peruſed the deceitful ſcroll:

"I CONFESS, ſir, that my behaviour towards you has been ſuch as to juſtify the idea I entertain, that you will ſuſpect all I may ſay to be void of truth. Yet if you can credit a woman you *once* ſo tenderly loved, oh, believe my ſincere penitence; believe me, when I caſt myſelf at your feet, not for your protection, but forgiveneſs. Never ſhould your repoſe have been troubled by me (for I would not hurt your feelings), if I did not perceive that you are likely to become the dupe of the villain who is alſo the cauſe of my preſent humiliation. Hear my ſad ſtory: my heart bleeds at the recollection. Horrible is retroſpect to the guilty; yet I have not loſt every virtue—I have a mind that can

ſhrink, painfully ſhrink, from the touch of ſelf-reproach: to weep my errors is all that is left me; to repair them is impoſſible.

"Some months prior to our marriage, a young man, gifted, as I falſely thought, with the beſt of hearts, after an acquaintance of many years, took advantage of a weak moment, and——I became unworthy of the hand you proffered. I never loved my ſeducer: ſpare me on this head: I deſerve humiliation, but cannot bear to wound my own boſom. Pride came to my aid—a falſe pride. I wiſhed to hide my ſhame from a pitileſs world, and became really guilty, by becoming your wife. A ſtate of mind, little ſhort of madneſs, ſucceeded my union with you. I left you, for I was unworthy to be yours. I could not bear to liſten to laviſh profeſſions of love, from the man I had ſo much injured. But who ought to be the object of your anger? I am contented to ſuffer, but let vengeance alſo fall on the author of my miſery: let it fall on the wretch who deceives you: let

it

it fall on *Foreſter!*—He is the man to whom you owe your ſhame; a hypocrite, whoſe mild and inſinuating manners act only as a cover to the moſt deep-laid plans of vice. By his deſire, I treated him in public as an indifferent perſon; nay, ſometimes acted towards him with rudeneſs: yet, when we ſeemed the coldeſt to each other, the ſtronger was our connexion.—I have done, ſir: may the prayers be heard, which I daily put up to Heaven for your health and peace. I mean to leave the kingdom. Aſk me not where I go; but in my exile, let me have the conſolation to reflect, that the partner of my crime has felt the vengeance of an injured huſband.

"EMILY."

Foreſter read the letter twice over, and almoſt began to ſuſpect Meredith in jeſt, or himſelf in a dream. Returning the paper, he coolly aſked if he really could put confidence in the aſſertion of ſuch a woman? or if, upon re-peruſing the letter,

a doubt could remain upon his mind? "Your wife," ſaid he, "has here failed of her uſual art. Allowing the truth of her aſſertion, and that ſhe was unworthy, on my account, of being your wife, ſhe ſurely had no inducement to elope with my friend, or to break open the lock of your eſcrutoire."

"Damnation!" exclaimed Meredith. "Have you the inſolence to pretend to be in the right? Take one of my piſtols; for I ſwear by all that's ſacred, one of us ſhall never return from this place alive."

"I have here," ſaid Foreſter, taking from his pocket-book the paper given him by Butler, "an additional proof of the integrity of your wife: read it, and confeſs that a woman who would act in ſo ſcandalous a manner, is unworthy the ſmalleſt credit."

"Periſh the forgery!" And tearing the proffered paper, Meredith threw it from him.

Foreſter

Foreſter eagerly picked up the pieces, and turning fiercely to his antagoniſt, he exclaimed, "By Heaven, ſir, this is too much: I find that I muſt meet you on your own terms, however my heart may diſapprove them. It ſhall be ſo, but not to-day. I have yet the duties of friendſhip to fulfil; nor ſhall your unjuſtifiable impetuoſity prevent me from ſo doing. I once thought you worthy of my eſteem: I am undeceived. I will meet you here this day three weeks."

He then turned away, and was leaving the place, when Meredith, in a ſoftened voice, ſaid, "Is it poſſible you can be innocent? I fear I have been too raſh."

"It is too late," replied Foreſter, haughtily, "to enter into any farther explanation."

"Yet, hold, Mr. Foreſter: whatever I may have ſaid, I never meant to doubt your courage."

"You have no reaſon to do ſo, and ſhall

have none." With theſe words, Foreſter ſullenly walked away, leaving Meredith a prey to conflicting paſſions.

Emily's triumph was almoſt complete. The man ſhe moſt hated, and a huſband ſhe deſpiſed, were, by her ſucceſsful arts, completely eſtranged from each other. Although her temper was violent, ſhe could, when ſhe gave way to reflection, form a juſt notion of the human heart. She knew that Meredith loved her to dotage, prior to her elopement; and as ſhe had ſtudied his character for many years, ſhe knew that little art was neceſſary to work upon his feelings. It never once occurred to her that her huſband would again receive her into favor: ſhe knew that to be impoſſible: he was too much a man of the world: but ſhe was convinced of his attachment; and relying upon it, wrote the penitent letter, well knowing that Meredith's impetuoſity would ſcorn the dictates of reaſon, and that his antagoniſt was a man of too much ſpirit

patiently

patiently to ſuffer reproach. In this ſhe had nearly failed. Foreſter, pitying the folly of his challenger, had borne his invectives, as far as it was in man to bear. Had Meredith's heart ſoftened but an inſtant ſooner, an explanation might have taken place, and all been amicably adjuſted: but now the die was caſt, and a falſe pride prevented either party from making any advances to reconciliation. Foreſter, though a man of reflection and principle, permitted paſſion to diſſolve the influence of both. He would not truſt himſelf to think on the promiſe he had made of meeting the colonel in a duel—the term by which a premeditated murder is ſanctioned: he drove away the idea, and only thought how to reſtore Cuthbert to his ſorrowing friends. To effect this, he put in practice every art in his power: at length, he was neceſſitated to ſend an advertiſement to the public prints, deſcribing his perſon, and inviting him to return to

his forgiving father. Every ſearch was made, and large rewards were offered to any who would give ſuch information as might tend to the diſcovery of his abode.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

——Forgive me—but forgive me!

ALL endeavours to trace the fugitive Cuthbert were, for ſome time, fruitleſs; and Foreſter beheld, with ſullen deſpair, the time approaching when he was to meet Colonel Meredith in the field. In one of his rambles about the ſtreets, hoping chance might again befriend him, he thought he beheld Hartlebury at a diſtance: he haſtened towards him, and, to his great joy, found he was not deceived. Hartlebury informed him that he was but that very morning arrived in town from his eſtate in Yorkſhire, where he had ſhut himſelf up ſome time, in conſequence of Baynton's unfortunate cataſtrophe. He added, that he had formed a reſolution of never playing for more than a certain ſum, and by reducing his expenſes, yet relieve the op-

preſſed and honeſt debtor. Foreſter, in return, related all that had paſſed between Meredith and himſelf. Hartlebury could not contain his indignation: he declared that the colonel ſhould make every apology for his ungentlemanlike outrage; and would that moment have gone in ſearch of him, had not Foreſter inſiſted, with vehemence, that as Meredith had wantonly provoked the duel, he muſt anſwer for the conſequence. He confeſſed that he well knew the atrocity of the act he was about to commit, but his injuries muſt plead his excuſe. Hartlebury, though he poſſeſſed an intimate knowledge of mankind, was here guilty of an overſight. Inſtead of giving way to the burſt of paſſion, he oppoſed its current, by argument, till Foreſter was worked to ſuch a pitch of frenzy, that he vowed his injuries could never be waſhed away, but by the blood of his challenger. He then requeſted Hartlebury to take upon him the office of ſecond, if neceſſary; willing to prevent miſchief, he acquieſced,

eſced, and Foreſter propoſed introducing him to Mr. Apſley. They proceeded to Swallow Street, and had no ſooner knocked at the door, than a ſhabby-looking man came up to them, and begged to know if they had not advertiſed a young gentleman who had run away? Foreſter, overjoyed, begged him to come in. Mr. Apſley and his ſiſter-in-law had taken a ſhort ride into the country, for the benefit of the air; but Sinclair was ſitting in the parlour. The man, after ſome heſitation, and cautiouſly inquiring when and in what manner the fifty guineas were to be paid for his information, declared, that a ſhort time before, a young gentleman had come to his houſe, in Southwark, and hired a ſmall garret, at the rate of eighteen-pence a week: the gentleman was tall, with light blue eyes, and flaxen hair; he was very ſtoutly made, but appeared ill and dejected. "I ſaw from the firſt," ſaid the man, "that ſomething was wrongiſh, and thought as how he wanted to eſcape from a *baily*, for he kept cloſe,

cloſe, and would ſit and *ſithe* for hours together. He never eat, as I could ſee; and he only ſtirred out when it was dark, ſo I ſuppoſe he got his victuals then. I ax'd my wife if we ſhould not give him a bit of dinner now and then? for I declare, ſomehow, I was quite ſorry for him; but my Betty was ſnappiſh (the beſt women are ſo ſometimes), and ſaid ſhe did not half like him; ſo I thought as how I'd ax him myſelf; but my gentleman was quite angry: he looked outrageous mad, and aſked me what I meant? but a minute afterwards, he thanked me very kindly, and begged leave to be excuſed; and he breathed ſo hard, that I was afraid he was choking. He has laid upon the bed ſince yeſterday morning, and I'll be ſworn he has not put wet or dry in his mouth all that time, though I offered him as nice bacon and greens as ever was ſeen." He then told them, that hearing fifty guineas were offered as a reward to any who would diſcover the abode of a runaway gentleman, as the deſcription anſwered

ſwered to his lodger, he had applied. If it had been to bring him into trouble, he would have ſcorned ſuch an action; but it could be no harm to reſtore him to friends willing to forgive him.

The man received the thanks of all for his humanity; and as no doubt could be entertained, from the accuracy of the deſcription, but that his lodger was the long-loſt Cuthbert, a conſultation was held in what manner to conduct the interview with his father. Sinclair however, recollecting that his brother was probably periſhing with hunger, inſiſted upon immediately proceeding to Southwark. Without farther delay the whole party prepared to ſet off; but while Sinclair was looking for his hat, Mr. Apſley and his ſiſter-in-law drove to the door. Sinclair, not able to contain his rapture, inconſiderately exclaimed, "Oh, my dear ſir, we have found my brother!"

Mr. Apſley bore the intelligence with more fortitude than was expected; he inſiſted upon hearing the whole account, and

while

while he deplored the errors of his child, which had reduced him to ſuch extreme wretchedneſs, he ſaid that no word of reproach ſhould farther wound the ſufferer.

In this opinion he was joined by Miſs M'Alliſter, who, weeping at the idea of the heir to Sir Gilbert Potheringham being reduced to miſery, declared, that, had ſhe foreſeen the accident, ſhe would have put an elixir of her own compoſition in her pocket, which was ſovereign in caſes of a weakened ſtomach. It was with difficulty ſhe could be perſuaded to ſtay at home herſelf, or permit Mr. Apſley to proceed to Southwark; but he was peremptory; he knew that Cuthbert loved him, and, once aſſured of his forgiveneſs, would return to his forſaken home. He meant to greet him with the ſmile of paternal affection, and even treat his follies with an affected levity, reſerving more ſerious admonition till the afflicted youth ſhould be able to bear it. A hackney coach was called, and the whole party

party were conveyed to a mean-looking alley in Southwark. Mr. Apſley was carefully lifted from the vehicle by Foreſter and Hartlebury; he was with difficulty ſupported while he mounted the narrow creaking ſtaircaſe; at length he reached the garret, where his darling ſon was ſuffering the united pangs of hunger and ſelf-reproach. In a faltering voice he begged that he might enter it alone. Hartlebury beckoned his companions, and they deſcended to a ſhabby-looking parlour. In the mean time Mr. Apſley entered the garret; the ſingle window it boaſted was compoſed of ſmall ſquares of glaſs, and ſome dirty rags were thruſt through many broken parts to exclude the wind; a bedſtead, without curtains, ſtood near, and on this the unfortunate Cuthbert lay extended.

Mr. Apſley approached; a heavy groan burſt from his agonized boſom, and he was obliged to lean for ſupport againſt the naked wall. A faint voice from the bed inquired who was there. Mr. Apſley could not force a reply.

a reply. Cuthbert ſlowly aroſe; he put his hand to his head, and with difficulty kept himſelf from falling. He again demanded why any perſon intruded.

"Am I then an intruder, Cuthbert?" ſaid Mr. Apſley.

"Ha! you know my name!—But whoever you may be, fly from hence; I am a polluted monſter, whoſe ſight muſt blaſt all who behold me with horror."

Mr. Apſley contemplated the altered form of his ſon with the keeneſt anguiſh; his color was fled, his cheeks were cadaverous, and his eye, once the ſeat of animation, was dull and half cloſed; his long flaxen hair was untied and fallen over his ſhoulders, while his dreſs exhibited the marks of ſqualid poverty.

"Cuthbert," ſaid Mr. Apſley trembling, "my dear, my beloved child, do you not—or—will you not know your father?"

The youth ſlowly advanced. "My eyes are weak," ſaid he; "yet could I once more behold my father, and receive his forgive-

forgiveneſs, I ſhould cloſe them for ever in peace."

"Behold your father—receive his forgiveneſs—return to your forſaken home—and be, as formerly, the pride and joy of my heart."

Cuthbert heard not the concluſion of this ſpeech—he had fallen ſenſeleſs on the floor. Mr. Apſley endeavoured to call for aſſiſtance, but his voice was loſt in his emotions; his infirm ſtate precluded the poſſibility of affording any relief, and after ſome time his ſon breathed a deep ſigh, and endeavoured to riſe. Mr. Apſley ſtretched out his hand to aſſiſt him; Cuthbert eagerly graſped it, and looking wildly in his face, he exclaimed, "You do not curſe me then?"

"May God bleſs you ever," ſaid the father, while the tears flowed abundantly down his manly cheeks: "you have been ſeduced by paſſion, and who ſhall pretend at all times to the undiſturbed empire of reaſon? You are not ſo guilty as you imagine;

gine; indeed, indeed, my boy, you are not."

"Your kindneſs, my injured father, comes too late; I am broken-hearted—loſt to every wiſh but that of obtaining your forgiveneſs. The world you painted in the faireſt colors, I find to be a monſtrous aſſemblage of deformity; you taught me to believe the exiſtence of honor, faith, and love—too well I am convinced of your miſtake and my credulity; yet if your precepts could fail; if I, who boaſted a father like yourſelf, could become a villain, who ſhall be free from crime? Your miſtaken kindneſs taught me to put too high a value on the few merits I once poſſeſſed, and a confidence in my own ſtrength has brought me to deſtruction."

"I allow your charge to be juſt, my child—I have been to blame. Talk not to me of forgiveneſs, but ſay if you can pardon the error of which I have been guilty, that of committing you to a world where every ſnare is ſpread for inexperienced

enced youth, without properly putting you on your guard."

"You vainly endeavour to reconcile me to myself. No, my father, never can I consent to live when my paſt conduct will be to me a never-ceaſing torment; when I am no more, perhaps the tear of pity may drop upon my grave."

"Speak not thus, my dear child," ſaid Mr. Apſley; "you have yet many, many happy years to come, when the errors you ſee and lament will no longer be had in remembrance. Come then with me; your brother is waiting with anxiety to greet you —your father entreats you to ſee him."

"I cannot—no, I cannot go," exclaimed Cuthbert: "my brother, ſaid you? he doubtleſs exults in my crimes—it is juſt he ſhould, for I was ſevere upon his errors."

"Oh, my Cuthbert!" ſaid Mr. Apſley, mournfully, "I expected to find you ſtubborn, but not unjuſt."

Cuthbert ſank on his wretched bed.—"And is it poſſible," ſaid he, "that you

can forgive, and my brother lament my fall from rectitude? Oh yes—it muſt be ſo—pardon me, my dear, my revered father: but I am ſunk in guilt—my heart is vitiated; what wonder, then, that I ſhould judge of others by my own ſtandard?"

"Will you then accompany me?" cried the father; "bleſſed hearing! once more ſhall we be happy. But, my poor boy, you want aſſiſtance, and I am unable to afford it."

"I am indeed faint," ſaid Cuthbert, riſing, "for I have not taſted any food theſe two days paſt; I can, however, reach the foot of the ſtairs, and aſſiſtance ſhall be procured to conduct you."

He then walked a few paces, but a ſudden giddineſs ſeized him, and he fell on the floor. Mr. Apſley advanced as well as his malady would permit. Cuthbert was ſenſible; weakneſs alone had cauſed his fall; and while his father bent over him in ſilent anguiſh, Foreſter entered the garret: he approached the ſpot where Cuthbert lay

extended.

extended. Mr. Apſley begged him to get aſſiſtance to remove his ſon. By the aid of Hartlebury the youth was conveyed down ſtairs, where Sinclair had procured a baſon of ſoup; but nature was too far exhauſted, and Cuthbert had no ſooner touched the firſt ſpoonful with his lips, than he felt a loathing of all food, and fainted away.

Hartlebury ſeized him by the hand; it was firmly clenched, and when by violence it was opened, a miniature fell from it to the ground—it was the picture of Emily: the painter had exerted his happieſt art; a voluptuous ſmile played upon her lips, and her eyes were expreſſive of the moſt languiſhing ſenſibility: it was a picture which might have convinced the moſt decided admirers of Lavater of the fallacy of appearances.

Sinclair ruſhed from the houſe, and returned with a phyſician. By this time Cuthbert had recovered his ſenſes and taken ſome refreſhment; he was perfectly collected, and when Sinclair entered the

room

room he ſtretched out one hand, and with the other covered his face. The proffered hand was eagerly graſped by the truly affectionate brother.

"How do you do, Cuthbert?" ſaid he. "Don't you know your old friends, Foreſter and all? Cheer up, my man, and deuce take all ſorrow; my heart is as light as a feather—won't you be as happy as I am?"—He wiped a tear from his eye.

"You may be happy," ſaid Cuthbert; "for your heart acquits you of crime; but what muſt be my feelings, when I reflect upon the ſorrows I have cauſed my father, and the injuſtice I have done you?"

"Aye, aye," cried Sinclair; "we'll talk about all that ſome other time—on a long evening at Elm Grove when I want a nap —take my arm—lean harder, that's my good fellow; I long to ſee you out of this cobwebby palace: my aunt ſhall boil tapioca, and make decoctions of bark; that will pleaſe her, and ſet you on your legs as ſtout as ever."

Cuthbert aroſe, and attempted to ſmile; he walked a few ſteps, and ſtopped. "I have loſt a miniature," ſaid he, faintly; "do not deprive me of it."

"Permit me to hide it from you," ſaid Foreſter: "the ſight would be painful—let me beg that——"

"By no means," interrupted Hartlebury. "Here, ſir, is the miniature; let not the ſlighteſt diſappointment cloud the happineſs of the day."

Cuthbert took the miniature; he preſſed it to his lips, and turning to Hartlebury, "To you, ſir," ſaid he, "I reſign this once precious token; take it, never let me ſee it more; it is a ſmall ſacrifice, but all I have to offer."

He was then lifted into the coach, and conveyed to Swallow Street, where he inſtantly retired to bed; a phyſician was ſent for, who preſcribed for him, though Miſs M'Alliſter was rather piqued at her opinion not being conſulted; ſhe nevertheleſs acted the part of a good nurſe, and

with a circumſpection for which ſhe was not much noted, forbore any unpleaſant reflection.

Foreſter now took his leave; and as he was proceeding to Lord Arrowſworth's he was met by Creſwell. A cool bow was all the notice Foreſter condeſcended to take of him, and he paſſed quickly on, when the voice of his tormentor arreſted his progreſs.

"I was going to your lodgings, my dear Mr. Foreſter," ſaid he in as mild a voice as he could aſſume; "I have ſome agreeable news for you."

"I am at preſent," replied Foreſter, "in a very happy temper of mind, and can bear, I think, any news, good or bad."

"Well, ſir, I muſt then inform you, that at my repeated ſolicitation you will at length ſee your father."

"Permit me, ſir, to obſerve," ſaid Foreſter, with ſome indignation, "that you have already once deceived me on that head; beware how you again trifle with my feelings."

"In-

"Indeed, Mr. Foreſter, I did all for the beſt; but this time I promiſe you, upon my honor, that you ſhall ſee your father; for though I have told you he was dead, he is alive and well. I dare not inform you who he is, but I ſuppoſe he will do that himſelf. I have endeavoured to ſupply your want of parents, and I hope my care and——"

Foreſter interrupted this abject harangue by aſking when he ſhould be ſo happy as to ſee his father; and Creſwell, after informing him that the day was fixed for the Thurſday following at ſeven in the evening, took leave with many bows.

Foreſter flew rather than walked to St. James's Square. He firmly believed, that the time was now come when he ſhould ſee his father; his heart had long panted for the bliſsful moment, and when he met Lady Arrowſworth at table, ſhe congratulated him on his altered appearance; indeed, he was no longer the ſame man; a joyous ſmile played upon his animated

countenance, and in the evening, at a musical party, his execution of a difficult concerto on the harp deserved and received the universal plaudit of the company.

What added to the hilarity of the evening was the presence of Hartlebury, who came to Lord Arrowsworth's for the first time since his retirement; not a gloomy thought checked the gaiety of Forester; and when supper was announced he seized his friend by the arm, and in a whisper informed him of the happiness that awaited him on the Thursday evening.

"You forget then," said Hartlebury, "that you are to meet Colonel Meredith in the morning."

An attempt to paint the feelings of Forester were vain. In a moment his "airy palace of ideal joy" was overthrown, and the most excruciating feelings rent his bosom. At length, in a faltering voice, he asked if it were not possible to postpone the meeting, were it but for a day.

"It has already been postponed three

weeks

weeks at your desire: how can you with propriety ask a longer delay?"

A servant at this moment brought a note to Forester, saying, that it had been left in the morning, but by a mistake of the porter was not given to him for delivery before —it was in Meredith's hand.

"SIR,

"I SHALL be at the place where last we met, on Thursday by day-break; I shall be attended by Major Molyneux—I mention this, that you may take your measures accordingly.

"PHILIP MEREDITH."

The note was without a date, and Hartlebury, to preclude all idea of postponing the duel, confessed that he had called on Meredith in hopes of accommodating the affair, but that he had left town, and the people in Bond Street knew not whither he was gone. Forester pleaded indisposition, and excused himself from attending the party at

ſupper. Hartlebury, after giving all the conſolation the affair would admit of, ſoon retired; and the haraſſed youth, after a paſſionate burſt of tears, ſat down to write a letter to his unknown father, in caſe the duel ſhould prove fatal. This he meant to carry with him to the field; he directed it under cover to Creſwell, though he much feared it would not reach the hands for which it was intended.

"TORN by a thouſand paſſions do I ſit down to write. My father, when you peruſe theſe lines the hand that traced them will be cold, the heart that dictated will throb no more. I ſink to the grave unlamented—I have none to love me—none to ſoften the horrors of death. But let me collect my ſcattered thoughts; let me remember that I write for the only time to a father—oh, ſoothing ſound! why was a parent's embrace withheld from me?—But I again wander; forgive my incoherence; but my brain is almoſt frenzied.

"I owe

"I owe you much, my father; you have not neglected the creature to whom you gave life; I have never felt the preſſure of want; you were pleaſed to cultivate my mind by education, and appointed a man of univerſal reſpectability to watch over my conduct. Will it be believed that to one, whoſe moral character ſtands high in the world's opinion, whoſe integrity and fair-dealing not even calumny dare attack, I owe the majority of my errors? Yes, my father, to the guardian you choſe do I impute them. I have (let me boaſt it) an independent ſoul; I can ſmile contempt on the man who would humble me. I dare not flatter; how then could I ſecure the favorable opinion of a harſh and tyrannical man? When did I attempt to conciliate him, that my efforts were not checked by his frown? When did I bear with his reproaches, in order to diſarm invective by ſubmiſſion, that I have not been deemed ſullen and ſupercilious? I was found guilty of many real but more imaginary

ginary errors—What method was taken to eradicate theſe?—Reproach.

"I dare call Heaven to witneſs, my father, that although my paſſions may have hurried me ſometimes to exceſs, my heart has never ſwerved from the right line of virtue. Yes, egotiſm is now pardonable; for the grave will ſhut me from a world, whoſe bitter cup alone has been my portion. I poſſeſſed a feeling heart, but my paſſions were my maſters; by working upon the one a man of penetration might have checked the impetuoſity of the other. Many were my early follies—the force of reaſon would have reſtrained what reproach but hurried on. A parent has but half diſcharged his duty, if he conſult not the temper as well as the integrity of the guardian of his child. But pardon me, my father, I mean not a reflection; your higher avocations may have claimed your undivided attention; the fate of Europe may have hung upon your lips. Here then I pauſe—but before I bid you for ever adieu, let

let me entreat that I may live in your memory. My mind was formed for the diſcharge of filial duty; the name of parent creates in me an awe, bordering, perhaps, on ſuperſtition, and certainly on enthuſiaſm. Had I been the offspring of meaner parents, I ſhould have aſſiſted them in the labors of huſbandry; and when, exhauſted by age, they no longer could wreſtle with their infirmities, I ſhould have been the comfort of their declining years; ſweet, hallowed would have been my labor, for it would have been ſanctioned by a parent's bleſſing.

"Enviable ſituation! ſuch is not my—

"Adieu, my father, adieu for ever."

CHAP. XI.

Morar, thou art low, indeed; thou haſt no mother to mourn thee, no maid with her tears of love.—Dead is ſhe that brought thee forth; fallen is the daughter of Morglan.—Who is this?——it is thy father, O Morar! the father of no ſon but thee. Weep, thou father of Morar, weep; but thy ſon heareth thee not. No more ſhall he hear thy voice, no more awake at thy call. OSSIAN.

THE next morning, when Foreſter met the family at breakfaſt, his blood-ſhot eyes but too well betrayed the ſleepleſs night he had paſſed; his changed countenance alarmed Lady Arrowſworth, who propoſed ſending for a phyſician. Foreſter, faintly ſmiling, declined any offer of that nature, and endeavoured to aſſume a more cheerful look. The effort was vain: his clouded brow indicated the acuteneſs of his feelings; and her Ladyſhip, who poſſeſſed no great ſhare of penetration, aſcribed his appearance

pearance to bodily ſuffering. As ſoon as breakfaſt was over, the gentlemen retired to the library: a ſilence of ſome minutes enſued, which was broken by Lord Arrowſworth.

"What ſhall we read this morning, Mr. Foreſter?"

"Whatever your Lordſhip pleaſes."

"Shall we finiſh the Aminta?"

Foreſter took up the book: his eyes wandered over the words; but his thoughts were otherwiſe engaged, and he read ſo ill, that his Lordſhip interrupting him, propoſed any other work more agreeable, for Foreſter was by no means a proficient in the Italian language.

"You promiſed," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth, "to ſhow me ſome tranſlations from the German of Bürger; have you a copy about you?"

"I have," ſaid Foreſter; and taking a folded paper from his pocket-book, he, with a vacant air, preſented it to his patron.

Lord Arrowſworth had no ſooner began to read than he ſtarted; Foreſter was rouſed from his reverie, and beheld with confuſion, that he had given Meredith's note inſtead of the tranſlation.

Lord Arrowſworth returning the note, ſaid, with a degree of coldneſs, "I forbear to make any remark on a ſubject, with which you did not think proper to acquaint me."

"If," ſaid Foreſter, "I have acted wrong, attribute my conduct to its real motive—an unwillingneſs to expoſe myſelf to the cenſure of thoſe I moſt eſteem and revere."

"How far your conduct may deſerve praiſe or cenſure, I am ignorant," ſaid his Lordſhip, with more urbanity; "yet, if I may judge of your character by what I have ſeen, you would never provoke, and never refuſe a challenge."

"You are right," my Lord; "I never would provoke a challenge; but may not ſome circumſtances juſtify the refuſal of one,

one, particularly when paſſion blinds the challenger?"

"In that caſe let his life pay the forfeit of his temerity: to what purpoſe is reaſon given us—but to act as a rein to the paſſions?"

"True, my Lord; and, in my opinion, reaſon will tell us, that we are to pardon the impetuoſity of anger—as we pardon the invectives of a drunkard; let us reſtrain our own paſſions, and, by the dint of reaſon, diſarm our antagoniſts."

"The world," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth, ſmiling, "is not apt to have recourſe to ſuch arms. I fear you incline to that philoſophy now ſo prevalent, which inculcates the idea of a better order of things, and a new arrangement of ſociety."

"That man in his preſent ſituation is as he ought not to be," ſaid Foreſter, "is evident; yet I cannot but ridicule the idea of thoſe who fancy a future Utopia. The preſent ſtate of ſociety may be ameliorated; but vice and folly, under any form of go-

vern-

vernment, will twine their baneful weeds with the garland of virtue and patriotiſm. I ſay this to exculpate myſelf from the charge of a romantic philoſophy, the idea of which, though pleaſing, is fallacious."

"If, then," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth, "you are not the friend of innovation——"

"Pardon me, my Lord; I am the friend of any innovation, which certainly ſecures the real happineſs of mankind: I am only the enemy of wild experiment."

"You will however allow, that an individual opinion will not change men and manners; you are here challenged to the field; you may plead that ſuch a practice is contrary to your principles; but will the world give you credit for heroiſm in refuſing the meeting? Will they not attribute your conduct to the baſeſt motives?"

"I know the world too well, my Lord, to attempt to contradict what you advance."

He then informed Lord Arrowſworth of every particular that led to the duel, not

even

even concealing the ignominy with which Meredith had treated him. His Lordſhip liſtened with aſtoniſhment, not unmingled with contempt.

"Is it poſſible," ſaid he, "that you could endure all this?"

"I am ſorry to ſay that I could not; my paſſions at length became my maſters."

"To be accuſed," continued his Lordſhip, "of forgery! to be branded by the name of villain! Good Heavens! how could a man I thought ſo——but I have done."

"If your Lordſhip judges me unworthy your eſteem," ſaid Foreſter, with a haughty look, "I can only lament the difference of our opinion; and grateful for your paſt favors, decline their continuance."

"Pardon me," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth, "if I have inadvertently ſaid any thing to hurt your feelings; yet I confeſs I was ſhocked to think on the tameneſs with which you bore inſult. I am not, Mr. Foreſter, the advocate of duelling; but, in ſuch a caſe as yours, the ſword of a man of ſpirit would inſtinc-

inſtinctively leap from the ſcabbard. Do not miſtake me; I mean not to doubt your courage, I only wiſh to excite it."

"You think then, my Lord, that this duel is unavoidable?" ſaid Foreſter, with a long-drawn ſigh.

"I do," replied his Lordſhip; "no circumſtance whatever can juſtify your refuſal."

Foreſter ſat a few minutes in a gloomy reverie: at length ſtarting up, he exclaimed, "Oh, yes, there is one circumſtance, there is one ſufficiently ſtrong to authorize a delay, if not an abandonment, of this ſanctioned homicide. I have—I—I have a father."

"Well, ſir!"

Foreſter was ſilent: he had, by the advice of Hartlebury, carefully concealed the myſtery of his birth from his patron; he reſolved not to divulge it now."

"Is your father in ſuch a ſituation as to need your filial aſſiſtance?"

Foreſter was ſilent.

"I con-

"I conclude it is ſo," ſaid his Lordſhip; "but not even that tie can juſtify your putting up with inſult. The laws of honor require you to meet your antagoniſt; ſummon your reſolution, forget all but your injuries, and ſhow that you are a man of ſpirit."

"How mortifying the idea," ſaid Foreſter, mournfully, "that, to prove my courage, I muſt forfeit ſelf-eſteem! You then adviſe me to this duel, my Lord?"

"You muſt comply; your courage I do not doubt. I know well that you heſitate from principle, but the cuſtoms of the world muſt be obſerved. I ſtrongly adviſe, and, were I your father, would inſiſt that you meet your inſulter in the field."

"I have done, my Lord, though I am convinced of the turpitude of the act; I will meet him."

On the Wedneſday evening, Hartlebury called according to appointment at Lord Arrowſworth's. Foreſter was calm, but his

apparent ſerenity aroſe from deſpair. It was agreed that he ſhould call upon Hartlebury at his lodgings, from whence they were to proceed to the place appointed for the meeting.

Foreſter gave orders to be called at four o'clock the next morning; and retiring to his chamber, without undreſſing, he threw himſelf upon the bed, and endeavoured to procure a temporary oblivion in ſleep. Never did night appear to him ſo tedious! he lay liſtening to the neighbouring clocks as they ſtruck the quarters, and wondered at the lagging foot of time. A ſlight ſtorm of hail pattered againſt the windows; Foreſter ſtarted, he knew not why; a preſentiment of the horrors that awaited him ſeemed to take poſſeſſion of his mind, and he felt relieved by the tapping of the footman at the door. He bade him enter: the man made his appearance with a light; never was light ſo welcome to the eyes of Foreſter. He

began

began to make ſome alteration in his dreſs. The footman, who had lived with Lord Arrowſworth ever ſince his marriage, and was a favorite in the family, obſerved his pallid looks.

"I fear, ſir," ſaid he, ſhaking his head, "that you are going upon no pleaſant journey; I have ſerved many a young nobleman before I came to this houſe, and can pretty well gueſs at what you are about."

"Indeed!" ſaid Foreſter, attempting to hide his piſtols.

"Why, yes, certainly, or why ſhould you take thoſe ugly things with you? Ah, ſir, it is at all times a ſad thing to fight; the ſmalleſt trifle will do the buſineſs: poor Major Maxwell was killed about the feathers in a lady's head-dreſs."

"Why ſhould you think I am about to fight a duel?"

"Come, come, ſir," ſaid the man, "I will be fair and above-board; I never loſt any thing by that. To confeſs the truth, his

his Lordſhip has informed me of all, and will be at Mr. Hartlebury's this morning. I am to watch you at a diſtance, and to bring him immediate intelligence of the event; but, now you are dreſt, ſir, let me go off firſt, for I muſt hide myſelf ſomewhere abouts, and, if you have firſt fire, do pray take a good aim."

Away ran the man; and Foreſter leaving the houſe, found Hartlebury ready dreſſed. They walked towards Tottenham Court Road; the day was not yet broke, and the two friends paced ſlowly backwards and forwards: at length, Hartlebury, fearing the effects of a damp raw morning, propoſed entering a ſmall public-houſe which had juſt been opened. Foreſter, careleſs where he went, or what he did, mechanically followed him: a fire had juſt been lighted; and a woman was buſied in putting away a table covered with pewter pots, and the ſhattered remains of tobacco-pipes. She looked earneſtly at them.

"Poor

"Poor young man!" muttered ſhe to herſelf.

Hartlebury's quick ear caught the ſound. He gazed at her with ſurpriſe, and their eyes encountered.

"Aye, aye, I ſee how it is," ſaid ſhe; "you are both unlike highwaymen, ſo I'll be burnt if you are not going to fight."

"What can make you ſuppoſe ſuch a thing?" ſaid Hartlebury, with amazement.

"Ah! Lord bleſs you," ſaid ſhe, "we poor folks muſt ſee all and ſay nothing.—Why, do you think you will be the firſt that has walked this way to fight? It was but a week ago that a ſweet young man was ſhot through the heart in the fields hard by. I'm ſure I cried when I ſaw him. He put me ſo in mind of my poor Ned, who was killed on board the Belliqueux."

"Are duels common here?" demanded Hartlebury.

"Once

"Once a month," upon a *beverage*," ſaid the good woman; "though, for the matter of that, they ſeldom do much harm. One fires, and miſſes: t'other ſhoots in the air, and then they ſay their honor is ſatisfied. Now I think there was more honor (and glory into the bargain) to be ſhot like poor Ned, in defence of his king and country—every body was ſorry for him; but who cares for a man who is ſhot by another in a duel?"

"But I can aſſure you," ſaid Hartlebury, "that this gentleman and I are not going to fight."

"Well, well," ſaid the woman, "it's no bread and butter of mine. God ſend us all clean hands and hearts at ſupper-time. Fighting is grown ſo common, that I verily believe our pot-boy and Giles the brickduſt-man will ſoon leave off plain boxing, and get their brains blown out, like their betters."

The morning began to dawn. Foreſter aroſe, and obſerved it to his friend. They

paid

paid for what they left untouched, and walked haſtily to the appointed ſpot. Meredith was not arrived, but in a few minutes a poſt-chaiſe was ſeen driving furiouſly towards them. At about the diſtance of a hundred yards it ſtopped, and Foreſter ſhortly after recogniſed his antagoniſt, accompanied by his ſecond and a ſurgeon. A cool bow took place between the parties. At ſight of Meredith, the remembrance of the inſult he had ſuffered flaſhed upon the mind of Foreſter, and he felt his anger revive. The ſeconds withdrew for a ſhort time, and an accommodation was propoſed; but, not being able to agree upon the terms, it was reſolved that the difference muſt be decided by the piſtol. Foreſter was allowed the privilege of precedence in firing. The ground was marked out, and the combatants took their ſtations with intrepidity. Foreſter was a good markſman, but he would not avail himſelf of the advantage. He deſignedly miſſed his enemy, who immediately

mediately returning the fire, beheld Foreſter ſink to the earth.—Meredith kept his ground; but Hartlebury, Major Molyneux, and the ſurgeon, ran to his aſſiſtance. His waiſtcoat was torn open, and it appeared that the ball had penetrated the right ribs. The miniature of his mother (which he always wore round his neck) being in the way, the ſurgeon cut the riband, and delivered it, by miſtake, into the hands of Meredith, who had now joined the group. The colonel took the miniature, and was about to put it in his pocket, when his eye glanced on the features, and he exclaimed, with amazement—

"Heaven and earth! what do I ſee?"

Major Molyneux, leaving Foreſter to the care of Hartlebury and the ſurgeon, advanced towards him, and inquired what was the cauſe of his diſorder. Meredith made no reply, but taking a miniature from his own boſom, gave it to Molyneux, who.

who beheld, with amazement, that one was exactly like the other.

"This is extraordinary," cried the major. "Can Mr. Foreſter ſpeak? I hope —I fervently hope, he is not dead."

"He is not *yet* dead," ſaid the ſurgeon; "but whether he will ever ſpeak again I much doubt——the wound is mortal."

"Can he be removed?" ſaid Hartlebury.

The anſwer was affirmative.

"Let him then," added he, "be conveyed to my lodgings in Rathbone Place."

The chaiſe was in waiting. Foreſter had fainted from loſs of blood, and in that ſtate was conveyed to the lodgings of his friend. Meredith and Molyneux, fearleſs of the conſequences, requeſted permiſſion to attend them, and having obtained it, they haſtily walked to London. —When arrived at Rathbone Place, the ſurgeon met them at the door. He ſaid,

that although Mr. Foreſter had recovered his ſenſes and voice, no hope could poſſibly be entertained of his life. He adviſed Meredith to fly, with all poſſible ſpeed, as Lord Arrowſworth, who had that moment arrived, might, from the affection he bore his protegé, ſtrain every nerve to puniſh the author of his death.

Meredith, without anſwering, abruptly entered the houſe, and requeſted that he might once more behold Foreſter.

Hartlebury, who was much ſurpriſed at the ſtrange circumſtance of the miniature, ordered him to be admitted. He entered the room, and approached the couch on which the dying youth lay extended—Lord Arrowſworth was ſupporting his head. An angry glance from that nobleman greeted his entrance.

"I underſtand you, my Lord," ſaid Meredith, "and you may believe me, when I aſſure you that I would not intrude were not intruſion neceſſary. I wiſh to elucidate a point of the utmoſt importance.—

Mr.

Mr. Foreſter, though you cannot forgive me, at leaſt have the candor to tell me, if you knew the original of theſe miniatures?"

He held them towards him—but a ſudden pang, too ſevere for endurance at that moment, cauſed Foreſter to faint away.

"Why, ſir," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth, angrily, "will you torment the man you have injured?"

"Behold theſe miniatures, my Lord—they exactly reſemble each other; one is my property, and the other was this morning taken from the neck of Mr. Foreſter."

Lord Arrowſworth took the miniatures; he beheld them for a moment; then, ſtarting, he cried—

"Oh, God! oh, God! what a ſtriking reſemblance!—ſay—what was the name of the original?"

"Her name was Middlewich, my Lord."

"And you are——"

"Her ſon."

"Speak again, and drive me to diſtraction," ſaid his Lordſhip. "Were you born at Rome?"

"I was not, my Lord; I never knew my mother. I was removed from her care when an infant by Mr. Meredith, the half brother of Admiral Allingham, whoſe ſon I am. My father died at ſea, and Mr. Meredith's fondneſs towards me was ſo great, that he allowed me to take his name, and every body believed me to owe my birth to him; which opinion was ſtrengthened by his leaving me the whole of his immenſe property in England, beſides his eſtates in the Weſt Indies. This ſecret I have carefully kept from every body except my wife. I had no reſerve to her. I ſhould not have known it myſelf had not my father by adoption left a paper behind him, diſcloſing the whole affair.—How a copy of this picture, which I have worn from a child, ſhould fall into the hands of Mr. Foreſter, I am ignorant—

unleſs

unleſs——oh, gracious Heaven! the thought is too horrible to be entertained."

By the aſſiſtance of the ſurgeon, Foreſter was reſtored to a ſenſe of exiſtence. Lord Arrowſworth ſlowly aroſe from the coach, and, kneeling by the ſide of it, he ſoftly ſaid—

"My dear Foreſter—tell me—whoſe picture is this?"

"Oh, my mother!" ſighed Foreſter—"my revered mother! let me once more embrace your reſemblance."

"Hold!" raved Lord Arrowſworth.—"Were you born at Rome?"

"I was."

"And your father's name was——"

"My father!" continued Foreſter—"yes, I was this evening to have embraced him—e'en now, perhaps, ſhould I have been preparing for the interview—never—never ſhall I ſee him—oh, my heart foreboded this!"

"Were you to have ſeen your father at

Mr. Creſwell's this evening?" demanded his Lordſhip, with a look of horror.

"I was."

"Oh, my ſon—my murdered ſon—embrace your father! and ſay—can you forgive him, for urging you, an unwilling victim, to deſtruction?—Myſterious Providence! We were to have met this day—oh, miſery! is it *thus* we meet?"

He flung himſelf again on his knees, and ſeized the hand of the dying youth.—Hartlebury haſtened to his Lordſhip's aſſiſtance, while the ſurgeon compelled Foreſter to ſwallow a cordial. His ſenſes did not fail him, and an explanation, ſudden as unexpected, took place.

Agony was painted on the countenance of Lord Arrowſworth, while his ſon's exhibited a ſerene reſignation. Hartlebury, whoſe feelings were almoſt too ſevere for endurance, ſat at a ſmall diſtance from the couch, while Meredith, with a ſmile of horror, contemplated his dying brother,

and

and ſeemed to revolve ſome dark deſign in his mind. Foreſter's wound now grew acutely painful; but his eyes ſtill gleamed with their native fire, while he addreſſed Lord Arrowſworth by the endearing name of *father*. His Lordſhip bent over him in ſilent grief. He now lamented his pride—a pride that had warped his better reaſon: he beheld his ſon a victim to falſe honor—a victim to obedience—a father had forced his child to the field, where he had fallen by the hands of his brother.

Such are the evils of illegitimacy!

Foreſter now felt that the hand of death was on him; he beckoned the ſurgeon:

"Do not deceive me, ſir," ſaid he.—"Will this wound terminate my exiſtence?"

The ſurgeon kept a ſignificant ſilence.

"I underſtand you, ſir. How many hours may I yet linger in pain?"

"I fear, ſir," ſaid the ſurgeon, "that by the evening you will be paſt the ſenſe of pain."

Lord Arrowſworth deeply groaned.—Hartlebury hid his face in his handkerchief, and Meredith gloomily ſmiled.—Foreſter preſented a paper to Hartlebury: it contained ſome directions, written the evening before. He then ſeized the hand of his father.

"That paper," ſaid he, "contains my laſt wiſhes: yet let me do an act of juſtice, and well employ the few remaining moments of life. I have ſaved a poor woman from miſery: my death will again involve her. She was a ſervant of my mother; ſhe nurſed me in my infancy: let me once more ſee her, that I may recommend her to your protection."

Hartlebury was going to object; but the ſurgeon whiſpered, that the ſlighteſt contradiction might haſten the awful moment; and the ſervant was diſpatched for Mrs. Thomas.

Foreſter now fixed his eyes on Meredith.

"Do

"Do you yet believe me guilty, my brother? (for that ſuch you are, theſe miniatures but too well teſtify.) I am innocent of what I am accuſed. Speak kindly then to me, and, if neceſſary, accept my forgiveneſs."

"Brother!" exclaimed Meredith.—"Brother!—yes—worthy am I of the title! wretch that I am! But I will not give way to womaniſh complaint. Innocent! Why ſhould you be ſo? It were proper—it would crown this ſcene of horror, if you had ſeduced your brother's wife. No crime had then been wanting, and the attendant evils of baſtardy had been complete."

"Speak not thus," ſaid Foreſter, in a languid voice, "but give me your hand, my brother."

"Oh, vile Emily—this is thy work!" exclaimed Meredith.

"Emily—" faintly repeated Foreſter—"oh, moſt true—ſhe bade me think on her when an unexpected ſtorm burſt upon

my head; too well I feel that her prophetic threat is fulfilled."

"And I am a fratricide! Curſed be the hour when firſt my eyes opened to the light of day! May the Author of my being eternally——"

"Hold!" cried Foreſter, with returning ſtrength—"hold!" (he half raiſed himſelf from the couch.) "Curſe not—withhold the dread, the unnatural execration!—From my ſoul do I forgive you my death—nay, my brother, I thank you for it.—My father—may happineſs be yours; and may Heaven alleviate the pangs you feel! may it, likewiſe, pardon the errors of a miſguided——my head ſwims——bleſſings on——"

The unhappy youth ſunk backwards—a convulſive ſhivering ſeized his limbs, and, while his mother's name trembled on his lips, he expired.

A ſilence of ſome minutes enſued—an awful horror reigned in the boſom of all; but Meredith approached the body, ſurveyed

veyed it with attention, and again the ſmile of deſperation gave a gloomy ferocity to his features. At this moment a feeble voice was heard to exclaim—"Where is he? where is he? let me ſee him once more"—and Mrs. Thomas, ſupported by a ſervant, entered the room.

"It is all over now, Edward," ſaid Hartlebury, in a low voice. "Convey the poor woman away."

But ſhe had overheard him: ſhe raiſed her eyes towards the ſofa, and, ſpringing from the footman, by an effort of deſpair, ſhe reached the ſpot where lay extended the pale corpſe of her benefactor. But when ſhe beheld his eyes fixed, and his features ghaſtly in death, ſhe uttered the moſt piercing ſhrieks:

"Oh, that ever I ſhould live to ſee this day!" cried ſhe. "My dear, dear benefactor! What villain, what monſter in a human form, could lift his hand againſt the mildeſt of God's creatures? Oh! he

would not have hurt a worm! He was ſo kind, ſo good, ſo charitable! I hoped to have ended my days under his roof. Little did I think I ſhould ever have had to cry over his grave!"

Hartlebury would have removed her from the melancholy ſcene. He obſerved, that her complaints would but augment the grief of her benefactor's neareſt friends.

"I will not go," cried ſhe; "never, never will I leave him. Friends! why did not his *friends* prevent his death?—Poor, ſweet young man! he had no friends, though he deſerved a thouſand—he had no father to adviſe him, or he would never have come to this untimely end."

The ſurgeon now attempted to remove her, but, ſinking on her knees, ſhe claſped her withered arms round one of the feet of the corpſe, which hung over the ſofa.

"I will not go," raved ſhe: "ſhame on you all! How do I know but that you are the murderers?"

Lord Arrowſworth could ſcarcely bear the ſcene. Meredith continued wrapped in gloomy thought.

"He lives! he lives! he is not dead!" cried the grateful mourner.—"Here! here! feel his hand—it is not cold—no—no—it is not cold;" and ſhe attempted to chafe it between hers.

"It is all in vain," ſaid Lord Arrowſworth; "the unhappy young man is no more: take comfort; you have loſt a friend in him—you ſhall find one in his father."

"His father!" ſcreamed ſhe. "Oh, yes, it is, indeed!—Mr. Hewardine—Mr. Hewardine!—though you have come too late to ſave him, God will forgive your neglect of him when alive, ſo you but purſue his murderers."

"That taſk be mine," ſaid Meredith. "I vow, ſolemnly vow, that an exemplary vengeance ſhall overtake them."

The

The poor woman immediately recognised the colonel.

"Do you say so?" exclaimed she: "and will you really keep your word?—Oh, look at the dear youth who now lies dead before you, and join with me to call down curses on the wretch who could lift his hand against him."

"*I do!*" said Meredith, with calm desperation; "and if there be a misery he can yet experience, may it be inflicted on him!"

"What is your meaning, sir?" faintly demanded Lord Arrowsworth. "Will you augment my miseries? Am I not sufficiently wretched; sufficiently humbled? Will you, by self-murder, expiate your crime, and add a greater weight to the load which bends me to the earth?"

"What, my Lord! shall I consent to live? Never—my eye is tearless, my purpose unalterable; but I will not fall alone.

alone. The cauſe—the vile cauſe of this ſcene of horror ſhall ſhare my fate."

He approached the corpſe. Mrs. Thomas had flung her arms over it, and lay without motion. Meredith ſeized the cold hand of his brother.

"I here," cried he, "ſolemnly pledge myſelf that the blood ſpilt by my unbridled rage ſhall not go unavenged; and if I keep not my oath, may miſeries, if poſſible more acute than thoſe I now experience, be my lot for ever!"

He dropped the hand, and ruſhed wildly from the houſe, followed by Major Molyneux.

Lord Arrowſworth was too much abſorbed in his own feelings to pay attention to any other circumſtance; but Hartlebury, though greatly ſhocked at the horrid ſcene, obſerved to the ſurgeon, that it would be proper to remove Mrs. Thomas from the body, in order to prepare it for interment: he approached for that purpoſe; he

he lifted the unfeigned mourner in his arms, and conveyed her to the adjoining apartment. She remained ſpeechleſs, and ſurvived her benefactor but three days.

CHAP. XII.

Die, ſorc'reſs, die! LEE.

WHEN Lord Arrowſworth had acquired ſufficient compoſure, he returned to St. James's Square. His pallid and altered look alarmed his lady: fearing to ſhock her, or injure her health, he attempted to aſſume a cheerful air. In about two hours, a gentleman was announced on particular buſineſs, and Lady Arrowſworth retired; but ſhe was ſoon brought back by a violent ringing of the bell, and the voice of Creſwell calling for aſſiſtance. On entering the room, ſhe beheld his Lordſhip ſtretched on the floor, with an open letter lying by him. She ſhrieked loudly, and the ſervants appearing, by proper methods he was reſtored to life: but the ſhock was

more

more injurious to Lady Arrowſworth; ſhe was taken ill, and conveyed to her bed, where, after a long and painful labor, ſhe was delivered of a ſtill-born male child.—The letter which had cauſed his Lordſhip's indiſpoſition was that written by Foreſter, a few days previous to his death: it was found in his pocket, and ſent, as directed, to Creſwell, who dared not open or ſuppreſs the letter of another.

Hartlebury, in two days time, attended his unhappy young friend to the grave.—He was, by his particular wiſh (expreſſed in the paper he delivered when dying), buried at the feet of his mother. The funeral was private; pomp was avoided—but the tears ſhed were real.

The news of Foreſter's death was communicated to Sinclair Apſley by Hartlebury. The good youth was not aſhamed to weep: he expreſſed his horror of duelling in the moſt forcible terms, and declared, that Foreſter had not left his equal behind him. It was deemed proper

to

to conceal the news from Cuthbert till his health was perfectly reſtored; and in a ſhort time the whole family left London for the more peaceful ſcenes of Somerſetſhire.

Emily exulted in the ſucceſs of her ſchemes, and appeared ſhortly as the profeſſed miſtreſs of Lord Winterfield, who left his neglected wife at Bath, where ſhe hovered round the gaming-table, without the means of joining the votaries of fortune:—thus ſpectres are ſaid to haunt the ſpot they moſt loved on earth.

But Meredith had formed a dark ſcheme; the laws, he knew, could not reach the murderers of his brother: he determined to ſupply their defect.

A month had elapſed ſince Foreſter had been conſigned to the grave. Emily inhabited an elegant houſe in Wimpole Street. Her abode was well known, for ſhe had loſt all ſhame, and was become the faſhionable demi-rep of the day.

Mere-

Meredith was informed by his ſpies, that Lord Winterfield had left the houſe in his chariot, and that there did not appear to be any company. He immediately repaired to the ſpot, and, ſaying he wiſhed to ſpeak to Mrs. Meredith on particular buſineſs, was admitted to the drawing-room. The ſervant aſked his name. Diſconcerted at the queſtion, he replied, in a heſitating manner, that he was a ſtranger, but had a particular meſſage to deliver from Lord Winterfield, that could not brook delay. The ſervant retired.

The room was decorated with taſte and magnificence. Feſtoons of artificial jaſmine hung round the ceiling, and a large pier glaſs reflected the ſplendid ſcene. As he paſſed the mirror, Meredith ſtarted.

"Alas!" thought he, "how am I changed! Once a votary of diſſipation, I thoughtleſsly revelled in the gay walks of life; but now the dream is vaniſhed, and I feel the folly of haſty opinion. Oh! I thought the world a ſcene of delight. I

thought

thought I could only tread where roſes were ſtrewed in my path: but now—— bitter reflection!"

A ſudden ſtep aroused him—it paſſed on, and he began to fear that Emily had learned his arrival, and avoided his preſence; but he was deceived, for, in a quarter of an hour, that ſeemed an age, Mrs. Meredith entered the room, gaily humming an Italian air.

She beheld him—faintly ſhrieked, and would have fled; but he ruſhed to the door, double locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

He gazed at her in ſilence. She trembled, attempted to ſpeak, but her voice was loſt in murmurs. At length, unable to ſupport his ſteady eye—

"You are come," ſaid ſhe, "to upbraid me with my crimes."

Meredith ſtill was ſilent, and continued to gaze upon her.

"You alarm me," cried ſhe; "for Heaven's ſake ſpeak! tell me you hate—de-

ſpiſe

deſpiſe—execrate me—do any thing but keep that horrible ſilence."

"Did you know that the murdered Foreſter was my brother?" exclaimed Meredith, in a voice of thunder.

"How? is he then dead?"

"Wretched woman, you know he is, and a victim to your arts."

"And did he fall by your hand?"

"He did."

"Oh, joyful hearing!" cried ſhe. "I knew it well, but was reſolved to have the confeſſion from your own mouth. Meredith, I fear you not; the laws cannot reach me; and a ſingle ſcream of mine will ſummon the ſervants to my aid. Yes, weak man, I *did* know that Foreſter was your brother; but I knew it not till I had reaſon to hate him. I feared the milkineſs of your nature; I feared you would own him as a brother, and ſquander your fortune on the baſtard brood of Mrs. Middlewich. Happy was it that I kept the ſecret: my prudence has enabled me to gratify my vengeance:

vengeance: you neglected, he outraged me. I armed one brother againſt the other: to me it was immaterial which fell; and I now hail you—you, the *worthy*, *generous*, *feeling* Meredith, as a fratricide!"

"I am ſo," ſaid Meredith; "yet I have one duty to fulfil: vengeance muſt be taken on the murderers, for I am not the only guilty perſon. I come here to do an act of juſtice."

Emily trembled. "I fear you not, Meredith—on my ſoul, I fear you not—the laws cannot reach me: you may, perhaps, expoſe me, but——I fear you not: do not imagine that I fear you."

"Behold theſe piſtols! This deadly weapon deprived a brother of life: his wronged ſpirit demands retribution. I have pledged myſelf to avenge his death, and I will keep my oath. Emily—prepare to die."

The wretched woman ſtood petrified with horror: at length, ſhe attempted to eſcape, but the door was faſtened. Meredith ſeized

her

her by the arm. "Move not: you vainly endeavour to escape. Dare not to call for aid, or that moment is your last."

She piteously gazed on him: her eyes flashed with the wildness of agony. At length she cried, while her voice was often interrupted by emotion, "Meredith—oh, Meredith—you will not—can you bear to—will you become the murderer of a woman, and your wife?"

"Both those titles have you forfeited. It were a vain task to attempt to disarm my justice. We quit not this room with life. Address yourself to Heaven, if you yet can hope for mercy there."

"I cannot—I cannot—I know not how; but spare me, Meredith—spare me: oh, I must not—I cannot die."

Meredith paced the room with emotion. "Sad is the necessity," said he; "but you have brought this ruin on your head: you have not a quarter of an hour's life."

"Hold, hold! I will not hear it—oh, spare me—I am unfit to die—how shall I dare to——"

"Emily

"Emily, I have often heard you ridicule the idea of a future ſtate of retribution: call, now, your philoſophy to your aſſiſtance.—What! does it fail of comfort, in your utmoſt need?"

"Oh, talk not thus to me; but if mercy yet inhabit your boſom, ſpare my life, and let my future conduct teſtify the ſincerity of my penitence."

"I am fixed: you will not move me, Emily."

"If to drag out the wretched remainder of my days in want, in chains, in darkneſs, in never-ending penance, will atone for my crimes, ſuch ſhall be my deſtiny; but ſpare, ſpare my life."

"Prepare for death," ſaid Meredith, in a hurried manner; "I will no longer liſten to you."

Emily, loudly ſhrieking, rang the bell with violence: at the ſame moment——

* * * * * * * *

When the door was burſt open, what a ght preſented itſelf to the aſtoniſhed ſer-

vants! They raised the bodies from the ground. Meredith was quite dead: the ball had entered his temple; but Emily discovered some faint signs of life. She was conveyed to her chamber: the wound was declared by the surgeons not to be mortal: but her lower jaw was broken; and when, after a long and painful illness, she was enabled to leave her bed, she presented a sight of deformity to her disgusted beholders. She left London, where she was become the object of universal execration, and retired to an old mansion-house in Cumberland, belonging to Lord Winterfield, who allowed her a yearly stipend of forty pounds, Meredith having left his property to a distant relation of his father by adoption.

There she mourns the crimes that have reduced her from affluence to misery, and remains a terrible example to the world, of pride, cruelty, and guilt, having met the just reward.

THE END.